

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON _____ GLOBALIZATION & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS-VIII

AUGUST 24, 2026 / ISTANBUL, TÜRKİYE

PROCEEDINGS BOOK



EDITORS | PROF. DR. ARZU AL
PROF. DR. GÜLZAR İBRAHİMOVA



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EDITORS

Prof. Dr. Arzu AL Prof.
Dr. Gülzar İBRAHİMOVA

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adapted by Mariam Rasulan

CONGRESS ID

CONGRESS TITLE

8th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBALIZATION & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

DATE and PLACE

AUGUST 24, 2026 / ISTANBUL, TÜRKİYE
Marmara University

ORGANIZATION

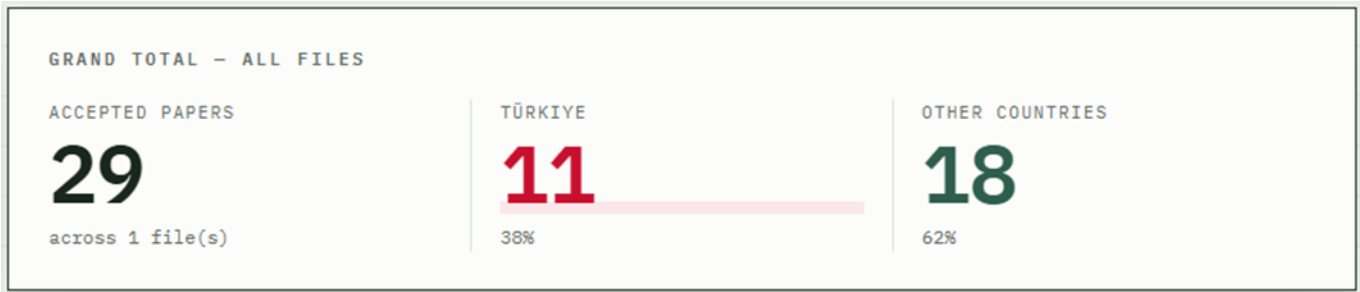
IKSAD-Institute of Economic Development and Social Research

PARTICIPATION

Keynote & Invited

EVALUATION PROCESS

All applications have undergone a double-blind peer review process



BREAKDOWN BY COUNTRY				-
Türkiye	11	Morocco		1
Azerbaijan	7	Uzbekistan		1
Nigeria	4	Vietnam		1
Albania	2	Algeria		1
Georgia	1			

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HEAD OF SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE - Prof. Dr. Gülzar İBRAHİMOVA – Vice Rector of Baku Eurasian University

