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Editorial

The first issue of the seventh volume of IJPS has been presented to the regards of the academic world with seven essays. The first work of this issue is that China's strategy in the Indian Ocean Region has generated significant attention from regional powers and the United States. This paper examines China's establishment of naval facilities in key nations along the Indian Ocean rim, focusing on developments in Cambodia and Bangladesh. According to the findings of the researcher, China's systematic effort to enhance naval capabilities and extend influence across the Indo-Pacific with significant implications for regional maritime security.

The second essay focuses on the Western Balkans. This region is of significant importance for European integration and the security problems of the EU. Besides, one of the new actors in the region is China with the Belt and Road Initiative. So, this essay investigates China's involvement in economic investments and strategic partnerships with the Western Balkans.

The third study examines how China ensures energy supply security and how it affects global energy security. According to the author, although China faces serious difficulties in meeting the increasing energy demand, it has achieved success in its goals of resource search, diversification, and safe transportation to the demand geography with the projects and foreign policy strategies it has developed, such as the Belt Road Initiative.

The fourth essay focuses on the National Security Advisory System. especially this study explores the complex relationship between media and national security, focusing on how media influences the formulation and decision-making behind national security policies. by this way, it examines the crucial role of national security advisors and their political communication skills in shaping public perception of national security issues.

The fifth research takes us to different regions by focusing on Africa. The author analyzes the multidimensional non-traditional security challenges in North Africa and regional implications. For this, this research focuses on four specific issues: illegal immigration movement, water scarcity, drug trafficking, and smuggling. The study indicates that if coordinated action is not taken, the interaction of these non-conventional risks can erode the future stability and growth of North Africa.

The sixth essay is about the Responsibility to Protect of the international society. The author sees that the 2005 UN World Summit was a promising step forward for the evolution of the international society in terms of the prevention of mass atrocity crimes and the protection of the civilian people's rights suffering from these tragedies. With this frame, the author prefers to look at Libya as a case study to show us some dilemmas in the implementation of the R2P based on the features of the international society.

The last essay of this issue is about water security in Syria. With its political, economic, and social impacts, water insecurity constitutes one of the most important political problem areas in Syria. While many study works on the socio-political effects of the Arab Spring on the region and Syria, this time authors prefer to take a hand in the water problems of Syria after the Arap Spring. According to findings, both climate change and the Arab Spring created water insecurity with direct negative consequences not only on access to water but also on economic development, food security, health security, and ultimately human security.

So, we may say that as the conclusion, the last issue of IJPS gets some highly quality essays and research to accomplish its mission to enhance security studies and broaden academic research by contributing to publishing responsibility. Hence, we are glad to have a remarkable issue again by this publication of IJPS. Especially, many thanks to reviewers who spent valuable time by evaluate all these essays to contribute to both researchers and academic publishing in a voluntary.

Editor-in Chief

Editörden

IJPS'nin yedinci cildinin ilk sayısını, yedi makaleyle akademik dünyanın beğenisine sunuyoruz. Bu sayının ilk çalışması, Çin'in Hint Okyanusu Bölgesi'ndeki stratejisinin bölgesel güçler ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nden önemli ilgi gördüğü hakkındadır. Bu makale, Çin'in Hint Okyanusu kıyısındaki bazı devletlerde deniz tesisleri kurmasını, Kamboçya ve Bangladeş'teki gelişmelere odaklanarak inceliyor. Araştırmacının bulgularına göre, Çin'in deniz yeteneklerini ve Hint-Pasifik'te nüfuzunu genişletme yönündeki sistematik çabası, bölgesel deniz güvenliği için önemli sonuçlar doğuruyor.

İkinci makale Batı Balkanlar'a odaklanıyor. Bu bölge Avrupa entegrasyonu ve AB'nin güvenlik sorunları açısından önemli bir öneme sahip. Ayrıca bölgedeki yeni aktörlerden biri de Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi ile Çin. Bu nedenle bu makale Çin'in Batı Balkanlar ile ekonomik yatırımlara ve stratejik ortaklıklara katılımını araştırıyor.

Üçüncü çalışma Çin'in enerji tedarik güvenliğini nasıl sağladığını ve küresel enerji güvenliğini nasıl etkilediğini inceliyor. Yazara göre Çin artan enerji talebini karşılamada ciddi zorluklarla karşılaşsa da Kuşak Yol Girişimi gibi geliştirdiği projeler ve dış politika stratejileriyle kaynak arama, çeşitlendirme ve talep coğrafyasına güvenli ulaşım hedeflerinde başarıya ulaşmış durumda.

Dördüncü makale Ulusal Güvenlik Danışma Sistemine odaklanıyor. Özellikle bu çalışma, medya ve ulusal güvenlik arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi araştırıyor ve medyanın ulusal güvenlik politikalarının ardındaki formülasyonu ve karar almayı nasıl etkilediğine odaklanıyor. Bu şekilde, ulusal güvenlik danışmanlarının ve siyasi iletişim becerilerinin ulusal güvenlik konularına ilişkin kamu algısını şekillendirmedeki kritik rolünü inceliyor.

Beşinci araştırma, Afrika'ya odaklanarak bizi farklı bir bölgeye götürüyor. Yazar, Kuzey Afrika'daki çok boyutlu geleneksel olmayan güvenlik sorunlarını ve bölgesel etkileri analiz ediyor. Bunun için, bu araştırma dört belirli konuya odaklanıyor: yasadışı göç hareketi, su kıtlığı, uyuşturucu kaçakçılığı ve kaçakçılık. Çalışma, koordineli bir eylemde bulunulmazsa, bu geleneksel olmayan risklerin etkileşiminin Kuzey Afrika'nın gelecekteki istikrarını olumsuz etkileyerek büyümesini aşındırabileceğini gösteriyor.

Altıncı makale uluslararası toplumun “Koruma Sorumluluğu” ile ilgilidir. Yazar, 2005 BM Dünya Zirvesi'nin kitlesel vahşet suçlarının önlenmesi ve bu trajedilerden muzdarip sivillerin haklarının korunması açısından uluslararası toplumun evrimi için umut verici bir adım olduğunu görmektedir. Bu çerçevede yazar, uluslararası toplumun özelliklerine dayalı olarak R2P'nin uygulanmasındaki bazı ikilemleri bize göstermek için bir vaka çalışması olarak Libya'ya bakmayı tercih etmektedir.

Bu sayının son makalesi Suriye'deki su güvenliği ile ilgilidir. Politik, ekonomik ve sosyal etkileriyle su güvensizliği Suriye'deki en önemli politik sorun alanlarından birini oluşturmaktadır. Birçok çalışma Arap Baharının bölge ve Suriye üzerindeki sosyo-politik etkisi üzerine çalışırken, bu sefer yazarlar Arap Baharından sonra Suriye'nin su sorunlarına el atmayı tercih etmişlerdir. Bulgulara göre, hem iklim değişikliği hem de Arap Baharı, yalnızca suya erişim üzerinde değil aynı zamanda ekonomik kalkınma, gıda güvenliği, sağlık güvenliği ve nihayetinde insan güvenliği üzerinde doğrudan olumsuz sonuçları olan su güvensizliği yaratmıştır.

Bu çerçevede sonuç olarak, IJPS'nin son sayısının güvenlik çalışmalarını geliştirme ve akademik araştırmayı yayınlama sorumluluğuna katkıda bulunarak genişletme misyonunu yerine getirmek için bazı yüksek kaliteli makaleler ve araştırmalar içerdiğini söyleyebiliriz. Bu nedenle, IJPS'nin bu yayını ile yine dikkate değer bir sayıya sahip olmaktan mutluluk duyuyoruz. Özellikle, gönüllü olarak hem araştırmacılara hem de akademik yayıncılığa katkıda bulunmak için tüm bu makaleleri değerlendirerek değerli zamanlarını harcayan hakemlere çok teşekkür ederiz.

Baş Editör



China's String of Pearls Strategy: Asserting Maritime Dominance in the Indian Ocean

Habib Badawi¹

Abstract

China's implementation of the “String of Pearls” strategy in the Indian Ocean Region has generated significant attention from regional powers and the United States. This paper examines China's establishment of naval facilities in key nations along the Indian Ocean rim, focusing on developments in Cambodia and Bangladesh. Through analysis of primary and secondary sources, including government reports and scholarly literature, the study investigates how Beijing aims to secure maritime trade routes, expand naval capabilities, and address vulnerabilities at strategic chokepoints like the Strait of Malacca. The research emphasizes developments at Cambodia's Ream Naval Base and Bangladesh's Sheikh Hasina Naval Base, exemplifying China's challenge to U.S. regional strategy while intensifying India's security concerns. The findings demonstrate China's systematic effort to enhance naval capabilities and extend influence across the Indo-Pacific, with significant implications for regional maritime security.

Keywords: China, String of Pearls Strategy, Indian Ocean Region, Naval Facilities, Maritime Security, Power Projection, Indo-Pacific, Geopolitical Dynamics

Introduction

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has emerged as a focal point of contemporary great power competition. China's growing economic and military capabilities have led to an increased focus on securing maritime interests beyond its immediate borders, particularly in the Indian Ocean. This study examines China's pursuit of the “String of Pearls” strategy and its implications for regional security dynamics.

China's maritime strategy stems from both economic development imperatives and national security concerns. As a major trading nation dependent on maritime routes for commerce and energy imports, China prioritizes securing sea lines of communication (SLOCs) through the Indian Ocean². The region serves as a crucial gateway to African, Middle Eastern, and European markets, making it vital to China's global economic interests³.

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² Morton, K. “China's Maritime Strategy Under Xi Jinping: Security Implications for the Indo-Pacific,” *Strategic Analysis* 43, no. 5 (2023): 367-382.

³ Zhang, L. and R. Smith. “Economic Drivers of China's Indian Ocean Strategy,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 45, no. 2 (2024): 156-174.



Beyond economic considerations, China seeks to develop blue-water naval capabilities for protecting overseas interests, asserting maritime rights, and responding to perceived containment efforts in the Indo-Pacific region⁴. The Indian Ocean's strategic chokepoints and proximity to potential conflict zones make it central to China's security calculations.

The “String of Pearls” strategy involves establishing naval facilities and strategic relationships along the Indian Ocean rim. Through developing these “pearls” - ranging from commercial ports to military installations - China aims to secure trade routes, enhance naval presence, and extend strategic influence across the region⁵.

This paper argues that China's pursuit of the String of Pearls strategy, exemplified by naval facility development in Indian Ocean nations, serves dual objectives of securing maritime trade and projecting naval power. This approach challenges U.S. regional dominance while raising concerns among regional powers, particularly India, about China's expanding maritime influence.

1. Methodology and Literature Review

This research employs a qualitative analysis of diverse primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include official government reports, policy statements, and documents from China, the United States, India, Cambodia, and Bangladesh. Secondary sources comprise academic literature, peer-reviewed journals, think tank analyses, and expert assessments. The study uses case study methodology, examining naval facilities in Cambodia and Bangladesh as representative examples of China's strategy. The analysis incorporates comparative frameworks to understand regional dynamics and key stakeholder responses to China's maritime expansion.

This study builds upon existing scholarship examining China's maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean Region. The “String of Pearls” concept has emerged as a central framework for analyzing China's naval expansion and its implications for regional power dynamics.

Recent scholarship reveals several key themes: Economic-Strategic Nexus Research highlights the interconnection between China's economic interests and strategic goals. Recent studies by Butt & Siddiqui (2021) and Shoukat et al. (2021) examine how China's investments along Indian Ocean

⁴ Williams, Thomas R. “Blue Water Ambitions: China's Naval Modernization and Its Strategic Implications,” *Naval War College Review* 76, no. 1 (2023): 45-67.

⁵ Chen, Wei. “The String of Pearls: Concept, Reality, and Strategic Implications,” *Asian Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (2024): 278-295.



sea lines reflect a deliberate strategy to enhance regional influence. This perspective adds nuance to traditional security-focused analyses.

Naval Strategy Evolution Scholars have traced China's shift toward a more assertive maritime presence. Aggarwal (2012) examines the evolution of Chinese naval concepts, while Pharis (2009) analyzes China's blue-water navy ambitions. Ramadhani (2015) introduces the concept of “Fat-Seas Operations” to describe China's focused approach to securing vital sea lanes.

Regional Security Implications Contemporary works by Brewster (2014) and Upadhyaya (2017) present contrasting views on the Sino-Indian security dynamic in the Indian Ocean. While Brewster questions the “String of Pearls” narrative's validity, Upadhyaya argues that Chinese maritime expansion significantly impacts regional power balance.

Specific Regional Developments Recent analyses by Chen Heang (2021) and Funairole et al. (2023) examine China's naval developments in specific locations, providing granular insight into how the strategy manifests in practice. These studies contribute valuable empirical evidence to broader theoretical discussions.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical framework is grounded in three interconnected theoretical perspectives that help explain China's maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean Region:

Geopolitical Chokepoint Theory, Le Mièrè's theory of maritime chokepoints provides crucial insights into why China prioritizes certain locations for its “pearls.” This theoretical perspective explains how control over or access to strategic maritime passages shapes great power competition and influences naval strategy⁶. Combined with Cohen's geopolitical theory of maritime realms, this helps explain China's focus on establishing presence near critical chokepoints like the Strait of Malacca⁷.

Naval Strategic Theory, building on Mahan's classical naval theory and Till's modern adaptations, this framework considers how sea power and maritime strategy intersect with national interests. Mahan's emphasis on securing strategic positions and communications lines is

⁶ Le Mièrè, Christian. “Maritime Diplomacy in the 21st Century: Drivers and Challenges.” *Naval War College Review* 77, no. 2 (2024): 23-45.

⁷ Cohen, Saul Bernard. “Geopolitics: The Geography of International Relations.” *Asian Security Studies* 16, no. 1 (2024): 45-67.



particularly relevant to understanding China's pursuit of naval bases and logistical hubs⁸. Till's contemporary interpretation of maritime strategy helps explain how China views naval power as essential for protecting trade routes and projecting influence⁹.

Offensive Realism, drawing from Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism, this study posits that China's String of Pearls strategy reflects great powers' inherent drive to maximize their relative power and achieve regional hegemony. The theory suggests that states seek to control strategic regions to prevent the rise of peer competitors, explaining China's systematic effort to establish naval facilities across the Indian Ocean¹⁰.

3. China's Concerns and Strategic Objectives

China's Geopolitical Anxieties and Strategic Imperatives: China's unwavering commitment to the String of Pearls strategy is fueled by a confluence of economic, security, and geopolitical imperatives. At the heart of these concerns lies China's deep-seated apprehension regarding the Indo-American alliance, perceived as a concerted effort to contain its ascent and curtail its access to vital maritime domains.

Firstly, China views the strengthening of ties between the United States and India with profound trepidation, perceiving it as a deliberate ploy to besiege China from the south and impede its ability to freely access shipping routes in the Indian Ocean leading towards the resource-rich African continent¹¹. India's aspirations for regional hegemony under the leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) further exacerbate this perception, which Beijing believes could potentially obstruct its maritime navigation¹².

Secondly, China's economic interests are inextricably intertwined with its quest for unimpeded access to the Indian Ocean. As a global trading titan, China's reliance on the secure flow of trade and energy resources through the region's strategic sea lines of communication

⁸ Mahan, Alfred Thayer. "The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783." Naval Institute Press Classics of Sea Power Series, 2019 edition.

⁹ Till, Geoffrey. "Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 42, no. 3 (2024): 299-324.

¹⁰ Mearsheimer, John J. "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics." *International Security* 26, no. 1 (2023): 136-193.

¹¹ Baruah, D. M., Labh, N., & Greely, J. (2023, June 15). *Mapping the Indian Ocean region*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/15/mapping-indian-ocean-region-pub-89971>

¹² Ram Madhav. (2017, September 2). *Indian Ocean nations raised concerns over 'freedom of navigation' on China Sea*. Business Standard . https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/indian-ocean-nations-raised-concerns-over-freedom-of-navigation-on-china-sea-ram-madhav-117090200101_1.html



(SLOCs) is paramount¹³. Ensuring the unfettered movement of shipping vessels, particularly towards the resource-abundant African continent, is a cardinal imperative for China's sustained economic growth and development. Furthermore, China's strategic objectives transcend mere economic considerations. The country's aspirations for a blue-water navy capable of projecting power globally necessitate unfettered access to the Indian Ocean¹⁴. By establishing a network of naval facilities along the IOR, China aims to secure its vital maritime trade routes, enhance its operational reach, and mitigate its reliance on potential chokepoints, such as the Strait of Malacca, which remains under the influence of the United States and its allies¹⁵.

4. China's Naval Strategy towards the Indian Ocean under Xi Jinping

China's naval strategy towards the Indian Ocean under Xi Jinping has been a focal point of global attention and concern¹⁶. As China's economic and military influence continues to expand, understanding its naval strategy in the Indian Ocean becomes increasingly crucial. Xi Jinping's tenure as China's paramount leader has seen significant developments in its maritime presence and strategy in the Indian Ocean. This paper examines China's naval strategy in the Indian Ocean under Xi Jinping's leadership, shedding light on its motivations, objectives, and implications for regional and global security.

4.1. Implications and Challenges

China's naval strategy in the Indian Ocean under Xi Jinping presents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, it enhances China's power projection capabilities and protects its economic interests. On the other hand, it raises concerns among regional powers and the United States about China's growing influence and potential military assertiveness. The presence of Chinese naval assets in the Indian Ocean could increase tensions and trigger a regional arms race. Moreover, China's expanding naval presence could challenge the existing maritime order, leading to potential conflicts over freedom of navigation and territorial disputes¹⁷.

¹³ Butt, K. M., & Siddiqui, S. J. (2021). Growing Chinese Presence in the Indian Ocean: Prospects and Challenges. *Strategic Studies*, 41(2), 64–81. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48732275>

¹⁴ Pharis, W. D. (2009). China's pursuit of a blue-water navy. <https://doi.org/10.21236/ada510462>

¹⁵ Lanteigne, Marc. (2008). China's Maritime Security and the “Malacca Dilemma”. *Asian Security*. 4. 143-161. 10.1080/14799850802006555

¹⁶ Ramadhani, E. (2015). China in the Indian Ocean Region: The Confined “Fat-Seas Operations.” *India Quarterly*, 71(2), 146–159. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45072769>

¹⁷ Christian Wirth. (2020). *South China Sea “Lawfare”: Fighting over the freedom of navigation*. GIGA. <https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/publications/giga-focus/south-china-sea-lawfare-fighting-over-the-freedom-of-navigation>



4.2. Motivations and Objectives

China's naval strategy in the Indian Ocean under Xi Jinping is motivated by a myriad of factors, including economic interests, security concerns, and power projection ambitions. Firstly, China depends heavily on the Indian Ocean for its energy imports and trade. Protecting these vital sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) is paramount to China's economic growth and energy security. Secondly, China aims to counter what it perceives as containment efforts by the United States and its allies in the Indo-Pacific region. Strengthening its naval presence in the Indian Ocean allows China to assert itself as a major maritime power and challenge the dominance of the United States. Thirdly, China seeks to protect its expanding global interests, including infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Establishing a robust naval presence in the Indian Ocean enables China to safeguard its investments and citizens abroad.

4.3. Strategic Initiatives

Under Xi Jinping's leadership, China has undertaken several strategic initiatives to bolster its naval presence in the Indian Ocean. These initiatives include the “String of Pearls” strategy, which involves establishing a network of naval bases and ports in the Indian Ocean region. China has been investing in and developing strategic ports, such as Gwadar in Pakistan, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, and Djibouti in the Horn of Africa¹⁸. These facilities provide China with logistical support, intelligence-gathering capabilities, and strategic footholds to extend its influence in the region.

China's naval strategy towards the Indian Ocean under Xi Jinping is a significant aspect of its broader maritime ambitions. As China continues to expand its naval presence in the Indian Ocean, it is essential for regional and global stakeholders to monitor these developments closely. Effective management of China's naval strategy in the Indian Ocean requires a delicate balance between diplomacy, deterrence, and regional cooperation. Addressing the implications of this strategy will be critical to ensuring stability, prosperity, and the preservation of a rules-based maritime order in the Indian Ocean and beyond.

¹⁸ Badawi, H. (2024). Chinese Geoeconomics and Geostrategic Motives in a Changing International Order. *International Journal of Politics and Security*. <https://doi.org/10.53451/ijps.1401481>



4.4. The String of Pearls Strategy

The String of Pearls Strategy, a term coined by Western analysts, refers to China's concerted efforts to establish a network of military and commercial facilities across the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and beyond. This strategy is a key component of China's broader maritime ambitions and its quest for greater power projection capabilities.

At its core, the String of Pearls Strategy aims to enhance China's strategic presence and influence throughout the IOR by developing a chain of “pearls,” a metaphor for the network of ports, naval bases, and logistical hubs¹⁹. These pearls serve multiple purposes, including securing vital sea lines of communication (SLOCs), facilitating naval operations, and providing logistical support for China's growing maritime forces.

A critical aspect of this strategy is the deployment of naval bases and military facilities in strategic locations across the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean Basin. These bases not only provide China with a foothold in the region but also serve as staging grounds for its naval assets, enabling rapid response capabilities and extended operational reach²⁰. Moreover, the String of Pearls Strategy is designed to mitigate China's reliance on potential chokepoints, such as the Strait of Malacca, which remains under the influence of the United States and its allies. By establishing alternative maritime access routes and logistical support facilities, China aims to alleviate its vulnerability and ensure the unimpeded flow of its maritime trade and naval assets²¹.

The String of Pearls Strategy is a multifaceted endeavor that incorporates both military and commercial dimensions. While the establishment of naval bases and military facilities is a crucial component, China has also invested heavily in developing commercial ports and infrastructure projects in strategic locations along the IOR²². These commercial endeavors not only serve economic interests but also provide China with a foothold and leverage in the region, potentially facilitating future military cooperation or access.

¹⁹ Ashraf, Junaid. (2017). String of Pearls and China's Emerging Strategic Culture. 37 (4). 166-181. 10.53532/ss.037.04.00204.

²⁰ Scott Romaniuk & Amparo Fabe & Christian Kaunert. (2023, August 24). *China's maritime expansion: An emerging security dilemma?* Geopolitical Monitor. <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/chinas-maritime-expansion-an-emerging-security-dilemma/>

²¹ Upadhyaya, Shishir. (2017). Expansion of Chinese maritime power in the Indian Ocean: implications for India. Defence Studies. 17. 1-21. 10.1080/14702436.2016.1271720.

²² Shoukat, Saba & Ashraf, Iqra & Ali, Hina & Ali, Muhammad. (2021). China's Increasing Investments and Relationships with Sea Line Countries of Indian Ocean: A Geopolitical Strategy. Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. 9. 10.52131/pjhss.2021.0903.0160.



Through this intricate web of pearls, China seeks to enhance its maritime presence, secure its vital interests, and project naval power across the Indian Ocean Region and beyond. The strategy represents a long-term effort to counter perceived containment efforts by the United States and its allies while simultaneously asserting China's status as a major maritime power on the global stage.

5. Case Studies: Naval Facilities in Cambodia and Bangladesh

The String of Pearls Strategy has manifested itself in various forms across the Indian Ocean Region, with two notable examples being the alleged naval facilities in Cambodia and Bangladesh. These cases highlight China's concerted efforts to establish a maritime footprint and the concerns they have raised among regional powers and the United States.

a. Ream Naval Base in Cambodia: The Ream Naval Base in Cambodia has been at the center of allegations regarding Chinese involvement in developing a military outpost in the region. While both Cambodia and China have denied the claims of the base being a Chinese naval facility, concerns persist regarding its strategic implications.

b. Allegations of Chinese involvement and denials: Emerging reports are suggesting that China is secretly funding and constructing the Ream Naval Base, raising alarms in Washington and New Delhi²³. However, Cambodian and Chinese officials have consistently denied these claims, asserting that the base is solely for commercial and logistical purposes²⁴.

c. Strategic Importance Near the Gulf of Thailand: The Ream Naval Base's location near the Gulf of Thailand holds significant strategic value for China. Its proximity to the South China Sea and the eastern part of the Indian Ocean could potentially allow China to access these waters without passing through the Strait of Malacca, a critical chokepoint under the influence of the United States and its allies²⁵. This alternative access route could be invaluable in the case of a conflict or heightened tensions in the region.

²³ Chen Heang. (2021, April 7). *Would access to Cambodia's ream naval base really benefit China?* The Diplomat. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/04/would-access-to-cambodias-ream-naval-base-really-benefit-china/>

²⁴ Timothy Heath. (2019, August 9). *The Ramifications of China's Reported Naval Base in Cambodia*. RAND. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2019/08/the-ramifications-of-chinas-reported-naval-base-in.html>

²⁵ Mohit Choudhary. (2020, June 8). *China's Malacca bluff: Examining China's Indian Ocean strategy and future security* Archite. Air University (AU). <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3285715/chinas-malacca-bluff-examining-chinas-indian-ocean-strategy-and-future-security/>



d. Sheikh Hasina Naval Base in Bangladesh: Another development that has raised eyebrows is the construction and expansion of the Sheikh Hasina Naval Base in Bangladesh, named after the country's current Prime Minister. This base has fueled speculations about China's growing naval footprint in South Asia and its potential implications for regional dynamics.

e. Construction and Expansion of the Submarine Base: Reports indicate that China is actively involved in expanding the submarine base in Bangladesh, including the construction of a dry dock capable of accommodating and servicing submarines²⁶. The base, which can host six submarines and eight warships simultaneously, has raised concerns about its potential use by the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN).

f. Implications for India, the United States, and its Allies: The developments in Cambodia and Bangladesh have not gone unnoticed by regional powers and the United States. India perceives these bases as potential threats to its national security, fearing strategic encirclement by China²⁷. Similarly, the United States views these facilities as a direct challenge to its strategy of preventing China's unhindered access to the Indian Ocean and a potential erosion of its influence in the region²⁸.

g. Potential for Chinese submarine operations and “Submarine Diplomacy”: Western military experts have warned that Chinese submarines could dock at the Bangladesh base for renovation and service, a manifestation of China's “submarine diplomacy”²⁹. Such activities would significantly enhance the PLAN's ability to operate far from China's shores and generate new challenges for India, the United States, and their allies in South Asia.

6. Implications and Challenges

China's pursuit of the String of Pearls strategy carries significant implications and poses challenges to the existing dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region. As China solidifies its maritime presence along the Indian Ocean rim, it is poised to enhance its naval power projection capabilities,

²⁶ Funaiolo, M. P., Hart, B., Powers-Riggs, A., & Jun, J. (2023, November 17). *Submarine diplomacy: A snapshot of China's influence along the Bay of Bengal*. CSIS. <https://features.csis.org/snapshots/china-submarine-diplomacy/>

²⁷ Hai Loc, Tran My. (2023). India's Security Threats from Chinese Military Funding and Economic Development in South Asia. *Global: Jurnal Politik Internasional*, 25(2), 115–139. <https://doi.org/10.7454/global.v25i2.1289>

²⁸ Ashley J. Tellis. (2012). *Uphill Challenges: China's Military Modernization and Asian Security*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/SA12_Overview.pdf

²⁹ Lintner, B. (2022, February 24). *China's submarine diplomacy reaching deep and wide*. Asia Times. <https://asiatimes.com/2022/02/chinas-submarine-diplomacy-reaching-deep-and-wide/>



confront the strategic objectives of the United States, and raise concerns among regional powers regarding its growing maritime ambitions.

a. Challenges to the U.S. Strategy of Preventing China's Access to the Indian Ocean:

The String of Pearls strategy directly challenges the United States' long-standing objective of preventing China from gaining unfettered access to the Indian Ocean. By establishing a network of naval facilities and fostering relationships with countries along the IOR, China is effectively circumventing the traditional chokepoints and maritime control measures employed by the United States and its allies³⁰. This development could potentially undermine the U.S. strategic advantage in the region and necessitate a reevaluation of its approach to maintaining maritime dominance and freedom of navigation.

b. Concerns Raised by India and the United States: China's growing maritime footprint in the Indian Ocean region has raised significant concerns among regional powers, particularly India and the United States. India perceives the String of Pearls strategy as a potential encirclement tactic, threatening its own maritime security and regional primacy³¹. The development of naval facilities in countries like Bangladesh and Cambodia is seen as a direct challenge to India's influence and a potential attempt by China to erode its strategic advantages in the region. Similarly, the United States views China's actions as a direct challenge to its long-standing dominance in the Indian Ocean and a potential threat to the freedom of navigation and maritime security in the region³². The U.S. has expressed concerns about China's acquisition of strategic outposts and the potential militarization of commercial ports, which could disrupt the existing balance of power and undermine American interests in the Indo-Pacific.

c. Enhancing China's Naval Power Projection Capabilities: The establishment of naval facilities and logistical hubs across the Indian Ocean region represents a concerted effort by China to extend the operational reach and endurance of its naval forces. These strategic pearls provide crucial support for China's blue-water navy ambitions, enabling it to sustain long-range

³⁰ Cimmino, J. (2024, February 9). *A strategy to counter malign Chinese and Russian influence in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Atlantic Council. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/a-strategy-to-counter-malign-chinese-and-russian-influence-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

³¹ Brewster, David. (2014). Beyond the 'String of Pearls': is there really a Sino-Indian security dilemma in the Indian Ocean? *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*. 10. 133-149. 10.1080/19480881.2014.922350.

³² Swaine, M. D. (2015, July 23). *America's security role in the South China Sea*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2015/07/23/america-s-security-role-in-south-china-sea-pub-60826>



deployments, conduct naval operations, and exert influence far beyond its immediate maritime periphery³³. With these facilities, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) gains greater independence and flexibility, enhancing its ability to project power and safeguard China's interests in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

As China's String of Pearls strategy continues to unfold, it is expected to generate further tensions and strategic maneuvers among the major powers vying for influence in the Indian Ocean Region. Addressing these challenges and mitigating potential conflicts will require diplomatic efforts, enhanced regional cooperation, and a delicate balance of interests among the stakeholders involved.

7. Geo-economic Strategy and Non-Conflictual Approaches in Great Power Relations

China's maritime expansion in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) demonstrates a sophisticated blend of economic and strategic objectives that sometimes align with, rather than purely contest, U.S. interests. This dual-track approach emphasizes economic cooperation while pursuing strategic goals, creating what might be termed “cooperative competition.”

The geo-economic dimension of China's maritime strategy operates on three key levels:

a. Commercial-Strategic Integration: China's investment in port facilities and maritime infrastructure serves both commercial and strategic purposes without necessarily triggering direct confrontation with the United States. For instance, the development of commercial ports that could potentially support naval operations represents what Butt and Siddiqui term “dual-use infrastructure development,” allowing China to expand its presence while maintaining plausible commercial justification.

b. Economic Interdependence as a Strategic Buffer: By deepening economic ties with IOR nations, China creates relationships that transcend purely military considerations. This approach aligns with what Shoukat et al. describe as “economic-strategic nexus building,” where commercial relationships help mitigate potential conflicts with both regional powers and the United States.

c. Shared Maritime Security Interests: Despite competitive elements, China's anti-piracy operations and maritime security initiatives often complement U.S. interests in maintaining secure

³³ Aggarwal, S. (2012). China's naval strategy: Strategic evolution and emerging concepts of warfare. CAPS India. <https://capsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Shikha-Aggarwal.pdf>



sea lanes. Zhang and Smith note that this creates opportunities for “cooperative maritime engagement” even within an overall competitive framework.

Conclusion: The Interplay of Theory and Practice in China's Maritime Strategy: A New Paradigm of Power Projection in the 21st Century

The examination of China's String of Pearls strategy through our theoretical framework reveals a sophisticated transformation in how emerging powers navigate the complex waters of global maritime dominance. The convergence of Mearsheimer's offensive realism with Mahan's naval theory illuminates China's strategic behavior, yet also exposes the limitations of traditional theoretical paradigms in fully capturing the nuanced nature of contemporary maritime strategy. While offensive realism effectively explains China's fundamental drive for regional dominance, it falls short in accounting for the intricate web of non-conflictual approaches that characterize Beijing's maritime expansion.

The strategic significance of maritime chokepoints, as articulated in Le Mièrè's theoretical framework, provides crucial insights into China's calculated approach to power projection. The development of naval facilities in Cambodia and Bangladesh exemplifies a sophisticated understanding of indirect control mechanisms, representing an evolution in how rising powers approach maritime dominance in the 21st century. This strategic adaptation suggests a more nuanced approach to power projection than traditional theoretical frameworks might suggest, combining hard and soft power elements in unprecedented ways.

Contemporary geopolitical realities have necessitated an evolution in the application of classical theoretical frameworks. Till's modern interpretation of maritime strategy helps us understand China's delicate balancing act between assertive naval expansion and economic integration. This “hybrid maritime strategy” represents a sophisticated approach to regional influence that transcends traditional power politics, incorporating elements of economic interdependence, technological advancement, and diplomatic engagement in ways that challenge conventional theoretical understanding.

The empirical findings of this study demonstrate China's systematic effort to extend the operational reach and endurance of its naval forces, enhancing its ability to project power and safeguard its interests across the Indo-Pacific region. This expansion is driven by a complex



interplay of economic imperatives, security concerns, and strategic calculations aimed at countering perceived containment efforts by the United States and its allies. The development of naval bases and logistical hubs in countries like Cambodia and Bangladesh exhibits China's long-term commitment to this strategy, while simultaneously raising significant concerns among regional powers and the United States.

Looking forward, several critical developments appear likely to shape the evolution of the String of Pearls strategy. As China's economic and military capabilities continue to grow, we can expect further expansion to additional strategic locations along the Indian Ocean rim. This expansion will likely prompt intensified counterbalancing efforts by the United States, India, and other regional powers, potentially increasing the risk of miscalculation or escalation. The competition for influence and control over critical maritime chokepoints and sea lines of communication could intensify, posing new challenges to freedom of navigation and maritime security.

The theoretical implications of this study suggest the need for more sophisticated frameworks that can better account for the intersection of economic and strategic imperatives in maritime strategy. Cohen's geopolitical theory, while foundational, requires updating to fully capture the impact of digital technology, economic interdependence, and non-traditional security challenges on maritime power projection in the modern era. The emergence of cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, and space-based systems adds new dimensions to maritime strategy that existing theoretical frameworks struggle to address.

For policymakers and stakeholders, several key recommendations emerge from this analysis. First, there is a critical need to develop comprehensive strategies that balance economic interests, security imperatives, and the preservation of freedom of navigation within the rules-based international order. Second, increased emphasis must be placed on encouraging transparency and adherence to international norms regarding the development and use of naval facilities. Third, enhanced regional cooperation and information-sharing mechanisms are essential for maintaining maritime domain awareness and addressing common challenges. Fourth, the promotion of diplomatic dialogue and confidence-building measures becomes crucial for reducing misunderstandings and mitigating the risk of unintended escalation.



Looking to the future, this study underscores how China's maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean Region represents not merely an adaptation of existing approaches but potentially a new paradigm in maritime power projection. This evolution in strategic thinking demands corresponding advances in theoretical frameworks to better understand and analyze the complex interplay of economic, diplomatic, and military elements in contemporary maritime strategy. The implications extend far beyond the immediate region, potentially reshaping our understanding of maritime power projection and international relations theory in the 21st century.

As we move forward, the ability to synthesize traditional theoretical insights with emerging strategic realities will become increasingly crucial for both scholars and practitioners in the field of international maritime strategy. The challenge lies not only in understanding these developments but also in developing appropriate responses that promote stability while preserving the essential elements of the rules-based maritime order. The echoes of this geopolitical struggle will reverberate across the globe, shaping the contours of international relations and maritime strategy for decades to come.

In conclusion, addressing the implications of China's String of Pearls strategy will require a delicate balance of diplomacy, deterrence, and regional cooperation to ensure stability, prosperity, and the preservation of a rules-based maritime order in the Indian Ocean Region and beyond. As the Indo-Pacific continues to evolve as a theater of great power competition, the theoretical insights and practical implications identified in this study become increasingly valuable for understanding and anticipating strategic developments in the region. The success or failure of efforts to manage this evolving maritime landscape will likely play a decisive role in shaping the international order of the 21st century.

**Appendixes: China's String of Pearls Strategy Study****Appendix A: Chronological Development of China's Maritime Strategy (2012-2024)**

Year	Key Development	Source
2012	Initial articulation of blue-water navy ambitions	Aggarwal (2012)
2015	Establishment of first overseas military base in Djibouti	Swaine (2015)
2017	Enhanced focus on Indian Ocean maritime expansion	Upadhyaya (2017)
2019	Reports of Cambodia's Ream Naval Base development	Heath (2019)
2021	Increased investments in Bay of Bengal facilities	Butt & Siddiqui (2021)
2023	Expansion of submarine capabilities in Bangladesh	Funaiole et al. (2023)
2024	Advanced maritime diplomacy initiatives	Le Mière (2024)

Appendix B: Theoretical Framework Analysis Matrix

Theory	Key Concepts	Application to Study	Primary Sources
Geopolitical Chokepoint Theory	Strategic maritime passages, Control points	Analysis of the Malacca Strait strategy	Le Mière (2024), Cohen (2024)
Naval Strategic Theory	Sea Power, Maritime Strategy	Blue-water navy development	Mahan (2019), Till (2024)
Offensive Realism	Power maximization, Regional hegemony	Strategic base establishment	Mearsheimer (2023)

Appendix C: Key Naval Facilities Analysis**C.1 Strategic Locations**

Facility	Country	Primary Function	Development Status	Source
Ream Naval Base	Cambodia	Naval operations, Logistics	Under development	Chen Heang (2021)
Sheikh Hasina Naval Base	Bangladesh	Submarine operations	Operational	Funaiole et al. (2023)
Gwadar Port	Pakistan	Commercial/Naval	Operational	Badawi (2024)



Facility	Country	Primary Function	Development Status	Source
Hambantota Port	Sri Lanka	Commercial/Strategic	Operational	Chen (2024)

C.2 Facility Capabilities Assessment

Capability Type	Ream Naval Base	Sheikh Hasina Naval Base
Vessel Capacity	Medium-sized warships	6 submarines, 8 warships
Maintenance Facilities	Basic repair capabilities	Advanced submarine maintenance
Strategic Value	South China Sea access	Bay of Bengal operations
Development Stage	Early phase	Fully operational

Appendix D: Regional Response Analysis

D.1 Stakeholder Positions

Stakeholder	Primary Concerns	Policy Response	Source
India	Strategic encirclement	Enhanced naval modernization	Hai Loc (2023)
United States	Freedom of navigation	Indo-Pacific strategy	Swaine (2015)
ASEAN nations	Maritime sovereignty	Multilateral engagement	Morton (2016)
Bangladesh	Economic development	Strategic Partnership	Funaiole et al. (2023)

D.2 Security Implications Matrix

Aspect	Regional Impact	Global Impact	Source
Naval Balance	Shift in power dynamics	Enhanced Chinese presence	Williams (2023)
Trade Routes	New shipping patterns	Alternative supply chains	Zhang & Smith (2024)
Military Cooperation	Increased partnerships	Strategic realignment	Badawi (2024)



Appendix E: Economic Implications Assessment

F.1 Investment Patterns (2015-2024)

Region	Infrastructure Investment	Strategic Value	Source
South Asia	High	Critical	Butt & Siddiqui (2021)
Southeast Asia	Medium	Significant	Morton (2016)
East Africa	Medium	Emerging	Badawi (2024)

F.2 Trade Route Impact Analysis

Route	Strategic Importance	Economic Value	Security Challenges
Malacca Strait	Critical	Very High	Significant
Bay of Bengal	High	High	Moderate
Arabian Sea	Significant	Medium	High

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Competing for Influence: EU-China Strategic Engagement in the Western Balkans

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Abstract

The European Union (EU) has significant historical, political, economic, and cultural ties with the Western Balkan states. Integrating the Western Balkan states into the EU is crucial for the region and the EU, strengthening European security as regional developments directly impact the EU. Unlike China, which views the Western Balkans as an economic opportunity, the EU prioritizes democratic governance, the rule of law, and reform-linked financial aid. However, China's influence in the region affects not only the EU's ability to shape policies and governance, but also the approaches and performance of regional and non-regional actors (like the EU, the US, and Russia). This paper examines the competing agendas of the EU and China in the Western Balkans, highlighting how their differing approaches create policy dilemmas for the region's states.

Keywords: EU, China, Western Balkans, foreign influences, European integration.

Introduction

The Western Balkan region (Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and North Macedonia) has become a significant focus for external actors, like the EU, the US, Russia, and China. Each actor has distinct, yet sometimes overlapping, agendas driven by strategic, political, and economic interests. The Western Balkan states hold strategic significance for actors regarding their geographical location, which provides an important connection between Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. In case of China, to develop and strengthen its position in the region, Beijing uses a global project like the New Silk Road Initiative or Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) focusing on appealing and vital projects for the region's countries, such as energy, infrastructure, and socio-cultural spheres, which represents a “comprehensive approach to regional security that seeks to engage a region through multiple vectors as part of an overarching security strategy to advance China's power and influence”.²

This study has used a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data, including academic literature, media reports, and government publications, with quantitative data on investment flows. The comparative analysis of China's and the EU's presence in the Western Balkans and case studies of each Western Balkan state will offer a comprehensive assessment of the extent and limitations of external influences in

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² Freeman, Carla P. “China's ‘regionalism foreign policy’ and China-India relations in South Asia.” *Contemporary Politics* 24, no. 1 (December 19, 2017): 81–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2017.1408168>.



the region. The article aims to answer the research question: How do the EU's and China's strategies in the Western Balkans differ? In this regard, understanding foreign actors' policies toward the Western Balkans is crucial for identifying why this region holds such important significance for the EU and China. The main argument is that while the EU's engagement in the Western Balkans prioritizes long-term political reforms and democratic governance, China's influence is primarily driven by vast infrastructure investments. This contrasting approach creates a competitive dynamic that challenges the region to integrate into the EU and may shift regional alignments towards alternative economic partnerships.

The literature review explores the motivations, strategies and impacts of the EU and China in the Western Balkans, highlighting the complexities of their involvement. Scholarly debates on the Western Balkans' geopolitical landscape highlight the competing influences of foreign actors, particularly the EU, the US, China, and Russia.³ The EU's engagement with the Western Balkans is based on conditionality mechanisms through adopting the rule of law and democratic reforms in exchange for financial assistance and eventual EU membership.⁴ However, on one hand, some scholars argue that the EU's conditionality-based engagement has led to significant democratic and economic reforms;⁵ while others critics note “enlargement fatigue” within the EU and frustration among Western Balkan states over the slow accession process.⁶

While the EU's involvement in the region is rooted in its enlargement policy, emphasizing political stability, economic reform, and democratic governance,⁷ China's engagement is strategic and economic, prioritizing investment projects and infrastructure

³ Zeneli, V. (2023) Chinese Influence in the Western Balkans and Its Impact on the Region's European Union Integration Process, retrieved from <https://www.iwm.at/blog/chinese-influence-in-the-western-balkans-and-its-impact-on-the-regions-european-union> Accessed 20 June 2024; Mahmutaj, N. (2023). Russian Government Policy in the Western Balkans. In: Mihr, A., Sorbello, P., Weiffen, B. (eds) *Securitization and Democracy in Eurasia*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-16659-4_8

⁴ Schimmelfennig, F., & Scholtz, H. (2010). Legacies and leverage: eu political conditionality and democracy promotion in historical perspective. *Europe Asia Studies*, 62(3), 443–460. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668131003647820>

⁵ Szolucha, A. (2010). The EU and ‘Enlargement Fatigue’: Why Has the European Union Not Been Able to Counter ‘Enlargement Fatigue’? *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 6(1), 107–122. <https://doi.org/10.30950/jcer.v6i1.124>.

⁶ Elezi, G. (2024, April 17). Dealing with “enlargement fatigue” to avoid “patience fatigue” - European Policy Centre. European Policy Centre. <https://cep.org.rs/en/publications/dealing-with-enlargement-fatigue-to-avoid-patience-fatigue/>; Timofeev, I. (2023) The Chinese View of the World: Is a Non-Zero-Sum Game Possible?, retrieved from <https://valdaicclub.com/a/highlights/the-chinese-view-of-the-world-is-a-non-zero-sum/> Accessed 20 June 2024.

⁷ Schimmelfennig, F., & Scholtz, H. (2010). Legacies and leverage: eu political conditionality and democracy promotion in historical perspective. *Europe Asia Studies*, 62(3), 443–460. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668131003647820>



development under the BRI project, focusing on large-scale infrastructure investments, trade agreements, and strategic partnerships in the Western Balkans.⁸ Through the BRI and the 14+1 format (formerly 17+1), China has expanded its presence in the Western Balkans, funding projects such as highways, railways, etc. Moreover, some scholars argue that China does not impose political or governance conditions on its investments, unlike the EU, making it an attractive partner for some Western Balkan governments that seek fast-track economic growth without political requirements.⁹

From a theoretical perspective, the EU-China dynamic in the Western Balkans aligns with foreign influence, which examines how external actors shape the domestic policies of smaller states through economic, political, and cultural tools. Also, studies on soft power suggest that while the EU relies on institutional integration and governance reforms, China exerts influence through economic interdependence and elite-level diplomacy.¹⁰ Additionally, scholars analyse how Western Balkan states navigate these competing influences, often adopting a pragmatic, multi-vector foreign policy to extract benefits from both sides, like in the case of Serbia.¹¹ The research contributes to understanding the current strategic involvement of the EU and China and their different approaches towards the Western Balkans.

1. EU's agenda in the Western Balkans

After the fall of communist regimes in the 1990s, following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the Western Balkan states have made efforts to integrate and strengthen their position in Euro-Atlantic structures (NATO and EU). However, the EU's engagement in the Western Balkans is first motivated by the desire to ensure long-term stability by promoting democratic governance and fostering economic and social development. This approach is part of the EU's enlargement policy and strategy to integrate the Western Balkan states into the European framework. Concretely, to achieve this objective, the EU has provided various programs aimed at implementing reforms and strengthening democratic institutions and the

⁸ Zeneli, V. (2023) Chinese Influence in the Western Balkans and Its Impact on the Region's European Union Integration Process, retrieved from <https://www.iwm.at/blog/chinese-influence-in-the-western-balkans-and-its-impact-on-the-regions-european-union> Accessed 20 June 2024; Liu, L. (2021) Beyond the status quo and revisionism: an analysis of the role of China and the approaches of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to the global order. *Asian Journal of Political Science*: 29/1, 88-109.

⁹ Vangeli, A., & Pavličević, D. (2019). Introduction: New perspectives on China – Central and Eastern Europe relations. *Asia Europe Journal*, 17(4), 361–368. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-019-00560-4>

¹⁰ Zhongping, F., & Huang, J. (2014). China's Strategic Partnership Diplomacy: Engaging with a Changing World. ESPO Working Paper 8.

¹¹ Mahmutaj, N. (2023). Russian Government Policy in the Western Balkans. In: Mihr, A., Sorbello, P., Weiffen, B. (eds) *Securitization and Democracy in Eurasia*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-16659-4_8



rule of law. Notably, the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP)¹², initiated in June 1999 and strengthened at the Thessaloniki Summit in June 2003, took over elements of the accession process. The SAP sets out the foundation for integrating the region into the EU with a focus on common political and economic goals, although progress evaluation is based on countries' own merits. In this context, another initiative is the Berlin Process, initiated in 2014 to utilise the potential of increased regional cooperation and connectivity in the Western Balkans and bring concrete benefits to the regional citizens. Offering a wide range of projects to increase connectivity and cooperation in the region, as well as good neighbourly relations and interpersonal relationships, while subsequently supporting the EU integration of the region.¹³ These initiatives support governance reforms, anti-corruption measures, and judicial independence in the Western Balkan countries.

The realisation of these reforms is supported financially by the main program, Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), as a key financial tool of the EU's strategy for facilitating infrastructure projects, economic reforms, and capacity building in the Western Balkan region. Financial help is a key part of the economy and infrastructure in reducing gaps between the EU members and the Western Balkans. Above all, the EU has been the largest provider and supporter of financial and development assistance in the region. During the 2007-2013 period, the IPA was allocated a budget of €11.5 billion.¹⁴ Its successor, IPA II, received a budget of €12.8 billion for the 2014-2020 period.¹⁵ Also, for the multiannual financial framework covering 2024-2027, the budgetary allocations for IPA III have been set at €14.162 billion¹⁶ (including Turkey as an EU candidate country). Overall, the IPA III budget is for research, innovation, sustainable development, and also addressing key issues and challenges such as climate change and regional security. Hence, one key area of EU focus has been infrastructure development. The EU initiative, the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF), has funded many projects in transport, energy and digital infrastructure. For instance, the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) aims to connect the Western Balkan region

¹² Stabilisation and Association Process, retrieved from https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/glossary/stabilisation-and-association-process_en Accessed 20 June 2024.

¹³ Berlin Process, retrieved from <https://www.berlinprocess.de/> Accessed 20 June 2024.

¹⁴ Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, retrieved from https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/overview-instrument-pre-accession-assistance_en Accessed 20 June 2024.

¹⁵ Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, retrieved from https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/overview-instrument-pre-accession-assistance_en Accessed 20 June 2024.

¹⁶ Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, retrieved from https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/overview-instrument-pre-accession-assistance_en Accessed 20 June 2024.



to the EU's core transport network.¹⁷ The Rail Corridor III between North Macedonia and Bulgaria includes an 89 km-long rail section between Kumanovo and the border with Bulgaria as well as another 103 km-long rail section between Kicevo and Skopje, amounting to around € 282 million.¹⁸ In Albania, the rehabilitation of the Tirana-Durres railway (Mediterranean Corridor) line is funded by this initiative, amounting to € 108 million.¹⁹ While the transport Corridor X, a key Pan-European arterial route running north-south, passes through Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, North Macedonia, and Greece, it was completed in 2019, amounting to € 1,4 billion.²⁰ The WBIF is the central mechanism for coordinating EU financial support and prioritizing large-scale infrastructure projects in the Western Balkan region.

Beyond economic investments, the EU is also active in cultural diplomacy to strengthen its regional values and norms. Moreover, EU programmes such as Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, Creative Europe, and COSME help the Western Balkan partners boost their development by creating opportunities for young people and fostering cultural exchange, education, research, and innovation in the region. According to statistics for the period 2015-2022, there were over 2,372 educational projects and over 48,000 people moving (*see the Chart*).²¹ In the same line with the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, the EU allocated nearly €80 billion to support research and innovation in the region between 2014 and 2020.²² In this context, all of these programs and people-to-people connections aim to assist Western Balkan countries in developing infrastructure and strengthening ties with the EU.

¹⁷ Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/infrastructure-and-investment/trans-european-transport-network-ten-t_en

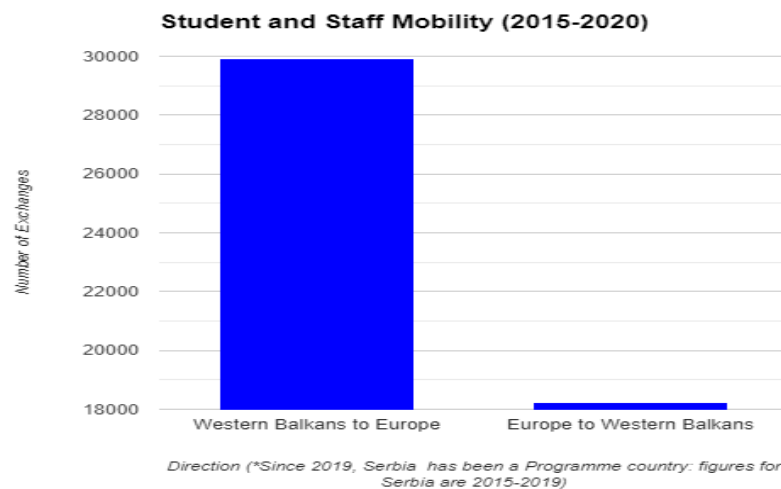
¹⁸ Orient/East-Med Corridor: Construction of Rail Corridor VIII in North Macedonia, Kumanovo - Kriva Palanka Sections, <https://www.wbif.eu/project-detail/PRJ-MKD-TRA-001>

¹⁹ Mediterranean Corridor: Rehabilitation of Tirana - Durrës Railway Line and Construction of New Line to Rinas Branch, <https://www.wbif.eu/project-detail/PRJ-ALB-TRA-002>

²⁰ Corridor X Motorway (E-75 & E-80) in Serbia, <https://www.wbif.eu/project-detail/PRJ-SRB-TRA-005>

²¹ EU-Western Balkan cooperation through Erasmus+, <https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/erasmus-plus/factsheets/regional/westernbalkans-regional-erasmusplus-2020.pdf>

²² Horizon 2000, https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-2020_en#statistics



Although the Western Balkan countries welcome the EU investments, there is growing criticism in terms of the accession process in the region's countries. The geopolitical landscape has shifted significantly compared to ten years ago, particularly with Ukraine and Moldova knocking on the European door and becoming candidate states. Also, international issues, considering the war in Ukraine, COVID-19, global warming, economic crises, cybersecurity, and the increased presence of other actors like Russia and China, have diverted the EU's focus, placing the Western Balkans lower on its agenda. In light of this, the long ongoing process has fostered frustration among political elites and citizens alike, raising questions about the attainability and desirability of EU membership. For instance, the Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama stated in December 2017, *"Russia and China have many things to offer. Russia can give you power and energy for the rest of your life if you give up the rule of law. It is not quite uninteresting...if the EU will not run to catch us, believe me, many multi-problems can restart and then it will be much more costly to marry us later"*.²³ Similarly, Serbia's Europe minister Tanja Miscevic remarked the EU's "lack of momentum" in integrating the Western Balkans, which has tarnished the bloc's reputation in the region.²⁴ The slow EU accession process has caused enlargement fatigue within the Union and has led to uncertainty and disillusionment in the Western Balkans. This has not only created an "opportunity" for the EU to reinvigorate its enlargement policy, but has also created an opportunity for other geopolitical actors, particularly China, to use this limited timeframe to increase their influence and presence in the

²³ "EU must 'marry' Western Balkans quickly to avoid new risks – Albania PM", Euractiv, (December 2017) // <https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/eu-must-marry-western-balkans-quickly-to-avoid-new-risks-albania-pm/> Accessed 04 September 2024.

²⁴ Minister Miscevic: EU lacked momentum on Balkan enlargement, <https://n1info.rs/english/news/minister-miscevic-eu-lacked-momentum-on-balkan-enlargement/> Accessed 04 September 2024.



region. Thus, the EU's strict conditionality requirements, internal political instability in the EU, and current enlargement resistance among some Member States contribute to the need for a significant new approach to EU membership, both theoretically and practically, that can effectively adapt to shifting international dynamics. In contrast, China's engagement focused on economic cooperation without strong governance or political preconditions may be perceived as more attractive to some Western Balkan states. Unlike the EU's emphasis on democratic reforms, the rule of law, and good governance, China's pragmatic approach could offer a compelling alternative for the Western Balkan states.

2. China and Other Actors in the Western Balkans

The geographical position and resources of the Western Balkans have positioned the region at the centre of attention of other nonregional powers like the US, China, and Russia, which play an important role in establishing the balance of power under the general equilibrium principle in modern international relations. Nowadays, those actors view the economic and political prospects and future of the Western Balkans as their key priorities. However, the EU focuses on establishing democratic institutions and the rule of law, while the US has historically played a leading role in shaping the Western Balkans' post-war trajectory, particularly through security interventions, diplomatic engagement, and NATO expansion. For instance, the US was instrumental in NATO's military interventions in wars in Bosnia (1995) and Kosovo (1999), which shaped the region's post-Yugoslav security architecture. Since then, the US has actively supported NATO expansion, leading to a concrete step of Albania joining NATO in 2009, Montenegro in 2017, and North Macedonia in 2020, as well as being engaged in the process of normalization of political and economic ties between Serbia and Kosovo. Regarding U.S. policy toward the Balkans, Washington is focused on helping the states of the region cement peace and build stability and prosperity by deepening cooperation and advancing their integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions, including NATO and the EU.²⁵ Important to highlight, the EU and the US remain key partners and both are key security actors through the European Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR)²⁶ and Kosovo Force (KFOR)²⁷ operations in the Western Balkans. While the EU is the leading trade partner and has strong

²⁵Stability and Security in the Western Balkans: Assessing U.S. Policy, <https://www.congress.gov/118/chr/CHRG-118hhrg53237/CHRG-118hhrg53237.pdf> Accessed 05 March 2025.

²⁶ European Union Force, <https://www.euforbih.org/>

²⁷ Kosovo Force, <https://jfcnaples.nato.int/kfor>



institutional ties with all six countries through its accession policy, the US retains significant diplomatic influence.

In contrast, Russia, as a traditional actor in the Western Balkans, has refused to recognize Kosovo as an independent state, underscoring its enduring role in regional geopolitics and aligning with its broader foreign policy goal of countering Western influence and preventing further EU enlargement, and strongly NATO expansion.²⁸ Using its historical, religious, and economic ties, Russia's influence is strongest in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republika Srpska). The Kremlin and Belgrade share Slavic brotherhood and Orthodox Christian values, fortifying their ties. Moscow has also consistently supported Serbia on key international issues, most notably blocking Kosovo's recognition at the UN. This has reinforced Serbia's balancing act between EU accession aspirations and close ties with Russia. There is no doubt that Belgrade, under this Russian presence and influence, has recently emphasized its foreign policy based on two key vectors, i.e "Euro-Russian Serbia". The clarification of this two-vector Euro-Russian policy by Serbia can be seen from the visits of senior leaders of the Serbian and Russian governments, where such visits at a high state-level consolidate the cooperation between Belgrade and Moscow, as well as cooperation in the political, and diplomatic, economic, commercial, cultural, and spiritual fields. Regarding Belgrade's policy towards Brussels, Serbia has hesitated to take any step that would harm its EU accession prospects or openly distance itself from the EU's general foreign policy.²⁹

At the same time, Russia exerts leverage through energy exports, particularly through Gazprom's investments in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. For instance, the new gas project in Serbia, the agreement for which was signed in 2017 between Russia's largest company, Gazprom, and that of Serbia, YugoRosgaz; further, the TurkStream pipeline, which runs through Serbia, increases regional dependence on Russian energy.³⁰ Moreover, the Kremlin supports nationalist movements and Eurosceptic narratives in the region, like in Republika Srpska, where Milorad Dodik's pro-Russian stance has hindered Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU and NATO ambitions. While Russia's relationship with other Western

²⁸ Timofeev, I.(2023) The Chinese View of the World: Is a Non-Zero-Sum Game Possible?, retrieved from <https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/the-chinese-view-of-the-world-is-a-non-zero-sum/> Accessed 20 June 2024.

²⁹ Mahmutaj, N. (2023). Russian Government Policy in the Western Balkans. In: Mihr, A., Sorbello, P., Weiffen, B. (eds) *Securitization and Democracy in Eurasia*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-16659-4_8

³⁰ Infrastructure investment in the Western Balkans, <https://wiiw.ac.at/infrastructure-investment-in-the-western-balkans-a-first-analysis-dlp-4621.pdf> /Accessed 20 June 2024.



Balkan states, particularly Albania and Montenegro, is already strained due to their political stance aligned with the EU. Notably, the relationship between Albania and Russia is limited, since one of the main reasons is that the main official documents between the states, the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1995, have not yet been ratified.³¹ Meanwhile, after the 2022 Ukraine war, the Western Balkan countries have emerged as a frontline in Russia's geopolitical confrontation with the West. This has again put the Western Balkans on the spot, pushing their governments to take a clear stance towards their historical ally. While the EU has tried to give a new methodology to the enlargement process and has reinforced its presence in the region; Russia continues to have its allies; for instance, a large majority of Serbian citizens in particular continue to consider the Kremlin to be their true ally, despite the EU being Serbia's major financial supporter.³²

However, China has strategically strengthened its influence in the Western Balkan region through two main initiatives: the Belt and Road Initiative and the 17+1 format (now referred to as the 14+1 format). The 17+1 framework, officially known as China-Central and Eastern European Countries Cooperation (or China-CEEC), was launched in 2012 as a cross-regional cooperation platform based on traditional friendship and the participants' shared desire for cooperation and common development. This project is focused on economy and trade, culture, education, youth exchange, agriculture, tourism, science and technology, health, think-tank exchange, and sub-national cooperation.³³ However, the initiative has recently faced setbacks, notably with the withdrawal of the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) in 2022, which perceived it as divisive and redundant.³⁴ The withdrawal was catalysed by a diplomatic rift between Beijing and Vilnius over the opening of a Taiwanese trade office in Lithuania.³⁵ Despite initial enthusiasm, the 14+1 format has struggled to produce significant tangible outcomes, specifically when compared to the BRI. In this regard, the BRI aims to secure economic and strategic footholds in the European continent through substantial

³¹ Mahmutaj, N. (2023) Albanian-Russian relations after the Collapse of Communism. Institute of European Studies, UT.Tirana. ISBN 9789928472120, p. 87-88.

³² Branislav Stanicek and Anna Caprile (2023). Russia and the Western Balkans. Report, European Parliamentary Research Service, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/747096/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)747096_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/747096/EPRS_BRI(2023)747096_EN.pdf). Accessed 07 March 2025.

³³ China-CEEC Cooperation, retrieved from <http://www.china-ceec.org/eng/> Accessed 5 September 2024.

³⁴ Lithuania quits 'divisive' China 17+1 group, retrieved from <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1416061/lithuania-quits-divisive-china-17plus1-group> Accessed 5 September 2024.

³⁵ China condemns opening of Taiwan office in Lithuania as 'egregious act', retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/19/china-condemns-opening-of-taiwan-office-in-lithuania-as-egregious-act> Accessed 5 September 2024.



infrastructure investments and the pursuit of bilateral relations with each state in the Western Balkans. Despite its geographical distance, Beijing's involvement in the region is multifaceted, combining economic, political, and strategic motivations. China's BRI project has strengthened its regional cooperation across the world, transforming China into an economic powerhouse through governance and the implementation of infrastructure works.³⁶ The BRI serves as an instrument of international governance and regional engagement.

In recent years, China has heavily invested in infrastructure projects in the Western Balkans, including highways, railways, energy plants, and ports. According to the data of the Balkan Network of Investigative Journalism (BIRN),³⁷ Serbia hosts the most Chinese projects, with 61 projects amounting to €19 billion. Bosnia-Herzegovina follows with 29 projects amounting to €5 billion, and North Macedonia has 15 projects worth €654 million. Other countries in the region, such as Montenegro and Albania, have fewer projects, 9 projects amounting to €2.5 billion in Montenegro, and 8 projects amounting to €650 million in Albania. Notably, Kosovo has no Chinese project due to Beijing's non-recognition as an independent state. In this background, from 2009-2021, China invested in 122 projects in the Western Balkans, focusing on transport infrastructure, energy, and technology. Huge investments include a planned expansion of copper mining, as demand for the metal in Serbia, valued at 3.8 billion dollars;³⁸ and a steam injection oil project in Albania's Patos-Marinza field by the Chinese-owned Bankers Petroleum Company.³⁹ Some of the notable projects in the region include the 1.5-kilometre-long Pupin Bridge in Belgrade, which crosses the Danube River at \$220 million; the Belgrade-Bar highway in Montenegro, valued at \$1 billion. In North Macedonia, the Chinese company Sinohydro, with the support of Chinese loans, completed a section of Corridor 10 from Miladinovci to Shtip and constructed the highway portion along Corridor 8. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chinese companies have signed multiple contracts with Republika Srpska authorities for the construction of highways such as Banja Luka-Prijedor Novi Grad, Banja Luka-Mlinista, Brcko-Bijelina, and Vukosavlje-Brcko. Moreover, Chinese

³⁶ Liu, L. (2021) Beyond the status quo and revisionism: an analysis of the role of China and the approaches of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to the global order. *Asian Journal of Political Science*: 29/1, 88-109.

³⁷ China in Balkan, retrieved from <https://china.balkaninsight.com/> Accessed 20 June 2024.

³⁸ China's Zijin Mulls \$3.8 Billion Expansion of Serbia Copper Mine, retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-08-28/china-s-zijin-mulls-3-8-billion-expansion-of-serbia-copper-mine#xj4y7vzkg> Accessed 20 June 2024.

³⁹ CEO of Bankers Petroleum Albania: Ambitious project to transform Patos-Marinza field, retrieved from <https://euronews.al/en/ceo-of-bankers-petroleum-albania-ambitious-project-to-transform-patos-marinza-field/> Accessed 20 June 2024.



companies are involved in the reconstruction of the tram system in Sarajevo. These projects highlight China's strategic investments focused on enhancing regional connectivity and promoting economic development in the Western Balkans. It's important to recognize that China's infrastructure initiatives in this region are not isolated; they are strategically connected to the broader goals of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Beyond economic investments, China is also active in cultural diplomacy to strengthen friendly relations with other nations. Thus, the Confucius Institute, a government-funded organisation promoting Chinese culture and language, exemplifies Beijing's strategy to build an efficient communications infrastructure through government-run institutions.⁴⁰ The first Confucius Institute in the region was opened in Belgrade in 2006.⁴¹ China's cultural presence in the Western Balkans is the most prominent in Serbia, where the recent establishment of Chinese language schools and two Confucius Institutes in Belgrade and Novi Sad University reflects this. China has also established Confucius Institutes in North Macedonia, Albania, and Serbia. As a result, cooperation between some Macedonian universities, such as the Saints Cyril and Methodius University or the Goce Delchev University, and in Albania, the Confucius Institute has been operating since 2013. Institutes regularly organise events promoting the Chinese language, culture, history, and politics.

Furthermore, Republika Srpska has recently sought to include the Chinese language in various educational curricula. This shows that, although it has not produced many results yet, there is some degree of desire on the part of the Chinese to expand their cultural influence in the Western Balkans. Chinese social and cultural influence has also grown as a result of the visa liberalisation that has occurred in the Western Balkan states, which is implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. However, despite the growing economic presence, young people in the Western Balkans view China as a distant country with limited cultural appeal, preferring to migrate to Western Europe. Regarding this, cultural and social ties between the EU and the Balkans are stronger than those with China. However, it is difficult to separate China's soft-power strategy in the Western Balkans from the appeal of China's economic achievements and the economic engagement that it offers.

⁴⁰ Zhou, Y. & Luk, S. (2016) Establishing Confucius Institutes: a tool for promoting China's soft power?, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 25:100, 628-642, DOI: 10.1080/10670564.2015.1132961

⁴¹ China's strategic interests in the Western Balkans, retrieved from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733558/EPRS_BRI\(2022\)733558_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733558/EPRS_BRI(2022)733558_EN.pdf) Accessed 20 June 2024.



As China increases investments further, Beijing is more likely to position itself as an important player in the region, as the EU traditionally has been, and this will have real implications; for instance, increasing Chinese investments in the Western Balkans could therefore result in Beijing displacing the Brussels and curtailing or at least restraining its activities in the region, or other players like Russia.⁴² In the case of Russia, while Moscow remains a significant actor in the Western Balkans, its influence may be overshadowed by Beijing's increasing presence under BRI, which may limit Moscow's ability to operate in the region. Even though China and Russia have sought to align their mutual interests in much of the post-communist space through the 'docking' of the BRI and the Russian-led economic organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, no such agreement or condominium exists between Beijing and Moscow⁴³ to date. To sum up, as Chinese investment grows, the balance of power between China and other players (EU, US, and Russia) in the Western Balkans is likely to shift, since China's BRI and other projects could reduce the influence of other players and limit their ability to pursue their interests. Thus, the competition between these players shapes the Western Balkans' political, economic, and security landscape. The region's future depends on whether the EU can accelerate its enlargement process and whether local governments can balance economic opportunities with strategic alignment choices.

Remarks and Conclusion

Strategic competition in the Western Balkans is defined by the overlapping interests of other external actors, like the EU, the US, China, and Russia. As analysed above, the external players represent distinct economic and political approaches and engagement. The objectives and approaches of the EU and China differ significantly and create a complex landscape in the Western Balkan region. The EU's approach is deeply rooted in its values-based foreign policy, which focuses on democratic reforms, political stability and adherence to the rule of law. In contrast, China's approach prioritises economic cooperation and infrastructure development under its BRI. Unlike the EU, China does not impose political or governance conditions on its investments. It follows a policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of the states it engages with, prioritising state sovereignty and maintaining strategic partnerships. Strategic

⁴² Harper, T. (2019). "China's Eurasia: The Belt and Road Initiative and the creation of a new Eurasian power". *The Chinese Journal of Global Governance* 5, no. 2: 99–121. doi:10.1163/23525207-12340039

⁴³ Nadège, R. (2019). "A China–Russia Condominium Over Eurasia," *Survival* 61, no. 1: 7–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2019.1568043>; Mahmutaj, N. (2023). *The New Geopolitical Order in the Black Sea: Russia's Role in the Area*. *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*. 22(3), 45-58.



partnerships have thus become a leading diplomatic tool for Beijing in defence of its political system. In nearly every strategic partnership document, concepts such as non-interference in domestic affairs, different understandings of democracy and human rights, or different development paths are explicitly stated.⁴⁴

However, if Brussels wants to achieve its geopolitical goals in the region, it will have to understand the nature of the competition with China.⁴⁵ Chinese investment can benefit Europe only if China respects European interests, especially environmental protection, human rights, and the rule of law. Moreover, the EU remains sceptical of China's growing influence in the Balkans.⁴⁶ Western policymakers need to address the development gap between the region and the EU through initiatives such as targeted energy and infrastructure investment plans, sectoral integration frameworks, and, importantly, the first loading of EU law in the membership process.⁴⁷ Harmonising European interests with China's strategic ambitions seems unlikely in a multipolar world. Nowadays, both the EU and China, as major international actors, are strong competitors for global dominance. The current world remains confrontational, and the level of rivalry is likely to increase. China is building a new type of international relations, rejecting the zero-sum game, in which the success of some is achieved at the expense of others.⁴⁸

The dual presence of the EU and China in the Western Balkans presents the region with both opportunities and challenges, reflecting their distinct agendas. While the EU's strategy remains rooted in its normative power approach, emphasizing democratic governance, rule of law, and long-term stability, China provides fast-tracked infrastructure investments under the BRI project without imposing political or governance conditions. Moreover, other players like the US and Russia further shape the geopolitical dynamics. The USA's strategic presence, particularly through NATO expansion, ensures regional stability and does not directly replace

⁴⁴ Zhongping, F. and Jing, H. (2014). China's strategic partnership diplomacy: engaging with a changing world." ESPO Working Paper 8.

https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/181324/China%E2%80%99s%20strategic%20partnership%20diplomacy_%20engaging%20with%20a%20changing%20world%20.pdf.

⁴⁵ Shopov V. (2022) Mapping China's Rise in the Western Balkans, European Council on Foreign Relations, March 2022.

⁴⁶ Robinson, W. (2020). The Trojan Dragon Comes to the Balkans. The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, 44(2), 29–44. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48599308>

⁴⁷ Shopov, V. (2021) Decade of patience: How China became a power in the Western Balkans, The European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), retrieved from <https://ecfr.eu/publication/decade-of-patience-how-china-became-a-power-in-the-western-balkans/> Accessed 20 June 2024.

⁴⁸ Timofeev, I.(2023) The Chinese View of the World: Is a Non-Zero-Sum Game Possible?, retrieved from <https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/the-chinese-view-of-the-world-is-a-non-zero-sum/> Accessed 20 June 2024.



the EU's long-term integration agenda. On the other hand, Russia has sought to maintain influence in the region by using historical, cultural, and religious ties, advocating for pan-Slavic solidarity, and opposing NATO expansion. In this regard, Western Balkan states have a multi-actor presence that must navigate between competing foreign interests, balancing economic opportunities with broader geopolitical alignments. The clashing agendas of these external influences place Western Balkan states in a position of strategic vagueness.

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Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti'nin Uluslararası Enerji Politikalarının Küresel Enerji Güvenliğine Etkisi¹

Gizem Ay Şeker²

Özet

Dünyanın en büyük ekonomilerinden olan Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti'nin enerji açığı ekonomik büyümesine eşit veya onu aşan oranlarda artarken, enerji güvenliği politika yapımcıları ve uluslararası toplum arasında bir alarma neden olmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Çin'in enerji arz güvenliğini nasıl sağladığını ve küresel enerji güvenliğini nasıl etkilediğini incelemektedir. Çin, artan enerji talebini karşılamada ciddi zorluklarla karşı karşıya kalmasına rağmen, Kuşak Yol Girişimi gibi geliştirildiği proje ve dış politika stratejileri ile kaynak arama, çeşitlendirme ve talep coğrafyasına güvenli ulaştırma hedeflerinde başarı sağlamaktadır. Çin, uluslararası enerji piyasasında ithalat ve ihracat oranları sebebiyle direkt etkide bulunmaktadır. Çin'in sürdürülebilir ekonomik kalkınmasının devam edebilmesi için enerji arz güvenliğini, ulusal güvenliği ve iktisadi güvenliğini birlikte değerlendirmektedir. Bu çalışmada veriler nitel araştırma yöntemi olan doküman analizi metodu kullanılarak elde edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çin, Enerji Jeopolitiği, Enerji Arz Güvenliği, Enerji Talep Güvenliği, Kuşak Yol Girişimi.

The Impact of International Energy Policies of the People's Republic of China on Global Energy Security

Abstract

While the energy deficit of the People's Republic of China, one of the world's largest economies, is increasing at rates equal to or exceeding its economic growth, energy security is causing alarm among policymakers and the international community. The purpose of this study is to examine how China ensures energy supply security and how it affects global energy security. Although China faces serious difficulties in meeting the increasing energy demand, it has achieved success in its goals of resource search, diversification, and safe transportation to the demand geography with the projects and foreign policy strategies it has developed, such as the Belt Road Initiative. China has a direct impact on the international energy market due to import and export rates. It evaluates energy supply security, national security, and economic security together for China's sustainable economic development to continue. In this study, data was obtained using the document analysis method, which is a qualitative research method.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative, China, Demand Security, Energy Geopolitics, Energy Supply Security

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Giriş

Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti, 1949 yılında Mao Zedong tarafından kurulmuş ve yaklaşık 30 yıl boyunca sosyalist bir ideoloji ile yönetilmiştir. 1960'lı yıllarda küresel bir güç, 1970'li yıllarda Birleşmiş Milletlerin daimî beş üyesinden biri, 1990'lı yıllarda ise başarılı ekonomik kalkınma ve dünya sahnesinde gördüğümüz Çin; bugün 1,4 milyar nüfusu ile dünyanın ikinci büyük ekonomisi olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Çin ekonomisinin ulusal ve küresel enerji kaynakları üzerinde önemli etkileri vardır. Kuruluşunun ilk yıllarında enerji sektörlerinin tümündeki vurgu, endüstride reform yapılmasına ve iç talebin karşılanmasıyla daha verimli hale getirilmesine odaklanılmıştır. Bu dönemde ana dış politika endişesi, yabancı yatırımı sağlamaktır. Çin'in enerji gelişimini yönlendiren bütünleşmiş bir politika ortaya konulamamıştır. Sektörde benimsenen politikalar birbirinden kopuk, genellikle birden fazla, birbirini tamamlamayan hedeflere sabitlenmiş ve ekonomik kaygılar pahasına siyasi amaçlara ulaşmak için tasarlanmıştır. Çin ekonomik reformlarının deneysel, kademeli olduğu yaygın olarak kabul edilmektedir.³

1978 yılı itibari ile Mao Zedong'un yerine geçen Deng Xiaoping, Zedong'un ekonomik politikalarının ideolojik baskı altında kalmasını ve Çin'in dünyadan kendini tecrit etme politikalarının ekonomik verimliliğinin önüne geçtiğini savunarak, tasarladığı yenileşme stratejisi ve modernleşme reformları uygulamaya koymuştur. Bu reformlar; Robert Keohane ve Joseph Nye'nin teorik çerçevesini oluşturduğu neoliberal kurumsalcılığın; piyasa mekanizmasının güçlendirilmesi, devletin ekonomik aktivitelerde geri planda kalmasının gerektiğini, uluslararası şirketlerin ana aktör olarak ortaya çıkması, dış dünyaya açılım, yabancı sermayenin ülkeye girişi, uluslararası örgütlerin devletlerarası iş birliği ve diyalogu artıracığı gibi prensiplere dayanmıştır. Çin, ilk olarak iktisadi kalkınmasının merkezine yüksek üretim ve ihracata dayalı ekonomik politikaları yerleştirmiştir. Ucuz iş gücü ve düşük maliyetli üretim bu politikaların daha da gelişmesine sebebiyet vermiştir. Deng, '*dereyi geçerken taşları ayağınla yoklayarak*' söylemindeki gibi temkinli politikalar uygulayarak, IMF ve Dünya Bankası tarafından Washington Uzlaşısı sonrasında önerilen ani özelleştirme içeren ekonomik politikaları reddetmiş⁴, '*Çin Tarzı Sosyalizm*' olarak adlandırdığı aşamalı neoliberal politikalar

³Yi-Chong Xu, "China's Energy Security", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 60, sy. 2 (2006):265-286.

⁴M. Hart Lansberg ve Paul Burkett, *China and Socialism: Market Reforms and Class Struggle* (New York, Monthly Review, 2004), 56.



ile yıllık büyümesini %10 civarına çıkarmayı başarmıştır.⁵ Deng, uyguladığı politikaların olumlu etkilerini gördükten sonra ülkenin güneyindeki bir gezisinde ‘*zenginleşmek muhteşem*’ ve ‘*fare yakalandıktan sonra kedi beyazmış ya da siyahmış ne fark eder*’ ifadelerini kullanarak iktisadi gelişiminin ideolojik prensiplerin önünde olduğu vurgusunu yapmıştır.⁶ Diğer taraftan yenilikçi lider Xiaoping, stratejilerinin ekonomik kalkınmayla birlikte halk refahının artması ve ordunun modernizasyonu ile ulusal güvenliğinin tam anlamıyla sağlanmasının Çin komünist rejimin de devamını sağlayacak ana unsur olarak arz etmiştir.

Çin, kendisine kuruluşunun 100. yıl dönümüne kadar üç önemli hedef belirlemiştir. Bunlardan birincisi ve önemlisi; güçlü ekonominin sağlanmasıdır. İkincisi uluslararası arenada önemli gündem başlıklarından olan Tayvan sorunu çözmek ve bölgesel rekabette Asya’da güç lideri olmaktır. Üçüncüsü ve son adımı ise ekonomik ve siyasi gücünü ileriye götürerek dünya süper gücü olmaktır. Bu üç idealin gerçekleşmesi, üretime dayalı sürdürülebilir ekonomik refahın sağlanmasını mecbur kılmıştır.⁷ Artan üretim faaliyetleri Çin’in enerji arzının yükselmesine sebep olmuştur. Çin enerji bağımlılığı sebebiyle dünyanın her yerinde enerji diyalogunu ve iş birliğini derinleştirmek istemektedir. Bu bağlamda çok sayıda stratejik plan ve uluslararası iş birliğini artıracak projeler ortaya koymuştur. Günümüz Çin Devlet Başkanı Xi Jinping tarafından açıklanan ve beş yıllık kalkınma planlarına ışık tutan ‘Enerji Devrimi’, ‘Made in China 2025’ ve ‘Kuşak Yol Girişimi’ buna örnek verilebilir. Çin, sermaye hareketini kontrol ederek hem iç piyasasına zarar veren rekabetçilere karşı kendini koruyan hem de elde ettiği güç ile küresel ölçekte hegemon olmayı amaçlayan neo-merkantalist bir politika izlemektedir. Bu doğrultuda Çin, enerji arz güvenliğini sağlamayı ve enerji kaynak çeşitliliğini dış politikasının temeline yerleştirmiştir. Dünya enerji piyasasındaki yüksek enerji ithalat ve ihracat oranları küresel enerji güvenliği ve fiyat istikrarının sağlanması için direkt etkilidir.

Bu makale, Çin’in artan enerji talebinin küresel etkilerini ve geliştirilen stratejileri açıklayacaktır. Çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde enerji güvenliği nedir? Çin enerji arz güvenliğini nasıl sağlamaktadır? Çin’in enerji arz güvenliğini sağlamadaki en önemli uluslararası problemleri nelerdir? Sorularının cevapları detaylandırılarak açıklanacaktır. Üçüncü bölümde ise, Çin’in büyük enerji projelerinin küresel etkileri ve enerji arz güvenliğinin uluslararası

⁵Lan Cao, “Chinese Privatization: Between Plan and Market”, Law and Contemporary Problems, 63, sy. 4 (2000):30.

⁶David Harvey, Neoliberalizmin Kısa Tarihi, çev.Aylin Onocak, (İstanbul: Sel Yayıncılık, 2015).

⁷R. Kutay Karaca, “Çin’in Değişen Enerji Stratejisinin Dış Politikasına Etkileri (1190- 2010)”, *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 9, sy. 33 (Bahar 2012): 95.



sonuçlarından bahsedilecektir. Sonuç bölümünde ise bölümlerde verilen Çin'in enerji arz güvenliğinin küresel enerji güvenliğine etkisinin analizi yapılmıştır.

1. Çin'in Enerji Güvenliğine Yaklaşımı

Enerji güvenliği; enerjiyi iletim, dağıtım sistemlerinden başlayarak olası terör saldırılarından, çatışmalardan ve doğal afetlerden koruyarak, adil, temiz, güvenilir, akılcı bir yol izleyerek talep coğrafyasına kadar sorunsuz ulaştırılmasıdır.⁸ Enerji güvenliği, en basit haliyle, 'yeterli' ve 'güvenilir' bir enerji arzının 'istikrarlı' bir fiyatla güvence altına alınması anlamına gelir. Birincil enerji, kömür, petrol, gaz, hidro ve diğer yenilenebilir kaynaklardan oluşmaktadır. Birincil enerjinin büyük bir kısmı elektriğe dönüştürülür ve ekonomi ne kadar gelişmişse, elektriğin nihai enerji tüketimindeki oranı o kadar büyük olur.⁹ Dolayısıyla, enerji güvenliği politikası yalnızca birincil enerjiye erişimin güvence altına alınmasıyla ilgili değil, bir dizi faktöre bağlı olan güvenilir nihai enerji arzının güvence altına alınmasıdır. Bu faktörler; ekonomik ve enerji verimliliğini iyileştirmek için piyasa reformları, ulaşım zorluklarının hafifletilmesi, geniş alanlı elektrik kesintilerinin önlenmesi, elektrik santrallerinin ve elektrik şebekelerinin terör saldırılarından korunması ve enerji tasarrufunun sağlanmasıdır.¹⁰

Bir ülke yüksek miktarda petrol ve gaz ithal etmeye başladığında potansiyel rakiplerine karşı siyasi ve askeri savunmasını yükseltmesi gerekmektedir. Ülkelerin petrol ve gaz şirketlerinin çıkarları genellikle ulusal çıkarlarıyla eşittir, yaptıkları şey hükümet politikalarının uygulanması ekonomik çıkarlarının peşinde koşmaktır. Ulusal enerji şirketlerinin nihai amaçları ülkenin güvenlik ve siyasi hedeflerinden farklı değildir. Kuşkusuz yeterli miktarda birincil enerji arzının sağlanması, tüm devletler için önemli bir endişe kaynağıdır. Enerji kaynaklarına kesintisiz erişim, güvenli ulaşım ve göreceli fiyat istikrarı gibi konuları içermektedir. Bu enerji endişelerinin yalnızca güvenlikle ilgili sonuçları olmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda başlı başına bir güvenlik sorunu haline gelmektedir. Çinli politika yapımcıların büyük ilgi ve çabaları yeterli ve güvenilir bir yerel enerji arzı sağlamaya yöneliktir. Bu, enerji sektöründeki başarılı piyasa reformlarına ve enerji tasarrufuna bağlıdır. Dış politikada ise; enerji şirketlerini denizaşırı petrol ve gaz arama ve üretimine erişmeye teşvik etme, küreselleşme adına Çin'in önemli bir oyuncu olarak uluslararası tanınırlık kazanma ve entegre

⁸Necdet Pamir, *Enerjinin İktidarı*, (İstanbul: Hayykitap, 2015), 39.