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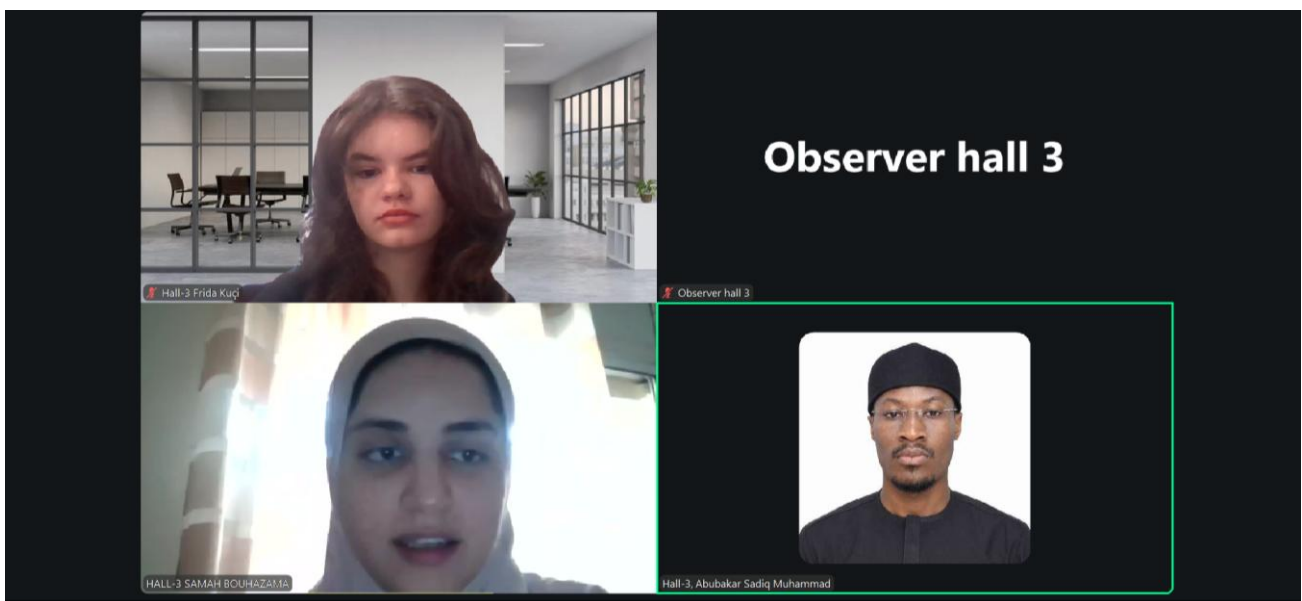
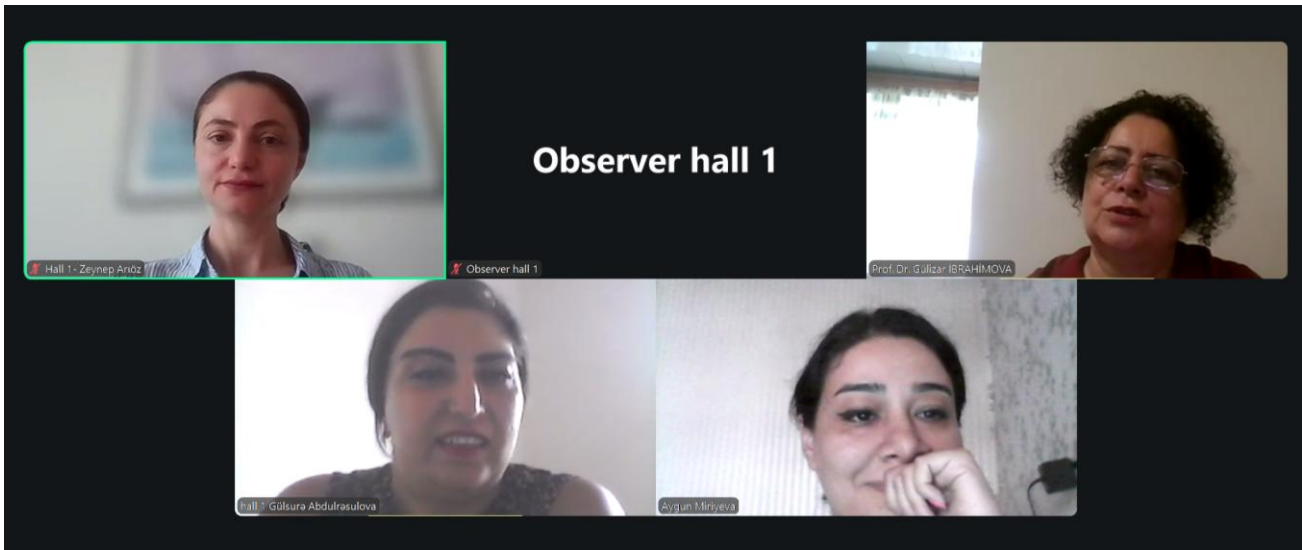




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İSTANBUL, TÜRKİYE AUGUST 24, 2026







observer hall 4

Hassan Attahiru...

Hassan Attahiru Gwandu

BİRLEŞMİŞ MİLLETLER BARIŞI KORUMA OPERASYONLARINDA ÇEKİLME STRATEJİLERİ

MINUSMA Örneği

Zeynep ARIÖZ

Bandırma Onyediy Eylül Üniversitesi • Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü



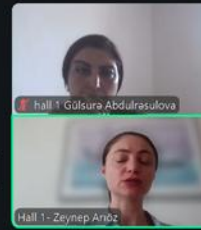
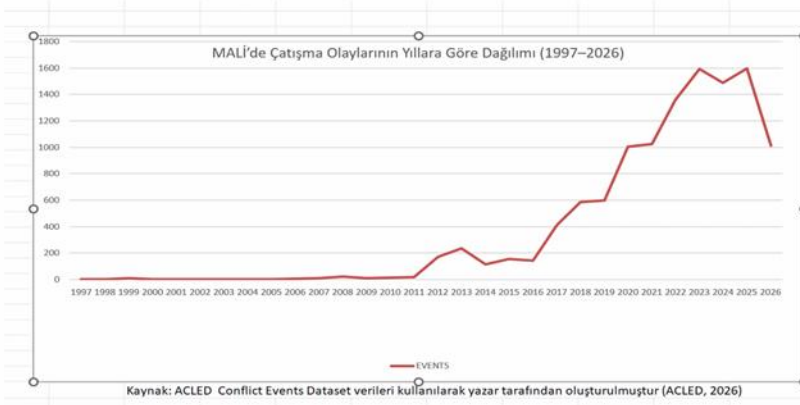
Observer hall 1