⁹David Buchan, "The Threat Within: Deregulation and Energy Security", *Survival*, 44, sy.3 (2002):105.

¹⁰Angie Austin, "Energy and Power in China: Domestic Regulation and Foreign Policy", *Foreign Policy Centre*, 2005, <https://fpc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2006/09/448.pdf> (12.02.2024).



olunmuş bir dünyanın parçası olma yönündeki geniş çaplı çabanın ana aktörleri olarak belirlemişlerdir. Yani Çin'in ulusal enerji şirketleri enerji arzını sağlama endişelerinin yanında siyasi ve diplomatik kaygılarla yönlendirilmektedir.¹¹

Çin, yüksek oranlı üretimi sağlamak için; altyapı olanaklarını iyileştirmek, teknolojik gelişimin desteklemek ve enerji sanayi sektörlerini ve kaynaklarını geliştirmek zorundadır. Çin'in, 1990'lardan sonra kendi enerji kaynaklarının yeterli düzeyde ikame edilemediği görülmektedir. Çin'in enerji politikalarını üç periyota ayırmak mümkündür. Birinci periyot kuruluşu 1949'dan 1992 yılına kadar olan kendi kaynaklarının yeterli geldiği dönemdir. İkincisi, 1993-2002 yılları arasındaki arz odaklı enerji kavramının olduğu periyottur. Üçüncüsü ise 2002'den günümüze kadar benimsediği kaynak bulma, kaynak çeşitlendirme ve enerji akışını kontrol edebilme sürecidir. Üretimin artması ile gelen enerji ihtiyacı Çin'i diğer bölgelerden enerji ithalatı yapmak zorunda bırakmıştır. Bu zorunluluk Çin'in iç, dış ve enerji politikalarının küresel bir yapıya kavuşmasına neden olmuştur. Çin'in gerçekleştirdiği başarılı ekonomik kalkınma, enerjiyi ihtiyacın ötesinde bir güvenlik meselesi haline dönüştürmüştür. Dış politikasında önceliği enerji arzını karşılayabilecek kaynak zengini ülkelere vermiştir. Karşılıklı 'kazan kazan' prensibi ile yürütülen ilişkiler Latin Amerika, Orta Asya, Orta Doğu, Afrika bölgelerindeki ülkeler ve Rusya ile gerçekleşmektedir. Çin enerji güvenliğini, iktisadi ve ulusal güvenliği ile bir bütün olarak değerlendirmektedir.¹²

Çin'in enerji güvenliğinin sağlanmasının önemini beş başlıkta kategorize etmek mümkündür; Birincisi, deniz yollarının güvenliğini sağlanması ve küresel ölçekte güçlü Çin Deniz Kuvvetleri için ordu modernizasyonunu gerçekleştirme isteğidir. İkincisi, enerji kaynaklarının çeşitlendirilmesi ve enerjiyi kaynağından sorunsuz elde etmek arzudur. Enerji kaynaklarına sahip ülkelerin siyasi iktidarsızlığa ve çatışma ortamlarına açık oluşu ve enerji yollarının güvenliğinin yeterince sağlanamaması Çin için önemli bir güvenlik problemi olarak görülmektedir. Üçüncüsü, enerji fiyatlarında meydana gelen ani dalgalanmalara karşı savunmasını güçlendirmektir. Dördüncüsü, küresel ısınma ve hava kirliliği ile etkin mücadele etme isteğidir. Beşincisi ise, Güney Çin Denizinde meydana gelen kıta sahanlığı problemleri ve ABD ile yaşanan rekabet durumudur.

¹¹ Peter H. Gries "China Eyes The Hegemon", *Orbis Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 49, sy. 3 (2005):401-412.

¹²R. Kutay Karaca, "Çin'in Değişen Enerji Stratejisinin Dış Politikasına Etkileri (1190- 2010)", *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 9, sy. 33 (Bahar 2012): 94-107.



Çin, dünya toplam enerji tüketiminin %12'sini oluşturması sebebi ile küresel enerji pazarının başlı başına büyük bir oyuncusudur. Bu bağlamda uluslararası enerji piyasasında iyi statüde muamele görmek istemektedir. Dünya enerji kaynaklarını paylaşma ve uluslararası enerji masasında söz sahibi olma 'hakkını' talep etmektedir. Çin'in sahip olduğu bu diplomatik ve siyasi hırslar enerji stratejilerini oluştururken üzerinde durduğu en önemli gerekçelerdir. Çin'in harici enerji stratejilerinin dört özel yönü vardır. Bunlardan birincisi; yakın coğrafyası olan Rusya ve Orta Asya ülkelerinden petrol ithalatını artırmaktır. İkincisi; Orta Doğu, Afrika ve Latin Amerika ile yaptığı ham petrol ithalat oranlarını yükseltmektir. Üçüncüsü; kaynak çeşitliliğini sağlayarak beklenilmeyen enerji akış kesintileri önlemektir. Sonuncusu ise; enerji iş birliğini ikili ve bölgesel düzeyde teşvik etmek ve enerji diyalogunu güçlendirmektir.¹³

Çin'in en büyük ticaret ortağı ve rakibi olan Amerika Birleşik Devletleri (ABD), dünya petrol tüketiminde birinci, üretiminde ise üçüncü sırada gelmektedir. Dünyanın önde gelen petrol şirketleri ABD menşelidir.¹⁴ Bu durum Çin'in enerji kaynaklarına ulaşmada kaynak zengini ülkelerle enerji diyalogu kurmanın beraberinde enerji pazarındaki rekabet sebebi ile enerji güvenlik politikalarını sürekli yenilemesi anlamı taşımaktadır. Çin enerji dış politikasında; yumuşak gücün kullanımı, barışçıl ve uzlaşmacı yaklaşım, kaynak zengini ülkelerin altyapı problemlerinin iyileştirilmesine odaklanmak ve hızlı diplomasi ilkelerini benimsemektedir.

Çin'in Orta Doğu'dan petrol arzını karşılama stratejisi Irak'taki 'teröre karşı savaşın' gölgesinde tasarlanmış olması, ithalatın kaynağı ve ulaşım rotasının, özellikle tedarik alanının güvensiz olduğu düşünüldüğünde, Çin'in enerji güvenliğini etkileyen büyük endişe kaynağı olarak görülmektedir. Hükümet, deniz aşırı enerji kaynaklarına erişimini güvence altına almak ve çeşitlendirmek için, Çinli ulusal enerji şirketlerine 'üç stratejik bölge' listelemiştir. Bunlar; Orta Asya ve Rusya, Orta Doğu ve Kuzey Afrika ve Güney Amerika'dır.

Çin enerjiyi kendisine taşımakta bir takım güvenlik problemleri görmektedir. Bunlardan en önemlisi enerji sevkini sağlayacak boru hatlarının yetersizliğidir. Çin ithal ettiği enerjinin büyük bir kısmını deniz yolu ile kendisine ulaştırmaktadır. Deniz yolu kontrollerinin ABD'nin denetimi altında olması, bu iki büyük rakip devlet arasında olası bir Tayvan sebepli krizin çıkması nedeniyle enerji sevkinin kesintiye uğraması anlamı taşımaktadır. Bu nedenledir ki Çin,

¹³Xu, "China's Energy Security," 271-272.

¹⁴BP Energy, "BP Statical Review of World Energy 68 the edition", *BP Energy Economic*, 2019, <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/business-sites/en/global/corporate/pdfs/energy-economics/statistical-review/bp-stats-review-2019-full-report.pdf> (04.10.2023).



önemli stratejik limanları kendi işletmesi altına alarak enerji sevk güzergahlarını kontrol etmeye çalışmaktadır. Pakistan'ın Gwadar Limanı işletmesi için uyguladığı 'İnci Stratejisi' ve Tayland'ın ortasından geçirmeyi düşündüğü 'Kra Kanalı' projesi bu duruma örnek verilebilir.¹⁵ Çin, yılda 500.000'den fazla geminin geçtiği Malakka Boğazı başta olmak üzere enerji ulaşım koridorlarının güvenliğinden endişe duymaktadır. Çin'in ithal ettiği petrolün büyük bir bölümü tankerler tarafından teslim edilmektedir. Güvenli teslimatların gerçekleşmesinin en önemli şartının, deniz yollarının güvenliğini sağlamak olduğunu bilen Çin'in, Şanghay ve Hürmüz Boğazı arasında 7000 millik deniz yolunu kapsayacak şekilde deniz kapasitesini genişlettiği iddia edilmektedir. Çin 'kıta' savunmasından kıyı ve deniz bölgelerinin 'çevresel' savunmasına odaklanma, petrol ithalatını güvence altına alma ve bölgesel otoritesini güçlendirmenin beraberinde, Asya'daki değişen stratejik güvenlik ortamının kurucu aktörü olmak istemektedir.¹⁶

Çin'in enerji güvenliğini tehdit eden diğer bir husus ise Güney Çin Denizi'nde sınır adaları olan Paracel ve Spratly adaları üzerindeki hâkimiyet tartışmasıdır. Adaların önemini artıran hususlar; çevresinin önemli ve yoğun deniz taşımacılığı rotalarından olması, etrafında büyük enerji rezervi varlığının tahmin edilmesi ve kıymetli balıkçılık kaynaklarının olmasıdır. Çin, adalar çevresindeki mercan resiflerini doldurarak yapay adalar inşa etmektedir. Çin, bu yapay adaları yaklaşık 425.000 km²'lik bir alana yayarak Malakka Boğazı'nda ve Güney Çin Denizi'nde, Japonya ve Güney Kore'ye karşı ekonomik ve stratejik üstünlük kurmaya çalışmaktadır. Çin, bu yapay adalar üzerine havalimanı, askeri üstler ve limanlar inşa ederek bölgeye güvenlik yatırımı yapmaktadır.¹⁷

Çin için enerji pazarlarının istikrarının sağlanması, şeffaf piyasa yapısının temini, enerji fiyatlandırma sisteminde adil olunması, enerji iş birliği ve diyalogunun gelişimi için önem arz etmektedir. Bu nedenledir ki; enerji arz güvenliğinin sağlanması, enerji kaynaklarının çeşitlendirilmesi, olumsuz çevre şartlarının düzenlenmesi elzemdir. Çin'in 2019 yılında yayımladığı Milli Savunma Strateji Kitabı'nda, enerji iş birliği yapılan ülkelerle uzun vadeli dostça ve siyasi ekonomik çatışmaların ötesinde bir ilişki kurulması gerekliliği üzerinde

¹⁵Fuangfa Amponstira, "Analysis of Global Connectivity of Kra Isthmus Canal Vision", *Rajapark Journal*, 14, sy. 33 (2020): 305-306.

¹⁶Christopher B. Pultz, "The PLA and China's Changing Security Environment", *Security Insight*, 2023, https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/si/si_2_1/si_2_1_puc01.pdf (20.01.2024).

¹⁷Ben, Werner, "New Air Bases, Baby Cabbage Key to Chinese Long Term Claims in South China Sea", *U.S. Naval Institute*, 2020, <https://news.usni.org/2020/06/03/new-air-bases-baby-cabbage-key-to-chinese-long-term-claims-on-south-china-sea> (04.07.2023).



durulmuştur.¹⁸ Çin 2015 yılından itibaren Uluslararası Enerji Forumu'nun kurucusu olması sebebiyle uluslararası enerji örgütlerinde kendine söz hakkı bulmuştur. Bilhassa Petrol İthal Eden Ülkeler Örgütü (OPEC) ve Körfez Arap ülkeleriyle uzun süreli enerji iş birliği anlaşmaları vardır. Çin, Şanghay İş Birliği Örgütü ile Orta Asya ülkeleri ile diplomatik ve enerji ilişkilerini geliştirirken, Uygur bölgesine gelebilecek ayrılıkçı hareketleri de önlemeyi amaçlamıştır. FOCAC gibi örgütlerle de Afrika enerji diplomasisini köklendirmektedir.

2. Çin'in Enerji Arzının Küresel Etkileri ve Mega Enerji Projeleri

Çin'in enerji arzının giderek yükselmesinin temel sebebi hızlı gelişen endüstri sektörü ve ekonomik büyümesidir. Çin'in son 20 yıl içerisindeki enerji talep miktarı %6,2 oranında bir artışın olduğu bilinmektedir. Çin'in üretiminin temeline yerleştirdiği enerji madeni olan kömürün talep ettiği miktar dünyanın yarısına denk gelmektedir. Çin, kömürde arz ve talebinde dünyada birinci sıradadır. Bu sebeple dünya kömür pazarının belirleyicisidir. Çin'in yıllık 900 milyon ton kömür ihtiyacı bulunmaktadır. En büyük kömür ithalatçısı ise Endonezya'dır. Çin'in dünyada petrol arzında ikinci, doğalgaz arzında ABD, Rusya ve Avrupa Birliği'nden sonra dördüncü sırada gelmektedir. Araç kullanımı açısından bakıldığında ise dünyanın en fazla araca sahip üçüncü ülkesi konumundadır. Çin uluslararası enerji piyasasında fiyat belirlemede çok büyük etkisi vardır. Çin'in geniş kömür rezervleri bulunmasına rağmen son yıllardaki enerji eğilimleri yenilenebilir enerji kaynaklarına doğru olmuştur.¹⁹

Çin, ABD ve diğer büyük güçler arasında ileri dönemde doğalgaz ve petrol arzında enerji güvenliği adına birçok ikili anlaşma ve müdahalenin olmasının artışı muhtemeldir. Çin'in dünya piyasasındaki enerji ithalat ve ihracat oranları küresel enerji güvenli açısından önemli bir konuma gelmesinde direkt etkilidir. Enerji aldığı ülkelere yaptığı yatırımlar ile kaynak zengini ülkeleri kendine talep bağımlısına dönüştürmüştür.²⁰ Bunların sonucunda Çin'in enerji üzerindeki etkisi ülke sınırları içerisinde kalmayıp diğer ülkelerin dış politikasını etkileyebilecek güçtedir. Çin petrol ihtiyacının 2/3'ünü ithal etmektedir. Dünyanın en fazla CO² yayan ülkesi konumundadır. Çin petrol arzını Rusya, Kazakistan ve Myanmar'dan boru hatları ile karşılamaktadır. İthalatının yarısını ise Orta Doğu bölgesinden gerçekleştirmektedir. Irak yatırımları dikkat çekmektedir. Çin'in 90 günlük petrol stok kapasitesi bulunmaktadır. Rafine edilmiş petrol ürünlerinin ihracatçılığı ham petrol ithalatının en önemli faktörüdür. Çin

¹⁸Lu Hui, "China's National Defense in the New Era", *The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China*, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-07/24/c_138253389.htm(11.05.2023).

¹⁹Hasan G. Özkan, "Çin Enerji Arz Güvenliğinin Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güç Geçiş Teorisi Çerçevesinde Analizi", (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Milli Savunma Üniversitesi, 2020), 140.

²⁰Özkan, "Çin Enerji Arz Güvenliğinin Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güç Geçiş Teorisi Çerçevesinde Analizi," 141.



ihtiyacından fazla petrolü rafine etmektedir. Dünyada petrole en yoğun talep OECD dışı ülkelerden Çin ve Hindistan'dan gelmektedir. Çin'in enerji arzındaki güvenlik yaklaşımları şunlardır;

- Malakka boğazından geçecek taşınmış petrol miktarının azaltılması
- 90 günlük petrol stok kapasitelerinin artırılması
- Uluslararası ve ikili ticari anlaşmalarla, enerji şirketlerinin yabancı imtiyazlarında artış sağlanması ve geliştirilmesi
- Verimlilik/tasarruf ile talep artışının azaltılması
- Ham petrol ve petrokimyasal ürünler arasındaki ithalat dengesinin sağlanmasıdır.²¹

Çin'in anayasanda yer alan, uluslararası iş birliğini artırarak enerji arz güvenliğini sağlamak adına geliştirdiği mega projesi Kuşak Yol Girişimi ekonomik ve stratejik bir plandır. Kuşak Yol Girişimi'nin öncelikli hedefi kaynak zengini ülkeler ile siyasi koordinasyonun sağlanması, altyapı ve tesislerin inşası, engelsiz ticaretin gerçekleşmesi ve finansal bütünleşme olarak belirlenmiştir. Kazakistan'da 2013 yılında dünyaya duyurulan proje Dünya Bankası verilerine göre belirlenmiş enerji rezervlerinin %75'ini, dünya nüfusunun %62'sini kapsamaktadır.²² 2024 yılı ocak ayı itibari ile Kuşak Yol Girişimi mutabakatını imzalayan 149 ülke bulunmaktadır. Çin Ticaret Bakanlığı'nın istatistiklerine göre 2023 yılı sonu itibari ile mutabakat zaptı imzalayan 149 ülkeye 1.053 trilyon ABD doları yatırım yapmıştır.²³ Kuşak Yol Girişimi'nin küresel ölçekte önemli etkileri vardır. Bu proje Çin'in büyüme stratejisinin merkezinde yer almaktadır. Asya Altyapı Yatırım Bankası öncülüğünde ulaşım ve altyapı projeleri geliştirerek Çin'in dünya ekonomisi ile bütünleşmesini sağlamaktadır.

Kuşak Yol Girişimi'nin bölgesel etkilerini incelediğimizde; Afrika'daki dış politikasının öncelikli ilgisi enerji kaynaklarına olduğunu görmekteyiz. Enerji arzını bu bölgeden karşılarken yaptığı altyapı çalışmaları ile kıta ülkelerinin kalkınmasına yardım etmiştir. Çin Afrika ilişkileri stratejik iş birliği konumundadır. Stratejik iş birliği noktasına gelmesinin temel nedenleri; Afrika bölgesindeki zengin enerji kaynakları, Çin'in yeni pazar

²¹Özkan, "Çin Enerji Arz Güvenliğinin Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güç Geçiş Teorisi Çerçevesinde Analizi," 148.

²²François de Soyres ve Alen Mulabdic ve Michele Ruta, "Common Transport Infrastructure a Quantitative Model and Estimates from the Belt and Road Initiative", *World Bank Group Policy Research Working Paper* 8801, 2019, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/879031554144957551/pdf/Common-Transport-Infrastructure-A-Quantitative-Model-and-Estimates-from-the-Belt-and-Road-Initiative.pdf> (04.05.2024).

²³Christoph Nepopil Wang, "China Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Investment Report 2023", Report, (Shanghai: Griffith AsiaInstitute, Griffith University (Brisbane) and Green Finance & Development Center, FISF FudanUniversity, 2024).



arayışları ve yatırım olanakları, gelişmeye dair iş birliğine istekli olunması ve stratejik ortaklığın oluşturulmasıdır.

Dünya petrol rezervlerinin %7,5'i Afrika kıtasında yer almaktadır. Orta Doğu'dan sonra en çok petrol ithal ettiği bölge %25 ile bölge Afrika'dır. İki bölge arasındaki ticaret yüksek seviyelerdedir. Ticaretin yüksek seviyede gerçekleşmesinin temeli Çin'in Afrika'ya enerji ithalini şart koyarak yatırım yapması, teknoloji ve bilgi paylaşımıdır. Çin yatırım yaptığı Afrika bölgesinde batılı bir ülkenin etkisinin olmamasına da dikkat etmektedir.²⁴

Çin Afrika'ya yatırımları karşılığında yüksek miktarlarda kredi vermektedir. Ülkeler kredilerini ödeyemediklerinde ise takas yoluna giderek stratejik kaynaklarını ele geçirmektedirler. 'Borç tuzağı' olarak adlandırılan bu durum Çin'e 'yeni yüzyıl sömürgecisi' denilmesinin asıl sebebidir. Çin'in son 20 yılda Afrika kıtasına yaptığı yatırım toplam ticaret hacminin %20'sine denk gelmektedir. Çin'in Afrika'daki ithalat kalemlerine baktığımızda doğal kaynak ürünleri ve işlenmemiş mamul malları görmekteyiz. Çin ithal ettiği hammaddenin işlenmiş formunu tekrar satarak ikili ticarete daha fazla yarar sağlamaktadır. Afrika bölgesi ise teknolojik mallar, imalat sanayi ürünleri ithal etmektedir.²⁵

Çin'in enerji kaynaklarını çeşitlendirme politikasının bir yansımasını da Latin Amerika'da görmekteyiz. Çin enerji şirketlerini sadece kalkınma aracı olarak değil diplomatik araç olarak da kullanmaktadır. Çinli yatırımcılar Brezilya'daki elektrik sektörünün 2/3'ünü kontrol etmektedir. Çin, Brezilya'nın en büyük özel elektrik dağıtım şirketi olan CPFL EnergiaSA'nın %95 hissesini 12 milyar ABD doları karşılığında satın almıştır. Çin, Latin Amerika'daki yatırımlarını %52'sini elektrik, %28'ini maden ve %4'ünü ise tarım alanındaki şirketlere yapmıştır.²⁶

Çin, Orta Asya ülkeleri ile ilişkilerinde ise sınır problemlerinin çözümüne, bölgedeki etnik ve dini problemlerinin çözümü ve iş birliğinin geliştirilmesi amaçlarına odaklanmıştır. Orta Asya bölgesi enerji üssü görevi görmektedir. Güvenlik kaygısı taşıdığı Malakka Boğazı'ndan enerjiyi kendisine ulaştırmak istememektedir. Bu sebeple Orta Asya bölgesinde gelişmiş boru hatları inşası yapmaktadır. Orta Doğu'daki siyasi iktidarsızlık da Asya'ya yönelmesine sebep olmuştur.

²⁴China Africa Research Initiative, 2024, <https://chinaafricaloandata.bu.edu/> (02.05.2023)

²⁵Trademap, 2024, [https://www.trademap.org/\(08.05.2023\)](https://www.trademap.org/(08.05.2023))

²⁶Rebecca Ray ve Zara C. Albright, ve Kehan Wang, "China-Latin AmericaEconomicBulletin", *GCI Economic*, 2021, [https://www.bu.edu/gdp/files/2021/02/China-LatAm-Econ-Bulletin_2021.pdf\(12.03.2024\)](https://www.bu.edu/gdp/files/2021/02/China-LatAm-Econ-Bulletin_2021.pdf(12.03.2024)).



Kazakistan'ın toplam petrol üretiminin %75'i Hazar Denizi'nde yer alan Kaşagan, Karaşaganak ve Tengiz petrol sahalarından olmaktadır.²⁷ Türkmenistan gaz kaynakları bakımından dünyada dördüncü sırada gelmektedir. Çin ve Orta Asya enerji havzasında 'Atasu-Alashankou Petrol Hattı' ve 'Orta Asya Çin Doğalgaz Petrol Boru Hattı' olmak üzere önemli iki hat bulunmaktadır. Atasu-Alashankou petrol boru hattı yılda 20 milyon ton petrolü Çin'e taşımaktadır. Orta Asya Çin doğalgaz boru hattı ise Kazak, Türkmen ve Özbek gazını Çin'e taşımaktadır. Yılda toplam A, B ve C hatlarıyla 55 milyar metreküp doğalgazı Çin'e ulaştırmaktadır.²⁸

Çin'in ulusal enerji şirketi CNPC, Kazakistan'daki petrol üretiminin %24'ünü kontrol etmektedir. CNPC, Kazakistan'ın en büyük enerji şirketleri olan AktobeMunaiGas'ın%85'ine ve PetroKazakhstan'ınise %67 hissesine sahiptir. CNPC, Kazakistan'ın önemli petrol bölgeleri Kenkiyak, Hope ve Zhanazhol'de,AktobeMunaiGas şirketi bünyesinde üretim çalışmalarını sürdürmektedir. CNPC, PetroKazakhstan ile Kazakistan'ın beş arama bloğu ve 11 petrol bölgesinde faaliyet göstermektedir.²⁹ Kazakistan'ın petrol ürünleri satışında önemli yeri olan PetroKazakhstan, ülkenin en büyük petrol rafineri Çimkent'te pay sahibidir.

Kazakistan'dan sonra Çin yatırımlarının en fazla olduğu ülke Orta Asya ülkesi Türkmenistan'dır. Kazakistan'da olduğu gibi CNPC bu bölgede etkin rol almıştır. CNPC'nin bölgeye yatırımı 4 milyar ABD doları civarındadır. Çin, Türkmenistan'ın Amu Derya bölgesinde gaz araması yapan ilk ülke olmuştur. Çinli enerji şirketleri Özbekistan'da ise Fergana Vadisi, Aral gölü ve çevresi, Mingbulak petrol sahasında çalışmalarını sürdürmektedir.³⁰

Çin, Orta Asya enerji yarışında dengeyi lehine çevirecek nitelikte proje ve yatırımlar ortaya koymaktadır. Büyük enerji projeleri ile Rusya'nın fiyat belirleme üstünlüğüne son vererek, Orta Asya devletlerinin Rusya'ya olan bağımlılığını azaltmayı ve bağımsızlıklarının pekişmesini amaçlamıştır.

Rusya'nın doğalgaz kaynakları ülkenin kuzey ve batısında bulunurken Çin'in arz bölgeleri ise güneybatısında bulunmaktadır. Bu sebeple Çin ve Rusya arasında en az 50.000

²⁷Güçlü Köse, "Orta Asya (Türkistan) Enerji Meselesi: Enerji Potansiyeli ve Aktörler", *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 13, sy. 72 (2020):254-275.

²⁸Gizem A. Şeker, "Enerji Jeopolitiği Bağlamında Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti Dış Politikasının İncelenmesi" (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Milli Savunma Üniversitesi, Atatürk Stratejik Araştırmalar Enstitüsü, Strateji ve Güvenlik Anabilim Dalı, 2022), 83-88.

²⁹Çağlar Şakı, "Büyük Güçler Politikasında Orta Asya Enerji Kaynakları: Jeopolitik Mücadele" (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı,2018),228-251.

³⁰Şakı, "Büyük Güçler Politikasında Orta Asya Enerji Kaynakları: Jeopolitik Mücadele,"268.



kilometrelik bir boru hattı inşası gerekmektedir. İki bölge arasındaki enerji nakil hatları için büyük yatırımlara ihtiyaç vardır. 2010 yılı itibari ile Rusya ve Çin arasında birçok iş birliği anlaşması yapılmıştır. Bu anlaşmalardan en önemlisi 2011 yılında inşasına başlanan ve günümüz dünyasının en uzun petrol boru hattı olma özelliğine sahip olan Doğu Sibirya-Pasifik Okyanusu Petrol Boru Hattı (ESPO)'dur. Bu hat sayesinde Doğu Sibirya'dan Çin'in Daging bölgesine Rus petrolü taşınmaktadır. Buna ilaveten 2014 yılında Rusya-Çin doğalgaz anlaşması imzalanmıştır. Bu anlaşma 400 milyar ABD doları yatırımı kapsamı sebebiyle iki ülke tarihinin en büyük enerji anlaşması olarak kayıtlara geçmiştir.³¹

Uluslararası Enerji Ajansı (IEA)'nın öngörüsü, Çin'in petrol ihtiyacının 2030 yılına kadar her yıl %2,7 oranında artarak dünya ortalamasının iki katına çıkacağıdır.³² IEA, Çin'in 2030'da günde 12 milyon varil petrol ithal edeceğini tahmin etmektedir. IEA'nın verilerine göre Çin'in, 2030 yılına kadar kendi ürettiği petrolün günde 3,4 milyon varile düşeceği ve ithal ettiği petrol oranının %80 artacağını beklenmektedir. Uluslararası Enerji Ajansının açıkladığı raporda diğer bir dikkat çeken husus ise 2030 yılında Çin, enerji tüketim oranlarında kendisine en yakın ülke olan ABD'den yaklaşık %77 daha fazla enerji tüketimi yapacağıdır. Rusya'da 20,4 milyar varil petrol kaynağının bulunduğu bilinmektedir. Bu bağlamda Rusya- Çin enerji ticaretinin artması ve Kuzey Doğu Asya pazarının gelişmesi, bölgedeki enerji hatlarının gelişmesi ile doğru orantılı görülmektedir.³³

Rusya, Orta Asya ülkelerinin de gaz ihracatçısı olması sebebi ile Çin ile olan enerji diyalogunu diğer ülkeleri dışarıda tutarak geliştirmek istemektedir. Bu sebeple Rusya, Çin'e doğalgazı taşımak için iki boru hattı üzerinden plan tasarlamıştır. Bunlardan birincisi; Rusya'nın Altay bölgesinden Çin'in Sincan bölgesine kadar uzanacak olan ve yılda 30 milyar m³ doğalgazı taşıyacağı batı hattıdır. İkincisi ise; Power of Siberia'dır. Bu hat Sakhalin adasından başlayarak Viladivostok şehrinin altından ilerleyip, yılda yaklaşık 40 milyar m³ doğalgazı Kuzeydoğu Çin'e ulaştırılması için planlanmıştır. Power of Siberi 4000 km uzunluğunda ve 42 milyar ABD doları yatırımı kapsamaktadır.³⁴

ABD'nin Şeyl gazını Avrupa piyasasına sürmesi ile Rusya için enerji pazarındaki rekabet artmıştır. Bu durum Rusya'yı petrole bağımlı fiyatlandırma biçiminden açık piyasa

³¹Hasan Duran ve Nyambayar Purevsuren, "Güvenlik, Enerji ve Pazar Ekseninde Çin'in Orta Asya Politikası", *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, Afro-Avrasya Özel Sayısı*(Aralık 2016): 289-290.

³²Erica S. Downs, "Sino Russian Energy Relations an Uncertain Courtship", *The Future of China Russia Relations*, ed. James Bellacqua, (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 146-175.

³³Tuğçe S.Varol, "Rus Dış Enerji Politikası ve Yeni Hedef Kuzey Doğu Asya", *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 11. sy.41 (2014):95.

³⁴Varol, "Rus Dış Enerji Politikası ve Yeni Hedef Kuzey Doğu Asya",93-96.



odaklı yaklaşıma itmiştir. Rusya yeni pazar, boru hattı arayışı ve LNG gibi alternatif yatırımlara yönelmiştir. Asya, Avrupa'dan daha fazla doğalgaz ithalatına bağımlıdır. Bu durum özellikle Asyalı tüketiciler fiyat risklerinin hafifletilmesine ve kaynak çeşitlendirilmesi konusunda daha istekli kılmaktadır.

Çin, desteklediği çok kutuplu dünya anlayışı sebebiyle Orta Doğu'nun Rusya ve ABD'nin etkisinden çıkması için kendini alternatif olarak görmektedir. Çin bölgede politik yaklaşımlarından ziyade faydacı bir amaç güderek Orta Doğu ticaretine hâkim olmayı ve enerji arzını karşılamayı istemektedir. Dünya petrol rezervlerinin %10'u, kanıtlanmış doğalgaz rezervlerinin ise %20'si İran'da bulunmaktadır. Üstelik bu rezervlerin %60'ı henüz kullanılmamıştır. Bu sebeptendir ki İran, Çin için cazibesi yüksek bir ülkedir. Çin'in ulusal enerji şirketleri Sinopec, CNPC ve CNOOC, İran'ın Güney Pars doğalgaz yatakları ve Yadavaran, Kaşhan ve Mescid-i Süleyman gibi petrol yataklarında önemli projeler sürdürmektedir. İran, CNPC ve Total şirketi ile bir konsorsiyum imzalayarak dünya bilinen gaz rezervlerinin %8'inin bulunduğu Güney Pars bölgesinin 11. fazının geliştirilmesi hususunda anlaşmışlardır. Çin Azaedagan petrol yataklarının geliştirilmesi için 8,4 milyar ABD doları yatırım yapmayı taahhüt etmiştir. İran, Çin'in Kuşak Yol Girişimi'nin Avrupa'ya bağlanmasında önemli bir coğrafi konuma sahiptir. İran'ın Hazar Denizi'ne ve Basra Körfezi'ne sınırının olması jeostratejik açıdan önem arz etmektedir. Kuşak Yol Girişimi'nin, Çin-Orta Asya-Batı koridoru Çin'i kara yolu ile Orta Doğu, Afrika ve Avrupa'ya ulaştıracak güzergâhın en önemli noktasında İran bulunmaktadır. İran'ın bu proje sayesinde demiryolları, karayolları, limanları ve enerji nakil hatlarının altyapı yenilenmesi yapılacak ve finansal destek elde ederek ticaretini geliştirecektir.³⁵

Çin-İran enerji diplomasisinin son yıllarına baktığımızda 27 Mart 2021 tarihinde iki ülkenin dönem Dışişleri Bakanları VangYi ve Cevad Zarif arasında uzun süreli müzakereler sonucunda imzalanan '25 Yıllık Kapsamlı İş Birliği Anlaşması' dikkat çekmektedir. Söz konusu anlaşma eğitim, turizm, teknoloji, sağlık, enerji gibi birçok sektörde derin iş birliği vaat etmektedir. Anlaşma şartlarına göre Çin, İran'a petrol, doğalgaz, petrokimya ürünlerinde 280 milyar ABD doları, ulaşım, altyapı ve imalat sanayisinde kullanılmak üzere 120 milyar ABD doları, toplamda da 400 milyar ABD doları yatırım yapmayı kararlaştırmıştır. İran bu yatırımların Yuan olarak ödenmesini kabul etmiş ve enerjiyi %32 indirimli vereceğini belirtmiştir. Çin'in, İran'da KeşmErvend ve Maku gibi bölgelere yatırım yapma imkânı

³⁵Will Green ve Taylore Roth, "China-Iran Relations: A Limited but Enduring Strategic Partnership", StaffResearch Report (Washington, D.C: U.S ChinaEconomicand Security ReviewCommission, 2021).



bularak, yeni petrol ve doğalgaz yataklarının keşfi için çalışmalara başlanması kararlaştırılmıştır. İran, Çin ile yaklaşan bu diplomasisinin Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi'nde kendisine yönelik silah ambargosunun uzatılması oylamasında Çin'in vetosunu alacağını kesinleştirmek istemiştir.³⁶ Orta Doğu, Çin'in Kuşak Yol Girişimi güzergâhında bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle bölgeye kara yolu, demir yolu, hava yolu, liman ve enerji tesisleri gibi birçok yatırım yapmaktadır. Çin, yatırım yaparken bölgelerin kendine özgü koşullarını göz önünde tutmaktadır. Orta Doğu yatırımlarının %42'sini enerji, %18'ini ulaşım sektörlerine yapmaktadır. 1990'lı yılların sonlarında Orta Doğu'dan günde yaklaşık 350 bin varil petrol ithal eden Çin, 2020'li yıllara doğru günlük 4 milyon varil petrol ithal etmiştir. 2010'da enerji ihtiyacının %60'ını Orta Doğu'dan karşılarken, 2020'de bu oran %44'e düşmüştür. Bu durum Çin'in enerji ihtiyacının zaman içinde artarken, kaynaklarını çeşitlendirdiğinin bir göstergesidir.³⁷ Suudi Arabistan ve Çin arasındaki petrol ticareti 2019 yılında %44 artmıştır. Bunun temel sebebi Suudi Arabistan petrolünün en büyük şirketi Aramco'nun piyasa fiyatını artırmak amaçlı izlediği kısıktıcı politika ve İran'a yapılan ambargoların artmasıdır.³⁸

Sonuç

1970'li yıllardan sonra neoliberal reformlarla ekonomik kalkınmasını geliştiren Çin, bugün dünyanın ikinci büyük ekonomisi konumundadır. İktisadi gelişmişliğinde yakaladığı bu ivme Çin'in enerji kaynaklarına duyduğu ihtiyacı kritik hale getirmiştir. Çin'in enerji kaynakları üzerindeki etkisi ülke sınırları içerisinde kalmayıp diğer ülkelerin dış politikasını etkileyebilecek güçtedir. Çin'in dünya piyasasındaki enerji ithalat ve ihracat oranları küresel enerji güvenliği açısından önemli bir konuma gelmesinde doğrudan etkilidir. Çin, enerji diyalogu kurarken karşılıklı saygı, iç işlerine müdahale etmeme, kazan-kazan prensibi gibi argümanlar kullansa da etkili yumuşak güç stratejileri ile yayılmacı bir politika izlemektedir. Piyasa mekanizmasını ve devlet çıkarlarını önde tutarak yönlendirdiği ulusal enerji şirketleri Çin'in enerji diplomasisindeki ana aktörlerdir. Kuşak Yol Girişimi gibi uyguladığı mega projeleri, beş yıllık kalkınma planları ışığında dünya enerji kaynaklarını kendisine akıtmaya devam edecektir. Çin, enerji ithalat ve ihracatında uzun süreli anlaşmalar yaparak, kredi-borçlandırma sistemi ile kaynak zengini ülkelere kendisini bağımlı kılmakta ve stratejik

³⁶Fahrimullah Farzam, "Çin-İran 25 Yıllık İş Birliği Anlaşması", *İran Araştırmalar Merkezi*, 2020, <https://iramcenter.org/cin-iran-25-yillik-kapsamli-is-birligi-anlasmasi-211>(14.07.2020).

³⁷Muharrem H. Özev ve Deniz İstikbal, "Orta Doğuda Çin'in Yatırımları", *Analiz Raporu 339* (İstanbul: SETA, Kasım 2000).

³⁸Ayşe Yıldız, "Enerji Bağımlılığı Özelinde Çin'in Orta Doğu ve Orta Asya Siyaseti", *Araştırma 131*(İstanbul: İSAMER,2020).



kaynaklarını ele geçirmektedir. Bunlara ilaveten Birleşmiş Milletler daimî üyeliği ve diğer uluslararası organizasyonlardaki statüsünü kullanarak pek çok ülkenin dış politikalarında etki sahibidir. Çin pazarının büyüklüğü ve enerji arzının güvenli sağlanmasının ehemmiyeti düşünüldüğünde Çin'in Rusya ve ABD gibi büyük güçlerle iş birliği ve rekabeti artacaktır. Coğrafi yakınlığı ve enerji kaynakları bakımından çeşitliliği sayesinde Orta Asya, Çin için her zaman cazibesini koruyacaktır. Orta Doğu'daki güvenlik problemleri, Latin Amerika'daki siyasi krizler Çin'in enerji arz güvenliğinin kesintiye uğramaması için kaynak çeşitlendirme politikasını zorunlu kılmaya devam edecektir.

Çin yenilenebilir enerji kaynaklarına yönelse de birincil yerel kaynağı olan kömürün yoğun kullanımı dolayısıyla küresel iklim güvenliğini tehdit etmektedir. Çin'in enerji sektörü, cumhurbaşkanının enerji devrimi, kirlilikle mücadele ve hizmete dayalı bir ekonomik modele geçiş çağrısını takiben yeni bir yöne doğru ilerlemektedir. Çin'in enerji politikasının temel argümanı, elektrik, doğalgaz ve daha temiz, yüksek verimli ve dijital teknolojilere vurgu yapmaktadır.

Çin küresel enerji güvenliği için önemlidir ve enerji piyasasıyla olan ilişkisi, yükselen gücü ve statüsü ile küresel refah ve istikrarın sağlanması için etkili politikalar üretmeye devam edecektir.

Extended Summary

China, which achieved rapid growth after the neoliberal modernization reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping towards the end of the 1970s, has set three important goals for itself until the 100th anniversary of its founding. These are; ensuring a strong economy, becoming a regional leader in Asia, and then becoming a world superpower. The realization of these three ideals necessitates the provision of sustainable economic prosperity based on production. Increasing production activities have led to an increase in China's energy supply. Due to its energy dependency, China wants to deepen energy dialogue and cooperation all over the world. Following a neo-mercantilist policy, China has placed ensuring energy supply security and energy resource diversity at the core of its foreign policy. High energy import and export rates in the world energy market are directly effective in ensuring global energy security and price stability.

China's successful economic development has transformed energy into a security issue beyond necessity. In its foreign policy, it has given priority to resource-rich countries that can meet its energy supply. Relationships that are carried out on the principle of mutual 'win-win'



are with countries in Latin America, Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Russia. China evaluates its energy security as a whole, together with its economic and national security.

China, which accounts for 12 percent of the world's total energy consumption, is a major player in the global energy market. As a major player, it wants to be treated with good status in the international arena. It demands the right to share the world's energy resources and sit at the international energy table. These political and diplomatic ambitions are the most important arguments it emphasizes when determining energy strategies. China's external energy strategies have developed in four specific directions. These are; increasing oil imports from Russia and Central Asia, increasing the proportion of crude oil imports from Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America, and preventing unexpected energy flow interruptions by diversifying China's energy imports, promoting and strengthening regional and bilateral energy cooperation.

China's energy foreign policy adopts the principles of using soft power, a peaceful and conciliatory approach, focusing on improving the infrastructure problems of resource-rich countries, and rapid diplomacy. In order to secure and diversify its access to overseas energy resources, China has listed three 'strategic regions' for Chinese oil companies to target. These are Central Asia and Russia, the Middle East and North Africa, and South America. For China, ensuring the stability of energy markets, ensuring a transparent market structure, and being fair in the energy pricing system is important for the development of energy cooperation and dialogue. Therefore, ensuring energy supply security, diversifying energy resources, and regulating adverse environmental conditions are essential. In China's National Defense Strategy book published in 2019, it was emphasized that it should establish long-term friendly relations with countries with which it cooperates in energy, beyond political and economic conflicts. China has found a voice in international energy organizations since 2015 as the founder of the International Energy Forum. It has long-term energy cooperation agreements, especially with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the Gulf Arab countries. While China develops diplomatic and energy relations with Central Asian countries through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, it also aims to prevent separatist movements that may come to the Uyghur region. It is rooting African energy diplomacy with organizations such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

China's energy supply security approaches are; reducing the amount of transported oil to pass through the Strait of Malacca, increasing 90-day oil stock capacities, increasing and developing the upward activities of foreign concessions of energy companies with international



and commercial agreements, reducing the increase in demand with efficiency/savings, and ensuring the balance between crude oil and petrochemical.

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Analysis of National Security Advisory System in True Communication of National Security Issues

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Abstract

This study explores the complex relationship between media and national security, focusing on how media influences the formulation and decision-making behind national security policies. It examines the crucial role of national security advisors and their political communication skills in shaping public perception of national security issues. The research methodology involves a comprehensive review of existing theoretical frameworks related to media, communication, and national security. The study's scope encompasses political communication, news media dynamics, the influence of journalists and academics, and the interplay between media and advisors. Focusing on the "post-truth" era, the study investigates how emotions and beliefs impact public opinion on national security matters. The central question: What characterizes the media-national security relationship? The study emphasizes the need for rational systems to ensure clarity and truth within this complex domain.

Keywords: Public Policy, Media, National Security, Public Opinion, Decision Making, Disinformation, Post-Truth.

Introduction

The term "media" literally comes from the Latin word "medium," which means "tool". It has vital importance in terms of satisfying curiosity about people, objects, the course of the relationship between them, data collection, and decision-making processes³. The media have acted as a transmitter for many years. In parallel with this, the media have been understood as "the fourth power of democracy" that makes the black box of the state more transparent. According to the "Social Responsibility Theory" and known from the Hutchins Commission Report published in 1947, the media have an obligation to explain the developments to the citizens in a comprehensive manner. After several economic, social, and political developments, other than being the narrator, I preferred to follow certain ideological discourses and even became a deceiving force in certain circumstances⁴. The relatively innocent method used by the media to create its message is agenda setting. According to the theory put forward by Maxwell Combs and Donald L. Shaw in 1972, not all information obtained is presented to the audience

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³ Iggers, Jeremy. (1998). *Good News Bad News, Journalism Ethics and the Public*. Westview Press. pp. 45-47.

⁴Göka, Şenol. (2011). *Medya, Siyaset ve Zihnime Yansımalar*. Ankara: Birleşik. p. 24.



verbatim. Within a limited time and budget, certain data are pushed to the background, while others are brought to the fore. Based on this, individuals are primarily guided about what they need to know and what they need to think⁵. Similarly, in 1947, Kurt Lewin put forward the gatekeeper theory to express which data becomes newsworthy within the said process, within the intervention of various actors and factors.

At the beginning of the 20th century, several academicians viewed mass media as a tool that conveyed one-way messages and had a clear audience. In this respect, media professionals and those in touch with them, like bureaucrats, have not hesitated to increase the dosage of propaganda. To exemplify, Lipmann argued that the idea of an "Enlightened Society" is impossible and sees a large segment of society as people who cannot grasp the essence of political and social developments or are not directly interested in them. According to him, decisions concerning society should be handled by some kind of intellectual higher committee, and the media should be used to impose the decisions taken on society⁶. Another academician who sees the media as a propaganda tool and mass communication as a one-way channel is Wilbur Schramm. According to him, the audience is just a passive object. He claims that the audience would automatically accept everything given to it and be open to infinite influence on everything from political decisions to consumption habits. In this context, the media could penetrate people's skulls and spread inside them, like a "bullet"⁷.

The statecraft, no matter the reason to do so, has always been seen as a penetrator of the media. This idea became one of the most significant topics to study, both for communication professionals and academicians. For instance, in his work titled "Ideology and Ideological Devices of the State", Althusser includes the press, radio-TV, and other communication tools within this framework when talking about the "Communication ISA (Ideological State Apparatus)"⁸. Additionally, Chomsky asserts that companies' motivation to make profits, the influence of advertisers, and the fact that journalists' main source of news is based on people such as bureaucrats, business world, and experts; make them dependent and ultimately turn them into a propaganda machine that supports the status quo⁹. Chomsky and Herman further

⁵ McCombs, Maxwell., & Shaw, Donald L. (1972). The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 176-185. p.177.

⁶ Lipmann, Walter (1922). *Public Opinion*. New York: The Macmillan Company. p. 310.

⁷ Schramm, Wilbur E. (1971). The Process and Effects of Mass Communication. In W. Schramm, & D. Roberts, *The Nature of Communication Between Humans*. Chicago: The University of Illinois Press. pp. 7-9.

⁸ Althusse, Louise. (2010). *İdeoloji ve Devletin İdeolojik Aygıtları*. (A. T. (Translation), Ed.) İstanbul: İthaki Yayınları.

⁹ Chomsky, Noam. (1999). *Medya Gerçeği*. İstanbul: Tüm Zamanlar. p.21.



present a list of filters that turn free news-making into a propaganda machine. According to this, there are six main filters such as the size, ownership, and profit orientation of mass media; advertising license to do business; who/what are the news sources of mass media; response generation and forces; anti-communism control mechanism; propaganda campaigns and polarization¹⁰. In this sense, Gieber claims that news does not have an independent existence but is a product that emerges because of the bureaucracy of those who collect or organize the news. He says, “News is created by journalists”¹¹.

By the end of the Cold War period, globalization became widely effective. Together with technological innovations, the concepts of mass communication and national security have undergone significant changes. New technological innovations have led to a paradigm shift in mass media called “communication globalism”. This has led to a change in the media-politics relationship. National security has become more vulnerable to the machinations of hostile states and non-state actors through new avenues of media such as the Internet. Although it is still hard to undermine a nation's national security interests, vulnerabilities do exist. Wikileaks (2010) and the Panama Papers (2016) are the most popular examples of this new trend. While the Panama Papers released personal information about off-shore accounts or private property of some politicians and used as an ambiguous delegitimization campaign, WikiLeaks contained classified information about criticism of the United Kingdom’s military operations in Afghanistan by U.S. and Afghan officials, details of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program, and covert efforts of the U.S. to fight al Qaeda in Yemen- and plan to have a policy change¹². Currently, both the media and security organizations responsible for national security are adapting to changing nuances, and it is their cooperation strategy and mutual trust that can serve the interests of national security¹³.

1. New Media, Post-Truth and Politics

By the millennium, internet usage has spread to almost the whole world. The term social media as new sources of entertainment, communication and information, emerged in the World

¹⁰ Herman, Edward S., & Chomsky, Noam. (2012). *Rızanın İmalatı: Kitle Medyasının Ekonomi Polisiği*. (E. A. (Translation), Ed.) BGST Yayınları. pp. 72-107.

¹¹ Gieber, W. (1964). News is What Newspapermen Make It. In L. Dexter, & D. White, *People, Society and Mass Communication*. Newyork. p. 235.

¹² Fink, Allison. (2017). Responsible Whistleblowing: The Panama Papers, Wikileaks, and the National Security Enterprise. *The Dialectics: Journal of Law, Leadership and Society*, 1-7. pp. 3-4.

¹³ Al-Rfouh, Faisal. O. (2005). Mass Communication and National Security. *Democracy and National Security*, 1(1), 41-62.



scene. It was an unavoidable fact that such developments influenced politics and the way of doing it. At first, like the traditional media, several professionals thought that these technological innovations would enhance the global level of democracy. Recalling from the ancient tradition of the agora, direct democracy, or cyber democracy that would strengthen the transparency, and welcomed with hope and happiness¹⁴. It was expected that online, an alternative public sphere in Habermas's terms, would be created to feed civil society and improve its position as a mediator between people and the state. Habermas pointed out that critical rationality, equality, freedom of expression, and dissemination are the necessary conditions for the proper functioning of the public sphere¹⁵. Considering the appearance of themes like "post-truth", it could be seen that this was not the case. In the most basic definition, post-truth means relating to or existing in an environment in which facts are viewed as irrelevant and emotional appeals are used to influence public opinion. In this sense, it should be remembered that, as Boudillard proposed, a super-reality that would overshadow the real world can easily be created within the scope of perception management. Hyper-reality is designed and disseminated by mass media. The made-up truth overshadows the truth¹⁶.

Since the US Presidential Elections in 2008 and Occupy Wall Street Movements, social media and the internet have started to be used for political purposes. With the start of the Arab Spring events, the sphere of influence of such politically oriented movements on the internet became international. With the Russia-Ukraine War starting in 2022, the internet and internet-based applications were not only a source of cultural and technical embargo material but also became a matter of disinformation and misinformation rivalry. Besides, it could be said that the Cambridge Analytica Scandal that allegedly changed the outcome of the US Presidential Elections in 2016 and the referendum on the BREXIT constitute the most interesting cases in the field. In March 2018, news about cheating claims in the previous presidential elections was published. It is claimed that Aleksandr Kogan, a lecturer at Cambridge University, created a personality and style-behavior modeling test called 'psychographics' and applied it on to about 80 million Facebook users in the USA and UK. One of the key points here is that people deliberately logged into many other applications gave important information such as names,

¹⁴ Şener, Gülüm. (2006). Küresel kapitalizmin yeni kamusal alanı olarak internet: Yeni Toplumsal Hareketlerin İnternet Kullanımı. *Dissertation Thesis*. İstanbul, Türkiye: Marmara University. p. 64.

¹⁵ Habermas, Jürgen. (1991). The Public Sphere. In C. Mukerji, & M. Schudson, *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*. Berkeley University of California Press. pp. 398-405.

¹⁶ Boudillard, Jean. (2013). *Simularklar ve Simülasyon*. (O. (. Adanır, Ed.) İstanbul: Doğu Batı Yayınları.



locations, e-mail addresses, and friend lists to the relevant service providers. The company Cambridge Analytica has enabled the collection, analysis, and use of all this information within a new marketing strategy. In this case, they not only violated laws on protecting personal data, but also nurtured polarization among people¹⁷. At this point, it must be recalled that algorithms of popular social media applications are created for making people busier and busier with these apps, by showing relevant content to appeal to each user's appetite all the time. This led to 'homophily', which means people who like to be with others who think like themselves. Hamdy argued that homophily makes civil mobilization (which is also a threat to national security), easier to occur¹⁸. For example, DCMS (House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (UK)) released a report in 2018, in which they underlined that micro-targeting what spread hyper-partisan views and the negative impact of fake-news, could result in a "democracy crisis"¹⁹. A similar perception has also been added to the NATO's Strategic Concept as Western democracies are being challenged by authoritarian actors while hybrid threats turned out to be a permanent feature of contemporary security environment with hybrid threats, the spread of disinformation and propaganda, cyber-attacks, etc. At the Wales NATO Summit in September 2014, allies agreed to "ensure that NATO is able to effectively address the specific challenges posed by hybrid warfare threats" and highlighted the significance of strategic communications. Also, the NATO Centre of Excellence on Strategic Communications in Riga, and the European Center of Excellence on Countering Hybrid warfare in Helsinki established for information sharing and counterpropaganda, while in 2016 EU-NATO cooperation in the field guaranteed Parallel and coordinated exercises (PACE)²⁰.

This situation is not only limited to the new media or its impact on creation of homophily or hyper-reality which may cause civil unrests, but also because the content of traditional media inspired from its descendant. In the most basic scenario, social media could set traditional media's agenda by agents like Twitter's trend topic lists in each country. Despite introduction of the regulations like EU's DMA or Türkiye's "Law on Amendments to the Press Law No.

¹⁷ Öztemel, İlknur. Ş. (2022). Digital Hegemony and the Russia-Ukraine War. *İletişim ve Diplomasi*, 43-57. pp. 45-48.

¹⁸ Hamdy, Naila. (2010). Arab media adopt citizen journalism to change the dynamics of conflict coverage. *Global Media Journal: Arabian Edition*, 1(1), 3-15. pp. 6-10.

¹⁹ DCMS(House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee). (2018). *Disinformation and fake news: Interim Report*. Retrieved from <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcmds/363/36302.html>. p. 3.

²⁰ Ratsiborynska, Vira. (2024). The Strategic Security Environment and NATO's Perspectives in Developing Effective Strategic Communications. In R. Arcos, İ. Churi, & C. Ivan, *Routledge Handbook of Disinformation and National Security* (pp. 328-338). NY: Taylor& Francis Groups. pp. 329-330.



7418 and Certain Laws”, numbered 31987, dated October 18, 2022, there is no direct limitation or fast-checking mechanisms on these social media service providers. The main cause of such regulations is to impose after-event punishment to discourage further negative developments. Likewise, the Turkish regulation orders imprisonment of those who spread fake news and disinformation (Article 29), all news sites to keep the content they publish for two years (Article 6), and underscores that the removal decision made for a content has become valid on all websites and platforms²¹. In addition to these, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s call for a “Communication Mobilization” to spread Turkish narration of international developments and the speech of the Presidency’s Directorate of Communications, Fahrettin Altun’s label of what his leading institution does as “Working for the conscious (the inner man) of the Umma and even whole World” are crucial.

2. Journalists, Academicians, National Security Advisors, and News-making

In the light of the previous parts, it could be said that we have a projection which includes policy maker working in the field of national security, academicians that contribute to the process with their scientific reviews, journalists (whether working for traditional media news center or online news centers/blogs) that provide raw material to these two group of people, and the new media that meddle into this cycle, enlarge the scheme and make it relatively less controllable. Feldman (2024) argued that the media’s role in national security policymaking increased in the last two decades²². National security issues, together with factors such as publicizing demands and improving the image of institutions, are evaluated within the integrated social approach of national security²³. Policymakers are obliged to understand what is happening, identify the issues at hand, evaluate possible options for action, and ultimately make decisions that will directly affect the lives of civilians and soldiers. Errors in understanding reality can lead to wrong decisions in policy design, operational planning, and force generation. While intelligence is designed to make it possible to understand the situation regarding the enemy and the environment, other institutions are designed to help understand the situation of one's own forces²⁴. Moreover, as media and despite its failure to achieve a

²¹ Öztemel, İlknur. Ş. (2023). Türk Siyasal Hayatında Sosyal Medya Ve Dijital Platformların Kullanımı: 2002-2020 Dönemi. *Master Thesis*. Hacettepe University. pp. 130-131.

²² Feldman, Robert. P. (2024). *National Security and Communications*. Retrieved from The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS): <https://www.inss.org.il/research/communications-national-security/>

²³ Parlak, Bekir., & Mağat, Muhammet. (2021). Whole of Society Approach to National Security Issues: Public Policy and Social Media Correlation. *Kamu Yönetimi Ve Politikaları Dergisi*, 2(2), 233-256.

²⁴ Brun, Itai., & Roitman, Michal. (2020). *National Security in the Era of Post-Truth and Fake News*. Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies (INSS).



modern agora or a proper public sphere, social media are mediating between a country's government and its people. Therefore, the policies of a state are conveyed and interpreted by the media²⁵.

a. Journalists: A reporter is not just an observer but a player in the national security enterprise. International journalists and foreign offices of media outlets provide continuous flow of information to the center and upgrade the level of consciousness at home. However, due to certain fiscal problems and privatization, several news agencies partnered with MNCs. Like in Reagan's term, conservative fiscal policies dominated by hefty tax cuts, immense defense spending, and deregulation, which boomed privatization and profit-centered understanding, applied. These moves increased the competitiveness of certain goods and services but also hardened the public interest-oriented view of the media. In this era, several news agencies and media outlets decreased the number of employees and closed their foreign bureaus. This has resulted in poorer coverage of international developments and multiple shocks to American audiences to discover why the majority of the African, Eurasian, or European people do not like them. Satara asserted that the outdated images and film clips from Afghanistan and Pakistan, published after 9/11, evidenced the long-term absence of foreign reporters in the region²⁶.

Other than receiving raw data from on-the-ground narrators as journalists, government officers would use media and journalists to prepare people for certain foreign-policy moves, too. As Bernard Cohen argues in his book "The Press and the Foreign Policy", even if the media cannot reach a sufficient influence on people's "what to think", its persuasive ability in terms of "what to think about" is quite high²⁷. In a secondary step, terms such as the Responsibility to Protect or Just War in international law were distorted for the sake of national interests. In this regard, CNN live broadcasts, which came to the fore with the Gulf War in 1991 and irreversibly changed the media phenomenon, have a great impact. According to this phenomenon, which is also referred to as the "CNN Effect", any event taking place in a country is announced to the whole world through the work of global media companies, increasing national and international pressure on local governments, and thus causing policy, official and even regime changes in the country in question. It is foreseen. Of course, if we look at it chronologically, this phenomenon

²⁵ Dairo, Morolake. (2017). The Connection Between National Security and Communication. *Specialty Journal of Knowledge Management*, 1-11.

²⁶ Satara, Maja. (2008). The George W. Bush Administration and the News Media: the Unfolding of a Turbulent Relationship. *M.A. Thesis*. the Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages at the University of Oslo. pp. 54-56.

²⁷ İrvan, Süleyman. (2001). Gündem Belirleme Yaklaşımının Genel Bir Değerlendirmesi. *İletişim*, 69-108. p. 70.



can be seen before the regime changes, by persuading the international public opinion by embellishing it with terms such as Democratic Peace Theory or Responsibility to Protect (R2P)²⁸. It is claimed that Washington was waiting for an excuse to interfere in the Middle East and make military lobbyists happy for continuously increasing military spending. As General Colin Powell stated in 1991: “Think hard about it. I’m running out of demons. I’m running out of villains”. In this respect, the war on terrorism was a gift from heaven²⁹. What’s more, *USA Today*, at the time the nation’s largest-circulation newspaper, began raising serious questions about the case for invading Iraq in July 2002 when three months before the Congress was about voted to authorize the use of force and eight months before sending troops to Iraq³⁰.

In the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, about 800 reporters from diverse American news organizations signed contracts with the military, to travel with advancing troops- embedded journalism³¹. However, recalling from the notification of Lipmann, propaganda is also a version of censorship, Bush Administration of the term was unwilling to cooperate with the media and share information with all, and even selected analysts and reporters to work with³². Even the term embedded journalism born from it, such traits have always been done in previous administrations. For example, in Franklin D. Roosevelt who claimed to have the best relations with the media, introduced certain rules for the White House press corps that define what information was on-background, off-the-record, or not-for-attribution, and reporters who did not follow the president’s rules were dismissed. In 1933, the White House Press Office was founded to present the most accurate news and analysis at the center. Meanwhile, the *Voice of America* (VOA) which’s first broadcast was in 1942, has always been under the influence of the State Department and create basis for Washington’s policies abroad. Another President that had relatively better relations with the media was John F. Kennedy who has often been called America’s “first television president”. He even allowed cameras to film both him and his family at the White House, to have direct communication with

²⁸ Öztemel, İlknur. Ş. (2023). Türk Siyasal Hayatında Sosyal Medya Ve Dijital Platformların Kullanımı: 2002-2020 DÖNEMİ. *Master Thesis*. Hacettepe University. p. 22.

²⁹ McChesney, Robert W. (2004). September 11 and the Structural Limitations of US Journalism. In B. Zelizer, & S. Allan, *Journalism After September 11* (pp. 91-100). NY: Routledge. p. 94.

³⁰ Rishikof, Harvey., & George, Roger Z. (2011). *Navigating the Labyrinth of the National Security Enterprise*. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press. pp. 325-326.

³¹ Rishikof, Harvey, & George, Roger Z. (2011). *Navigating the Labyrinth of the National Security Enterprise*. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press. pp. 305-306.

³² Satara, Maja. (2008). The George W. Bush Administration and the News Media: the Unfolding of a Turbulent Relationship. *M.A. Thesis*. the Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages at the University of Oslo. p. 59.



the voters, which no newspaper could alter by interpretation or omission. However, there were still disadvantaged people in this government-media relations, likewise, former reporter David Halberstam of *The New York Times* was removed from his position because of his critical reporting in Vietnam. President Lyndon B. Johnson had wire service feeds installed in the Oval Office so that he could better supervise the news coverage, other than the typical President's Daily Brief Material (PDB), and allegedly had faster decision-making regarding the situation in Vietnam. After the American Press's pyrrhic victory against the government, the Watergate Scandal during Nixon's term, relations became more strained and limited. In 1969, the White House Office of Communications was established 1969 to bypass the critical filter.

b. Academicians, Researchers, and Think-Tanks: Academicians, researchers, and think-tanks that hire or cooperate with them are significant sources of national security policy, and relatively media content creation. They contribute to the intellectual synthesis that comes from breaking down bureaucratic barriers. Their autonomous position makes them more capable of disseminating relevant policy research within government agencies than government agencies themselves and monitoring the policy function (from data collection to knowledge to conceiving means of implementation) than government bureaucracies, which might be internally segmented along such lines. There are various think-tanks in the US which could be categorized under academic, party/university, or government-related, politically affiliated, private, independent, etc. While some of them have their own publications and media establishments like the Cato Journal, Brookings Institute, Foreign Policy from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, or Foreign Affairs from the Council on Foreign Relations (on publications); The Dialogue radio program of Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, TV Channels of The Brookings Institution and the Heritage Foundation etc.). Furthermore, many of their think tank colleagues appear several times a week as regular political commentators on CNN and other cable channels and write down articles especially for the Wall Street Journal³³. Briefly, while they provide a more detailed and elitist analysis of the recent developments to the public media, they add to the government's policy orientations as an ideally operating national security enterprise with reports and research.

c. The National Security Advisor Position: The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (APNSA), commonly referred to as the National Security Advisor serves as the principal advisor to the President of the United States on all national security issues. He or She

³³ McGann, James J. (2005). *Think Tanks and Policy Advice in The US*. Pennsylvania: Foreign Policy Research Institute.



participates in meetings of the National Security Council (NSC) and usually chairs meetings of the Principals Committee of the NSC with the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense. Also, he/she sits on the Homeland Security Council (HSC). The national security advisor is supported by NSC staff who produce classified research and briefings, and his/her appointment does not need confirmation by the United States Senate.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, debates about the creation of a United States Department of Defense (DOD) started. In accordance with this, the United States Navy submitted the Eberstadt Report, which called instead for the creation of the National Security Council (NSC). With the National Security Act of 1947, President Truman led to the foundation of the Secretary of Defense, NSC, and NSA positions. In the most basic terms, NSA is supposed to set the agenda, engage in diplomacy, serve as a bridge between politics in policy, work as an intelligence official, be a congressional liaison, and for media relations³⁴. NSA ought to consider alternative policy directions, weigh the costs and benefits of each possible course, and ensure that all relevant bureaucratic actors receive a fair hearing in the process. This makes him/her an “honest broker” among supporters of all potential answers to problems, among professionals in statecraft, media, the academy, etc. He/she must not prioritize his/her ideas or interests, as it was concluded by the Tower Commission in 1987, and “must not use his proximity to the President to manipulate the process so as to produce his own position”³⁵.

Nevertheless, in some cases, NSA works hard to make his/her boss, the president, satisfied with their ideals and somehow work for the grounding conditions, related public opinion, and legal causes to be found out, rather than fulfilling their goal to be a mediator and honest broker. Dueck argued that a similar orientation was taken by Bush’s NSA, Rice³⁶. It is reported that she had even problems persuading NSC to decide what to study on³⁷. Recalling from Chomsky’s emphasis on media’s dependent nature as one of the main sources of media is high-level state-bureaucrats, information-provider role for policy-makers became drastically less practical and with biased position of NSA in the term, media turned out to be an echoing,

³⁴ Halvorson, Robert. (2010). Monograph. *The Interagency Cometh: Is the National Security System of 1947 Capable of Handling the Challenges of 2009?* Kansas, USA: United States Army Command and General Staff College School of Advanced Military Studies.

³⁵ Dueck, Colin. (2014). The Role of the National Security Advisor and the 2006 Iraq Strategy Review. *Orbis*, 15(1), 15-38. pp. 30-31.

³⁶ Dueck, Colin. (2014). The Role of the National Security Advisor and the 2006 Iraq Strategy Review. *Orbis*, 15(1), 15-38. p.16.

³⁷ Brupbacher, Jared. J. (2017). People, Process, And Policy: Case Studies In National Security Advising, The National Security Council, And Presidential Decision Making. *A Thesis Presented To The Faculty Of The School Of Advanced Air And Space Studies For Completion Of Graduation Requirements*. Alabama, Usa: School Of Advanced Air And Space Studies Air University Maxwell Air Force Base. pp. 79-80.



public opinion management gadget that underscored American national identity symbols and worked for demonization of the “enemy”³⁸. A similar culture was adopted by President Trump and his executives, too. Trump had one of the most populous national security advisor teams of six. Undoubtedly, he had a different style than we all got used to, which emphasizes the alternative facts. This trait could be seen from Trump’s refusal to receive a daily intelligence briefing, as a “smart person” who did not need to be told the same thing in the same words every day for the next eight years. He also rejected conversations with several intelligence officers and related executives. In this sense, he was called a President who was far more interested in shaping reality than in understanding it. Copying from their boss, several counselors helped to spread false statements. To exemplify, Kellyanne Conway, a counselor to President Trump, defended false statements by the White House press secretary about the number of people who attended the President's inauguration ceremony in January 2017³⁹.

Conclusion

Fair news making of national security issues has always been a quite hard issue that includes diverse actors, filters, propagandists, and dynamics. Regarding the developing technology and rising influence of the new media, non-official narrators, leaks, and widespread fake news, this complex process has become even harder to control. Such as former Director of the CIA, Michael Hayden, wrote a book named *The Assault on Intelligence: American National Security in an Age of Lies*, to highlight the threat of technological opening⁴⁰. He reported that even President Trump’s habit of using social media provides foreign intelligence agencies with all manner of data that they can use to create profiles to assist their policy makers. In relation to this, national security policy processes become full of raw material, but the majority of them cannot be seen as trustworthy. Besides, securing classified data and controlling public opinion not to focus on conspiracy theories or be radicalized, especially in democratic states, turned out to be an additional national security topic by itself. In this labyrinth, NSA must act in a strong way that protects his/her neutrality, prioritizes national interests over any individualistic motives or any other loyalties, and perform as an honest broker with all his or her diplomatic experience and leadership traits to lead NSC to search for proper documents.

³⁸ Hutcheson, John, et al. (2004). U.S. National Identity, Political Elites, and a Patriotic Press Following September 11. *Political Communication*, 21(1), 27-52. pp. 30-31.

³⁹ Brun, Itai., & Roitman, Michal. (2020). *National Security in the Era of Post-Truth and Fake News*. Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies(INSS). pp. 6-8.

⁴⁰ Hayden, Michael V. (2018). *The Assault on Intelligence: American National Security in an Age of Lies*. Newyork: Penguin Books.



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Analyzing the Multidimensional Non-traditional Security Challenges in North Africa and Regional Implication

Ramzi Bendebka¹

Abstract

The non-traditional security challenges in North Africa have experienced significant changes in recent years. In addition to conventional military issues, the region has experienced many problems, such as drug trafficking, illegal immigration movements, smuggling, the Arab Spring, and the consequences of the global 'War on Terror' launched after the events of 9/11. Most research on North African security concentrates on threats within the traditional paradigms of military matters and terrorism. Nevertheless, this paper considers the overall parameters of an expanded North African regional non-traditional security. It focuses on four specific issues: illegal immigration movement, water scarcity, drug trafficking, and smuggling. The study indicates that if coordinated action is not taken, the interaction of these non-conventional risks can erode the future stability and growth of North Africa.

Keywords: Non-traditional security, North Africa, Illegal immigration, Drug trafficking, Water scarcity.

Introduction

Traditional security is built around the real force functions projected through weapons and military that could only be used by a state, and it does not fulfill or comprise any element other than the use of power. However, since the end of the Cold War, economics and globalization have challenged the concept of security and forced human societies into endless war and terrorism, contributing more to the security environment.² These interconnected forces, in turn, produced a redefining of security and its sources, which have helped scholars and policymakers to broaden their understanding.³ The end of the Cold War signaled a shift from addressing security solely in militaristic terms to one that addresses non-military forms of threats, such as financial instability and violence between states and within them due to political turmoil or genocide/regional conflict. Security studies have drastically changed. Security, principally dominated by notions of military power and state sovereignty, has been threatened locally, in addition to non-traditional threats due

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² Buzan, B., Waeber, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. Pp. 75-76.

³ Baldwin, D. A. (1997). The concept of security. *Review of International Studies*, 23(1), 5-26. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210597000053>



to its emerging international nature.⁴ Such issues typically involve forms of criminality such as drug trafficking and illegal immigration, environmental degradation, and spillovers from global terrorism.⁵

This reframing of security to capture non-military threats is part of an increasing recognition that the contemporary world order is such that other issues, such as economic stability, political governance, and social cohesion, are inextricably linked with real life.⁶ This broader view of security is particularly relevant in North Africa, where traditional security concerns include military conflict and terrorism⁷ have predominated until now. Nevertheless, the nature and extent of security challenges to North African countries have changed significantly in recent years. Meanwhile, new non-traditional security threats that are vast and varied in scope have emerged.⁸

Illegal immigration represents one of the most important non-traditional security threats to North Africa. At the same time, political instability and conflict in countries of origin contribute to waves of migration through a region that functions as a primary waystation for migrants on their way to Europe.⁹ This flow of people carries enormous security-related implications not only for the countries in North Africa but also for Europe due to a compound nature ranging from cross-border crime and human trafficking to humanitarian crises.¹⁰ The consequences of illegal migration on the stability, social coherence, and economic resources are important for North African countries.¹¹

Water scarcity is another key non-traditional security challenge in North Africa. The region is the most water-scarce in the world and already has depleted renewable water resources that will be strained further by growth, ongoing climate change, and ultimately unsustainable current uses

⁴ Sheehan, M. (2005). *International security: An analytical survey*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. P. 43.

⁵ Felbab-Brown, V. (2009). *Shooting up: Counterinsurgency and the war on drugs*. Brookings Institution Press. P. 120.

⁶ Paris, R. (2001). Human security: Paradigm shift or hot air? *International Security*, 26(2), 87-102. <https://doi.org/10.1162/016228801753191141>

⁷ Ayoob, M. (1995). *The third world security predicament: State making, regional conflict, and the international system*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. Pp. 3-4.

⁸ Halili, A. (2023). Non-Traditional Security Threats and NATO's Response in the Contemporary Security Environment. *SEEU Review*, 18(2) 148-165. <https://doi.org/10.2478/seeur-2023-0095>

⁹ Koser, K. (2005). Irregular migration, state security, and human security. *Global Commission on International Migration*.

¹⁰ Tolley, H., Jr. (2011). [Review of the book *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective*]. *Human Rights Quarterly* 33(3), 895-899. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2011.0031>.

¹¹ International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2019). *World Migration Report 2020*. IOM.



of its precious nexus between energy and food, a necessary element to sustain life on Earth themselves. Water scarcity is a grave danger to agricultural productivity, food security, and human health, with fateful geopolitical dimensions for conflicts within and between nations over access to (and possession of) water resources.¹² Water scarcity connects directly to other security issues, such as migration and economic instability in the region, showing a need for more overall or holistic management of regional water resources.¹³ Drug trafficking and smuggling also constitute a major non-traditional security challenge in North Africa.

Also, North African states represent a vital transit region for international drug traffickers from South America and Asia to Europe.¹⁴ The spread of drug smuggling networks weakens the state and corrupts and funds other criminal enterprises such as terrorism.¹⁵ This is complicated by the smuggling of goods, including weapons and human trafficking, which adds to security matters, economic instability, and social unrest.¹⁶

The way of governance in some states, Weak state institutions, which frequently suffer from corruption and a lack of resources to manage their responsibilities, are preventing regional states from an adequate response. This, in turn, undermines economic growth and development, perpetuates social inequalities, and contributes to the cycle of instability and unemployment.¹⁷ Most non-traditional security threats (e.g., drug trafficking and illegal immigration) are transnational in nature. Meeting these challenges calls for cross-national cooperative action by various actors, including states, multilateral institutions, and civil society.¹⁸ Adequate responses

¹² Zeitoun, M., & Warner, J. (2006). Hydro-hegemony: A framework for analysis of trans-boundary water conflicts. *Water Policy*, 8(5), 435-460. <https://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2006.054>

¹³ International Water Management Institute (IWMI). (2007). *Water for food, water for life: A comprehensive assessment of water management in agriculture*. Earthscan.

¹⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2010). *The globalization of crime: A transnational organized crime threat assessment*. UNODC.

¹⁵ Gootenberg, P. (2008). *Andean cocaine: The making of a global drug*. University of North Carolina Press. P. 122.

¹⁶ Nadelmann, E. A. (1990). Global prohibition regimes: The evolution of norms in international society. *International Organization*, 44(4), 479-526. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300035375>

¹⁷ World Bank. (2011). *Migration and remittances factbook 2011*. World Bank Publications.

¹⁸ Newman, E. (2001). Human security and constructivism. *International Studies Perspectives*, 2(3), 239-251. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1528-3577.00053>



must adopt comprehensive approaches bridging security, development and governance dimensions that are mutually interconnected.¹⁹

Beyond the near-term security implications, however, such non-traditional threats in North Africa have more significant geopolitical and strategic relevance. Its proximity to Europe and between Africa and the Middle East made it an essential global security area.²⁰ As Reuveny argues, the security of Europe directly refers to North Africa's instability regarding migration flows (which he considers as one cause for terrorism and transnational organized crime).²¹ Thus, The global community must recognize the growing security dilemmas due to non-traditional threats and take supportive measures at bilateral and multilateral levels in North African countries.²²

Hence, due to the interdependency of the majority of non-traditional security threats, including drug trafficking, human smuggling, and immigration, collaboration between states and across regions is compelled. Overcoming these challenges requires mobilizing action beyond the nation-state level, meaning states, Intergovernmental organizations or agencies, and civil society organizations should participate. Measures have to be designed following an overall concept of security and development linked with governance issues since they cannot be separated.²³

Besides the threats of the comprehensible traditional security threats, non-traditional threats in North African states are ideologically and strategically important. Many scholars have highlighted that the region's strategic position connects Africa to the Middle East and its close association with Europe, which is why it is a susceptible region regarding international security. The situation in North Africa impacts European security concerns such as migration and terrorism, specifically transnational criminal activity.²⁴

¹⁹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2004). *Water governance for poverty reduction: Key issues and the UNDP response to Millennium Development Goals*. UNDP.

²⁰ Andreas, P., & Nadelmann, E. (2006). *Policing the globe: Criminalization and crime control in international relations*. Oxford University Press. Pp. 30-31.

²¹ Reuveny, R. (2007). Climate change-induced migration and violent conflict. *Political Geography*, 26(6), 656-673. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2007.05.001>

²² Waltz, K. (1979). *Theory of international politics*. Addison-Wesley.

²³ Springborg, R. (2020). *Political economies of the Middle East and North Africa*. John Wiley & Sons. Pp. 4-5.

²⁴ Cannon, B. J., & Donelli, F. (2020). Asymmetric alliances and high polarity: Evaluating regional security complexes in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. *Third World Quarterly*.



Therefore, the discussion in this study highlights the deeply interconnected nature of non-traditional security threats in North Africa, including illegal immigration, water scarcity, drug trafficking, and smuggling. These threats significantly undermine governance, economic stability, and social cohesion. The analysis emphasizes the role of financial instability and political turmoil as key drivers, creating fertile ground for criminal networks and exacerbating vulnerabilities. Moreover, it underscores the need for comprehensive, multi-faceted strategies integrating security, governance, and development. The findings suggest that addressing these challenges requires robust international cooperation, capacity building, and a shared commitment to tackling root causes, such as poverty, corruption, and environmental degradation.

1. Methodology

The qualitative research method was used for data collection and analysis when approaching non-traditional security threats in North Africa. This data is expected to establish a comprehensive and better understanding of matters concerning illegal immigration, water scarcity, drug trafficking, and smuggling. Moreover, the study focuses on non-traditional security threats in particular countries, such as Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, which provides a clear vision of the problems in the region.

The theoretical foundation on which the article is built is based on the concept of security, which has evolved from state-centered and wars-based security to nontraditional security. They consist of economic, environmental, and social elements that identify today's globally connected and fast-moving threat system. The author emphasizes the need for an integrated approach to address challenges like illegal immigration, water scarcity, drug trafficking, and smuggling in North Africa. Analyzing these threats with the help of post-Cold War security discourse, the framework points to the interconnections between these threats and the contexts of governance, sustainable development, and regional security and calls for addressing threat causes and mitigating threats at both the national and international levels.

Data collection is done through a literature review, thus involving the analysis of articles, policy papers, government reports, international organization publications, the United Nations, and the African Union, among others. Official documents and mass media also complement the research by using document analysis to give a more balanced view of the security situation in the region. Conceptual and comparative analysis procedures are used to analyze the collected data to



distinguish patterns, themes, and variations in the non-traditional threats to the North African nations. Some techniques followed include Informed consent, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity; hence, the research is ethical and credible.

2. Findings

2.1. Illegal Immigration Movement

As previously asserted, cross-national border migration continues to persist as a security threat in North Africa due to tensions such as economic instabilities and strains, instability in political systems, and the danger of war.^{25,26} The region is the pathway for migrants who attempt to reach Europe, which in turn leads to multiple security threats both nationally and internationally.²⁷

Economic drivers, unemployment, and poverty are considered the main push factors in North African illegal immigration. Constraints such as high unemployment, underemployment, and poverty force most people, especially the youth, to move around in search of better job opportunities.²⁸ Destination countries, including Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia, are frequently used because these countries are neighbors to European territories. Economic opportunities are hard to come by in their home countries, leading them to risk their lives and that of their children by traveling across the Mediterranean Sea with the help of human smugglers. The problem is that North African countries need resources to manage the flow, help migrants, and deal with migration's social and economic impacts on their societies.²⁹

Political instability and conflicts are also considered drivers for engaging in illegal immigration.³⁰ After the 2011 revolution in Libya, state structures rapidly disintegrated, providing human smugglers and armed groups with opportunities to control migrant traffic from sub-Saharan

²⁵ Collyer, M. (2006). States of insecurity: Consequences of Saharan transit migration. *COMPAS Working Paper No. 31*.

²⁶ Cornelius, W. A., & Rosenblum, M. R. (2005). Immigration and politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 8, 99-119.

²⁷ Andreas, P. (2003). Redrawing the line: Borders and security in the twenty-first century. *International Security*, 28(2), 78-111.

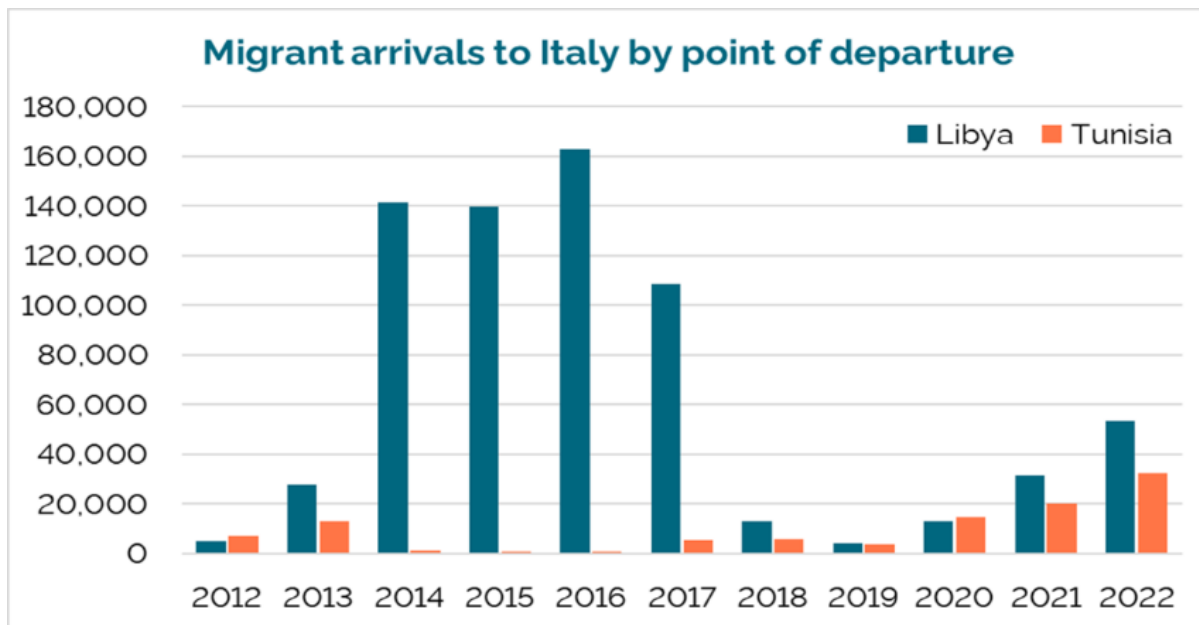
²⁸ Koser, K., & Lutz, H. (Eds.). (1998). *The new migration in Europe: Social constructions and social realities*. Macmillan. P. 23.

²⁹ Williams, P. D. (Ed.). (2012). *Security studies: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Routledge. P. 12.