Hall 1 - Zeynep Ariöz

Prof. Dr. Gülizar İBRAHİMOVA

Aygun Miriyeve

Aygun Miriyeve



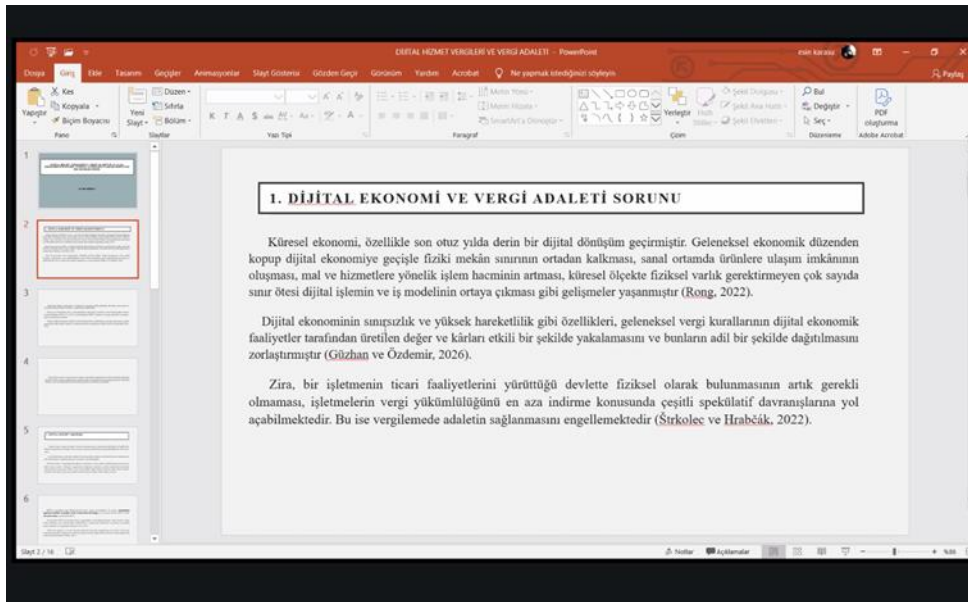
Observer hall 1

Hall 1 - Zeynep Ariöz

Prof. Dr. Gülizar İBRAHİMOVA

Aygun Miriyeve

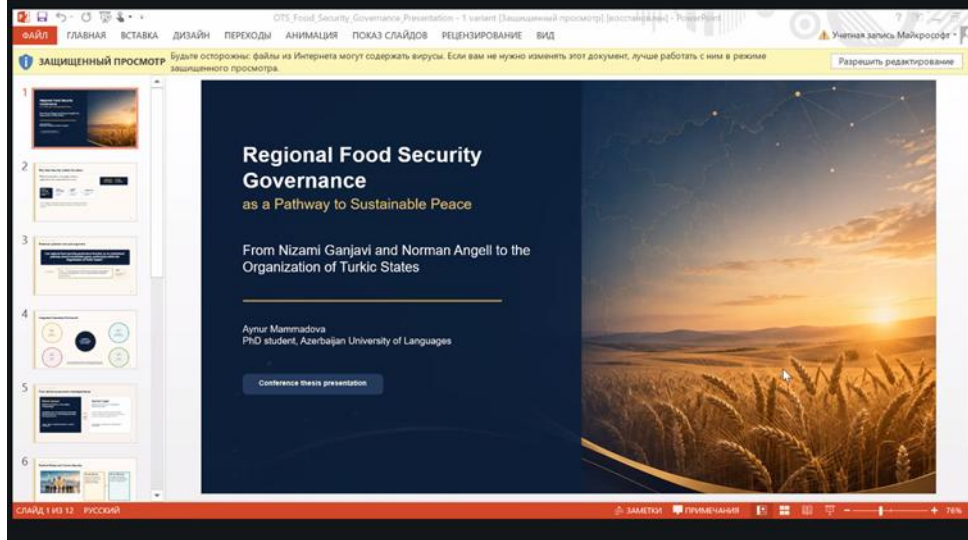
Aygun Miriyeve



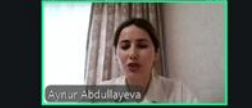
Observer Hall-2



Aynur Abdullayeva

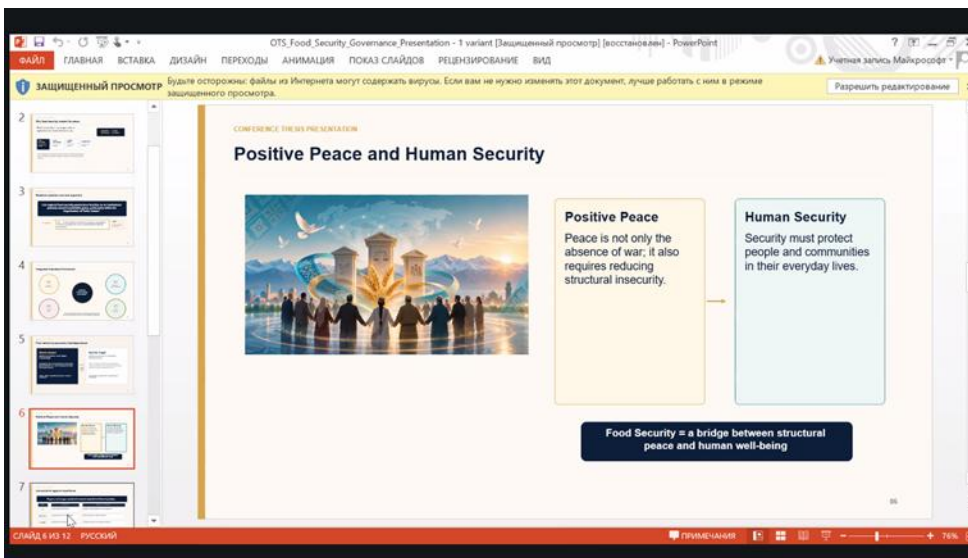


Observer Hall-2

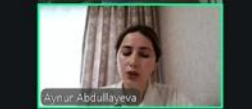


Abdullayeva Tac...

Abdullayeva Tacira



Observer Hall-2



Abdullayeva Tac...

Abdullayeva Tacira



Sustainability Reporting and the Role of Independent Auditing in Enhancing Corporate Disclosure: An Albanian Perspective

8th International Conference on Globalization & International Relations
Istanbul, Türkiye | August 24, 2026

Prof. Asoc Mirela Miti, University of Tirana, mirela.miti@unitir.edu.al
PhD (c) Fatmir Bërdica, University of Tirana, fatmir_b@hotmail.com
Msc. Frida Kuçi, University of Tirana, fridakuci18@gmail.com



Observer hall 3



Hall-3 Frida Kuçi



Hall-3, Abubakar Sadiq Muhammad

Research questions:

RQ1: To what extent have sustainability reporting practices developed in Albania?

RQ2: What is the role of independent auditing in enhancing the credibility of sustainability information?

RQ3: What are the main barriers affecting the implementation of ESG reporting by Albanian companies?

RQ4: What measures can be taken to strengthen sustainability reporting and develop professional capacities in the fields of accounting and auditing?

Methodology

The study follows a qualitative and exploratory research approach based on documentary analysis. The analysis examines international developments, the Albanian regulatory framework, business capacity and the role of independent auditing.

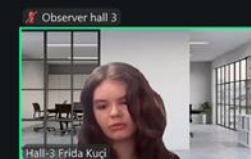
Figure 1. Methodology Flowchart



Source: Authors



Observer hall 3



Hall-3 Frida Kuçi



Hall-3, Abubakar Sadiq Muhammad

Introduction

The Citizen's Problem