³⁰ Dassah, M. O. (2017). Socio-economic Impacts of Intra-and Extra-Regional Southern African Development Community Migration on South Africa. *Ghana Journal of Development Studies*, 14(1), 255-275.



Africa. Internal conflicts and oppressive political conditions in Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia force many people to move towards North Africa and Europe. Political instability worsens governance issues in North African states, making it challenging to address migration and ensure internal security. Also, the conflicts in the Sahel worsened the situation and had a significant impact on illegal immigration. The International Organization for Migration indicate that in 2023, almost 26% of illegal immigrants in Libya were from Niger alone, which is nearly 180000. 11 % were from Chad. Others are from Mali, Nigeria and Sudan.³¹



Source: Italian Ministry of Interior Report, 2022.

The above chart shows how many migrants came to Italy in the last ten years from their main departure points, Libya and Tunisia, from 2012 until 2022. The most recent and noticeable spike in Libyan arrivals was from 140,000 to 160,000. In 2018, the number of arrivals from Libya and Tunisia was among some of the lowest. However, illegal immigrants increased from both Libya and Tunisia, with more arrivals in total, and that shows the level of threat towards other countries.

Moreover, because of instability, smugglers operate their crime networks freely in North African countries, especially in Libya and Tunisia. Such networks are highly developed and practical, taking advantage of migrants' weaknesses and the absence of efficient state authority in

³¹ The International Organization for Migration. (2024). Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Libya Migrant Report. UN Migration.



specific areas.³² There is a high risk involved in migrating, as many people experience exploitation, abuse, and even death.³³ These networks undermine state authority and exacerbate other problems like corruption and criminality. Disintegrating these networks requires adequate cooperation from different countries and efficient law enforcement, which is challenging as many organizations lack the necessary resources and political will.³⁴

Also, the European Union's border policies and externalization strategies significantly affect the pattern of irregular immigration in North African countries.³⁵ Bilateral contracts to manage and block migration flows with North African countries have led to the securitization and militarisation of borders. Although these measures intend to reduce the influx of illegal immigrants, they also result in humanitarian catastrophes, keeping migrants vulnerable and often violating their human rights. Critics argue that instead of addressing the causes of migration, the EU focuses on border security, worsening immigrants' lives.³⁶

The welfare of irregular immigrants is threatened due to unfavorable conditions while traveling and in transit countries or due to the affiliation of those irregular immigrants with terrorist groups.³³ Evidence of physical, sexual, and other forms of abuse is prevalent, and facilities often provide minimal or no amenities. Relief efforts and rights support from NGOs and international agencies face multiple concerns, such as limited access to affected regions and scarce funds.

2.2. Water Scarcity

Lack of water resources is a significant non-traditional security threat in North Africa, devastatingly impacting social mobility, economic progression, and security. North Africa is one of the most water-deficit areas globally, facing challenges due to climate change, population pressure, and water management issues.³⁷

³² Andreas, P. (2003). Redrawing the line: Borders and security in the twenty-first century. *International Security*, 28(2), 78-111.

³³ Huysmans, J. (2006). *The politics of insecurity: Fear, migration and asylum in the EU*. Routledge. P. 20.

³⁴ Thakur, R., & Van Langenhove, L. (2007). Enhancing global governance through regional integration. In *Regionalisation and global governance* (pp. 33-58). Routledge.

³⁵ Zoubir, Y. H., & White, G. (Eds.). (2016). *North African politics: Change and continuity*. Routledge. P. 317.

³⁶ Amuedo-Dorantes, C., Puttitanun, T., & Martinez-Donate, A. P. (2013). How do tougher immigration measures affect unauthorized immigrants?. *Demography*, 50, 1067-1091.

³⁷ Rachid, A. (2023). The impact of climate change in Africa: Environmental security in the face of nature. *Remittances Review*, 8(3).



Almost all North African countries are affected by climate change, particularly water shortages. Increased temperatures, fluctuations in precipitation, and droughts impact water levels and quality.³⁸ The expansion of the Sahara Desert into areas formerly used for farming reduces water access and affects agriculture and food sources. Global warming and climate change worsen water shortages, threatening food production, human and animal health, and economic stability, potentially causing water-related conflicts.³⁹

Also, water scarcity in North Africa is exacerbated by rapid population growth and increasing urbanization rates.⁴⁰ High population levels put more demand on water for domestic, agricultural, and industrial uses. Urbanization leads to overcrowding in areas with existing social amenities, requiring significant investment to build new facilities for water supply and sanitation, which many North African states cannot afford.

Agriculture remains the leading consumer of water in North Africa, mainly for irrigation, which often results in high water loss through evaporation and seepage. Efficient water use should be a significant principle, achievable by improving irrigation facilities and using advanced technology. Still, limited resources, poor technology, weak institutions, and poor policies often hamper these efforts.⁴¹

Due to their transboundary nature, water resources like the Nile River are a significant security issue in North Africa. Competition for access to and use of these resources can trigger conflicts, as seen in the Nile Basin involving Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia.⁴² Moreover, water scarcity in North Africa has severe social, economic, and political consequences. It affects agricultural yields, leading to famine and loss of income for farming communities. In urban areas, water scarcity can cause social rivalry and weaken government legitimacy and authority as people lose access to fundamental services. Addressing water scarcity requires integrated solutions

³⁸ Odermatt, E. (2013). Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development: A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries.

³⁹ Sowers, J., Vengosh, A., & Weinthal, E. (2011). Climate change, water resources, and the politics of adaptation in the Middle East and North Africa. *Climatic Change*, 104(3), 599-627.

⁴⁰ Hejazi, M., Santos Da Silva, S. R., Miralles-Wilhelm, F., Kim, S., Kyle, P., Liu, Y., ... & Clarke, L. (2023). Impacts of water scarcity on agricultural production and electricity generation in the Middle East and North Africa. *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, 11, 1082930.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Rahman, M. A. (2013). Water security: Ethiopia–Egypt transboundary challenges over the Nile river basin. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 48(1), 35-46.



involving water management, poverty alleviation, economic diversification, and good governance.⁴³

2.3. Drug Trafficking and Smuggling

Drug trafficking and smuggling are significant non-traditional security threats in North Africa, with serious repercussions for stability, governance, and public health. North Africa is often a transit route for illicit drugs, impacting crime rates, corruption, and violence.⁴⁴

Illegal drugs North Africa is a major artery for drug trafficking, with drugs from South America and Asia transiting through the region to Europe. Cannabis, cocaine, and heroin are key drugs that pass through, facilitated by poor governance, open borders, and political uncertainty.

Drug trafficking significantly impacts governance and state institutions in North Africa. Corruption is prevalent, with offenders bribing officials to conduct their business. This undermines public confidence in the government and police and fosters disregard for the rule of law. Drug sales revenue can also fuel rebel and terrorist groups. Addressing these issues requires restoring governance, enhancing policing, and combating corruption.⁴⁵

Moreover, drug trafficking negatively affects public health and society in North Africa. Increased drug availability leads to higher addiction rates, particularly among youth, causing social issues like crime, family problems, and social isolation. Existing health facilities often cannot meet the increased demand for addiction treatment and rehabilitation services. Solving these problems requires complex education, prevention, treatment, and social rehabilitation measures.⁴⁶

The following chart depicts a complicated web of drug trafficking routes, many of which pass through North African countries such as Morocco, Algeria, Libya, and Egypt. Since then, these countries have become significant nodes in the trafficking routes that interconnect countries and some continents abroad. The black lines indicate major trafficking routes, with substantial links from North African states to countries on the European continent, including Spain, Italy,

⁴³ Omondi, E. A. (2014). *Environmental Scarcity and Trans-boundary Conflicts: the Case of Lake Victoria, 1994-2011* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi). Pp. 13-19.

⁴⁴ Aning, K., & Pokoo, J. (2014). Understanding the nature and threats of drug trafficking to national and regional security in West Africa. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 3(1), 8-8.

⁴⁵ Warf, B. (2015). Corruption in the Middle East and North Africa: A geographic perspective. *The Arab World Geographer*, 18(1-2), 1-18.

⁴⁶ Djukanovic, V., Mach, E. P., & World Health Organization. (1975). *Alternative approaches to meeting basic health needs in developing countries: a joint UNICEF/WHO study*. World Health Organization. P. 17.



On the other hand, smuggling Contraband is a cross-cutting non-conventional security threat in North Africa, severely detrimental to economic stability, fostering corruption, and creating social and political problems.

⁴⁸ Meneghini, C. (2022). Structure and Evolution of Drug Trafficking Networks in North Africa: The Impact of Rule of Law and Corruption. In: Savona, E.U., Guerette, R.T., Aziani, A. (eds) *The Evolution of Illicit Flows*. Sustainable Development Goals Series. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95301-0_10



Types of smuggling contraband in North Africa include motor vehicles, foodstuffs, chemicals, petroleum products, medicines, and other banned goods. Arms proliferation and supplying weapons to insurgent and terrorist organizations incite violence and related activities.³³ For example, according to the Global Terrorism Index Report,⁴⁹ North Africa witnessed over 500 terrorist incidents in 2021, resulting in approximately 2,000 deaths. Supplying weapons to terrorists is a way to increase incidents and victims. Fuel smuggling also creates black markets, and the smuggling of pharmaceuticals and consumer products affects population health and the formal economy through tax losses and sales of substandard products.⁵⁰

Smuggling negatively impacts the economy by reducing legal companies' ability to compete and causing governments to lose tax revenues. It destabilizes market structures and increases social and political insecurity as governments struggle to manage smuggling's economic impacts. Preventing smuggling requires detailed economic solutions targeting price gaps and improving enforcement measures.⁵¹

Also, corruption and weak governance are invariably interlinked with smuggling in North Africa. Smugglers rely on state bureaucracy members to perpetrate illegal activities, undermining state authority. Corruption erodes public confidence in the government and fosters a culture of criminality. Combating smuggling requires enhancing governance and police quality, increasing transparency and decentralization, and launching anti-corruption initiatives.⁵²

3. Discussion

Discussion of the findings on illegal immigration, water scarcity, drug trafficking, and smuggling in North Africa highlight the complex nature of non-traditional security threats in the region. These issues are deeply interconnected, influencing each other and compounding the overall security landscape. Scholars have argued that security must be understood in a broader context beyond military threats, incorporating economic, environmental, and social dimensions.⁵³

⁴⁹ Institute for Economics & Peace. (2024). Global Terrorism Index 2024: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism, Sydney. Available from: <http://visionofhumanity.org/resources>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Pitt, M. M. (1981). Smuggling and price disparity. *Journal of International Economics*, 11(4), 447-458.

⁵² Boukhars, A. (2012). The drivers of insecurity in Mauritania (Vol. 30). Washington, DC, USA: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

⁵³ Buzan, B., Waever, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. P. 13.



The non-traditional security challenges in North Africa exemplify this expanded understanding of security.

The study reveals that economic instability and political turmoil are significant drivers of illegal immigration in North Africa. Migration patterns are influenced by both push and pull factors, including financial opportunities and political stability.⁹ In North Africa, the lack of economic prospects and ongoing conflicts push individuals to seek better opportunities abroad, often through dangerous and illegal means. This aligns with the findings of the study of Kwilinski, Lyulyov, Pimonenko, Dzwigol, Abazov, and Pudryk, which notes that economic hardship and political instability are the primary factors driving migration in the region.⁵⁴

Human trafficking and smuggling networks exacerbate the issue of illegal immigration. These networks are highly organized and exploit the vulnerabilities of migrants, as noted by Louise Shelley in her work on transnational crime. The presence of these networks not only facilitates illegal immigration but also undermines state authority and contributes to broader issues of terrorism and criminality. For example, in the annual report of the Mixed Migration Centre, there were more than 120 Sudanese mercenaries caught by the Sudan authority on their way to fight in Libya.⁵⁵ Such illegal movements can, therefore, impact the security of North African countries. Efforts to combat these networks require robust international cooperation and strengthened law enforcement capacities, as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) emphasized.⁵⁶

North Africa faces severe consequences under the pressure of water scarcity, including significant socio-economic and political stakes. Among other scholars, Mark Zeitoun and Jeroen Warner emphasized water's role as a driver for conflict and cooperation in this region. Water scarcity issues are mainly due to Climate change, Rapid population growth, and unsustainable management practices.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Kwilinski, A., Lyulyov, O., Pimonenko, T., Dzwigol, H., Abazov, R., & Pudryk, D. (2022). International migration drivers: Economic, environmental, social, and political effects. *Sustainability*, 14(11), 6413.

⁵⁵ Mixed Migration Centre. (2020). Annual Report. Mixed Migration Centre.

⁵⁶ Serio, G. (2021). West Africa, North Africa, and the Central Mediterranean-Key Findings on the Characteristics of Migrant Smuggling in West.

⁵⁷ Wolf, A. T. (2007). Shared waters: Conflict and cooperation. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 32, 241-269. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.energy.32.041006.101434>



The Nile Basin is an example of transboundary issues in North Africa. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), in particular, has caused concerns about water sharing and regional stability.⁵⁸ Effective management of transboundary water resources requires cooperation, dialogue, and legal frameworks that ensure equitable and sustainable use, as the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) advocates.⁵⁹

Drug trafficking and smuggling pose significant threats to governance, public health, and regional stability in North Africa. The findings align with the research of Peter Andreas and Ethan Nadelmann, who argue that drug trafficking networks are deeply entrenched and adaptable, exploiting weak state controls and political instability. The profits from drug trafficking often finance insurgent and terrorist groups, further destabilising the region.

The public health and social consequences of drug trafficking are severe, with rising addiction rates and associated social issues.⁶⁰ Studies on the global drug trade always highlight the multifaceted impacts of drug trafficking on societies, including increased crime, family breakdown, and social exclusion. Addressing these impacts requires comprehensive strategies that include education, prevention, treatment, and social reintegration programs.⁶¹

The smuggling of various illicit goods, including arms, fuel, pharmaceuticals, and consumer goods, undermines economic stability and fuels corruption in North Africa. Vanda Felbab-Brown's work on the economics of illicit trade underscores the significant financial impact of smuggling, which distorts market dynamics and deprives governments of tax revenues.⁶² This economic disruption can contribute to broader social and political instability, making it difficult for legitimate businesses to compete.

Experts such as Robert Klitgaard note that corruption is closely linked to smuggling. They argue that corruption erodes public trust in government and creates an environment where illicit

⁵⁸ Kendie, D. (1999). Egypt and the hydro-politics of the Blue Nile River. *Northeast African Studies*, 6(1/2), 141-169.

⁵⁹ International Water Management Institute (IWMI). (2007). *Water for food, water for life: A comprehensive assessment of water management in agriculture*. Earthscan. P. 13.

⁶⁰ Kerr, T., Small, W., & Wood, E. (2005). The public health and social impacts of drug market enforcement: A review of the evidence. *International journal of drug policy*, 16(4), 210-220.

⁶¹ Thachuk, K. L. (Ed.). (2007). *Transnational threats: smuggling and trafficking in arms, drugs, and human life*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA. P. 94.

⁶² Felbab-Brown, V. (2009). P. 120.



activities can thrive.⁶³ Strengthening governance and law enforcement institutions, improving transparency and accountability, and reducing opportunities for corruption are critical for combating smuggling. This requires coordinated efforts at national, regional, and international levels.⁶⁴

This sub-regional dialogue is part of the response to the challenges in North Africa that individual nations cannot solve and require effective partnership among all parties at a regional and international level. Security threats, say academics, are dealt with at the regional level and require global cooperation. In these challenges, the African Union, The European Union, and several international institutions are vital in assisting national and regional mechanisms. Key elements to successful strategies, again in the security area but also applicable beyond it, are strengthening legal frameworks by limiting opportunities for exploitation and raising barriers.⁶⁵

The findings also highlight the importance and necessity of addressing the root causes of non-traditional security threats. This includes tackling economic instability, political turmoil, and environmental degradation, as well as promoting good governance and sustainable development. Scholars like Amartya Sen argue that human security must be linked to broader development goals, including poverty reduction, economic diversification, and social justice.⁶⁶ Integrating security and development policies can provide a more comprehensive approach to addressing the complex security landscape in North Africa.

These findings have significant policy implications. Governments in North Africa need to prioritise comprehensive strategies that address both the symptoms and root causes of non-traditional security threats. This includes investing in economic development, improving governance, and enhancing regional cooperation. International partners can support these efforts through capacity building, technical assistance, and financial support. As noted by the World Bank,

⁶³ Klitgaard, R. (1988). *Controlling corruption*. University of California Press. P. 34.

⁶⁴ Karras, A. L. (2009). *Smuggling: Contraband and corruption in world history*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Pp. 79-80.

⁶⁵ Bendebka, R. (2021). Factors Shaping Regionalism in the Middle East and North Africa: A Classical Approach. *Academia Letters*.

⁶⁶ Sen, A. (2014). Development as freedom (1999). *The globalization and development reader: Perspectives on development and global change*, 525.



effective policy responses require a coordinated approach that integrates security, development, and governance initiatives.⁶⁷

Future research should continue to explore the interconnectedness of non-traditional security challenges in North Africa. Longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights into the evolving dynamics of these threats and the effectiveness of policy responses. Comparative studies with other regions facing similar challenges can offer valuable lessons and best practices. Engaging with local communities and incorporating their perspectives can enhance the relevance and impact of research findings.

Conclusion

Non-traditional security threats in North Africa are multidimensional and require an urgent reconsideration of traditional security paradigms. Illegal immigration, water scarcity, drug trafficking, and smuggling are urgent issues, closely linked to socio-economic, political, and environmental dynamics. These threats undermine governance structures, destabilise economies, and contribute to social unrest. Additionally, the region's importance on the global stage is accentuated by its strategic position, acting as a bridge between Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. A comprehensive strategy that integrates economic development, governance reforms, and environmental sustainability will be necessary to tackle these obstacles instead of piecemeal solutions.

These threats are best addressed through regional and international cooperation. These issues are transnational and require cooperation among North African states and their global stakeholders. Characteristically, organizations like the African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) are important in building solidarity, establishing cooperation for steps towards collective security and capacity building, and facilitating resource-sharing. In addition, regional governance needs to be fortified while law enforcement mechanisms need to be reformed. Irrigation facilities need to be built to control organized crime, illegal immigration, and the fight over scarce water resources.

A sustainable approach to security in North Africa focuses on an integrated strategy to tackle the roots of violent extremism, not just its symptoms. For instance, countries in the region

⁶⁷ Bendebka, R. (2019). Regionalism From Islamic Views: The Case of the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) Region. *Journal of Islamic Economics and Development*, 4(23), 23-35.



can benefit from the Algerian experience in doing so. Addressing poverty, unemployment, and corruption is integral to addressing the causes of instability, especially in countries like Libya, Egypt, and Sudan. Moreover, strengthening public health systems and improving water management with new solutions could help alleviate gaps in tackling non-traditional security threats. For the region to attain sustainable stability, it is crucial to bridge the gaps between security on the one hand and development and governance policies on the other.

The ability of the North African region to adjust to these new security realities will have considerable implications for its future stability. While addressing immediate issues, as outlined in this report, will alleviate short-term pressures on vulnerable groups and shift the focus toward developing multi-dimensional strategies. Integrating their local, regional, and broader global efforts will be critical to achieving peace, prosperity, and security for North Africa and its interdependent global neighbours.

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Responsibility to Protect as a Primary Institution of the International Society: Libya Case

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Abstract

The adoption of the Responsibility to Protect Report in 2005 by the UN World Summit was a promising step forward for the evolution of the international society in terms of prevention of mass atrocity crimes and the protection of the civilian people's rights suffering from these tragedies. For some, this move was/is a sign showing the transformation of the international society towards a solidarist one where the R2P would be widely internalized as one of the primary institutions of the society of states. Nevertheless, as the contemporary international practices and approaches against mass atrocity crimes in Myanmar, Rohingya like in many places around the world shows that the members of the international society do not consider the R2P as a main pillar for the survival of the international society. Libya case will show us the dilemma on the implementation of the R2P based on the features of the international society.

Key Words: *English School theory, international society, Responsibility to Protect, primary institutions, Libya intervention, humanitarian intervention*

Introduction

The subsequent humanitarian crises of the 1990s and mass atrocity crimes, which continue to be a global concern, marked an important era for the international relations discipline as it gave birth to new paradigms of research and new challenges to be faced. Even though concepts like sovereignty, intervention, international human rights protection were not new to be debated by international relations scholars, crises of the 90s gave rise to new practices and new principles to discuss, like the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). The latter finds its place within academic spheres and rarely in political decision-making processes; its status, within the international society, causes discussions at both theoretical and practical levels. With the aim of framing the place of R2P within international society, this paper will use English School theory's framework concerning the role of primary institutions of the society of states. Many scholars claim R2P to be

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one of the institutions of international society along with sovereignty, international law, diplomacy, and human rights, maintaining order and justice within the society of states, as well as providing for its survival. The adoption of the R2P report and many references made by a few UN General Assembly / UN Security Council resolutions may have been non-negligible efforts made by international society for the evolution of preventive mechanisms of mass atrocity crimes and the orderly and justly survived international society. However, there are also structural problems and sovereign interests concerns inherent to that same society, preventing R2P from becoming a primary institution. To explain the reasons behind this argument, this paper will first summarize the features of the international society that allowed the adoption of the R2P report. Then, it will discuss the institutionalisation of R2P and will focus on the causes of inconsistencies in the implementation of the R2P and structural problems that prevent R2P from becoming a primary institution of the international society. Libya case will be studied in this regard to open an empirical aspect to that debate to understand the leverage allowing the implementation of the R2P and the rapid clashes between the members of the international society during the responsibility implementation that signals the questionable status of the R2P as a primary institution through the lens of English School.

In discussing the institutionalization of R2P, the paper will ontologically be framed by the international society approach as defined by English School theory. First, the transformation of paradigms and the circumstances leading the international society members to adopt the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) report in 2005 will be evaluated, combining both the solidarity uniting the actors and the controversies born out of the inherent problems of the R2P itself. The next chapter will analyse the impact of the R2P on the transformation of the international society. The intervention in Libya in 2011 will help to show not only the reluctance of the international society to institutionalize the R2P but also increasing scepticism against the latter because of the mismanagement of the R2P operation in the field.

1. International Society of English School Theory

The concept of international society is one of the three systemic forms used by English School (ES) theory in explaining the nature of international relations. The



interaction between states, as the only condition of existence, results in the formation of an international system, which appears as the first level of analysis. The interaction between states refers to mutually influenced states by each other's behaviour, and in this sense, material capabilities play an important role.² This approach is closely related to the realism of Hobbes. On the other hand, world society, as the third form for the ES to explain international relations, necessitates the existence of common interests and common values between the members of the human community. The moral concerns of world society, such as demands for justice, protection of human rights, and development of international humanitarian law, are of primary importance.³ This understanding of international relations is rooted in Kantian cosmopolitan thought.

Although these systemic forms exist together in world politics, international society is the fundamental apparatus of the ES in its analysis of international relations. The classical definition of international society was done by Hedley Bull in the *Anarchical Society* as 'international society is composed of a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and values, bound by common rules and institutions'.⁴ This definition had been later enlarged by Bull in collaboration with Adam Watson as 'a group of states (or, more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established, by dialogue and consent, common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognise their common interest in maintaining these arrangements.'⁵ For an international society to exist there are three rules of coexistence: Security against violence, the respect of agreements and the stability of properties which refer to assuring the survival of the international society and the position of the sovereign states, the maintenance of both independence and the

² Tim Dunne, 'The English School', in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, Steve Smith (eds), *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 144-5.

³ Tim Dunne, 'System, state and society: How does it all hang together?', *Millenium: Journal of International Studies*, 2005, vol. 34, No. 1, p. 160.

⁴ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in world Politics*, (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 13.

⁵ Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, 'Introduction' in Bull and Watson (eds), *Expansion of International Society*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 1.



external sovereignty of states, the establishment of peace (in the sense of absence of war), the limitation of violence between states, the conformity to international agreements.⁶

Considering these features attributed to the international society, contemporary world politics and decision-making mechanisms of the United Nations (UN) system are proving the existence of such a community with the state sovereignty still at the top of international agenda, but with also common attempts to construct new rules to conform to and new values to share. This is where the normative conflict on the R2P institutionalisation became significant not only at the theoretical but also practical level.

1.1. The path towards the adoption of the R2P by the international society

The adoption of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) report marked one of the steps forward in extending the international society in the sense that it was an instrument served by the members of the society of states in the new conjuncture of the 2000s, challenging the supremacy of sovereignty concerns in the minds and acts of the members of international society. With the paradigms shifting at the end of the Cold War, an adaptation period was already needed, and the perpetration of mass atrocity crimes of the 1990s tested the capability of the international society to confront threats against international order and justice, and unfortunately revealed the incapacity to do so. The 1990s had successive humanitarian tragedies (Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo ...) that international society had to resolve, but failed to prevent or stop. The outbreak of a civil war in Somalia, followed by the collapse of the state, made it difficult to focus on international society's attention and concern. After huge civil deaths, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted resolution 794⁷, for the first time allowing the use of force for humanitarian purposes. In Rwanda, while the crime of genocide was being perpetrated, international society was reluctant to call it so and to act against it to protect civilian people. The inaction of the international society led to the death of thousands of hundreds of people, and the Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was established by the UN to prosecute and punish genocide perpetrators and was an attempt to contribute to

⁶ Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Suganami, *The English School of international relations: A contemporary reassessment*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 17-26.

⁷ Resolution 794 (1992) / adopted by the Security Council at its 3145th meeting, on 3 December 1992. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/154648?ln=en&v=pdf>



international justice. The unacceptable approach of the international society was similar during the Yugoslav Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo. Civilian people, victims of ethnic cleansing, did not receive immediate support from the members of the international society. The UN created the Criminal Tribunal for Ex-Yugoslavia with the same perspective it had after the Rwanda genocide. The Kosovo case was significant for the understanding of humanitarian intervention because, for the first time, NATO acted without UNSC authorization, which led to a new debate about the legality and the legitimacy of intervention.⁸

In these circumstances, international society became conscious of the fact that it has the obligation to develop new primary and secondary institutions in order to obtain the ability to prevent and stop mass atrocity crimes all around the world. The International Criminal Court (ICC) and similarly the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) are born in such an atmosphere as two remedies; however the shift of the international society for the protection of substantive values has not led to a transformation in the legal procedures that will regulate the way it responds when these values are challenged.⁹ Notably, the R2P remained in the political sphere, in other words, in sovereign exclusive areas of the state.

Although mass atrocity crimes, just war thinking, and military intervention were not new concepts that were born after the Cold War, the situation where international society fell into and the experiences it faced in the 1990s influenced deeply the path towards the adoption of new institutions. In this sense, R2P and ICC are two global normative and institutional developments in terms of fighting against mass atrocity crimes. R2P provides a normative framework for preventing and stopping mass atrocity crimes, while ICC is designed to punish perpetrators and deter future atrocities.¹⁰ The conventional approach to the role of the state actor, sovereign immunity, and its precedence over human rights was seriously challenged by the two normative initiatives. The divergence between pluralists and solidarists within the ES represents this precise

⁸ Fusun Turkmen, 'From Libya to Syria : The Rise and Fall of Humanitarian Intervention?', 2014 ACUNS Annual Meeting, 19-21 June 2014, Istanbul, pp. 4-6.

⁹ Jason Ralph and Adrian Gallagher, 'Legitimacy fault lines in international society: The responsibility to protect and prosecute after Libya', *Review of International Studies*, February 2015, pp. 6-7.

¹⁰ Kurt Mills, 'R2P and the ICC: at odds or in sync?', *Criminal Law Forum*, 26(1), 2015, 73-4.



disagreement about the priority of international order and justice, and the R2P finds its rightful place because of the challenges it absorbs.

The paradigm shifts of the new conjuncture after 2001 and the transformation of the international society made the preparation and then the adoption of the R2P possible. The release of the R2P report was just after the 11/09 terrorist attacks, when a counter-terrorism agenda, emphasizing the necessity and exceptional measures to be taken when human rights-related issues are at stake. The way the international community negotiated the exceptional measures and welcomed their instrumentalization was encouraging for the R2P's future, but it was also one of the primary reasons for the normative regress for the R2P, since it also fueled already existing suspicion about Western intentions in humanitarian intervention.¹¹ The leverage for preparing the R2P report was the common interest of the members of the international society was the fight against acts challenging state sovereignty. As the world was facing a global threat and the USA was promoting togetherness in its fight against international terrorism, international society was on a stage where there was a sensitivity about their survival and that of the international society. As a consequence, in those crisis times, survival became a supreme common interest of the members of the international society and thus provided a togetherness. In other words, the motives gathering states for the adoption of R2P and the objectives of these were not compatible with the content and aims of the report. Thus, the weakness of the institutionalisation of the R2P lies in this lack of internationalization of the norms and principles it entails.

In the context of post-11/09, even though some scepticism was valid against the Western world, the R2P report was considered as a way to unite international society's members against a common threat. Nevertheless, when the 20th anniversary of R2P adoption arrived, the success concerning its implementation is still debatable. Considering humanitarian tragedies and mass atrocity crimes in Myanmar, Yemen, Ukraine, Palestine and all around the world, the R2P is rarely mentioned in UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. This international society's reluctance to support the

¹¹ Jennifer M. Welsh, 'Norm contestation and the Responsibility to Protect', *Global Responsibility to Protect*, 5 (2013), p. 369.



adoption of R2P and to uphold its commitment to protect civilian victims of mass atrocity crimes can be attributed to a few factors, which do not excuse its inaction.

1.2. Pluralist-solidarist division within the ES guiding through understanding R2P's inherent dilemma

The dilemma between the quest for order and justice within the international society is also a debate among ES scholars having two different conceptions of international society, which Hedley Bull identified as pluralists and solidarists. To understand the resistance towards the R2P, avoiding it to become the heart of the international relations agenda, exploring the theoretical split of the ES would provide us with a guideline of analysis. Pluralist and solidarist ES scholars agree upon the existence of a society of states having a consensus on common values, rules, and institutions. Nevertheless, the two wings do not share the same perspective about the normative content of this society, mainly on three specific issues: the place of war in international society, the sources of international law, and the status of individuals.¹²

The divergence between the pluralist and solidarist wings of the ES is about the nature and the potentiality of international society, in Buzan's words, and particularly about the actual and potential extent of shared norms, rules, and institutions within the systems of states. The nature of international law draws the attention of the two wings and the conflict arises when it is to be decided if the rules should be embraced from natural law or positive law. This differentiation is essentially separating two wings when the humanitarian intervention topic is in focus. According to Buzan, pluralist conceptualization focuses on the realist side of rationalism and suggests that international society norms and rules should be formulated respecting positive law and thus made by states. The latter is the principal actor in international society, and its sovereignty has legal and political primacy. Pluralists argue that international society is created upon the acceptance of a plurality of actors, thus believing in the preservation of cultural differences. This approach insists on the act of allowing each nation and state to develop

¹² Quoted by Alex Bellamy, 'Humanitarian Responsibilities and Interventionist Claims in International Society', *Review of International Studies*, vol 29, No 3, (jul. 2003), p. 323, from Hedley Bull, 'The Grotian Conception of International Society', in Martin Wight and Herbert Butterfield (eds), *Diplomatic Investigations* & Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society*.



its way of life. This plurality makes international society a type of community where states share a limited concern for the international order necessary for coexistence in an anarchic world, and in this, agreements are a tool for mutual recognition of sovereignty, respect for diplomatic rules, and promotion of the non-intervention principle. In other words, the normative content of a pluralist international society is limited to a mutual interest in the continued existence of the units comprising the society. In this sense, for states that are unable to agree about substantive issues like redistributive justice, the international society plays an instrumental role in avoiding disorder and concerns about survival.¹³

Meanwhile, the solidarist wing resides on the Kantian side of rationalism, claiming that concerns about human rights protection are necessary for international society. According to solidarists, international society cannot be limited to playing a functional role for the international order, rather, it should embrace shared norms and institutions for further political convergence. The solidarist conception of international society argues that diverse communities can reach an agreement about substantive moral standards and that international society has moral agency to uphold those standards. Solidarist thinkers focus on the normative framework to understand what states should do and what norms should be part of international society, and also on the empirical view to analyse what states do and what norms are becoming part of international society. The use of force in such a society will be considered legitimate only if it is an 'act of law enforcement' that can either be for the defence of a state (collective security) or the upholding of the society's moral purpose. In this sense, Buzan claims that a solidarist understanding of international order is inevitably more interventionist and its ties together state and non-state actors and focuses on cosmopolitan notions of individual rights. As a consequence, solidarists claim that there is agreement among the members of the

¹³ Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society: English School Theory and Social Structure of Globalization*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 45-7 & Alex Bellamy, 'Interventionist International Society', p. 323.



international society on the extreme cases of human suffering constitute a humanitarian emergency and thus a legitimate exception to the rule of non-intervention.¹⁴

One can claim that pluralist conception is a minimalist international society which led the scholars to be sceptical about the legitimacy and efficacy of humanitarian intervention. Their approach lies in the belief that there is no existent or possible agreement about what an emergency abuse of human rights is. They do not see any prospect for a consensus because they think that human rights are not universal and are specific to the cultural context. Therefore, proposals for universal ethics are always culturally biased.¹⁵

Pluralists advance the idea that even though globalisation and human rights regime have gained an impact since several decades and that state behaviour is more and more influenced by international society, the lack of a supreme regulatory mechanism undermines the effectiveness of this regime. This idea is related to ES theory's understanding of international society framed by anarchy. The compliance to international law and the respect for human rights stay as a matter for states to decide. This is why solidarists react with a cosmopolitan responsibility norm and they claim that for universal rights to be universally ensured, international society must be ready to intervene in the domestic affairs of one of its members. Thus, humanitarian intervention concept has become one of the most controversial issues in international relations, at the centre of the sovereignty-responsibility debate.¹⁶

The adoption of the R2P report at the UN World Summit Outcome Document in 2005 was a sign for the international society to move forward in becoming a more solidarist one, lying on the cooperation model to bring up new concepts and rules in the name of protecting civilian human rights against mass atrocity crimes. However, 20 years passed since the adoption of the R2P report showed that the members of the international society were still insisting to maintain the pluralist model prevailing the protection of

¹⁴ Buzan, *From International to World Society*, pp. 47-8 & Alex Bellamy, 'Interventionist Claim in International Society', pp. 324-5.

¹⁵ Alex Bellamy, 'Humanitarian responsibilities', p. 324.

¹⁶ Christian Bundegeard, 'The Normative Divide in International Relations', DIIS Working Paper, 2010:27, p. 12.



sovereignty, considered as essential for the order. The tendency of the international society towards remaining a pluralist one was also supported by the ambiguities inherent in the R2P report itself.

According to Jennifer Welsh, former UN Secretary General's Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, there are three main problems of the report itself. The first is the fact that the R2P of the international society is designed to be triggered in the case of large scale of loss of life, whether real or apprehended. In this sense, there was no clarity about the conditions of an international action. A second problem consisted of the source of international responsibility, whether it was derived from international law or morality. (Insisting on moral principles though in order to not be engaged by binding legal obligations) And the third problem consisted of to which entity the responsibility was accorded. (It was the international community in general.)¹⁷

Considering the features of the international society, the first problem revealed by Welsh implies the existence of a loophole in the report.

*"In the Commission's view, military intervention for human protection purposes is justified in two broad sets of circumstances, namely in order to halt or avert: large scale loss of life, actual or apprehended, with genocidal intent or not, which is the product either of deliberate state action, or state neglect or inability to act, or a failed state situation; or large scale "ethnic cleansing," actual or apprehended, whether carried out by killing, forced expulsion, acts of terror or rape. If either or both of these conditions are satisfied, it is our view that the "just cause" component of the decision to intervene is amply satisfied."*¹⁸

Whereas the identification of crimes targeted by the report is an attempt to clarify the conditions in which the R2P should be implemented, the emphasis on large scale loss of life avoids a consistent and objective implementation for two main reasons. First of all, international society is left to decide on the number of dead civilian worth to take action to stop mass atrocity crimes. This arbitrary decision making is leading to another problem that is of selectivity problem. Considering the anarchical nature of the international

¹⁷ Welsh, 'Norm contestation', p. 371.

¹⁸ Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 'The Responsibility to Protect', December 2001, p. 32, available at: { <http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf> }, accessed at 16 September 2020.



society, the states were given the possibility to act arbitrarily, which cause an inconsistency in the international action, which further strengthens the scepticism towards R2P.

This is closely related to the source problem of the R2P, whether it is international law or morality. International law is one of the primary institutions of the international society guaranteeing its orderly survival. However, the adoption of the R2P did not accord a legal status so the states had/have not the obligation to take the legal engagement. In other words, the R2P is left to an arbitrary interpretation by each international actor. Nevertheless, the very basis of the reasons behind the adoption of this report was the obligations emanating from the human rights regime. Arguing that the R2P is lacking a legal aspect would not be 100% right in the sense that it is founded on the basic human rights protection already having a legal status. Although the military intervention pillar's conditions of the R2P are not clarified by the report, the international society's anarchic structure and the state supremacy seem to be the more important causes of the so-called failure of the R2P.

The third problem on the entity that would trigger the implementation of the R2P. The report emphasizes the role of the UNSC as the only competent body to decide on military intervention. Nevertheless, before coming to that stage, the prevention methods have a large spectrum, from economic sanctions to diplomatic negotiations. The role of individual initiatives and the NGOs that are working ambitiously on the protection of civilians in the scope of the R2P are not emphasized by the report. However, these efforts are crucially important for the internalization of the R2P by the international society to push it into shared values and principles by the members and to promote the legalization of it by states. Even though ES prevails state actor as its primary analysis level, non-state actors have as much as a role for the functioning of not only international order but also international justice.

These problems are causing a lack of trust in the R2P and according to Welsh, the war against Iraq in 2003 was also an obstacle for the development of the R2P because of preventive war approach of Bush's USA. Preventive war was a challenge for both the UN and existing international law. It raised concerns about the western approach for the



conditions of recourse to force. A second negative impact of the Iraq war is due to the declarations of Tony Blair and Michael Ignatieff grounding the war on the humanitarian basis (which was initially taken to fight against weapons of mass destruction) empowered developing countries' suspicion on whether R2P was a new name for the old practice of western interventionism.¹⁹

As a matter of fact, R2P remains as a political commitment rather than a legal obligation, and Summit Outcome Document represents a form of soft law like J. Welsh claims. There is no new legal obligation created for states, and it does not create any new international mechanism or authority to undertake executive action. Rather it presents a new interpretation of existing rules by underlying normative understandings about domestic and international conduct.²⁰ States are reluctant to get engaged with legally binding rules, which avoids the prevention of violation of human rights all around the world. The fact that the R2P remains in the political domain results not only in the selectivity of the decision of the international society but also in its delay and determinacy of its decisions on humanitarian tragedies. According to the international society understanding of the ES, states are conscious of their common interests and common values and that they are bound by common rules. As Hedley Bull posits, international law is one of the instruments of the international society assuring the order. These show us the need to have codified rules for legal clarity about when and how the international society should be able to prevent, react and end mass atrocities and protect the victims.

Usually, UNSC's functioning is considered the main reason for the inadequacy of R2P and ICC to prevent mass atrocities. The increase in civil war numbers and the severity of tragedies during the 1990s would be attached to the failure of the UNSC, two important sights were evoked by Hehir: the influence of politics on decision making at the Security Council and the lack of standing military force capable of being deployed to intervene. The UNSC is the only mechanism of the international society to have the

¹⁹ Welsh, 'Norm contestation', p. 370.

²⁰ Welsh, 'Norm contestation', p. 377.



competence to authorize the use of military force and to refer states that are not a party to the Rome Statute to the ICC.²¹

2. What is the Status of the R2P for the International Society?

In ES thinking, there are primary and secondary institutions that are maintaining international order, thus the international society: balance of power, diplomacy, international law, war, and great powers as enumerated by Bull in *Anarchical Society*. The perspective shaped by institutions is at the heart of ES thinking because these help to understand the substantive content of international society, in Buzan's words. The institutions evolved over history and are diversified by different ES scholars. However, as a fundamental role, international society's institutions are durable practices.²² The institutions do not stay the same, and according to Wight, they depend on the nature of the international society, so each international society has its institutions and does not distinguish between primary and secondary institutions. According to him, besides sovereignty, international law, balance of power that are distinctive to European international society, diplomacy, trade, religious sites among others, are also institutions of the international society.²³

ES scholars had and still have different perceptions of the institutions depending on their pluralist or solidarist inclinations, as well as their choice of analysis framework. Whereas Mayall defended international law as being the master institution (2000:94), Robert Jackson argued that sovereignty was the principal institution of the society of states.²⁴ International organizations are usually accepted as secondary institutions and according to Knudsen, especially the UN system transformed deeply fundamental pluralist institutions' functioning towards a more solidarist one. This argument claims that war as an institution was transformed by the rule of non-use of force, leaving the ground for a legitimate use for the common good that represents a solidarist appreciation of war. Likewise, the great power management is institutionalized by the UN system by creating

²¹ Aidan Hehir, *The Responsibility to protect*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012), p. 217, cited by Kirsten Ainley, 'The responsibility to protect and the International Criminal Court: counteracting the crisis', *International Affairs*, 91 : I (2015), pp. 37-40.

²² Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society*, pp. 161-7.

²³ Buzan, *From international to world society*, 168-9.

²⁴ Buzan, *From international to world society*, pp. 170-3.



a collective, mutual restraint, and coordination system between the great powers. That also transformed the balance of power practices from an arms race, competition to the collective management of international order and justice. International law is likewise influenced by the UN system, as it is the most developed and effective instrument for the collective enforcement of international law, according to Knudsen. Last but not least, a final appreciation is about the evolution of human rights and duties supported by the UN, which also endorsed the development of a solidarist international society.²⁵

2.1. Did the R2P transform the international society towards becoming a solidarist one?

The R2P report certainly brings a new perspective on considerations of sovereignty as a new potential institution of international society. Humanitarian objectives of the report, at the expense of supremacy of sovereignty in times of mass atrocity crimes, were promising for those who were reading international politics through a solidarist approach. Mutual recognition of sovereignty persisted as a norm of international society, and R2P was born as a will to prevent mass atrocity crimes. Thus, R2P was perceived as the continuation of the institutionalization process of international society.²⁶

The R2P report was included in the Outcome Document of the 2005 high-level UN World Summit 2005, transforming the discussion on humanitarian intervention. According to the ICISS report, the norm of humanitarian intervention should not be addressed through 'whether or not' to intervene anymore, but the international society must focus on 'how' to intervene. Another transformation came with a new approach to sovereignty. The sovereignty definition of the report emphasized the “responsible sovereignty” aspect instead of conventional “immune sovereignty”. And this responsibility entailed/entails state responsibility to protect not only its own people but also suffering people of third countries. Nevertheless, the responsible sovereignty was not accepted as a general norm.

²⁵ Knudsen, 'Fundamental institutions and international organizations: Solidarist architecture', in T. B. Knudsen and C. Navari (eds), *International Organization in the Anarchical Society*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 180-4.

²⁶ Knudsen, 'Fundamental', pp. 186-9.



The World Summit clarified that R2P would only be applied against four atrocity crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing. With this document, the UN committed itself to authorise the use of force to stop mass atrocities, without the consent of the targeted state, and this on a case-by-case basis.²⁷

In 2009, when Ban Ki-Moon, the then Secretary General of the UN published a report identifying three pillars of the R2P: 1) States have the primary responsibility to protect their people from mass atrocities; 2) The international community has a responsibility to assist states in this regard; 3) The international community has a responsibility to use a variety of means – diplomatic, humanitarian, and military to protect people when the state fails to carry out its responsibilities.²⁸ The responsibility to protect civilian people from mass atrocity crimes (genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and war crimes) lays primarily on the state. However, the international community has the responsibility to assist the state to fulfil its responsibility and it should address to peaceful means (diplomatic, economic and humanitarian) to protect populations. In the case a state fails to protect its population, or a state itself commits the above crimes, the international community could address to recourse to force against the state in question, only with the UNSC authorization. It appears that there are structural problems in this statement, because of the limitation of the responsibility to four crimes and the slippery ground of peaceful means. There are questions that emerged like who will decide the peaceful means are sufficiently made use of, how actors will decide when to implement the tools of R2P (mainly military ones) or why such a critical decision is conceded to five permanent members of the UNSC? Since the adoption of the R2P report, although there are attempts to bring the R2P to international agenda, with also attempts to extend and clarify the content of it, these steps did not resolve structural problems of the R2P allowing the permanent members of the UNSC to act arbitrarily and to calm down the widespread scepticism against the mechanisms of the R2P. Although these steps cannot be ignored as positively held to move the international society to a solidarist one, these are not yet enough to realise this idea. This was clearly seen in the intervention in

²⁷ Mills, 'R2P and the ICC', p. 1.

²⁸ Mills, 'R2P and the ICC', pp. 1-2.



Libya in 2011 when a promising implementation of the R2P took place. The international response was decided surprisingly fast, but the clashes emerged at the same speed among the members of the international society.

When the implementation of a responsibility is at stake, concerns about the limits of this responsibility emerge even though the report defines the dimensions of responsibility in its own context. In times of failure of states to protect civilians from four atrocity crimes, the report accorded responsibility to the international society. The responsibility in cause entailed three dimensions: the responsibility to prevent atrocities, the responsibility to react when mass atrocity crimes are committed, and the responsibility to rebuild when these atrocities are stopped.²⁹ However, the transformation was only viable in the discourse, as the examples showed that the conventional attitude of the international society has not changed about the inviolability of the immune state sovereignty. According to Bull, the normative reflection of sovereignty is the supremacy over the population within a territory at the domestic level and in the form of independence towards other external authorities at the international level.³⁰ Also, these are sovereign states that make and interpret international rules, and make these legitimate via their actions and decisions. They are also responsible for the protection of these rules, which are designed to sustain the order.³¹ The sovereign state still remains as the fundamental unit of international society, defined as an independent political community, dotted by a government and sovereignty over a territory and population. The strong attachment to state sovereignty avoids the fulfillment of international responsibility in the name of civilian human rights at the expense of sovereign rights.

However, the R2P doctrine claims that sovereignty must assure security against mass atrocity crimes. Sovereignty as responsibility was clearly accorded to the sovereign state to protect its own population. The initialization and operationalization of any decisions related to R2P were that of sovereign states; in case of its failure, the international community is supposed to take the responsibility. However, this

²⁹ Mills, 'R2P and the ICC', p. 1.

³⁰ Bull, *Anarchical Society*, pp. 8-9.

³¹ Bull, *Anarchical Society*, pp. 68-71.



international responsibility did not replace state sovereignty rights as the collective action is assured by the permanent members of the UN Security Council and it would be initialized on a case-by-case basis using diplomatic, humanitarian and forceful means if necessary.³² Even though the UN Security Council is doted by a competence to adopt a resolution consisting of the use of necessary measures in order to stop or prevent a mass atrocity crime, it is not the efficient mechanism for R2P, firstly, because of the voting system causing an obstacle to an adequate implementation of the R2P. The UNSC permanent member system, as well as the voting procedures, already subject to discussions among the members of the society of states, reveal scepticism which is widely shared by non-Western countries against selective decisions made by the USA, Russia, China, France and the UK and the inconsistency in their reactions towards similar humanitarian tragedies in the world.

The limitation of mass atrocity crimes to four major ones to be addressed by R2P helped to convince sceptical states to accept the report, because according to constructivists, the institutionalization, particularly the legalization, provides greater specificity to norms, helping thus to dampen contestation and facilitate states' adherence. Although Sarah Percy does not share this approach advanced by Martha Finnemore and Katherine Sikkink and claims that legalization can also undermine a norm's progress if greater specificity amplifies particularly contentious aspects of the norm.³³ These four crimes had also been identified by Rome Statute (1998) and the Constitutive Act of the African Union (2001) and this expressed limitation assured sceptic states that R2P would be implemented in exceptional cases. Especially non-Western states were reluctant to trust the objectives of R2P because of the fear that the latter would erode sovereignty and authorize arbitrary intervention, mainly by Western countries. The condition that any use of force in the name of R2P should be decided by the UN Security Council aimed to resolve the problem of the 'proper authority' question of the ICISS report³⁴, however it

³² Welsh, 'Norm contestation', pp. 373-4.

³³ Welsh, 'Norm contestation', p. 374. Welsh quoted Martha Finnemore and Katherine Sikkink, 'International norm dynamics and political change', *International Organization*, 52/4, 1998, pp. 887-917 & Sarah Percy, 'Mercenaries: Strong norm, weak law', *International Organization*, 61/2, 2007, pp. 367-397.

³⁴ Welsh, 'Norm contestation', pp. 374-6.



did not, considering the UNSC structure and the scepticism against the will of its members.

2.2. Libya Case and a Response to the Non-Institutional Aspect of the R2P

The R2P became concretely visible when the international society decided to intervene in the Libyan civil war in 2011. The crisis in Libya was caused following democratic aspirations of 'Arab Spring' movements started in Tunisia in 2011 and it was responded by a brutal reaction of the Gadhafi regime against civilian protestors. In a timely and decisive way, as was anticipated by the R2P report, the UNSC adopted two consecutive resolutions, RES1970 and RES1973, to prevent further atrocities and stop the violence committed by the regime towards the Libyan people.

By its first resolution, RES1970, the UNSC referred the case to the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the significance of it hinges upon the fact that the international society completed its responsibility to protect by its responsibility to prosecute.³⁵ In this framework, RES 1970 was a sign that the UNSC members were following their commitment to the 2005 Outcome Document and that the quest for justice was prevailing over the protection of sovereign rights. This perception was reinforced by a second resolution, RES1973. The specificity of the RES1973 was due to UNSC authorization to recourse to force against Libya, a sovereign government recognized and a member of the UN, to protect the civilian population. The resolutions in question were promising for the future of humanitarian action and were considered promising for the evolution of both the R2P and solidarity within international society.

The Libya intervention was a further step for the R2P to be operationalized but was contested by most of the members of the Security Council. In 2011, the Brazilian government suggested revising the R2P as 'responsibility while protecting', emphasizing the international community's non-military options for implementing the norm, limiting the recourse to force as a last resort, and strengthening the accountability of those who act militarily on behalf of the Council. Even though this initiative did not come to an end,

³⁵ Carrie Booth Walling, *All Necessary Measures: The United Nations and Humanitarian Intervention*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 234-5.



it is important to show that the debate is still alive concerning the role of protection of the international society would be activated.³⁶

The Libya intervention is a representative case for the mutual evolution of international society and humanitarian intervention. Resolutions 1970 and 1973 indicated the determination of the international society to take its responsibility towards suffering peoples. Nevertheless, even though international society has evolved concerning its approach in favour of human rights, it is hard to claim that the international society had been radically transformed with the adoption of the R2P report. Remarks have to be made on many facilitating elements for the society of states to adopt those resolutions; at regional level like the Arab League or the African Union's support for such an intervention; efforts at individual level must be noticed like that of Navi Pillay (ex-president of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda). In the meantime, at domestic level, there were also Libya's particularities, which differentiated it from previous humanitarian intervention cases: the evident call by Colonel Gadhafi to mass killings, the negative human rights protection record of the Libya regime, the lack of international alliances, and the support to terrorism by the regime, rich petrol resources, weak army structure...

Promising resolutions 1970 and 1973 were also challenged by the reaction by Russia, particularly by Vladimir Putin to condemn the abstention of Medvedev in voting, as well as the reaction of the Arab League and African Union members becoming sceptical about the humanitarian purposes of the intervention because of the regime change in the country. The political contestation after the Libya intervention, over regime change and the use of protection of civilian mandate, are the symptoms, according to Ralph and Gallagher, of a perceived legitimacy deficit in the ordering structure of international society, which also influenced the Syria crisis.³⁷

Even though at the beginning of the Libya crisis and international society's response to it was promising for the consideration of the R2P as a primary institution, the reactions just after the military intervention along with the inability to deal with the

³⁶ Welsh, 'Norm contestation', p. 367.

³⁷ Ralph and Gallagher, 'Legitimacy faultlines' pp. 1-2.



domestic war in Libya showed that that was not the case. The failure of the Libya intervention in terms of stopping the violence in the country caused reluctance for the implementation of R2P in countries where mass atrocity crimes are committed, like it is the case in Syria, Myanmar, Mali... The R2P is still not internalized as a primary institution that is primordial for the survival of the international society, thus, it is not accepted as a tool to maintain the international society by its members.

The war in Libya between the Libyan National Army under Khalifa Haftar and the UN-backed government of National Accord (2015) under Fayeze Al-Sarraj necessitated an active decision-making of the UNSC enforcing sanctions to all parties damaging the peace process. Although the peace talks took place and international calls for a humanitarian ceasefire to address the Covid-19 pandemic are done, the fighting continued with extrajudicial killings, torture, abductions, attacks on civilian areas, human trafficking and abuses of asylum seekers and immigrants.³⁸ Although the intervention in Libya was a demonstration of rarely seen unity among the members of international society, these actors did not focus on the search for a comprehensive solution to the war. Instead of assisting political institutions, created by the Libyan Political Agreement, that failed to forge a consensus in the country, depending on their interests, foreign states sided with one of the rival groups, which deteriorated the situation in the country.³⁹

Libya intervention was framed in the context of the R2P and according to Hehir and Pattison, the Arab Spring was the concept's most exacting test and prompted a further spike in interest in both its efficacy and desirability. Arab Spring revealed the necessity of Pillar I, which highlights the responsibility of the state to protect its own population from genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The concerned countries may have failed in their responsibility, which put forward the Pillar II that asks for the responsibility of the international community by assisting the capacity building of the state in question. But most importantly, Pillar III was on the table, consisting of a

³⁸ Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, R2P Monitor, Issue 52, 15 July 2020, p. 18, available at: { http://www.globalr2p.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/R2P_Monitor_JULY2020_Final.pdf }, accessed on 29 July 2020.

³⁹ Tarek Megerisi, 'Libya's Global Civil War', Policy Brief, European Council on Foreign Relations, June 2019, p. 3.



timely and decisive response of the international community. In Libya, Pillar III was implemented by the international society; nevertheless, neither the civil war in Libya nor the conflicts and mass atrocity crimes in the region and elsewhere have the same timely and decisive action being taken.⁴⁰

Conclusion

Looking back at 2005, this step was considered a transformative one both for the fundamental principles of the international society and the development of the international human rights regime. Nevertheless, the last 15 years showed, if not totally, but partially, that these were not the cases. Structural problems of the R2P, but most importantly, the deep commitment to the state sovereignty principle by state members of the international society, prevented R2P from becoming a consistent and primary institution of the international society.

On International Justice Day, 17th of July, 2020, the UN Human Rights Council adopted its first thematic resolution on the R2P, an important endorsement for the internationalization of the R2P on its 15th anniversary. During the talks of this resolution Ambassador of Australia, H. E. Mansfield, stated that "R2P does not undermine sovereignty. It instead reminds that it comes with a fundamental responsibility to protect its population from atrocity crimes".

Since its adoption, international society has developed new normative and legal safeguards for international human rights protection. R2P provided a guideline to international society to prevent and stop mass atrocity crimes. It is clear that the international community is facing an unprecedented rise in the global population in need of humanitarian assistance, which makes the implementation and efficacy of the R2P primordial.⁴¹ On 4th of September (2020), the UN General Assembly voted for the inclusion of the R2P on the draft agenda of UNGA with 121 votes in favour, 13 against and 32 abstentions.

⁴⁰ Aidan Hehir and James Pattison, 'Introduction: The Responsibility to Protect after the Arab Spring', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 2016, Vol. 51(2), pp. 141-2.

⁴¹ Adrian Gallagher, Charles T. Hunt and Cecilia Jacob, 'Editorial: A New Era of GR2P', *Global Responsibility to Protect*, 12 (2020), pp. 5-6.



Examples all around the world, in Palestine, Darfur, Myanmar, Ukraine and many others are showing that when state sovereignty concerns are at stake, the protection of civilian rights from mass atrocity crimes are left behind by the members of the international society. In these circumstances, even though, there is a huge evolution in the protection of human rights, it is difficult to claim that R2P is one of the primary institutions of the international society. The protection of human rights is still not considered as one of the main pillars for the survival of the international society, which causes international inaction and voluntary ignorance of humanitarian crises. As long as the prevention and halt of mass atrocity crimes, as well as the punishment of those responsible of these tragedies, are not considered as of primary importance for the maintenance of international society and not internalized allowing a quick and consistent response, R2P cannot be labelled as a primary institution of the international society. The status of R2P depends on the transformation of the approaches towards sovereignty and humanitarian protection to go beyond the political will expressed by the international society. What has to be changed for this purpose is stated by Simon Adams perfectly when he spoke on Al Jazeera about Russia's attempt to avoid essential UN aid to desperate Syrians in the north, "the cruel politicization of humanitarian aid".

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21. Yüzyılda Suriye’de Su Güvenliđi¹

Derya Sürmelioglu Parlar²

Arda Özkan³

Öz

Siyasi, ekonomik ve toplumsal etkileriyle su güvensizliđi, Suriye’nin önemli siyasi sorun alanlarından birini oluşturmaktadır. Ülkede suyu güvenlik sorunu haline getiren farklı etmenler bulunmakla beraber 21. yüzyılda Akdeniz bölgesinde etkileri daha fazla hissedilen iklim deđişikliđi ile 2010’da bölgede vukuu bulan ve Suriye’yi etkisi altına alan Arap Baharı, su sorununu ülkede daha görünür hale getirmiştir. Çalışmada 21. yüzyılda Suriye’de suyu güvenlik sorunu haline getiren unsurların neler olduđunun belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Gerek iklim deđişikliđinin gerekse Arap Baharı’nın su güvensizliđi yaratarak yalnızca suya erişim noktasında deđil ekonomik kalkınma, gıda güvenliđi, sađlık güvenliđi, nihai olarak insani güvenlik üzerinde doğrudan olumsuz sonuçlar doğurduđu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu şekilde 21. yüzyılda Suriye’de suyun ciddi güvenlik sorunu haline geldiđi, bu durumun devam edeceđi, bu nedenle su sorununun Suriye’nin öncelikli politika hedef ve stratejileri arasında yer alması gerektiđi vurgulanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Su Güvenliđi, Suriye’de Su, İklim Deđişikliđi, Suriye İç Savaşı.

Water Security in Syria in the 21st Century

With its political, economic and social impacts, water insecurity constitutes one of the most important political problem areas in Syria. Although there are different factors that make water a security problem in the country, climate change, whose effects are felt more in the Mediterranean region in the 21st century, and the Arab Spring, which took place in the region in 2010 and affected Syria, have made the water problem more visible in the country. This study aims to identify the factors that make water a security problem in Syria in the 21st century. It has been revealed that both climate change and the Arab Spring have created water insecurity with direct negative consequences not only on access to water, but also on economic development, food security, health security, and ultimately human security. In this way, it is emphasized that water has become a serious security problem in Syria in the 21st century, this situation will continue, and for this reason, the water problem should be among the priority policy goals and strategies of Syria.

¹ Bu makale, 17-18 Ekim 2024 tarihlerinde Ankara Üniversitesi tarafından düzenlenen VIII. Mülkiye Uluslararası İlişkiler Kongresi Bildiriler Kitabında yayınlanan "İklim Deđişikliđinin Suriye’nin Su Güvenliđine Etkisi" başlıklı özet metnin genişletilmiş halidir.

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Keywords: *Water Security, Water in Syria, Climate Change, Syrian Civil War.*

Giriş

Çevresel güvenliği tehdit eden ve devletler arasında çatışma çıkarabilecek en muhtemel kaynak sudur.⁴ Su, ekosistemdeki tüm canlıların yaşamları süresince hem onları doğrudan etkileyen hem de kendisine bağlayan vazgeçilmez bir kaynaktır. Su, insanlar için yalnızca biyolojik bir ihtiyaç değildir, aynı zamanda sosyo-ekonomik ve kültürel yaşamın da özüdür. Fakat, hayati önemi haiz olan bu kaynak, dünyada sınırlı miktarda bulunmaktadır. Buna karşın, güncel ekonomik gelişmeler ve nüfusun hızla artması, bir yandan su kaynağına ihtiyaç olan talebi artırmakta, diğer taraftan da gittikçe azalan su rezervlerini tehdit etmektedir.⁵ Dünyanın sıcaklığının artmaya devam etmesiyle birlikte, su kaynaklarına ilişkin zararlı etkiler beklenir hale gelmektedir.⁶ Gelecek birkaç on yıldan sonraki büyük değişikliklerin kapsamı, gezegenin hassasiyetine ve küresel çapta sera gazı emisyonlarının miktarına bağlıdır.⁷ Nitekim, su krizine sebebiyet veren olaylar yalnızca talepte meydana gelen artışlarla ilgili değildir, su arzında da büyük dalgalanmalar yaşanmıştır. Bunun başlıca nedeni, 21. yüzyılın en önemli çevresel krizlerinden biri olan iklim değişikliği sorunudur. Birleşmiş Milletler (BM) Hükümetlerarası İklim Değişikliği Paneli'nin (*Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - IPCC*) 2021'de yayınladığı rapor (küresel ısınma sonucu oluşacak sera gazı emisyon senaryoları), dünyadaki ortalama sıcaklıkların önümüzdeki 20 yılda yaklaşık 1,5 derece artacağını göstermektedir. Bu artış beraberinde dünyanın su döngüsünden büyük değişimler oluşturacak, fazla yağışlı bölgeler daha fazla yağış alacak ve kurak bölgeler daha fazla kuraklık çekecektir.⁸

Suyun güvenli hale getirilmesini konu alan su güvenliği, toplumların içme ve kullanma suyuna erişim imkânını sürdürme kapasitesiyle ilgili bir kavramdır. Küresel ölçekte yaşanan

⁴ Thomas H. Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases-Part 1". International Security, Peace and Conflict Studies Program. University of Toronto. 19 (1), Summer 1994, <http://www.homerdixon.com/projects/evidence/evid1.htm> (10.07.2024).

⁵ Selim Kılıç, "Küresel İklim Değişikliği Sürecinde Su Yönetimi". *İstanbul Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*. 39, Kasım 2011: 161-162.

⁶ Water Calculator. The Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources. 2018, <https://www.watercalculator.org/wateruse/climate-change-water-resources/> (08.09.2024).

⁷ NASA. "The Effects of Climate Change". 28 Ağustos 2019. <https://climate.nasa.gov/effects/> (12.10.2024).

⁸ IPCC. "AR6 Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis". <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/> (10.11.2024).



iklim değışikliğı ile alakalı tüm veriler, durumun giderek kötüleşeceğini ve iyileştirici önlemler alınmadığı takdirde su sorununun daha da ciddileşeceğini dile getirmektedir.⁹ Dünyanın birçok bölgesinde su güvenliği, ekonomik büyüme ve nüfusun hızla artmasından kaynaklanan su kıtlığı; kuraklık ve taşkın gibi aşırı hava olaylarından kaynaklanan iklim değışikliğı; kara ve su ekosistemlerinin bozulması gibi unsurların birleşimi sebebiyle tehdit altında bulunmaktadır. Yıllar içinde bu tür tehditlere cevaplarla ilgili birçok üst düzey kavram ve ilke ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu görüşler arasında sürdürülebilir kalkınma kavramı, su kaynaklarının sınırlı olduğunun kabul edilmesi, suya ilişkin insan hakkı, arzın artırılmasından talep yönetimine geçiş gereksinimi, suyun ekonomik değeri ve su yönetiminde sivil toplumun rolü gibi konular yer almaktadır. Bu görüşleri bünyesinde bulunduran üst düzey ilkeler, 2000 tarihli BM Bin Yıl Kalkınma Hedefleri ve 2015 tarihli BM Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Amaçları gibi uluslararası kurum ve kuruluşlar tarafından yayınlanan birçok belgede kabul edilmiştir.¹⁰

Nüfus artışı, sosyo-ekonomik gelişmeler ve değışen tüketim alışkanlıklarının bir araya gelmesiyle su kullanımı, 1980'lerden bu yana dünya çapında her yıl yaklaşık % 1 oranında artmaktadır. Küresel su talebinin 2050 yılına kadar benzer bir oranda artmaya devam etmesi ve esas olarak endüstri ve ev sektörlerinde artan talep nedeniyle mevcut su kullanımı seviyesinin % 20-30 üzerinde bir artışa yol açması beklenmektedir. Su talebi arttıkça ve iklim değışikliğinin etkileri yoğunlaştıkça stres seviyeleri de artmaya devam edecektir.¹¹ İklim değışikliğinin ortaya çıkardığı su güvensizliği ve su kaynaklı olayların enerji üretimi, tarım, su kaynaklı hastalıklar gibi toplumsal sonuçları olmakta, bu durum savunmasız insanları daha fazla etkilemektedir. Su mevcudiyeti ile ilgili tehditler insan kaynaklı iklim değışikliğı sorununa bağlanmakta; iklim değışikliğinin ise su kıtlığını arttırarak ve insanların seller ve kuraklıklar gibi su kaynaklı aşırı olaylara maruz bırakılarak su güvenliğinin fiziksel görünümünü etkilediğı, siyasal, toplumsal ve ekonomik nedenlere bağlı olarak artan su kırılganlığını kötüleştirdiğı ve bazı ülkelerde ciddi toplumsal sonuçlara yol açacak şekilde su döngüsünü etkilediğı ifade

⁹ Çiğdem Tuğaç. "İklim Güvenliği Açısından Su Kaynaklarının Yönetimi". *Çağdaş Yerel Yönetimler*. 23 (3), Temmuz 2014: 19-20.

¹⁰ Roger Falconer ve Arthur Mynett. "Introduction to Global Water Security". *International Association for Hydro-Environment Engineering and Research (IAHR)*. 2022, <https://www.iahr.org/library/infor?pid=20699> (12.08.2024).

¹¹ UNESCO. "World Water Development Report". (19 Mart 2019). <https://en.unesco.org/themes/water-security/wwap/wwdr/2019#download> (14.10.2024).



edilmektedir.¹² Su güvenliği sorunu göç, temel hak olan suya erişim sorunu, gıda güvenliği, sağlık güvenliği ve ekonomik güvenlik sorunu yaratarak nihai aşamada siyasi güvenliği tehdit eden önemli etmenlerden biri olabilmektedir.

Dünyada şiddetli su sıkıntısı çeken 26 devletten 14'ü Orta Doğu ve Kuzey Afrika'da bulunmaktadır. Orta Doğu ve Kuzey Afrika devletleri, hem sınırlı yeraltı su kaynakları hem de iklimde meydana gelen değişimler nedeniyle uzun süredir su sıkıntısı yaşamaktadır.¹³ Bu bölgelerde kişi başına düşen yıllık yenilenebilir su kaynağı miktarı dünya ortalamasının % 10'u kadardır. Gıda ve Tarım Örgütü'nün (*Food and Agriculture Organization - FAO*) su veri tabanı AQUASTAT'ın 2019 verilerine göre, dünyada kişi başına düşen yıllık yenilenebilir su kaynağı miktarı 7.453 metreküp iken, Arap bölgesinde bu miktar 736 metreküptür.¹⁴ Arap bölgesinde nüfusun % 86'sı (yaklaşık 362 milyon kişi) su kıtlığı veya mutlak su kıtlığı koşulları altında yaşamaktadır.¹⁵ Arap bölgesi özelinde Orta Doğu'da ciddi su sorunu yaşayan devletlerin başında Suriye gelmektedir. 20. yüzyılda su bakımından kendi kendine yeten bir devlet olan Suriye, 21. yüzyılda başta iklim değişikliği sorunu ve ülkenin sürüklendiği iç savaşın su üzerinde oluşturduğu baskı olmak üzere çeşitli nedenlerle su sıkıntısı yaşayan ülkelerden biri haline gelmiştir. Su, Suriye'de bir güvenlik meselesi olarak, çözüm bulunması gereken en önemli siyasi konulardan birini oluşturmaktadır.

Suriye'de su güvenliği konusunun inceleneceği bu çalışmanın amacı, Suriye'de suyu güvenlik sorunu haline getiren unsurların neler olduğunu ortaya koymaktır. Çalışmada su güvensizliği ve su sorununun siyasi istikrarsızlıktaki yeri Suriye örneği üzerinden değerlendirilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Bu kapsamda, bu makale, farklı kaynaklardan yazarların görüşlerinin bir arada değerlendirileceği bir çalışma olacaktır. Öncelikle, Suriye'nin su kaynaklarının ne olduğu ortaya konulacak ve ülkenin su görünümü değerlendirilecektir.

¹² H. O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, H. Adams, I. Adelekan, C. Adler, R. Adrian, P. Aldunce, E. Ali, R. Ara Begum ve M. Tignor (Ed.). Technical Summary. Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge University Press, 2022.

¹³ Reig Willem Hofste, Paul Rutger ve Leah Schleifer, "One Quarter of the World's Population Live in Countries With a High Level of Water Stress". *World Economic Forum*. 8 Ağustos 2019, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/08/one-quarter-worlds-population-live-countries-high-levels-waterstress> (08.09.2024).

¹⁴ FAO. "The State of Food and Agriculture". 2020, <http://www.fao.org/3/cb1447en/cb1447en.pdf> (10.11.2024).

¹⁵ UN Water. "UN World Water Development Report 2021". 21 Mart 2021, <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-world-water-development-report-2021/> (16.08.2024).



Küresel iklim değişikliğinin su döngüsünde meydana getirdiği farklılaşmalar çerçevesinde, mevcut su kaynaklarının kıtlığının ne ifade ettiği incelenecektir. Sonrasında, Orta Doğu bölgesinin su krizi ile karşı karşıya kalacak devletlerden birinin Suriye olduğu açıklanacak ve Suriye’de su güvensizliği ele alınacaktır. Bu doğrultuda, ekonomisi büyük oranda tarıma bağlı olan Suriye gibi ülkelerde su kaynaklarının daha da önem kazandığı ortaya konulacak ve su kaynaklarının neredeyse tamamını kullanan bir ülke olarak Suriye’nin yüksek su stresi yaşayan ülkeler arasında olduğu dile getirilecektir. Küresel iklim değişikliğinin Suriye’deki su kaynaklarına etkilerinin ortaya çıkardığı sonuçlar ele alınarak, kuraklığın su kaynakları üzerinde yarattığı olumsuz etkilerle ülkenin siyasal, toplumsal ve ekonomik yapısını etkileyen etmenlerden biri haline geldiği açıklanacaktır. Suriye’de su güvensizliğine yol açan kuraklık sorununun 2011-2024 yılları arasında yaşanan iç savaşın dolaylı nedenlerinden biri olduğu incelenecektir. Bunlardan elde edilen bulgular ise sonuç kısmında değerlendirilecektir.

1. Suriye’nin Su Görünümü

Dünya suları içinde tatlı su kaynaklarının çok az olması, mevcut suya erişimin ise daha sınırlı olması, su kaynaklarının dünyada dengeli dağılmamış olması, iklim değişikliği, bilinçsiz kullan, nüfus artışı gibi etkenlerin kıt kaynak suları daha da tehdit etmesi gibi nedenlerle doğal yaşamın bütüncül parçası su, günümüzde ele alınması gereken acil güvenlik sorunlarından birini oluşturmaktadır. Özellikle su sorununun çok ciddi boyutlara ulaşacağı dünyanın kimi bölgelerinde su teknik bir sorun olmanın çok ötesinde politikanın ayrılmaz parçası haline gelmiştir. Suyun stratejik unsur haline geldiği Orta Doğu bölgesi, dünyada tatlı su kaynaklarının tükenmesi beklenen ilk bölgedir.¹⁶ Bu nedenle söz konusu bölgede su ekonomik, siyasi, toplumsal, doğal olarak beşeri hayatın her alanında stratejik rol alan temel parametrelerin başında gelmektedir. 20. yüzyılın son çeyreği ve özellikle 21. yüzyıla beraber her ülke kendi su kaynaklarını yeniden değerlendirerek olası su sorunlarına cevap verecek politikalara yönelme ihtiyacı duymuştur.

Su sorununun ciddi boyutlara ulaşması beklenen Orta Doğu bölgesinde su riski ile karşı

¹⁶ Wael K Al-Delaimy, “Vulnerable Populations and Regions: Middle East as a Case Study,” *Health of People, Health of Planet and Our Responsibility: Climate Change, Air Pollution and Health* içinde, ed. Wael K. Al-Delaimy, Veerabhadran Ramanathan ve Marcelo S. Sorondo, (Cham: Springer Nature, 2020), 121.



karşıya kalacak ülkelerinden birini Suriye oluşturmaktadır. 20. yüzyılda suda kendine yeten ülke profili çizen Suriye, başta iklim değişikliği olmak üzere çeşitli faktörlere bağlı su sıkıntısı yaşayan devletlerden biri olarak öne çıkmıştır. Suriye'nin önemli su kaynaklarını yerüstü suları oluştururken yeraltı suları da ülke su güvenliği açısından önem arz etmektedir. Ülke sahip olduğu su kaynaklarının çoğunu tarım sektöründe kullanmaktadır. Bu şekilde tarım ülkesi Suriye için su güvenliği aynı zamanda ekonomik, kalkınma güvenliği ile de yakından ilişkilidir.

Yüzey suları Suriye'nin en büyük su kaynağı olup bu durumun devam etmesi beklenmektedir.¹⁷ Yağış ve kar birikimi havzaların, yenilenebilir yeraltı sularının ana kaynaklarını oluşturmaktadır.¹⁸ Suriye su kaynaklarının %68,5'i yağışlardan beslenmektedir.¹⁹ Ülke içi yağışın sağladığı su oranı yaklaşık 7.1 milyon metreküp olup bunun 4.3 milyon metreküpünü yerüstü ve 2.8 milyon metreküpünü yeraltı suları oluşturmaktadır.²⁰ Doğal olarak suyun yaklaşık 9 milyar metreküpü sınıraşan sulardan karşılanmaktadır. Söz konusu yüksek oran ülkenin su güvenliğine ciddi bir risk oluşturmaktadır. Böylece Suriye yenilenebilir su ihtiyacı konusunda daha çok aşağı kıyıdaş ülke olarak sınıraşan sulara bağımlı olup²¹ %50'nin üstünde bir oranla başka ülkelerle paylaşılan su kaynaklarına bağımlı 33 ülkenin içinde yer almaktadır.²² Sınıraşan sular ülkenin toplam yüzey suyu kaynaklarının %75'ni ve kullanıma hazır su kaynaklarının %45'ten fazlasını oluşturmaktadır.²³ Ülkenin su ihtiyacının büyük kısmını karşılayan nehirlerin sınıraşan özellik göstermesi Suriye'nin su güvenliği üzerinde olumsuz etkiler yaratabilmektedir. Sahip olduğu 16 nehrin 6'sının uluslararası özellik taşıdığı

¹⁷ World Bank. "Renewable Energy Desalination: An Emerging Solution to Close the Water Gap in the Middle East and North Africa". *World Bank*, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2012), 56.

¹⁸ UNEP, *Vulnerability Assessment of Freshwater Resources to Climate Change: Implications for Shared Water Resources in the West Asia Region*, (Kenya: UNEP, 2012) , 14; FAO, "AQUASTAT Country Profile – Syrian Arab Republic", *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*.(Rome: FAO 2008), 4.

¹⁹ Wadid Erian, "Drought Vulnerability in the Arab Region: Case Study-Drought in Syria Ten Years of Scarce Water (2000-2010)", ISDR Report, (Geneva: ISDR, 2011), 16; Wadid Erian, Bassem Katlan ve Ouldbdey Babah, "Drought Vulnerability in the Arab Region: Special Case Study—Syria", *ISDR*, (Geneva: United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 2010), 5.

²⁰ FAO, "AQUASTAT Country Profile," 4.

²¹ World Bank, "Renewable Energy", 154.

²² FAO, "Review of World Water Resources by Country", *Water Reports*, (Rome: FAO, 2003), 21.

²³ Fanack Water, "Water Resources In Syria", *Fanack Water*, 23 Haziran 2019, <https://water.fanack.com/syria/water-resources/> (10.12.2024).



Suriye’de²⁴ toplam su kaynaklarının %75’inden fazlasını karşılayan beş temel nehri Fırat, Dicle, Asi, Yermuk, El-Kabir, Afrin sınıraşan niteliğe sahiptir.²⁵

Türkiye’den akan Afrin, Suriye topraklarını geçtikten sonra Türkiye’ye geri akmakta; Yarmuk Nehri, Ürdün ve Suriye’de kaynağı olup Ürdün Nehri’ne akmadan önce iki ülke arasında sınır oluşturarak İsrail’e akmakta, El-Kabir nehrinin de kaynak ülkeleri Suriye ve Lübnan olup denize dökülmeden önce iki ülke arasında sınır oluşturmaktadır.²⁶ Fırat ve Dicle nehirlerinin kaynak ülkesi Türkiye iken Lübnan’da doğan Asi en uzun yolu Suriye’de aldıktan sonra Türkiye’den Akdeniz’e dökülmektedir. 2330 km uzunluğu ve bu uzunluğun 680 km’si Suriye’den geçen, ülkenin en büyük nehrini oluşturan, ülke toplam su kaynağının büyük oranını karşılayan Fırat, Türkiye’den doğmakta ve Irak’a doğru akmaktadır.²⁷ Ülkede El-Esad, Jabbul, Qattineh, Autaybe, Khatunieh, Mzereeb, El-Baath ve Masada şeklinde 8 ana göl, 8 büyük baraj yanında²⁸ yağmur sularını tarımsal ve evsel amaçlar için kullanmak üzere yaklaşık 166 baraj bulunmaktadır.²⁹ Orta Doğu bölgesinin doğu kısmında kalan ülkelere kıyasla su kaynakları açısından daha güvenli ülke kabul edilebilecek Suriye’nin özellikle 2000’li yıllarla beraber su görünümü olumsuz seyretmeye başlamıştır.

Kişi başına düşen yenilenebilir yıllık su miktarı 1960’larda 3500 metreküp iken 2017’de 1000 metreküpün altına düşmüştür.³⁰ Ülkede su kıtlığına bağlı olarak 2000’li yıllarda kişi başına düşen yıllık su miktarı 800 metreküp olup söz konusu oran küresel su kıtlığı seviyesi eşiği olan 1000 metreküpün altında kalmaktadır.³¹ 21. yüzyılda Suriye’de kişi başına düşen

²⁴ Karen Frenken, “Irrigation in The Middle East Region in Figures Aquastat Survey 2008”, FAO Water Reports 34, (Rome: FAO, 2009), 343.

²⁵ Abdallah Droubi, “Climate Change, Water and the Policy-Making Process in the Levant and North Africa”, *Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs*, (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 2009), 13.

²⁶ FAO, “AQUASTAT Country Profile,” 5.

²⁷ a.g.e., 4.

²⁸ Khaldoun A. Mourad ve Ronny Berndtsson, “Syrian Water Resources between the Present and the Future”, *Air, Soil and Water Research* 4, (2011), 96.

²⁹ Frenken, “Irrigation in The Middle,” 344.

³⁰ Worldometers, “Syria Water”, *Worldometers*, 2017, <https://www.worldometers.info/water/syria-water/> (10.11.2024).

³¹ Ghaleb Faour ve Abbas Fayad, “Water Environment in the Coastal Basin of Syria-Assessing the Impacts of the War”, *Environmental Processes* 1, (2014): 533-552. 534.



yıllık su miktarı 800 metreküp olup uluslararası alanda su fakiri nitelendirilmesi için veri kabul edilen 1000 metreküp eşiğinin altında kalmıştır.³² 2010 yılında kişi başına düşen günlük su miktarı 163 litre iken nüfus artışına bağlı söz konusu oranın 2050 yılında 125 litreye gerilemesi beklenmektedir.³³ Bu yapılan projeksiyonlara savaş, göç, yetersiz su yönetimi, su verimliliği sorunu, iklim değişikliği gibi su güvenliğini olumsuz etkileyecek farklı unsurlar eklendiğinde suya erişim miktarının daha da azalması kaçınılmaz olacaktır.

Suyun en fazla kullanıldığı alan tarım olup tarımsal faaliyetler açısından su hayati önem arz etmektedir. Ülke sularının %87-90'nı tarımsal sulamada kullanılırken kaynakların %8'i evsel ve %2-4'ü sanayi alanında tüketilmektedir.³⁴ 2020 verileriyle tarım, balıkçılık ve ormancılık alanında su kullanım miktarı yıllık yaklaşık 8.8 milyon metreküp, sanayide 4 milyar metreküp ve hizmet alanında 9 milyar metreküp şeklinde gerçekleşmiştir.³⁵ Ülkenin %30'nu kaplayan tarım alanlarının tamamı suya ihtiyaç duyarken söz konusu arazilerin çoğu gerçekte yağmurla beslenmektedir.³⁶ Toplam tarım arazilerinin %71'inin yağmurla beslenmesi³⁷ tarımsal faaliyetlerde Suriye'nin hava olaylarına bağımlı olduğunu göstermektedir.

Suriye'nin su tablosu değerlendirildiğinde ülkenin daha çok yağış sularına bağımlı olması, nehir, göl ve yeraltı suları bakımından diğer bölge ülkelerine kıyasla su görünümü daha iyi konumda olmakla beraber su kaynaklarının daha çok dış ülkelere beslenmesi, kişi başına düşen su miktarının gittikçe azalması, ülkenin temel gelir kaynağı tarımın yağışa bağlı olması Suriye'yi su güven(siz)liği sorunuyla karşı karşıya bırakmaktadır. Dönemsel krizler dışında uzun yıllar mevcut su kaynaklarıyla su talebini karşılayabilen Suriye'de başta iklim değişikliği olmak üzere 21. yüzyılda kendini hissettiren kimi krizlerle su, ciddi güvenlik sorunu haline gelmiştir.

³² Droubi, "Climate Change," 12.

³³ Mourad ve Berndtsson, "Syrian Water Resources," 97.

³⁴ Jessica Barnes, "Managing the Waters of Ba'th Country: The Politics of Water Scarcity in Syria", *Geopolitics* 14, sy. 3 (2009), 514; Tuğba E. Maden, "İklim Değişiminin Arap Baharında "Tehdit Tetikleyici" Rolü ve Suriye", *Ortadoğu Analiz* 5, sy. 58 (2013), 83; FAO, "Faostat SDG Indicators", FAO, 2021, <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB> (08.09.2024).

³⁵ UN Water, "Syrian Arab Republic", UN, t.y.,

https://sdg6data.org:8443/en/countryorarea/Syrian%20Arab%20Republic#anchor_6.1.1 (08.09.2024).

³⁶ Barnes, "Managing the Waters," 514.

³⁷ Erian, Katlan ve Babah, "Drought Vulnerability in the Arab Region," 5.