Picture an ordinary person who just needs one simple service from local government.

The old journey



Travel to the office → wait in a queue → fill out paperwork → make a payment → wait for the service.

The possible new journey



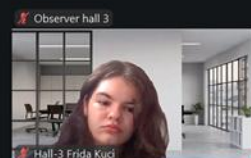
Some of these same steps completed right from a mobile phone — no travel, no queue.

The real question is not whether technology looks impressive — it is whether it can shrink the time, distance, and difficulty between citizens and government.

Digital Government, Finance & Financial Inclusion | KPMG Global Government



Observer hall 3



Hall-3 Frida Kuçi



Hall-3, Abubakar Sadiq Muhammad



What Is Digital Governance?

Digital governance simply means using technology to make government work better.

Instead of relying only on paper records, physical offices, and manual processes, government can use **electronic records, digital platforms, and digital payment systems.**

The purpose is not technology for its own sake — it is to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability in government operations.



Digital Governance, Finance & Financial Inclusion | Kato State Local Governments

8



Observer hall 3



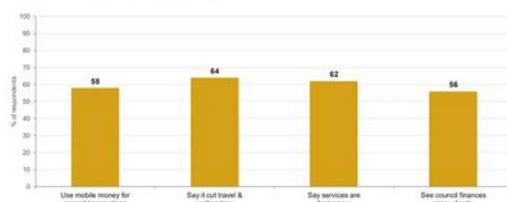
Hall-3 Frida Kuş



Hall-3, Abubakar Sadiq Muhammad

Finding 2: Real Benefits for Citizens

Less traveling, less waiting, faster transactions, greater visibility.



Digital Governance, Finance & Financial Inclusion | Kato State Local Governments

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Observer hall 3



Hall-3 Frida Kuş



Hall-3, Abubakar Sadiq Muhammad

ALBERT SARRAUT • ECONOMIC POLICY

Education became an investment in colonial human capital

01

TRAIN

Teachers
Clerks
Technicians

02

DEPLOY

Schools
Administration
Economic services

03

REDUCE COST

Fewer personnel
from metropolitan
France

1917 • École Supérieure de Pédagogie

Quốc ngữ expanded at the elementary level, while French remained compulsory from the third grade onward.