2. Suriye’de Su Güvensizliği

Daha çok kurak ve yarı kurak iklim koşullarının yaşandığı bölge olarak Orta Doğu’da tatlı su genellikle kıt ve değerli bir kaynaktır.³⁸ Arap dünyasının bölgenin geri kalanına göre daha sıcak, daha kuru ve daha değişken olan iklimi, Orta Doğu’nun zaten olumsuz olan su tablosunu daha da kötüleştirecektir.³⁹ Orta Doğu’da tatlı su kaynakları son derece kıt, oldukça değişken, daha çok sınıraşan ve çok az işbirliğinin görüldüğü ve etkili bir yönetim anlayışıyla idare edilmeyen özellik taşımaktadır.⁴⁰ Su stresi yaşayan ülkelerin çoğu, nüfusun %83’ünün son derece yüksek oranda su sıkıntısı sorunuyla karşı karşıya kaldığı Orta Doğu ve Kuzey Afrika’da yer almaktadır.⁴¹ Dünyada su sıkıntısı çeken 26 ülkenin 14’ü Orta Doğu’da olup su temelli siyasi sorunlar özellikle Türkiye-Suriye-Irak ve “Susuz Üçgen” olarak adlandırılan Şeria Nehri ve Golan Tepeleri arasında kalan bölgede (Ürdün-İsrail-Filistin) yaşanmaktadır.⁴² Bütün ülkelerin öncelikli planlamalarında yer alması gereken su, özellikle su kıtlığının olduğu bu bölgelerde ciddi bir siyasi, ekonomik ve toplumsal sorun olarak çözülmesi gereken en acil konulardan birini oluşturmaktadır.

Orta Doğu’da suyun zamanla petrolden daha hayati nitelik ve önem kazanacağı, bölge politikalarında petrolden daha çok etkili olacağı tahmin edilmektedir.⁴³ İklim değişikliğine bağlı olarak Orta Doğu ve Afrika bölgelerinde su akımlarında %50 oranında azalma görüleceği, su kaynaklarının özellikle Arap coğrafyasının kuzey ve batı kesimlerinde azalacağı, yüzyılın ortasında arz talep dengesinin daha da bozulmasıyla özellikle Arap ülkelerinin ciddi su sorunu yaşayacağı öngörülmektedir.⁴⁴ 2025 yılıyla beraber Kuzey Afrika ile Orta Doğu nüfusunun

³⁸ Jason P. Evans, “21st Century Climate Change in the Middle East”, *Climatic Change* 92, (2009), 418.

³⁹ Dorte Verner (Ed.), *Adaptation to a Changing Climate in the Arab Countries*, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2012), 128.

⁴⁰ Peter H. Gleick, “Water, War & Peace in the Middle East: 30 Years On”, *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development* 66, sy. 5 (2024), 7.

⁴¹ Samantha Kuzma, Liz Saccoccia ve Marlena Chertock, “25 Countries, Housing One-quarter of the Population, Face Extremely High Water Stress”, *World Resources Institute*, 16 Ağustos 2023, <https://www.wri.org/insights/highest-water-stressed-countries> (10.11.2024)

⁴² Mehmet Ögütçü, “Enerji Savaşları Kızışıyor Ama Su Sorunları Barış Sürecinde”, *Yetkin Report*, 22 Aralık 2023, <https://yetkinreport.com/2023/12/22/enerji-savaslari-kizisiyor-ama-su-sorunlari-baris-surecinde/> (16.08.2024)

⁴³ Fahir Armaoğlu, *Türk Dış Politikası Tarihi*, 4. bs (İstanbul: Kronik Kitap, 2021), 187.

⁴⁴ Verner, *Adaptation to a Changing Climate*, ” 111.



tamamının son derece yüksek su stresi ile karşı karşıya kalması beklenmektedir.⁴⁵ Bölgenin suya erişim sorunu, bölge ülkeleri için su ve su yönetiminin ne kadar hayati olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Orta Doğu bölgesinin önemli ülkelerinden Suriye, su krizi ile karşı karşıya kalacak devletlerden birini oluşturmaktadır.

Veriler, 2000’li yıllara kadar bölge ülkelerine kıyasla su kaynakları açısından daha şanslı görünen Suriye’nin su güvenliğinin yeni yüzyılda ciddi risk altında olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Kişi başına düşen su kaynaklarının en düşük olduğu ve net suyun en düşük seyrettiği bir bölgede yer alan ülkede su bir sorun olarak durmaktadır.⁴⁶ Suriye’nin su kaynakları üzerindeki baskı, yaklaşık çeyrek asırdır artmaktadır.⁴⁷ Suriye çok kurak, kurak, yarı kurak, nemli ve yarı nemli iklim bölgelerine sahiptir.⁴⁸ Ancak ülke yüzölçümünün üçte ikisi kurak ve çok kurak kabul edilmektedir.⁴⁹ Yıllık yağış oranının düşük olması ülkenin kurak özelliğini arttırmaktadır. 2020 verileriyle uzun dönemli ortalama yıllık yağış miktarının 252 mm şeklinde seyretmesi⁵⁰ Suriye’yi kurak ülke sınırına taşımaktadır. Yılda 300 mm’den fazla yağış alan yerler yalnızca yüksek rakımlı bölgelerle sınırlı kalmaktadır.⁵¹ Düşük yağış miktarı yağış sularına bağımlı ülkenin su kaynakları üzerindeki baskıyı arttırmaktadır.

Suriye, yıllık su kaynaklarının hemen hemen tümünü kullanan bir ülke olarak yüksek su stresi yaşayan ülkeler arasında yer almaktadır. Toplam su tüketiminin mevcut su kaynaklarına oranı üzerinden belirlenen su stresi oranı 2021’de %124 olan Suriye’de su stresi seviyesi, tarımsal alanda %108.85, sanayide %4.57 ve hizmet sektöründe %10.4’tür.⁵² Suriye her yıl yenilenebilir su kaynaklarının %80’ninden fazlasını sulama, hayvancılık, sanayi ve evsel ihtiyaçlar için kullanmasıyla son derece yüksek su stresi yaşayan 25 ülkenin içinde yer

⁴⁵ Kuzma, Saccoccia ve Chertock, “25 Countries, Housing One-quarter”.

⁴⁶ FAO, “Review of World,” 4.

⁴⁷ Peter H. Gleick, “Water, Drought, Climate Change, and Conflict in Syria”, *Weather, Climate, And Society* 6, sy. 3 (2014), 332.

⁴⁸ Duygu Ülker, Orhan Ergüven ve Cem Gazioğlu, “Socio-economic Impacts in a Changing Climate: Case Study Syria”, *International Journal of Environment and Geoinformatics* 5, sy. 1 (2018), 85.

⁴⁹ Issam Fares Institute For Public Policy And International Affairs, “Climate Change, Water and the Policy-Making Process in the Levant and North Africa; The Syria Case”, (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 2009).

⁵⁰ UN Water, “Syrian Arab Republic.”

⁵¹ UNEP, “*Vulnerability Assessment*,” 14.

⁵² FAO, “Faostat SDG Indicators.”



almaktadır.⁵³ Ülkenin yüksek su stresi oranı 2000’li yıllarda süreklilik arz etmiştir. Ülkede yıllık ortalama su kullanımı 2000’de toplam iç kaynakların %211’ni oluşturmuşken 2010’lu yıllarla beraber oran %196 şeklinde gerçekleşmiştir.⁵⁴ 1993 yılına kıyasla 21. yüzyılın başında su çekim oranı % 31 oranında artmıştır.⁵⁵

Arzı aşan su tüketim oranı ülkenin su sorunuyla karşı karşıya olduğunu göstermektedir. Suya talebin de gittikçe artması beklenmektedir. 2050 yılı projeksiyonunda suya olan talebin tarımda %80, evsel kullanımda %11 ve sanayide %9 artması beklenirken ülkede kişi başına düşen su miktarının aynı dönemlerde %50 oranında azalması öngörülmektedir.⁵⁶ Ciddi su kıtlığına paralel ülkede 2000’li yıllarda su arzı ve talebi arasında ortaya çıkan açığın yüzyılın ortasına doğru daha da büyüyerek 10.000 milyon metre küp olması beklenmektedir.⁵⁷ Talep artışına tezat oluşturacak şekilde kişi başına düşen günlük ve yıllık su miktarının her geçen gün azalarak uluslararası su kıtlığı alt seviyesi olan 1000 metreküpün altına düşmesi Suriye’yi su krizine sürükleyecektir. Artan talebi karşılamak noktasında ortaya çıkan su arzı sorunu suyu, Suriye’nin temel güvenlik sorunu haline getirmektedir.

Su tüketim sektörünün başında tarım gelmektedir. Özellikle ekonomisi büyük oranda tarıma bağlı Suriye gibi ülkelerde su kaynakları daha da önem kazanmaktadır. Suriye ekonomisinin temelini oluşturan tarımda su hayati rol oynamaktadır. Doğal olarak ülkede su sorunu aynı zamanda ekonomik ve kalkınma sorunu olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. İç savaş öncesi dönemde ülke sularının %90’nı sulamada kullanılırken yalnızca %8’i evsel ve %2’si sanayide kullanılmaktaydı.⁵⁸ Ülkenin temel tarım faaliyetlerinden buğday, pamuk, tütün, şekerpancarı gibi ürünlerin üretiminin suya bağlı olduğu Suriye tarımının çoğu yağmur suyuna dayanmaktadır.⁵⁹ Bu şekilde ülke ekonomisinin temel parametresini oluşturan tarımın devamının sağlanmasında su kaynakları hayati rol oynamaktadır. Suriye’de su güvenliği aynı zamanda ekonomik ve gıda güvenliği açısından vazgeçilmez olmaktadır. Su kaynakları gittikçe

⁵³ Kuzma, Saccoccia ve Chertock, “25 Countries, Housing One-quarter.”

⁵⁴ World Bank, “Syrian Arab Republic”, *World Bank*, t.y., <https://data.worldbank.org/country/syrian-arab-republic> (12.08.2024).

⁵⁵ Frenken, “Irrigation in The Middle,” 344.

⁵⁶ Mourad, ve Berndtsson, “Syrian Water Resources,” 93, 98.

⁵⁷ Verner, *Adaptation to a Changing Climate*,” 116.

⁵⁸ Barnes, “Managing the Waters,” 514.

⁵⁹ a.g.e., 514-515.



azalırken tarımda suya bağımlılığın devam etmesi, kalkınma, refah, gıda gibi ekonomik ve toplumsal güvenlik açısından da Suriye’de suyu bir güvenlik sorunu haline getirmektedir.

Ülkede su kaynaklarını tehdit ederek suyu güvenlik sorunu haline getiren birçok etmen bulunmaktadır. Bunların başında insan kaynaklı iklim değişikliği gelirken toplumsal, su yönetimine ilişkin sorunlar gibi iklim değişikliğinin etkilerini daha da arttıran çeşitli unsurlar su riskini tetikleyici etmenler olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bütün toplumlarda olduğu gibi Suriye’de de artan nüfus, su kullanım verimliliği konusunda yetersiz bilinç, ülke yönetiminin su kaynaklarına yönelik yaklaşım ve politikaları ülke su güvenliğini doğrudan etkilemektedir.

Suriye’de su verimliliği bilincinin yetersiz olması su kaynakları üzerinde olumsuz etki yaratmaktadır. Enerji ve suyun devlet tarafından sübvansede edilmesi çiftçilerin sürdürülebilir bir tarımı yakalamak yerine kısa dönemli üretimi arttırmayı hedeflemesi sonucunu doğurmuştur.⁶⁰ Halkın da bu yönde su güvenliğine yönelik bir bilinçle hareket etmediği görülmektedir. Suyun en fazla kullanıldığı tarım sektöründe tarım alanlarının yaklaşık %80’inde geleneksel sulama yönteminin devam ettirilmesi bu durumu ortaya koymaktadır. Su kıtlığı karşısında çiftçilerin yeraltı su kaynaklarına yönelmesi ülkede 1999’da 135.000 olan kuyu sayısının 2007’de 213.000’nin üzerine çıkması sonucu doğurmuştur.⁶¹ Su kıtlığına çözüm bulmak üzere halkın yeraltı sularını kendilerini yenilemeye fırsat vermeyecek şekilde tüketmesi su sorununu daha da arttırmaktadır.

İklim değişikliğinin yanında nüfus artışının da suya talebi arttırarak erişilebilir su kaynakları üzerindeki baskıyı arttırdığı ve arttırmaya devam edeceği belirtilmektedir. Şam’da geçmiş yıllarda su bolluğu olduğunu belirten BM Çevre Programı (*United Nations Environment Programme - UNEP*) da 2000’de nüfusun 3.8 milyona yükselmesinin su kısıtlaması uygulamasına yol açtığını ortaya koymaktadır.⁶² Suyun nitelik açısından bozulması da diğer bir sorun olarak durmaktadır. Büyük yerleşim yerlerindeki yeraltı ve yerüstü sularının belediye

⁶⁰ Shahrzad Mohtadi, “Climate Change and the Syrian Uprising”, *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 16 Ağustos 2012, <https://thebulletin.org/2012/08/climate-change-and-the-syrian-uprising/> (10.07.2024).

⁶¹ Francesco, Femia ve Caitlin E., Werrel, “Climate Change Before and After The Arab Awakening: The Cases Of Syria And Libya”, *The Arab Spring And Climate Change: A Climate and Security Correlations Series* içinde, ed. Caitlin E. Werrel ve Francesco Femia, (USA: Center for American Progress, Stimson the Center for Climate and Security, 2013), 26.

⁶² UNEP, “*Vulnerability Assessment*,” 21.



ve sanayi atıklarıyla kirlendiği, buna bağlı olarak su içindeki zararlı kimyasalların Suriye standartlarını aşacak kadar yükseldiği görülmektedir.⁶³ İklim değişikliğinin arttırdığı buharlaşma, aşırı su çekimi ve deniz suyunun tatlı suya karışma oranının artmasıyla yeraltı suyunun tuzlanmasına bağlı olarak su kalitesi daha da düşmüş, iç savaş ortamında su kirliliği artmıştır.

Suriye’de su riskini arttıran diğer bir neden Hafız ve Beşar Esad yönetimlerinin yanlış ve yetersiz su politikaları olmuştur. Ülke su stresi seviyesi, teknik kapasite sorunları, su yönetimi ve bölgesel işbirliği gibi alanlardaki sorunlar nedeniyle daha da yükselmektedir.⁶⁴ Baas partisi, hızlı tarımsal ve sanayileşme hedefiyle suyun sürdürülebilirliğine yönelik politikalara ağırlık vermemiştir.⁶⁵ Ülkede yeteri kadar atık su arıtma tesislerinin olmaması, agresif ekonomik liberalleşme politikaları ve sürdürülemez tarımsal uygulamalar suyun nitelik ve niceliğinde ciddi sorunlara yol açmaktadır.⁶⁶ Su kıtlığını Baas yönetiminin su yoğun tarım politikalarına bağlayan Barnes de yönetimin sulu tarımın genişlemesine dayalı büyüme ve bu şekilde başta buğday olmak üzere ülke ekonomisinde kilit rol oynayan gıda ürünlerinde kendine yeterli olma amacıyla su yoğun tarım politikasını benimsediğini belirtmiştir.⁶⁷

Suriye yönetimi buğday, arpa ve pamuk gibi sulu tarım alanlarını sübvans ederek söz konusu alanda kendine yeterli olma politikası takip etmiştir.⁶⁸ Bu doğrultuda su kuyularının sayısı yeraltı sularının kendini yenileme fırsatı bulamayacak ölçüde artmış, sulama kanalları drenaj havzası rezervlerini tüketmiştir.⁶⁹ 21. yüzyılda yaşanan kuraklıktan önceki yirmi yıllık dönemde Suriye yönetimi sulama sistemlerine yatırım yapmış, su kuyuları için lisans alınmasını zorunlu kılmış; ancak bu tür önlemlerin kimi zaman hükümetin siyasi amaçları için kullanılması

⁶³ FAO, “AQUASTAT Country Profile,” 15.

⁶⁴ Freiderike E. L. Otto, vd., “Human-Induced Climate Change Compounded by Socio-economic Water Stressors Increased Severity of Drought in Syria, Iraq and Iran”, Report, (Grantham Institute: *Grantham Institute for Climate Change*, 2023).

⁶⁵ Mohtadi, “Climate Change and the Syrian Uprising”.

⁶⁶ Mourad ve Berndtsson, “Syrian Water Resources,” 96; Colin Kelley, vd., “Commentary on The Syria Case: Climate as a Contributing Factor”, *Political Geography*, (2017), 2.

⁶⁷ Barnes, “Managing the Waters,” 510, 515.

⁶⁸ Christiane J. Fröhlich, “Climate Migrants as Protestors? Dispelling Misconceptions About Global Environmental Change in Pre-revolutionary Syria”, *Contemporary Levant* 1, sy. 1 (2016), 41.

⁶⁹ Barnes, “Managing the Waters,” 511.



ve bu şekilde yasa dışı su kullanımının devam etmesi karşısında yetersiz kalmıştır.⁷⁰ Esad rejiminin kısa vadeli ve bolluk dönemine endeksli tarım politikalarının su yoğun tarımı arttırması, yönetimin aldığı önlemlerin yetersiz kalması suyun kıt kaynak olarak ülke güvenliğine risk oluşturmaya sebebiyet vermiştir.

Sınıraşan sularda ülkeler arası işbirliğinin olmaması tek taraflı koruma önlemlerini yetersiz bırakarak diğer tarafın su kaynaklarını daha da olumsuz etkilemesine, sosyo-ekonomik ve çevresel zararlara yol açmasına, su paylaşımı yapan ülkeler arasında çatışmanın artmasına neden olabilmekte, doğal olarak sınıraşan su kaynaklarına aşırı bağımlılık ülkeleri su konusunda daha kırılgan hale getirmektedir.⁷¹ Suriye'nin su tablosu verilirken söz konusu ülkenin dışa bağımlılığı belirtilmişti. Suriye sahip olduğu su kaynaklarının çoğunu diğer ülkelerle paylaşmaktadır. Ülke nehirlerinin büyük kısmı ya ülke dışında doğmakta ya da ülke dışına akmakta, yeraltı suları birden fazla ülke sınırında bulunmaktadır. Bu durum ortak nehir ve yeraltı suları konusunda ülkeler arası müşterek yönetimi zorunlu hale getirmektedir. Ancak ortak yönetim anlayışı kimi zaman siyasi kimi zaman teknik kimi zaman öncelenen ulusal çıkarlar, ekonomik kaygı gibi nedenlerle mümkün olmamakta, ortak suların yönetimine ilişkin somut metnin ortaya çıkması zorlaşmaktadır. Tarihsel süreçte Suriye-Irak-Türkiye arasındaki Fırat ve Dicle nehirleri sorunu, Türkiye-Suriye arasında Asi nehri yönetimi, Yermuk nehri konusunda Suriye-İsrail arasındaki sorun gibi suya ilişkin anlaşmazlıklar ülkenin su güvenliğini doğrudan tehdit etmektedir.

Su paylaşımı konusunda paydaş ülkeler arasında kimi düzenlemeler bulunmakla beraber bunların yetersiz kaldığı, taraflar arasında kimi zaman sorunlara sebebiyet verdiği görülmektedir. Fırat-Dicle havzasında yukarı kıyıdaş ülke olarak Türkiye, en avantajlı konumda iken aşağı havza ülkeleri Irak ve Suriye ise Türkiye'nin başta baraj yapımı olmak üzere Fırat ve Dicle havzalarındaki su politikalarına tepki göstermekte, diğer taraftan Suriye'nin su havzalarında su tutma konusu Suriye ile Irak arasında da gerginliğe yol açmaktadır.⁷² Ürdün Nehri ile Golan Tepeleri'nin yeraltı su kaynakları İsrail, Ürdün, Suriye ve Filistin arasında sorun yaratan ve yaşanması muhtemel önemli su menbalarını

⁷⁰ Mohtadi, "Climate Change and the Syrian Uprising."

⁷¹ Verner, *Adaptation to a Changing Climate*, " 139.

⁷² a.g.e., 126.



oluşturmaktadır.⁷³ Suriye su kaynaklarının %70-80'nini Türkiye'den doğan Fırat Nehri'nden elde etmesi,⁷⁴ tarımsal su ihtiyacının %50'sini Fırat ve %20'sini Asi havzalarından karşılaması⁷⁵ ülkenin su risklerinden birini suda dışa bağımlılığın oluşturduğunu açıkça ortaya koymaktadır.

Sonuç olarak Suriye su açığını gittikçe hisseden, mevcut uygulama ve gelişmelerle su sorununun ciddi güvenlik sorununa dönüşeceği ülkelerden birini oluşturmaktadır. Hızlı nüfus artışı, sanayileşme ve arazi kullanım değişiklikleri, yukarı ve aşağı kıyıdaş ülkeler arasındaki nehir akış yönetimi, baraj uygulamaları, eskimiş su arıtma tesisleri, sulama sistemlerindeki düşük verimlilik ile devlet dışı aktörlerin kritik su kaynaklarını hedeflerine ulaşmada iktidara baskı unsuru oluşturacak şekilde kontrol altına almaları gibi çatışma ortamında suyun silah olarak kullanımı su krizini daha da tetiklemektedir.⁷⁶ Ülkede kişi başına düşen su oranının gittikçe azalması, mevcut su kaynaklarına oranla su çekiminin gittikçe artması, su talebini karşılayacak su arzının zamanla yetersiz kalması, kurak iklimsel özellik, sürdürülemez su yönetimi, kentleşme, su yönetimindeki yanlış politikalar, su kirliliği, su verimliliği sorunu, ülke ekonomi politikaları, çevre güvenliğine ilişkin uzun vadeli eylem programlarının yetersizliği, göç, su kaynaklarının önemli bir kısmının sınıraşan sulardan elde edilmesi gibi birbirini etkileyen olgu ve olaylar Suriye'nin su güvenliğini tehdit etmeye devam etmektedir. Özellikle dünyanın temel güvenlik sorunu haline gelen iklim değişikliği ve istikrarsız bölgede yer alan Suriye'nin Arap Baharı süreciyle iç savaşa sürüklenmesi, 21. yüzyılda ülkenin su güvenliği üzerinde en büyük etkiyi oluşturan parametreler olarak öne çıkmaktadır.

3. İklim Değişikliğinin Su Kaynaklarına Etkisi

Günümüzde dünya genelinde su kaynakları ve güvenliği üzerindeki en büyük baskıyı iklim değişikliği oluşturmaktadır. Küresel ısınma, ısınmanın iklim ve hava olayları üzerindeki kısa ve uzun dönemli etkileri su kaynaklarını doğrudan etkilemektedir. Artan sıcaklıklar ve buharlaşma, azalan yağışlar su kaynakları üzerinde doğrudan etki yaratmaktadır. İklim

⁷³ UNEP, "Vital Water Graphics: An Overview of the State of the World's Fresh and Marine Waters", UNEP Report, (Kenya: UNEP, 2002), 25.

⁷⁴ Barnes, "Managing the Waters," 519.

⁷⁵ Maden, "İklim Değişiminin Arap," 83.

⁷⁶ Otto, vd., "Human-Induced Climate Change."



değişikliğinin Orta Doğu'yu fazlasıyla etkilemesi beklenmektedir. Yapılan çalışmalar Orta Doğu bölgesindeki dönemsel sıcaklıkların her yıl biraz daha artacağını ortaya koymaktadır. Su kaynaklarını doğrudan etkileyen yağış oranlarının iklim değişikliğiyle Orta Doğu'da ciddi anlamda azalması beklenmektedir. Küresel ısınmanın Akdenize kıyısı olan bölge ülkelerini daha fazla etkileyeceği öngörülmektedir. Akdeniz ülkesi olan Suriye, doğal olarak bu iklim değişikliğinin sonuçlarını fazlasıyla hissedecek ülkelerden birini oluşturmaktadır.

İklim değişikliğine bağlı yüzyılın ortasında Orta Doğu'nın büyük kısmının daha sıcak olacağı ve bölge yağışlarında önemli bir azalma görüleceği tahmin edilmektedir.⁷⁷ Dünyadaki 2 °C'lik bir sıcaklık artışı senaryosunda Suriye'deki yıllık olağanüstü yüksek sıcak günlerin 1 günden 71 güne çıkması beklenmektedir.⁷⁸ Sıcak gün sayısındaki artış su kaynaklarını doğrudan olumsuz etkileyecektir. İklimsel değişimle beraber Orta Doğu'nun yağış miktarında yaklaşık %20-%25 oranında bir azalma olacağı, azalmanın su akışını yaklaşık %23 oranında düşüreceği projeksiyonlarda yer almaktadır.⁷⁹ Orta Doğu'da yüzyılın ortalarına kadar iklim değişikliğine bağlı sıcaklıkların artmasıyla Doğu Akdeniz, Türkiye, Kuzey Irak yanında Suriye'de de yağışlarda ciddi azalma olacağı öngörülmektedir.⁸⁰ Sıcak gün sayısının artması su kaynaklarının azalmasında önemli bir faktör oluşturmaktadır. İklimsel hava olayları bölgedeki su kaynaklarını niceliksel ve niteliksel olarak doğrudan etkilemektedir.

İklim değişikliğine bağlı yağışlardaki azalmanın en fazla görüleceği ülkelerden birini Suriye oluşturmaktadır.⁸¹ Suriye'de yağış oranlarının çok olması ve yağış değişkenliğinin daha fazla hissedilmesi beklenmektedir.⁸² Mourad ve Berndtsson, savaş öncesi dönemde Suriye Sulama Bakanlığı verilerine dayanarak ülkeye düşen yıllık yağış miktarının kıyı kesimlerde 900 mm'den yaklaşık 60 mm'ye kadar düştüğünü belirtmiştir.⁸³ İklimsel değişime paralel Suriye'de 2050 yılına gelindiğinde yeraltı ve yerüstü suların yıllık yaklaşık 1.300 milyon metreküp azalacağı ve su kaynaklarındaki buharlaşma oranının yıllık yaklaşık 190

⁷⁷ Verner, *Adaptation to a Changing Climate*, " 113.

⁷⁸ Al-Delaimy, "Vulnerable Populations", 123.

⁷⁹ Mourad ve Berndtsson, "Syrian Water Resources," 96.

⁸⁰ Evans, "21st Century Climate," 427.

⁸¹ World Bank, "Renewable Energy", 151.

⁸² Verner, *Adaptation to a Changing Climate*, " 118.

⁸³ Mourad ve Berndtsson, "Syrian Water Resources," 94.



milyon metreküp artacağı tahmin edilmektedir.⁸⁴ Böylece yağış ve buharlaşma oranları gibi hidrolojik parametrelerdeki büyük zamansal ve mekânsal değişimler nedeniyle Suriye su kıtlığı yaşanan bölge ülkelerinden birini oluşturmaktadır.⁸⁵ Yağışların azalmasının yarattığı yüzey sularındaki niceliksel küçülme, su kaynakları açısından büyük oranda yer yüzü sularına bağımlı olması dolayısıyla ülkenin ciddi bir su sorunuyla karşı karşıya kalmasına yol açacaktır.

Nehir suları gibi yenilenebilir suların başlıca su kaynağı olduğu Suriye’de iklim değişikliğine paralel söz konusu kaynakların yenilenmesinde belirsizlik yaşanmaya başlanmıştır.⁸⁶ Aşırı buharlaşmaya bağlı Suriye’deki Esad Gölü’nün önemli miktarda su kaybetmesi,⁸⁷ özellikle ülkenin doğusundaki yağışların yıllık ortalamasının %30’a düştüğü 2008’de Fırat’ın ana kollarından biri olan El Habur Nehri’nin kuruması⁸⁸ iklimsel değişimin somut örneklerini ortaya koymaktadır. Yağışların azalmasına bağlı olarak yağmurla beslenen tarım arazilerinin yüzyılın ortasında 8,500 km²’lik, yüzyılın sonunda ise İran, Irak, Lübnan, Suriye, Filistin topraklarının 170.000 km²’lik kısmının yok olacağı öngörülmektedir.⁸⁹ İklim koşullarına bağlı olarak Fırat Nehri akışının 21. yüzyılın sonuna kadar yaklaşık yüzyılın başına kıyasla %24 oranında azalması beklenmektedir.⁹⁰ Ülkenin en büyük su kaynağını oluşturan Fırat sularının ciddi anlamda azalmasının Suriye su güvenliği ve doğal olarak toplumsal hayatın her alanını olumsuz etkilemesi kaçınılmaz olacaktır.

Yeraltı sularının iklime bağlı azalması, su kıtlığının yeraltı suyunu yenilenemeyecek şekilde tüketmesi, aşırı buharlaşma ve daha fazla su çekiminin yeraltı sularının tuzlanmasına yol açması gibi gelişmeler iklim değişikliğinin yeraltı suları üzerinde de büyük baskı yarattığını göstermekte, dahası 1960-1990 arası dönemde kimi Arap ülkeleri gıda güvenliği adına yenilenemeyen su akiferlerini tüketmiştir.⁹¹ Suriye bu ülkelerden biri olarak su kaynaklarının devamlılığına zarar vermiştir. Söz konusu ülke, ekonomik kalkınma adına yer altı su

⁸⁴ a.g.e., 99.

⁸⁵ UNEP, “*Vulnerability Assessment*,” 2.

⁸⁶ a.g.e., 15.

⁸⁷ Verner, *Adaptation to a Changing Climate*, ” 130.

⁸⁸ Erian, Katlan ve Babah, “Drought Vulnerability in the Arab Region,” 15.

⁸⁹ Evans, “21st Century Climate,” 428.

⁹⁰ Megan Ferrando, “How Northern Syria’s Triple Water Crisis is Exacerbating Its People’s Woes”, *Middle East Institute*, 19 Eylül 2023, <https://www.me.edu/publicatons/how-northern-syras-trple-water-crss-exacerbatng-ts-peoples-woes>, (13.10.2024).

⁹¹ Verner, *Adaptation to a Changing Climate*, ” 124-127.



kaynaklarını tehlikeye atarken iklimsel gelişmeler suyun kalitesini de olumsuz etkileyerek ülke su güvenliği üzerinde büyük baskı yaratmaktadır. Suriye’de su güvensizliğinin ve ortaya çıkardığı benzer olayların gelecek projeksiyonlarda gittikçe artması beklenmektedir.

3.1. Kuraklık

İklim değişikliğinin Suriye yağış tablosu üzerindeki olumsuz etkileri, su güvenliği üzerinde en büyük baskıyı yaratan ve ciddi bir su sorunu olan kuraklığa sebebiyet vermesidir. İklim değişikliğine bağlı olarak kuraklaşmanın Doğu Akdeniz ve Orta Doğu’da devam edeceği ve gelecek yıllarda daha da yoğunlaşacağı tahmin edilmektedir.⁹² IPCC’ye göre de iklim değişikliği bölgede daha şiddetli kuraklıklara neden olacaktır.⁹³ İklim değişikliği ile artan şekilde sıklaşan hava olaylarının Ürdün, Suriye ve Lübnan’da daha fazla kuraklık ve sele yol açması beklenmektedir.⁹⁴ Küresel ısınmayla kuraklık arasında doğrudan bağ kuran Dünya Hava Durumu Bilgi Servisi (*World Weather Information Service - WWIS*) İran, Irak ve Suriye’de yaşanan kuraklığın iklim değişikliğinden kaynaklandığını, ısınmanın kuraklığın yoğunluğunu arttırdığını, dünyanın 1.2 °C daha soğuk olması durumunda bu tür hava olayının kuraklık sayılmayacağını ifade etmiştir.⁹⁵

Suriye su kaynakları, iklim değişikliğine bağlı olarak daha fazla hissedilen, bir bölgede nem miktarındaki geçici dengesizliğin o bölgedeki su kıtlığı ile ilişkisi olarak tanımlanan kuraklığa bağlı ciddi tehdit altındadır.⁹⁶ 21. yüzyılda Suriye’nin karşı karşıya kaldığı uzun dönemli kuraklık, su güvenliğine yönelik en büyük tehditlerden birini oluşturmaktadır. İklim değişikliği ile su güvenliği arasındaki ilişkiyi Suriye özelinde doğrudan kuraklık üzerinden değerlendirmek yanlış olmamaktadır. 20. yüzyılda ülkede daha nadir görülen kuraklık, 21. yüzyılla beraber Suriye’nin daha sık karşı karşıya kaldığı hava olaylarından biri haline gelmiştir. 2000’li yıllarla birlikte ülkede daha fazla ve uzun süreli hissedilmeye başlayan kuraklık su kaynaklarını doğrudan olumsuz etkilemektedir.

⁹² Kelley, vd., “Commentary on The Syria Case,” 2.

⁹³ Mohtadi, “Climate Change and the Syrian Uprising.”

⁹⁴ UNEP, “*Vulnerability Assessment*,” 32.

⁹⁵ Otto, vd., “Human-Induced Climate Change.”

⁹⁶ Kuzma, Saccoccia ve Chertock, “25 Countries, Housing One-quarter.”



Suriye’de kış yağış seviyesinin yaklaşık üçte birine gerilediği 1990’dan 2005’e kadar altı önemli kuraklık dönemi yaşanmıştır.⁹⁷ 2000’li yıllardan günümüze kuraklık ülkede daha sık görülmeye başlanmıştır. 2006-2011 yılları arası dönemde Suriye topraklarının %60’ı tarihteki en kötü ve uzun süreli kuraklıkla karşı karşıya kalmıştır.⁹⁸ 2020’de başlayan diğer bir kuraklık dalgası üç yıl etkili olmuştur.⁹⁹ 2020 yılında Doğu Akdeniz havzasındaki düşük yağış düzeyi Suriye’deki kuraklığı daha da olumsuz etkilemektedir.¹⁰⁰ Yüzyılın sonuna doğru Irak ve Suriye’de mera alanlarının ve bu alanların otlanabilir olduğu sürenin azalmasına, su ile yem ithalatının artmasına ya da hayvancılığın küçülmesine sebebiyet verecek şekilde kurak mevsimin iki ay daha uzaması öngörülmektedir.¹⁰¹

Kuraklık su kaynaklarının tükenmesinde rol oynamış önemli etkenlerden birini oluşturmaktadır. Ülkede 1990’lardan 2006’ya kadar yaşanan altı kuraklık dönemi bir sezon sürmüş ve halk devlet sübvansyonlarla ve ikincil su kaynaklarına dayalı kuraklıkla baş edebilmişken 2006’dan 2010’a kadar süren yedinci kuraklık döneminde yağış seviyesi en düşük düzeyde kalmıştır.¹⁰² Suriye’de su açığının kuraklığa bağlı olarak 1995-2005 arası dönemde yaklaşık 651 milyon metreküp olduğu ve bunun artmaya devam edeceği öngörülmektedir.¹⁰³ Suriye 21. yüzyılın kuraklığından önce su konusunda kırılgan bir yapıda iken 2006-2007’nin kışında başlayan şiddetli kuraklık dönemiyle beraber su kaynakları daha da risk altına girmiştir.¹⁰⁴ Ülkenin kıyı havzalarındaki su sorununu ortaya koymaya çalışan diğer bir çalışmada, 2000-2010 arası dönemde bölgedeki su çevresinin tekrarlayan kuraklık ve artan talep dolayısıyla ciddi tehdit altında olduğu belirtilmiştir.¹⁰⁵

2006-2010 arası kuraklık döneminde ülkenin buğday üretiminde önem arz eden Habur

⁹⁷ Mohtadi, “Climate Change and the Syrian Uprising.”

⁹⁸ William R. Polk, “Understanding Syria: From Pre-Civil War to Post-Assad”, *The Atlantic*, 10 Aralık 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/12/understanding-syria-from-pre-civil-war-to-post-assad/281989/> (10.12.2024).

⁹⁹ Otto, vd., “Human-Induced Climate Change.”

¹⁰⁰ UN OCHA, “Syrian Arab Republic: Euphrates Water Crisis & Drought Outlook”, *UN OCHA*, 17 Haziran 2021, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/syrian-arab-republic/syrian-arab-republic-euphrates-water-crisis-drought-outlook-17-june-2021> (10.07.2024).

¹⁰¹ Evans, “21st Century Climate,” 430.

¹⁰² Mohtadi, “Climate Change and the Syrian Uprising.”

¹⁰³ Erian, “Drought Vulnerability,” 16; Erian, Katlan ve Babah, “Drought Vulnerability in the Arab Region,” 5.

¹⁰⁴ Kelley, vd., “Commentary on The Syria Case,” 2.

¹⁰⁵ Faour ve Fayad, “Water Environment in the Coastal Basin,” 533.



Çayı kurumuştur.¹⁰⁶ 2014-2015 arası dönemde Suriye su sistemlerini olumsuz etkileyecek şekilde en kötü kuraklıklarından biri yaşanmıştır.¹⁰⁷ 2020-2023 arası dönemde ise ülkedeki yağış %60 oranında azalmıştır.¹⁰⁸ 1953'ten günümüze yaşanan en kötü kuraklığa bağlı olarak 2021 yılında Fırat Nehri suları en düşük seviyede akmıştır.¹⁰⁹ Fırat'ın batı yakasındaki 73 su istasyonunun 54'ü tarımsal ve gıda güvenliğine ciddi tehdit oluşturacak şekilde kritik düşük su düzeyiyle karşı karşı kalmıştır.¹¹⁰

Kuraklık ülkenin diğer önemli kaynak suyu olan yeraltı sularını da tehdit etmektedir. Yüzey sularının azalması yeraltı su kaynağının aşırı pompalanmasına yol açmaktadır. Yeraltı suları kendini yenilemeye imkan vermeyecek şekilde çiftçilerin hızlı bir şekilde tüketmesi dolayısıyla ciddi tehdit altındadır.¹¹¹ 1960'lardan 1990'lara kadar bölge ülkelerinin aşırı su pompalanmasıyla birçok akifer, on metreye kadar ekonomik olarak kullanılamaz hale gelmiştir.¹¹² 2006-2007 kışıyla beraber ülkenin su tablası hiç olmadığı kadar azalmaya başlamıştır. Önceki dönemlerde halk, yeraltı suyu çıkarmak için 60-70 metre sondaj yaparken kuraklık dönemiyle beraber 200, 500 ve 700 metre derine inmeye başlamıştır.¹¹³ Ülkede su sorunu niceliksel ve niteliksel olarak yeraltı su kaynakları üzerinde ciddi baskı yaratmıştır. Bu yönüyle iklim değişikliğine bağlı sıklaşan kuraklık, yağış sularına bağımlı olan Suriye'nin kalkınmasının önünde önemli bir engel olarak durmaktadır.

3.2. Kuraklığın Toplumsal Etkileri

Suriye'de kuraklık, su kaynakları üzerinde yarattığı sonuçlarla ülkenin ekonomik, toplumsal ve siyasal yapısını etkileyen unsurlardan biri haline gelmiştir. Kuraklık, tarım

¹⁰⁶ Erian, Katlan ve Babah, "Drought Vulnerability in the Arab Region," 4.

¹⁰⁷ Abdullah Saghir, "How Syria Crisis Affects the Potable Water System Efficiency in Non-State Armed Group Controlled Areas", *Turkish Journal of Water Science and Management* 2, sy. 2 (2018), 21.

¹⁰⁸ Ferrando, "How Northern Syria's Triple Water."

¹⁰⁹ Aurora Sottimano ve Nabil Samman, "Syria Has a Water Crisis and It's not Going Away", *Atlantic Council*, 24 Şubat 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/syria-has-a-water-crisis-and-its-not-going-away/> (12.10.2024)

¹¹⁰ UN OCHA, "Syrian Arab Republic: Euphrates Water Crisis & Drought Outlook."

¹¹¹ Barnes, "Managing the Waters," 512; Verner, *Adaptation to a Changing Climate*, " 121; Mithat A. Karasu, "Suriye'deki İç Savaşın Çevresel Kökenleri", *Çağdaş Yerel Yönetimler Dergisi* 26, sy. 3 (2017), 84.

¹¹² Verner, *Adaptation to a Changing Climate*, " 124.

¹¹³ John Wendle, "The Ominous Story of Syria's Climate Refugees", *Scientific American*, 17 Aralık 2015, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/ominous-story-of-syriacclimate-refugees> (12.06.2024).



ekonomisi ile sosyal yapısının çevresel strese duyarlı olmasından dolayı Suriye’yi daha kötü etkilemiştir.¹¹⁴ Kuraklığın yarattığı su kıtlığı tarım, gelir, sanitasyon, şiddet ve kitlesel göç gibi bir çok sorunu tetiklemektedir.¹¹⁵ Kuraklık, gıda ve tarım güvenliğini olumsuz etkilemekte, halkın göçüne yol açmakta, çölleşmeye sebebiyet vermektedir.¹¹⁶ 2006-2010 arası dönemde yaşanan kuraklık, ürün kıtlığına, telef olmuş hayvanlara, köylerin ortadan kalmasına ve iç göçe yol açmıştır.¹¹⁷ Kuraklık, GSYİH’nin %25’ni oluşturan ve Suriye işgücünün %40’ının çalıştığı, özellikle yağmur suyuna dayalı tarımı olumsuz etkilemiştir.¹¹⁸

1.3 milyon insanın etkilendiği 2006-2010 döneminde, kuraklık bölgesindeki halkın %60’ı uzun süreli kuraklık ile çeşitli oranlarda ürün kıtlığıyla karşı karşıya kalmış, çobanlar hayvanlarının %85’ini kaybetmiştir.¹¹⁹ Kuraklığın yol açtığı su kaynaklarındaki azalma buğday tarımı ile hayvancılığın temel geçim kaynağı olduğu bölgeleri olumsuz etkileyerek çiftçi hasatlarının %80 oranında düşmesine, ortaya çıkan yem kıtlığının geçim kaynağı olan hayvanların satılmasına yol açmıştır.¹²⁰ 2008 yılındaki kuraklık ülkenin yirmi yıl sonra ilk kez buğday ithal etmesine yol açmış, arpa üretimi yaklaşık %90 azalmış, hayvan yemi fiyatları iki kat artmış, hayvanların %70’i telef olmuş, kuraklığın etkili olduğu bölgedeki halkın %80’i yoksulluk sınırının altında yaşamaya başlamıştır.¹²¹ 2009-2010 dönemi ülkenin ekmek deposu olarak buğday üretiminin %75’ini karşılayan, üretimin yağışa bağlı olduğu Hasake, Rakka, Halep ve Deyrizor illerini ciddi oranda etkilemiştir.¹²² Otlaklardaki bitki örtüsünün ve yem rezervlerinin tükenmesi çobanların hayvanlarını maliyetinin çok altında satmalarına sebebiyet vermiş, buğday ve arpa verimleri sırasıyla %47 ve %67 oranında düşmüştür.¹²³ Söz konusu olumsuz gelişmeler su güvensizliğinin gıda ve ekonomik güvenliğini doğrudan etkilediğini gösteren örnekler oluşturmaktadır. 2021 kuraklığının sebebiyet verdiği nehir suyundaki ciddi azalma, barajların su depolamasında ciddi düşüş yaratarak 200.000 hektar

¹¹⁴ Ülker, Ergüven ve Gazioğlu, “Socio-economic Impacts in a Changing,” 86.

¹¹⁵ Al-Delaimy, “Vulnerable Populations,” 127-128.

¹¹⁶ Erian, “Drought Vulnerability,” 26-29; Erian, Katlan ve Babah, “Drought Vulnerability in the Arab Region,” 4.

¹¹⁷ Fröhlich, “Climate Migrants as Protestors,” 38; Wendle, “The Ominous Story of Syria's Climate Refugees.”

¹¹⁸ Erian, Katlan ve Babah, “Drought Vulnerability in the Arab Region,” 15-16.

¹¹⁹ Fröhlich, “Climate Migrants as Protestors,” 40; Polk, “Understanding Syria: From Pre-Civil War to Post-Assad.”

¹²⁰ Otto, vd., “Human-Induced Climate Change,”; Sottimano ve Samman, “Syria Has a Water Crisis.”

¹²¹ Mohtadi, “Climate Change and the Syrian Uprising.”

¹²² Erian, “Drought Vulnerability,” 16; Erian, Katlan ve Babah, “Drought Vulnerability in the Arab Region,” 5.

¹²³ Erian, “Drought Vulnerability,” 26-27.



tarım alanını tehdit etmiştir.¹²⁴ Su kıtlığının tarımsal faaliyetler üzerinde yarattığı ciddi etkiler, ülke ekonomisinin temeli olan tarım sektörünün su kıtlığından en fazla etkilenen alanlardan biri olduğunu, su güvensizliğinin gıda güvenliğini, doğal olarak ülkenin ekonomisini doğrudan ve ciddi oranda etkilediğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Yağış miktarındaki azalmaya bağlı nehir sularındaki azalma özellikle dışarıdan akan suların Suriye'ye bırakılan kısmının azalmasına ve doğal olarak bu sularla beslenen barajlardaki su miktarına negatif yönde etki etmektedir. Fırat suyu akışındaki azamalar 2020 yılında ülkenin kuzeydoğusunda elektrik kesintilerine yol açmış, kesintiler temel su istasyonlarının çalışmasını da sekteye uğratarak El Hasake, Rakka, Deyirzor, Halep bölgelerinde suya erişimi olumsuz etkilemiştir.¹²⁵ Nehir sularındaki azalma baraj sularını doğrudan olumsuz etkileyerek ülke elektrik üretiminde ciddi aksamaya yol açarak Suriye'nin kalkınmasını sekteye uğratmaktadır. Suyun yarattığı elektrik sorunu su güvenliğinin elektrik ihtiyacı üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koyduğu gibi farklı sektörler arasındaki bağlantının su güvenliğini doğrudan olumsuz etkileyeceğini göstermektedir.

Su sıkıntısı göçü tetikleyerek yeni bir güvenlik sorununa daha yol açmaktadır. Kuraklığın çıkardığı su açığı, gıda, ekonomik güvensizlik halkın ülke içi hareketine yol açmıştır. 2006, 2008 ve 2020 yıllarında kuraklığın yarattığı su kıtlığı kırsal alandan kente ya da komşu Arap ülkelerine doğru bir göç dalgasına yol açmıştır.¹²⁶ Suriye'de su sıkıntısı yaşayan bölgelerdeki halk zorunlu göçe maruz kalmıştır.¹²⁷ Şiddetli kuraklık, önceki yıllardaki kırdan kente göç ya da mevsimlik işçi göçlerinden farklı olarak kırsal çiftçi ailelerin tamamının ülke içinde yer değiştirmesine ve tarımsal bir çöküşe yol açmıştır.¹²⁸

Suriye'de kuraklık, 1.5 milyondan fazla insanı yerinden etmiş, tarım işçilerinin ve küçük ölçekli çiftçilerin aileleri ülkenin kuzeydoğusundan güneydeki kentlere göç etmiştir.¹²⁹ 2006-2011 dönemi kuraklığına bağlı, su kaynaklarının ve doğal olarak üretimin azalmasının yarattığı

¹²⁴ Sottimano ve Samman, "Syria Has a Water Crisis."

¹²⁵ UN OCHA, "Syrian Arab Republic: Euphrates Water Crisis & Drought Outlook."

¹²⁶ Erian, "Drought Vulnerability," 29; Verner, *Adaptation to a Changing Climate*, 121; Femia ve Werrel, "Climate Change Before and," 26-27; Polk, "Understanding Syria: From Pre-Civil War to Post-Assad"; Sottimano ve Samman, "Syria Has a Water Crisis."

¹²⁷ Saghir, "How Syria Crisis Affects the Potable Water System," 22.

¹²⁸ Kelley, vd., "Commentary on The Syria Case," 2.

¹²⁹ Mohtadi, "Climate Change and the Syrian Uprising."



göç, sosyo-ekonomik sorun ve istikrarsızlık yaratacak şekilde işsizlik, yoksulluk artışına yol açmıştır.¹³⁰ Diğer taraftan göçün su kaynakları üzerindeki baskıyı arttırdığı da gözlenmiştir. Göç alan şehirler kendi su altyapı eksikleriyle mücadele ederken göç edenler su kaynaklarına erişim için de birbirleriyle rekabet etmek zorunda kalmıştır.¹³¹ Nüfusun yer değiştirmesi ve su tedariki sorunu dışında 1999-2001 ve 2006-2009 dönemi yaşanan ciddi kuraklık, temizlik ve hijyenin azalmasına da yol açmıştır.¹³² 2020 yılında yaşanan ve üç yıl süren kuraklık, 2022’de su kaynaklı kolera salgını gibi hastalıkların artmasına yol açarak sağlık güvenliğini olumsuz etkilemiş, bütün ülkede suya erişimi en önemli insani sorunlardan biri haline getirmiştir.¹³³ Temiz ve yeterli suya erişim sorunu, su sıkıntısının ortaya çıkardığı hijyen gibi unsurlar doğrudan sağlık güvenliğini olumsuz etkilemektedir. Böylece su güvensizliğinin ekonomi ve göç üzerindeki etkisi dışında kuraklığın yarattığı suya erişim sorunu temel ihtiyaçların karşılanmasında da engelleyici rol oynamaktadır.

4. İç Savaş - Su Güvenliği İlişkisi

2010 yılının sonlarına doğru Orta Doğu’da kendini hissettiren Arap Baharı, Suriye’yi etkisine alarak ülkede 2024 sonuna kadar devam eden bir iç savaşın fitilini ateşlemiştir. Suriye iç savaşına yol açan birçok etmen bulunmakla beraber çevresel sorunların yarattığı ekonomik, toplumsal sonuçların da sürece dolaylı etkisi olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Su güvensizliği ve özellikle su güvensizliğine yol açan kuraklık iç savaşın dolaylı nedenlerinden biri olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Su güvenliği-iç savaş ilişkisi iki yönlü kendini göstermiştir. Bir taraftan ülkenin ana motoru olan tarımı etkileyecek şekilde iklim değişikliğinin yarattığı uzun dönemli kuraklık, kuraklığın yarattığı ciddi su krizi ve söz konusu çevresel faktörlerin ortaya çıkardığı ekonomik, siyasi, toplumsal sonuçlar ülkedeki iç savaşın tetikleyici unsurlarından biri olarak görülürken diğer taraftan ortaya çıkan istikrarsızlığın kısır döngü şeklinde su güvensizliğini tetiklediği de görülmektedir. İç savaş-su güvenliği sorunu arasındaki karşılıklı ilişki ülkenin

¹³⁰ Ülker, Ergüven ve Gazioğlu, “Socio-economic Impacts in a Changing,” 89.

¹³¹ Femia ve Werrel, “Climate Change Before and,” 27.

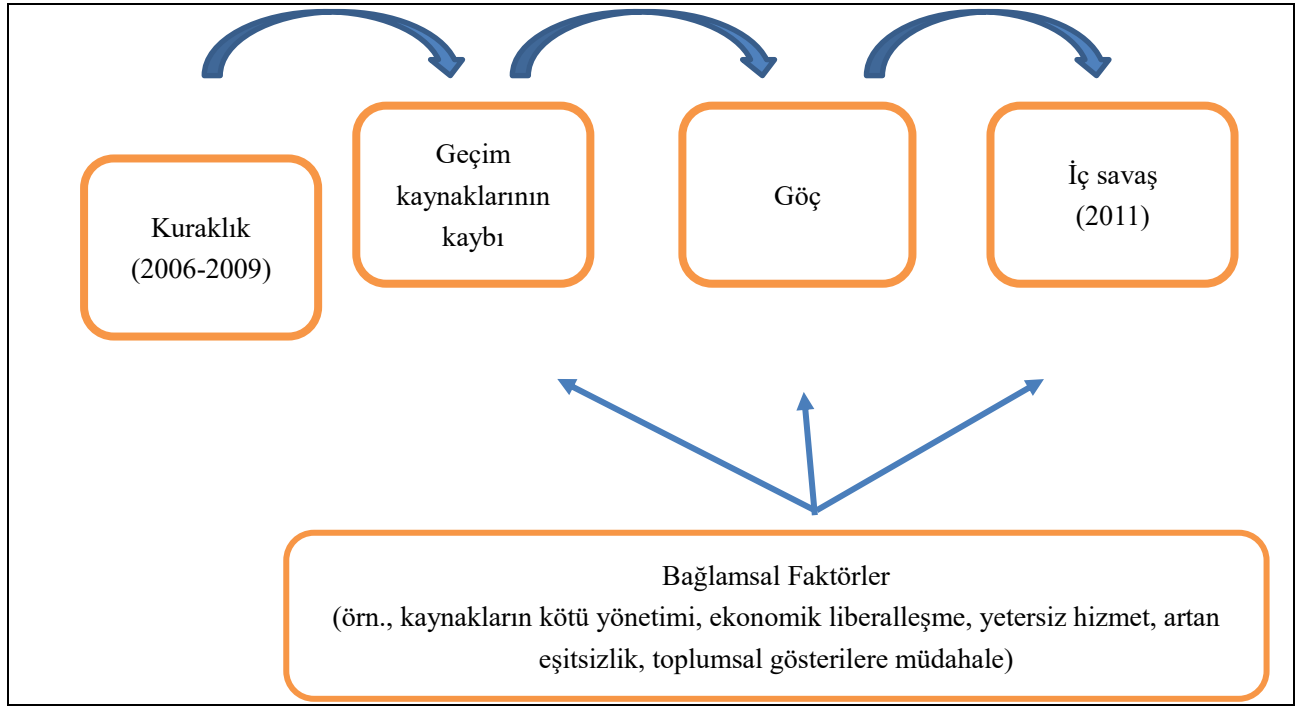
¹³² Joseph Daher, “Water Scarcity, Mismanagement and Pollution in Syria”, Middle East Directions Programme Technal Report, sy. 10, (Italy: European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre, 2022), 6.

¹³³ Otto, vd., “Human-Induced Climate Change”; Ferrando, “How Northern Syria’s Triple Water.”

istikrarsızlığı üzerinde arttırıcı etki yaratarak Suriye siyasi güvenliğini daha da çıkmaza sokmaktadır.

Suriye iç savaşını çevresel sorunlara dayalı açıklayan çalışmalar mevcuttur. Özellikle su sorununun temel nedenini oluşturan kuraklık iç savaşın dolaylı nedenlerinden biri olarak görülmektedir. Suriye’de iç savaş-iklim değişikliği arasındaki nedensel ilişkiyi eleştirel olarak incelediği çalışmada Ide, kuraklığın iç savaş üzerindeki etkisini ele alan çalışmaları aşağıda Şekil 1’deki gibi özetlemiştir.¹³⁴

Şekil 1: İç Savaş-Kuraklık İlişkisi¹³⁵



Gleick, suyun çatışmanın bir aracı ya da silahı olabileceği gibi şiddetin ve rekabetin tetikleyici unsuru olabildiğini savunmuştur.¹³⁶ Ülkedeki protesto eylemlerinin kuraklığa bağlı göç eden kırsal kesim tarafından başladığını ifade eden Mohtadi, söz konusu doğa olayı ve sebep olduğu göçün isyanın temel nedeni olmasa da ülke istikrarsızlığında ve doğal olarak iç savaşta rol oynadığını savunmuştur.¹³⁷ Kültürel kutuplaşma, siyasi baskı ve ekonomik

¹³⁴ Tobias Ide, “Climate War in the Middle East? Drought, the Syrian Civil War and the State of Climate-Conflict Research”, *Current Climate Change Reports* 4, sy. 4 (2018), 347-354.

¹³⁵ a.g.e., 348.

¹³⁶ Gleick, “Water, War & Peace in the Middle East,” 7.

¹³⁷ Mohtadi, “Climate Change and the Syrian Uprising.”



eşitsizliğin olduğu Suriye gibi ülkelerde iklim değişikliği daha büyük sosyal ve siyasal sonuçları doğurabilmektedir. Karasu, Suriye'deki iç savaşın azalan çevresel kaynaklar nedeniyle yaşanan kaynak çatışmasının izlerini taşıdığını belirtmiştir.¹³⁸ Maden, çalışmasında su kıtlığı ve kuraklığın yarattığı ekonomik ve sosyal etkilerin iç savaşta ana tetikleyici unsur olmasa da sürecin öne çekilmesinde etkili olabileceğini belirtmektedir.¹³⁹ Butler, Suriye iç savaşını iklim değişikliği ile yeraltı suyu tükenmesi gibi etkileşen eko-sosyal nedenlere bağlamıştır.¹⁴⁰ İklimsel sorunların etnik bölünmenin fazla hissedildiği ülkelerde silahlı çatışma riskini arttırdığını savunan çalışmada Schleussner vd., iklimsel sorunların Suriye iç savaşına doğrudan yol açmadığını söylemekle beraber iklim olaylarının mevcut toplumsal gerilimi arttırarak çatışmada rol aldığını ortaya çıkarmıştır.¹⁴¹ Ülker, Ergüven ve Gazioğlu da 2007-2010 arası dönem yaşanan kuraklığın ülkedeki çatışma, terörizm ve göçe yol açan nedenlerden birini oluşturduğunu belirtmiştir.¹⁴² Su stresi suya dayalı sanayi ve tüketicileri değil siyasi istikrarı etkileyecek ciddi bir sorun olacaktır.¹⁴³ Zaten gergin ve ayrılmış olan Suriye toplumsal yapısı ve rejime yönelik hoşnutsuzluk, hükümet otoritesinin zayıflaması ve toplumsal öfkenin yükselmesine neden olan süreç çevresel sorunlarla daha da artacaktır.¹⁴⁴

Esad yönetiminin kuraklık ve yarattığı sosyal, ekonomik sorunlara cevap vermede yetersiz kalmasının halkın rejime karşı muhalefetini arttırmış olması olasıdır. Rejime yönelik 2011 Mart ayındaki ilk protesto, tarım ürünlerindeki düşüşe bağlı olarak yer değiştirmek zorunda kalan genç erkek işsizlerin ve çiftçilerin büyük bir akın yeri, ülkenin tarım merkezlerinden olan Dara çevresinde başlamıştır.¹⁴⁵ Ayaklanma öncesinde ülkenin kuzeyinden Dara ve Humus gibi kuraklıktan daha az etkilenen bölgelere 1,5 milyon kadar insan göç etmiştir.¹⁴⁶ Kırsal kesimin Suriye muhalefet hareketinde önemli rol oynadığını belirten Femia

¹³⁸ Karasu, "Suriye'deki İç Savaşın Çevresel Kökenleri," 87.

¹³⁹ Maden, "İklim Değişiminin Arap," 86.

¹⁴⁰ Colin D. Butler, "Limits to Growth, Planetary Boundaries and Planetary Health", *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 25, (2017), 59.

¹⁴¹ Carl Friedrich Schleussner vd., "Armed-conflict Risks Enhanced by Climate-related Disasters in Ethnically Fractionalized Countries", *PNAS* 113, sy. 33 (2016), 9219.

¹⁴² Ülker, Ergüven ve Gazioğlu, "Socio-economic Impacts in a Changing," 84.

¹⁴³ Kuzma, Saccoccia ve Chertock, "25 Countries, Housing One-quarter."

¹⁴⁴ Karasu, "Suriye'deki İç Savaşın Çevresel Kökenleri," 83, 85.

¹⁴⁵ Gleick, "Water, Drought, Climate Change," 335.

¹⁴⁶ Fröhlich, "Climate Migrants as Protestors," 40.



ve Werrell de kuraklık ve su kıtlığı nedeniyle ciddi sorun yaşayan ve rejimden yeteri kadar destek alamayan, kırsal tarım kasabası Dara'nın protestoların odak noktası olduğunu vurgulamıştır.¹⁴⁷ 15 Mart 2011'de Dara kasabasında görece küçük grup hükümetin onlara yardım etmemesini protesto etmek için toplanmıştı.¹⁴⁸

Fröhlich ise göçmenlerin sosyal kapasitelerinin ve kaynaklarının çok yetersiz olmasına bağlı olarak devrim hareketinde anlamlı etkilerinin az olduğunu savunmaktadır.¹⁴⁹ Ancak Dara örneğinden yola çıkarak bu yönde ortaya atılmış savın doğru olduğu kabul edilse dahi iklim göçmenlerinin göç ettikleri bölgedeki yapıya olası etkilerinin protesto eylemlerinin bu bölgede başlamasına yol açtığını ve bu şekilde iklimsel göçmenlerin dolaylı yoldan dahi iç savaşta rol aldıklarını belirtmek mümkündür. Diğer taraftan Arap Baharı'nın Suriye'de yarattığı iç savaşın tek nedeninin su kıtlığına yol açan kuraklık gibi iklimsel olayların yarattığı sosyo-ekonomik sonuçlar olduğunu söylemek yanlıştır. İklimsel olumsuz koşulların tek başlarına siyasal etki yaratabilmesi için söz konusu olumsuz doğa olaylarının ülkenin tamamını çok ciddi oranda olumsuz etkilemesi ve hükümetin bu konuda tamamen aciz kalması gerekmektedir. Ancak kuraklık gibi su sorunu yaratan böylesi bir doğa olayı, Suriye iç savaşında rejime yönelik mevcut hoşnutsuzlukta kısmen tetikleyici, doğal olarak dolaylı rol oynamıştır.

Su güvenliği sorunu iç savaşın çıkmasında dolaylı etki yarattığı gibi iç savaşın kendisi su güvenliği üzerinde ciddi olumsuz etkiler doğurmuştur. Savaş öncesi mevcut su sorunu savaşla beraber daha da artmıştır. Savaş toplumun tüm yaşam alanını olumsuz etkileyeceği gerçeğinden hareketle su güvenliğine yönelik risklerin savaşla daha da kendini hissettirmesi kaçınılmaz olmaktadır. Söz konusu ortamda suya erişim ciddi risk altındadır. Gerek su kaynaklarının bilinçli hedef alınması ya da kazara zarar görmesi suya erişim güvenliğini doğrudan etkilemektedir. Diğer taraftan savaşta kullanılan silah ve benzeri mühimmatlar doğrudan suyun niteliğini olumsuz etkilemektedir. Savaş ortamında su altyapısı da zarar

¹⁴⁷ Francesco Femia ve Caitlin E. Werrell, "Syria: Climate Change, Drought and Social Unrest", *Center for Climate and Security*, 29 Şubat 2012, <https://climateandsecurity.org/2012/02/syria-climate-change-drought-and-social-unrest/> (12.08.2024).

¹⁴⁸ Polk, "Understanding Syria: From Pre-Civil War to Post-Assad."

¹⁴⁹ Fröhlich, "Climate Migrants as Protestors," 47.



gördüğünden halkın suya erişimi daha da zorlaşmakta, su güvensizliği ciddi bir sorun olarak Suriye yaşamını etkilemektedir.

12 yıllık çatışma, su kaynaklarının üçte ikisinin ve temizlik gibi temel sivil altyapının zarar görmesine yol açmıştır.¹⁵⁰ Suriye iç savaşında su kaynakları ve insan yapımı su sistemleri hem bir silah olarak kullanılmış hem de çatışmanın hedefi haline gelmiştir.¹⁵¹ Uluslararası Kızılhaç Komitesine göre iç savaş ortamında çatışmaların su tesislerini tahrip etmesine bağlı olarak Suriye’de içilebilir suyun savaştan itibaren 10 yıl içinde %40 azaldığını, bu şekilde halkın ciddi bir su sorunu yaşadığını ortaya koymuştur.¹⁵² Savaş öncesi dönemde kırsal ve şehir nüfusunun %90’dan fazlasının suya erişebildiğini belirten Komite, savaşla beraber günümüzde güvenli suya erişimi sağlayacak su ve sanitasyon sistemlerinin %50’sinin şiddet ortamında, çatışmaya bağlı uygun işletme ve bakım eksikliği, yedek parça ve insan kaynağı eksikliği nedeniyle çalışamaz hale geldiğini belirtmiştir.¹⁵³

2011 Suriye Savaşı’ndan önce halkın yaklaşık %85’inin iyi gelişmiş, devlete ait ve merkezi olarak yönetilen su sistemlerine erişim sağladığını belirten Saghier de iç savaş ortamında rejimin kontrolünden çıkan bölgelerde güvenli ve temiz suya erişimin daha büyük sorun haline geldiğini, su sistemleri ve kuyuların büyük ölçüde bozulduğunu, su sistemlerinin sağlıklı ve verimli şekilde işletilmesini sağlayan teknik araçların yüksek fiyatlar ve erişimsizlik dolayısıyla son derece sınırlı olduğunu ve bu şekilde 13 milyon Suriyeli’nin sağlıklı suya sürekli erişim şansının olmadığını, kamu ve özel sektör tarafından tankerlerle taşınan suya bağımlı yaşadığını ifade etmiştir.¹⁵⁴ Somut örnek oluşturması bakımından Türkiye ve Suriye’nin kuzeyindeki Kürtler arasındaki mücadelede su altyapısı hasar görmüş, ülkenin

¹⁵⁰ UN OCHA, “Syria: Facing the Dual Challenge of Climate Change and Conflict”, *UN OCHA*, 10 Kasım 2023, <https://www.unocha.org/news/syria-facing-dual-challenge-climate-change-and-conflict> (07.06.2024).

¹⁵¹ Peter H. Gleick, “Water as a Weapon and Casualty of Armed Conflict: A Review of Recent Water Related Violence in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen,” *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Water* 6, sy. 4 (2019): e1351.

¹⁵² International Committee of the Red Cross, “Syria Water Crisis: Up to 40% less Drinking Water After 10 Years of War”, *ICRC*, 01 Ekim 2021, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/syria-water-crisis-after-10-years-war> (12.05.2024).

¹⁵³ International Committee of the Red Cross, “Syria Water Crisis.”

¹⁵⁴ Saghier, “How Syria Crisis Affects the Potable Water System,” 20-22.



kuzeydoğusu ile Türkiye, Suriye arasında tampon bölgede yer alan ve yarım milyon insanın su ihtiyacını karşılayan Alouk su istasyonu 2020 yılından itibaren hizmet dışı kalmıştır.¹⁵⁵

Savaş aynı zamanda su kirliliğini artırıcı faktör olarak durmaktadır. Savaş ortamında kontrolsüz su çekimi, yönetim eksikliği ve suya erişimin azalması suyun niteliği üzerinde olumsuz etki yaratmaktadır.¹⁵⁶ Su kıtlığı ve kirliliği savunmasız halkı salgınlar, insanların başa çıkma kapasitesini aşındırma, sağlıklı olmayan su kaynaklarını kullanma gibi ciddi sorunlara yol açmıştır.¹⁵⁷ Atık su sistemlerinin de savaş ortamında çalışamaz hale gelmesiyle çevreye doğrudan akan atık sular, halk sağlığına ciddi risk oluşturmuş, yeraltı su kaynakları ciddi şekilde kirlenmiştir.¹⁵⁸ İklimsel değişiklikler ile savaş, gıda üretiminde azalmaya yol açarak gıda ve su fiyatlarını, sağlık sorunlarını ve su kaynaklı hastalıkları arttırmıştır.¹⁵⁹ Savaş koşullarında düşen buğday üretimi su kıtlığıyla daha da azalmış, ülke buğday ithalat eder duruma gelmiştir.¹⁶⁰ İç savaşın yarattığı ülke içi ani göç hareketleri ülkenin su yönetim kapasitesini daha da olumsuz etkilemektedir. Bu noktada savaş ortamında kıyı bölgelerine yaşanan yoğun göç hareketi göç alan bölgede su sorununu daha da arttırmış, rejimin su yönetim kapasitesini savaş öncesi döneme göre %30 azaltmıştır.¹⁶¹ Suriye'deki istikrarsızlık ortamı insanların iklim değişikliğinin yol açtığı kuraklık, kuraklığın yarattığı su kıtlığı, kıtlığın sebep olduğu ekonomik, sağlık, gıda, temizlik gibi sorunlarla mücadele etme kapasitesini azaltmaktadır.

Savaş ortamında su güvenliğini tehdit eden diğer bir neden suyun bir savaş aracı olarak kullanılmasıdır. Suriye'deki iç savaş, özellikle suyun stratejik değeri dolayısıyla bilinçli ve özel saldırılarla kentsel su dağıtım şebekelerini olumsuz yönde etkilemiştir.¹⁶² 2014-2015 döneminde ülkenin kuzeydoğusundaki hidroelektrik kaynaklar ile su kaynaklarının önemli bir kısmı DEAŞ'ın eline geçerken, söz konusu tarihten sonra Suriye'nin sulanabilir alanlarının yarısı, hidroelektrik santrallerinin önemli kısmı ve su potansiyelinin %95'i YPG gibi rejim

¹⁵⁵ Ferrando, "How Northern Syria's Triple Water."

¹⁵⁶ Faour ve Fayad, "Water Environment in the Coastal Basin," 533.

¹⁵⁷ UN OCHA, "Syria: Facing the Dual Challenge."

¹⁵⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross, "Syria Water Crisis."

¹⁵⁹ Faour ve Fayad, "Water Environment in the Coastal Basin," 538.

¹⁶⁰ Ferrando, "How Northern Syria's Triple Water."

¹⁶¹ Faour ve Fayad, "Water Environment in the Coastal Basin," 533.

¹⁶² Gleick, "Water, Drought, Climate Change," 336.



karşıtı güçlerin eline geçmiş,¹⁶³ bu durum söz konusu oluşumların siyasi gücünü arttırmıştır. Su kaynaklarının illegal oluşumların eline geçmesi su güvenliği üzerinde ciddi bir baskı oluşturmaktadır. Şam'ın su tedariki açısından önem arz eden Barada Nehri vadisindeki 2012-2017 dönemi çatışmasında su kaynakları ve tesislerini, hem Esad rejimi hem de isyan güçleri siyasi, askeri ve ekonomik amaçlarını sağlayacak şekilde askeri hedef ile askeri araç olarak kullanmıştır.¹⁶⁴ Suyun stratejik önemi ve su çevresindeki nüfusun kontrol ve hakimiyetinin bir aracı olarak nehir, göl gibi su kaynaklarının kontrolü stratejik önem taşımış, diğer taraftan rejim karşıtı güçler Şam'ın su ihtiyacının karşılanmasında önem arz eden söz konusu kaynakları ele geçirerek Şam'a suyun akışını doğrudan kontrol etmeleri ve böylece rejim karşısındaki maddi, manevi pazarlık güçleri arttırmaları mümkün olmuştur.¹⁶⁵

2019'da İdlib bölgesinde yer alan 80.000 insanı besleyen su istasyonu hava saldırılarıyla çalışamaz hale gelmiştir.¹⁶⁶ Türkiye, Suriye'nin kuzeyine yönelik askeri operasyonlarına paralel 2021 yılının başından itibaren Suriye'ye 500 milyon metreküp yerine 300 milyon metreküp su bırakmıştır.¹⁶⁷ Söz konusu kesintiyi Türkiye, onu da etkileyen kuraklığa bağlamasına rağmen su akışındaki azalmanın Suriye'nin kuzeyindeki Kürt güçlerini zorda bırakacak askeri bir strateji olduğu iddia edilmektedir.¹⁶⁸ Somut örnekler suyun savaş ortamında stratejik bir silahı olarak kullanılabildiğini, söz konusu durumun suya erişimi ciddi anlamda olumsuz etkileyerek su güvensizliğinin en önemli nedenlerinden birini oluşturduğunu göstermektedir. Kısacası iklim değişikliği etkilerinin ve çevresel bozulmanın daha görünür olmasına yol açan Suriye iç savaşı, suyun varlık ve kalitesini olumsuz etkileyerek su güvenliğine doğrudan tehdit oluşturmaktadır.

¹⁶³ Mehmet Çağatay Güler ve Can Uzun, "Suriye'de Doğal Kaynaklar Savaşı", *SETA Analiz*, sy. 293 (İstanbul: SETA Yayınları, 2019), 11-12.

¹⁶⁴ Margarida Gama, "Water Weaponisation: The Syrian Case", *e-cadernos CES*, sy. 40 (2023), 49.

¹⁶⁵ Gama, "Water Weaponisation: The Syrian Case," 44-45.

¹⁶⁶ UN OCHA, "Syrian Arab Republic: Recent Developments in Northwestern Syria Situation", Report 7, (UN: UN OCHA, 2019),

file:///C:/Users/d_sur/OneDrive/Masa%C3%BCst%C3%BC/latest_developments_in_north_western_syria_12jul y2019_sitrep7.pdf (12.08.2024), 2.

¹⁶⁷ Ferrando, "How Northern Syria's Triple Water."

¹⁶⁸ a.g.e.



Sonuç

Dünya su kaynaklarının %1 gibi çok küçük bir oranının kullanılabilir olması doğal yaşamın ayrılmaz parçası suyu devletlerin önemli politikalarından biri haline getirmiştir. Su kaynaklarının kıt kaynak olarak öne çıktığı Orta Doğu ülkelerinden Suriye, su görünümü tablosu uzun yıllar bölgenin diğer ülkelerine kıyasla daha iyi olmuşken 20. yüzyılın son çeyreğinden itibaren su krizini hissetmeye başlamıştır. Böylece Suriye’de ciddi su sorununun, çevresel bozulmanın sınıraşan etkilerinin ve yarattığı ulusal güvenlik risklerinin fark edilmesiyle çevresel güvenlik kavramının gelişmeye başladığı ve kendini göstermeye başlayan küresel iklim değişikliğine paralel 1970’li yıllardan itibaren ortaya çıktığı söylenebilmektedir. 21. yüzyıla beraber suya ilişkin kriz daha görünür hale gelmiştir. Artık su, Suriye’de bir güvenlik sorunu olarak ülkenin çözüm üretmesi gereken önemli politik konulardan birini oluşturmaktadır.

Suriye’nin su görünümü genel olarak değerlendirildiğinde ülke sularının büyük oranda ülke sınırları dışından sağlandığı, su kaynakları konusunda yüksek oranda yağmur suyuna bağımlı olduğu, ülkenin ana ekonomik motorunu oluşturan tarımın suya bağımlı olduğu şeklinde genel bir çerçeve ortaya çıkmaktadır. Dışa ve yağışa bağımlılık Suriye’de suyu stratejik unsur haline getirmektedir. Bu noktada Suriye’de suyu önemli güvenlik sorunu haline getiren birbirleriyle etkileşim içinde olan çok sayıda etmen bulunmaktadır. Geleneksel olarak ülkenin su kaynaklarının %70 gibi yüksek bir oranının ülke sınırları dışından sağlanması ülkeyi suda dışa bağımlı hale getirmektedir. Bu durum uzun yıllar ülke su güvenliğinin en önemli sorunlarından birini oluşturmuştur. Özellikle suyun ortak paylaşıldığı diğer komşu ülkelerin siyasi kaygılarla kimi zaman söz konusu doğal kaynağı stratejik dış politika aracı olarak kullanması Suriye’de su güvenliğini önemli bir sorun haline getirmiştir.

Su sürdürülebilirliği konusunda gerek yönetim gerekse toplum düzeyinde yeterli bir bilincin gelişmemiş olması, bu doğrultuda halkın su kaynaklarının yenilenebilirliğini gözardı edecek şekilde su tüketim alışkanlığı ile yönetimin uzun yıllar özellikle ekonomik kalkınma adına su kaynaklarının devamlılığını görmezden gelen politikalar takip etmesi ülke su kaynakları üzerinde büyük bir baskı yaratmıştır. Su üzerinde genel baskı yaratan nüfus artışı, artan kentleşme, sulu tarımın yaygınlığı, su arzını aşan talep gibi diğer etmenler de Suriye’de



suyu güvenlik sorunu haline getirmektedir.

21. yüzyılla birlikte Suriye’de kriz yaratacak şekilde suyu güvenlik sorunu haline getiren önemli sorunlardan birini Akdeniz’de etkisi gittikçe daha fazla hissedilen iklim değişikliğinin ve 2010 Arap Baharı’nın Suriye’yi sürüklediği iç savaşın su üzerinde yarattığı baskıdır. Küresel iklim değişikliği niteliksel ve niceliksel açıdan tatlı su kaynaklarını olumsuz etkileyerek dünyada sınırlı olan söz konusu değerli varlığı daha da tehdit etmektedir. Özellikle Orta Doğu gibi kurak ya da yarı kurak bir bölgede kıt kaynak olan su, küresel iklim değişikliği dolayısıyla daha büyük bir tehdit ile karşı karşıyadır. Suriye’de suyun geleceği üzerine yapılan çalışmalar, önümüzdeki dönemde ülkenin söz konusu kaynaklarının iklimsel değişime bağlı daha da azalacağını ortaya koymaktadır. Suriye’nin su güvensizliğini doruğa çıkaran en büyük unsurlardan birini iklim değişikliğinin yarattığı uzun dönemli kuraklık oluşturmuştur. Öyle ki iklimsel değişim ülkede en fazla su kaynaklarını doğrudan etkileyen ve 2000’li yıllarla birlikte daha sık görülen, uzun süreli kuraklık şeklinde kendini hissettirmektedir. Kuraklık gıda, su ve daha genel olarak toplumsal, ekonomik ve siyasi güvenliğini doğrudan olumsuz etkilemiştir. Ortaya çıkan su krizi ülke içi göç hareketlerine, tarımsal üretimde düşüşe, mevcut su kaynaklarının daha da tüketilmesine, suya bağlı sağlık sorunlarına yol açarak toplumsal, ekonomik, sağlık ve doğal olarak siyasi güvensizliği tetiklemiştir.

2010’da Orta Doğu’yu etkisi altına alan Arap Baharı, 2011 Mart ayıyla beraber Suriye’yi etkileyerek 2024 yılı sonuna kadar süren bir iç savaşa sürüklemiştir. Suriye iç savaşının su güvenliği üzerindeki etkisi iki yönlü olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Su sorunu bir yönüyle Suriye iç savaşının tetikleyici unsurlarından birini oluştururken iç savaş da su güvensizliğinin önemli nedenlerinden biri olarak durmaktadır. Suriye iç savaşında iklim değişikliğine bağlı olarak su kaynaklarını tehdit eden kuraklığın da dolaylı da olsa etkili olduğu görülmektedir. İç savaş öncesi dönemde 2000’li yıllarla birlikte sık tekrarlayan kuraklığa bağlı su sorununun ortaya çıkardığı siyasi, ekonomik, toplumsal güvenlik krizi ve Baas yönetiminin sorunu çözmede yetersiz kalması halkın mevcut rejime yönelik muhalefetini arttırmıştır.

Arap Baharı sürecinde ülkedeki isyan dalgası, kuraklık ve su sorunu nedeniyle göç alan, rejimin yeterli destek vermediği, tarım bölgesi Dara’da başlamıştır. Bu durum iç savaşla su güvenliği arasında bir bağ kurulabileceğini göstermekle beraber kuraklık ya da su krizinin



yarattığı sorunları Suriye iç savaşının temel nedeni olarak yorumlamak yanlış olacaktır. Su güvenliği sorunu, Suriye iç savaşının dolaylı nedenlerinden yalnızca birini oluşturmaktadır. Diğer taraftan iç savaş su güvenliği sorunu yaratan önemli siyasi krizler arasında yer almaktadır. Suriye iç savaşı suyun nicelik ve niteliğinde önemli sorunlara yol açmaktadır. Çatışmalara bağlı su altyapısının zarar görmesi, savaş ortamında temel suya erişimin ciddi bir sorun olması, su kaynaklı sağlık sorunlarına yol açacak ve sulu tarımı zayıflatacak şekilde iç savaşın su kıtlığını tetiklemesi, iç savaşın ülkede mevcut su krizini arttırıcı etki yarattığını ortaya koymaktadır. Diğer taraftan su, savaş ortamında stratejik unsur olan önemli doğal kaynaklardan birini oluşturmaktadır. Gerek rejim gerekse muhalif güçler savaş ortamında su kaynaklarının bilinçli şekilde hedef ya da kontrol altına alınması gibi suyu stratejik politika aracı olarak kullanmıştır.

Sonuç olarak iklim değişikliği ve sebebiyet verdiği, su kıtlığı yaratan kuraklığın daha sık yaşanması, suyun kötü yönetimi, sürdürülemez su tüketimi, artan nüfus, tarımsal uygulamalar, sürdürülemez çevre uygulamaları, iç savaş ve savaşın yarattığı su sorunu gibi unsurlar günümüzde Suriye’de su güvenliğini doğrudan tehdit etmeyi sürdürmektedir.

Extended Summary

Water is an indispensable resource that both directly affects and connects all living things in the ecosystem during their lives. Water is not only a biological need for humans, but also the essence of socio-economic and cultural life. However, this vital resource is available in limited amounts in the world. On the other hand, current economic developments and rapid population growth are increasing the demand for water resources on the one hand and threatening the dwindling water reserves on the other. The extent of major changes over the next few decades depends on the sensitivity of the planet and the amount of greenhouse gas emissions globally. Indeed, the events leading to the water crisis are not only related to increases in demand, but also to large fluctuations in water supply. The main reason for this is the problem of climate change, one of the most important environmental crises of the century.

All data related to climate change on a global scale indicate that the situation will worsen and the water problem will become more serious unless remedial measures are taken. In many parts of the world, water security is threatened by a combination of factors such as water scarcity



caused by economic growth and rapid population growth; climate change caused by extreme weather events such as droughts and floods; and degradation of land and water ecosystems. Water insecurity and water-related events caused by climate change have social consequences such as energy production, agriculture and water-borne diseases, which affect vulnerable people more. Threats to water availability are attributed to the problem of anthropogenic climate change; climate change is said to affect the physical manifestation of water security by increasing water scarcity and exposing people to extreme water-related events such as floods and droughts, worsening water vulnerability due to political, social and economic reasons, and affecting the water cycle in a way that leads to serious social consequences in some countries.

Of the 26 states with severe water shortages in the world, 14 are located in the Middle East and North Africa. The Middle East and North African states have been experiencing water shortages for a long time due to both limited groundwater resources and changes in climate. Syria, one of the Middle Eastern countries where water resources stand out as a scarce resource, started to feel the water crisis in the last quarter of the 20th century, while its water outlook picture was better compared to other countries in the region for many years. Thus, it can be said that the concept of environmental security started to develop in Syria with the realisation of the serious water problem, the transboundary effects of environmental degradation and the national security risks it poses, and that it emerged in parallel with the global climate change that started to manifest itself in the 1970s. In the 21st century, the crisis regarding water has become more visible. As a security issue in Syria, water now constitutes one of the important political issues that the country needs to find solutions to.

When Syria's water outlook is evaluated, a general framework emerges that the country's water is largely supplied from outside the country's borders, that it is highly dependent on rainwater in terms of water resources, and that agriculture, which constitutes the main economic engine of the country, is dependent on water. Dependence on foreign water and rainfall makes water a strategic element in Syria. At this point, there are many factors interacting with each other that make water an important security issue in Syria. One of the important problems that makes water a security issue in Syria is the pressure on water caused by climate change, the impact of which is increasingly felt in the Mediterranean, and the civil war that the Arab Spring



of 2010 dragged Syria into. Global climate change is adversely affecting freshwater resources in terms of quality and quantity, further threatening this precious asset, which is limited in the world. Especially in an arid or semi-arid region such as the Middle East, water, which is a scarce resource, faces a greater threat due to climate change. One of the most significant factors that has brought Syria's water insecurity to a head has been the long-term drought caused by climate change. In fact, climate change has made itself felt in the country in the form of prolonged droughts, which directly affect water resources and have become more frequent since the 2000s.

As a result, factors such as climate change and the more frequent occurrence of droughts that cause water scarcity, mismanagement of water, unsustainable water consumption, increasing population, agricultural practices, unsustainable environmental practices, civil war, and the water problem created by the war continue to directly threaten water security in Syria today.

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