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observer hall 4

observer hall 4

Hassan Attahiru...

Hassan Attahiru Gwandu



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBALIZATION & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS-VIII



ISTANBUL, TÜRKİYE



AUGUST 24, 2026



- OPENING CEREMONY -

24.08.2026 / Istanbul Local Time: 09⁴⁰ : 10⁰⁰

Meeting ID: 833 1287 1999 / Passcode: 242424

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83312871999?pwd=77qC7o2HkhP9ibljuDG7CUW7Sr7E68.1>

Prof. Dr. Arzu AL

Marmara University

HEAD OF ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Prof. Dr. Gülzar İBRAHİMOVA

Vice Rector of Baku Eurasian University

HEAD OF SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

GRAND TOTAL - ALL FILES

ACCEPTED PAPERS

29

across 1 file(s)

TÜRKİYE

11

38%

OTHER COUNTRIES

18

62%

BREAKDOWN BY COUNTRY

Türkiye	11	Morocco	1
Azerbaijan	7	Uzbekistan	1
Nigeria	4	Vietnam	1
Albania	2	Algeria	1
Georgia	1		

-IN PERSON SESSION-

24.08.2026 / ISTANBUL / TÜRKİYE

🕒 Istanbul Local Time: 10:00-13:00 / 📍 Marmara University Faculty of Political Science

HEAD OF SESSION: Prof. Dr. Arzu AL

AUTHORS	AFFILIATION	TOPIC TITLE
Dr. Yusuf Girayalp ATAN Prof. Dr. Arzu AL	Marmara University, Türkiye	TÜRKİYE'S REGIONAL ENERGY HUB POTENTIAL: PHYSICAL PORTFOLIO, MARKET AND TECHNOLOGY DIMENSIONS
Assist. Prof. Dr. Indira PHUTKARADZE	Istanbul Nişantaşı University, Türkiye	THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY CONCEPTS TOWARD UKRAINE AND GEORGIA WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NEAR ABROAD POLICY
Assist. Prof. Dr. Yury KATLIAROU	Istanbul Nişantaşı University, Türkiye	LANGUAGE AS COLLATERAL DAMAGE: RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER AND THE STATUS OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE IN THE "NEAR ABROAD" POST-2022
PhD Ali ORHAN	Trakya University, Türkiye	DECOLONIZATION IN MEXICO: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, THE ZAPATISTA MOVEMENT, AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION
Assist. Prof. Dr. Bedriye Aylin KARTAL	Istanbul Nişantaşı University, Türkiye	REPRESENTING THE NATION IN AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE: DIPLOMATIC ARCHITECTURE AND THE PARADOX OF MODERNISM IN ANKARA
Prof. Dr. Meral BALCI	Marmara University, Türkiye	TURKEY'S SOFT POWER IN TUNISIA: TİKA, THE YUNUS EMRE INSTITUTE, AND THE TURKEY MAARİF FOUNDATION
Dr. Osman BİLGİÇ	Marmara University, Türkiye	BALANCING STATES IN THE AGE OF WEAPONIZED INTERDEPENDENCE AND TÜRKİYE'S TRANSPORT CORRIDOR DIPLOMACY
Suraya BAZAROVA	Marmara University, Türkiye	TEMPORAL PROXIMITY DOES NOT ESTABLISH INSTITUTIONAL FOLLOW-UP: UN PRACTICE CONCERNING ICJ PROVISIONAL MEASURES (2001-2026)

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- ✓ Moderator is responsible for the presentation and scientific discussion (question-answer) section of the session.

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-ONLINE SESSION-

24.08.2026 / HALL-1

Istanbul Local Time: 10⁰⁰ : 12⁰⁰

Baku Local Time: 11⁰⁰ : 13⁰⁰

HEAD OF SESSION: Prof. Dr. Gulzar IBRAHIMOVA

AUTHORS	AFFILIATION	TOPIC TITLE
Prof. Dr. Gulzar IBRAHIMOVA Elvin SHIRINOV	Baku Eurasian University, Azerbaijan Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University, Azerbaijan	A NEOREALIST PERSPECTIVE ON ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE GAINS: THE METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE ZANGEZUR CORRIDOR APPROACH
Lect. Rashad ALİYEV	Baku Eurasian University, Azerbaijan	THE SYRIAN CRISIS IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND CHINA: SHARED POSITION, DIVERGENT INTERESTS, DIVERGENT STRATEGIES
Gulsura ABDULRASULOVA	Baku Eurasian University, Azerbaijan	THE AFGHAN PROBLEM AND THE US STRATEGY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN
Lect. Vugar ALIYEV	Baku Eurasian University, Azerbaijan	LOBBYING IN AZERBAIJAN LEGISLATION: EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE
Prof. Dr. Gulzar IBRAHIMOVA Aygün MİRİYEVA	Baku Eurasian University, Azerbaijan	THE ENERGY AND NUCLEAR RAW MATERIAL FACTOR IN RELATIONS BETWEEN CENTRAL ASIAN STATES AND THE EU, AND THE TRANSIT ROLE OF THE SOUTH CAUCASUS
Assist. Prof. Dr. Zeynep ARIÖZ	Bandırma Onyedİ Eylöl University, Türkiye	WITHDRAWAL STRATEGIES IN UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: THE CASE OF MINUSMA

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-ONLINE SESSION-

24.08.2026 / HALL-2

Istanbul Local Time: 10⁰⁰ : 12⁰⁰

Baku Local Time: 11⁰⁰ : 13⁰⁰

HEAD OF SESSION: Prof. Dr. Süreyya Yiğit

AUTHORS	AFFILIATION	TOPIC TITLE
Dr. Esin GÜZHAN	Independent researcher, Türkiye	THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL SERVICE TAXES ON TAX JUSTICE AND PUBLIC REVENUES: AN EVALUATION BASED ON TURKEY AND SELECTED COUNTRIES
Dr. Esin GÜZHAN	Independent researcher, Türkiye	THE ROLE OF TAX INCENTIVES IN PROMOTING GREEN BUILDINGS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TURKEY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF SELECTED COUNTRIES
Aynur MAMMADOVA	Azerbaijan University of Languages, Azerbaijan	REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY GOVERNANCE AS A PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE PEACE: FROM NIZAMI GANJAVI AND NORMAN ANGELL TO THE ORGANIZATION OF TURKIC STATES
Prof. Dr. Süreyya Yiğit	New Vision University, Georgia	HOBBS, LOCKE AND ROUSSEAU: HOW TO ACHIEVE PEACE
Tajira ABDULLAYEVA	Baku State University, Azerbaijan	THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS OF THE WORLD'S LEADING COUNTRIES AND THEIR POLITICAL ROLE

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-ONLINE SESSION-

24.08.2026 / HALL-3

Istanbul Local Time: 10⁰⁰ : 12⁰⁰

Baku Local Time: 11⁰⁰ : 13⁰⁰

HEAD OF SESSION: Prof. Dr. Samah BOUHAZAMA

AUTHORS	AFFILIATION	TOPIC TITLE
Prof. Dr. Samah BOUHAZAMA	Moulay Ismail University, Morocco	CYBERSECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF CURRENT CHALLENGES AND INCREASING UNCERTAINTY
Dr. James Okolie-Osemene	French Institute for Research in Africa, Nigeria	STRATEGIC ISSUES IN THE EMERGING DRONE WARFARE IN CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM: TAKEAWAY LESSONS FROM THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE
Prof. Asoc Mirela Miti PhD (c) Fatmir Bërdica Frida Kuçi	University of Tirana, Albania	SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING AND THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT AUDITING IN ENHANCING CORPORATE DISCLOSURE: AN ALBANIAN PERSPECTIVE
Assoc. Prof. Mubarakova D.	Journalism and Mass Communications University of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan	ASSESS CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN TURKISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY
Abubakar Sadiq Muhammad	Azman University, Nigeria	DIGITAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION: ASSESSING THE ROLE OF FINTECH IN ENHANCING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIONS

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-ONLINE SESSION-

24.08.2026 / HALL-4

Istanbul Local Time: 10⁰⁰ : 12⁰⁰

Baku Local Time: 11⁰⁰ : 13⁰⁰

HEAD OF SESSION: Prof. Isak Kafexholli

AUTHORS	AFFILIATION	TOPIC TITLE
Pham Duc Thuan Le Thi Minh Thu	Can Tho University, Vietnam	THE ECONOMIC POLICY OF INDOCHINA GOVERNOR – GENERAL ALBERT SARRAUT IN VIETNAM (1911 - 1914, 1917 - 1919)
Prof. Isak Kafexholli	Highschool"Hamdi Berisha", Albania	DIASPORA POLITICS AND TRANSNATIONAL BELONGING
Hassan Attahiru Gwandu	Federal University Birnin Kebbi, Nigeria	DRONES, MISSILES, AND THE WEAPONIZATION OF INSECURITY: HOW WEAPONS RESHAPE POLITICAL POWER IN UKRAINE AND IRAN
DR.BOT Ikram Kheira	Ahmed Zabana Universityof Relizane, Algeria	ANALYTICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE MECHANICAL RESPONSE OF POROUS FUNCTIONALLY GRADED PLATES
Jaafaru Hashimu Bawa	Federal University Birnin Kebbi, Nigeria	THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF VIGILANTISM IN ZAMFARA STATE: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF STATE-BUILDING VERSUS COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN SECURITY GOVERNANCE

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**DECOLONIZATION IN MEXICO: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, THE ZAPATISTA
MOVEMENT, AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION**

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Abstract

This study examines the position of Indigenous peoples in Mexico in relation to the continuing effects of colonialism and the social struggles developed to challenge and transform these structures from a postcolonial perspective. Instead of focusing only on political representation and state policies, this study examines the transformation of Indigenous communities from political, educational, cultural, and social perspectives.

In this context, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional - EZLN) and the Zapatista Movement as a whole, which emerged in 1994, are the main case of this study. The research examines the role of the Zapatista Movement in increasing the visibility of Indigenous peoples and supporting their rights and demands in Mexico. It also examines the effects of the movement on local autonomy, community organization, education, cultural identity, and collective rights. The Zapatista Movement is not only a political movement against the Mexican state. It is also part of social change in which Indigenous communities have tried to strengthen their ability to shape their own identities, institutions, and futures.

The study argues that the formal end of colonial rule did not necessarily eliminate colonial power relations. Political, economic, cultural, and educational inequalities experienced by Indigenous peoples demonstrate that colonial structures can persist in transformed forms within contemporary societies. Therefore, decolonization should not be understood solely in terms of legal recognition or political integration. Rather, it represents a broader and ongoing process involving transformations in education, culture, identity, knowledge, social organization, and political participation.

In this regard, the EZLN represents an important turning point in the structural transformation of Indigenous peoples that began during the colonial period. The study aims to demonstrate how the EZLN has contributed to the transformation of Indigenous communities in Mexico across political, educational, cultural, and social spheres.

Keywords: Mexico, Indigenous Peoples, EZLN, Decolonization, Social Transformation, Postcolonialism

**BİRLEŞMİŞ MİLLETLER BARIŞI KORUMA OPERASYONLARINDA ÇEKİLME
STRATEJİLERİ: MINUSMA ÖRNEĞİ**

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Özet

Birleşmiş Milletler (BM) barışı koruma operasyonlarının sonlandırılması, son yıllarda uluslararası barış ve güvenlik gündeminde giderek daha fazla önem kazanan konular arasında yer almaktadır. Uzun yıllar boyunca operasyonların kurulmasına odaklanan BM, son dönemde misyonların planlı, koordineli ve sürdürülebilir biçimde sonlandırılmasına yönelik çeşitli politika ve stratejiler geliştirmiştir. Bu kapsamda çıkış stratejisi (*exit strategy*) anlayışı zamanla güvenlik koşulları, ulusal sahiplenme ve kurumlar arası koordinasyonu esas alan daha kapsamlı bir geçiş yaklaşımına dönüşmüştür.

Bu çalışma, BM barışı koruma operasyonlarında çekilme stratejilerini BM Mali Çok Boyutlu Entegre İstikrar Misyonu (MINUSMA) örneği üzerinden incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada nitel vaka çalışması yöntemi benimsenmiş; BM Güvenlik Konseyi kararları, Genel Sekreter raporları, resmi BM belgeleri ve konuya ilişkin akademik literatürden yararlanılmıştır. Çalışmada öncelikle BM'nin çekilme stratejilerinin gelişimi özetlenmekte, ardından MINUSMA'nın kuruluşu, görev süreci ve 2023 yılında başlayan çekilme süreci değerlendirilmektedir. Bu bağlamda çalışma, çekilme kararının alınmasından misyon personelinin ülkeden ayrılmasına kadar geçen süreci ve bu sürecin sonuçlarını siyasi ve operasyonel boyutlarıyla ele almaktadır. Ayrıca planlanan geçiş mekanizmaları ile sahada ortaya çıkan koşullar arasındaki uyum değerlendirilmektedir.

Değerlendirme sonucunda MINUSMA'nın çekilme sürecinin, BM'nin son yıllarda geliştirdiği planlı ve koşullara bağlı çekilme yaklaşımının uygulamada karşılaşılabileceği güçlükleri ortaya koyduğu görülmektedir. Özellikle ev sahibi devletin talepleri, güvenlik koşullarındaki belirsizlikler ve operasyonel kısıtlar, çekilme sürecinin planlanan çerçevede yürütülmesini zorlaştırmıştır. Bu yönüyle MINUSMA örneği, BM barışı koruma operasyonlarının sonlandırılmasına ilişkin güncel tartışmaların anlaşılmasına katkı sağlayan önemli bir örnek oluşturmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Birleşmiş Milletler, Barışı Koruma Operasyonları, Çekilme Stratejisi, MINUSMA.

**WITHDRAWAL STRATEGIES IN UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS:
THE CASE OF MINUSMA**

Abstract

The withdrawal of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations has become an increasingly important issue on the international peace and security agenda in recent years. While the UN focused for many years on the establishment of peacekeeping operations, it has recently developed various policies and strategies aimed at ensuring that missions are terminated in a planned, coordinated, and sustainable manner. In this context, the concept of an exit strategy has gradually evolved into a broader transition approach based on security conditions, national ownership, and inter-institutional coordination.

This study aims to examine withdrawal strategies in UN peacekeeping operations through the case of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The study adopts a qualitative case study method and draws upon United Nations Security Council resolutions, Secretary-General's reports, official UN documents, and the relevant academic literature. It first outlines the evolution of UN withdrawal strategies and then examines the establishment, mandate, and

withdrawal process of MINUSMA, which began in 2023. In this context, the study addresses the period from the adoption of the withdrawal decision to the departure of mission personnel from the host country, as well as the outcomes of this process, from political and operational perspectives. It also evaluates the consistency between the planned transition mechanisms and the conditions that emerged on the ground.

The findings indicate that the withdrawal process of MINUSMA reveals the practical challenges associated with implementing the planned and conditions-based withdrawal approach developed by the UN in recent years. In particular, the demands of the host state, uncertainties in the security environment, and operational constraints complicated the implementation of the withdrawal process within the planned framework. In this respect, the MINUSMA case constitutes an important example that contributes to a better understanding of the contemporary debates on the termination of UN peacekeeping operations.

Keywords: United Nations, Peacekeeping Operations, Withdrawal Strategy, MINUSMA.

DİJİTAL HİZMET VERGİLERİNİN VERGİ ADALETİNE VE KAMU GELİRLERİNE ETKİLERİ: TÜRKİYE VE SEÇİLMİŞ ÜLKELER EKSENİNDE BİR DEĞERLENDİRME

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ÖZET

Dijital ekonominin hızla gelişmesi, geleneksel uluslararası vergi sisteminde önemli olan fiziksel bağlantı kavramının önemini yitirmesine yol açmıştır. Zira hızla gelişen yeni ekonomik düzende çok uluslu firmaların hiçbir şekilde fiziksel varlıklarının olmadığı pazarlardan bile önemli karlar elde edebilmeleri mümkün hale gelmiştir. Bu gelişmeler, vergi tabanı aşınması ve kar kaydırma sorunlarına yol açarak dijitalleşen ekonomide vergilendirmede adaletin sağlanmasını zorlaştırmıştır. Dijital hizmet vergisi, dijital ekonomide vergileme konusunda ortaya çıkan bu sorunları aşmak üzere kullanılan ve dijital faaliyetler ile ortaya çıkan değerın vergilendirilmesi amacıyla çoğunlukla tek taraflı olarak uygulanan bir politika aracıdır.

Bu çalışmada dijitalleşen ekonomi ile birlikte zorlaşan adil vergilemenin sağlanmasında dijital hizmet vergilerinin etkinliğini ve uygulandıkları ülkelerde kamu gelirlerine etkilerini seçilmiş ülkeler ekseninde değerlendirmek amaçlanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışmada Türkiye, Fransa, Birleşik Krallık ve Meksika ekseninde yeni ekonomik düzende dijital hizmet vergilerinin adil vergilemeye ve ülkelerin kamu gelirlerine etkileri araştırılmıştır. Yapılan araştırmalar sonucunda genel olarak dijital hizmet vergilerinin uygulanmasının başta çifte vergilendirme olmak üzere bazı sorunlara yol açabildiği buna rağmen vergilemede adaletin sağlanması hususunda önemli bir adım olduğu kanaatine varılmıştır. Ülkelerin dijital faaliyetler için tek taraflı olarak uyguladıkları bu vergilerin zamanla yeni ekonomik düzende adil vergileme konusundaki tartışmaların yeniden şekillenmesine ve bu vergilerin uygulanması konusunda küresel arenada ortak hareket edilmesi yönündeki çalışmaların hızlanmasına katkıda bulunduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca seçilmiş ülkeler çerçevesinde bu vergilerin ülkelere kamu geliri sağladığı, fakat bu vergilerden elde edilen gelirlerin, toplam vergi gelirleri içindeki paylarının çok düşük olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital Ekonomi, Dijital Hizmet Vergileri, Vergi Adaleti, Kamu Gelirleri

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL SERVICE TAXES ON TAX JUSTICE AND PUBLIC REVENUES: AN EVALUATION BASED ON TURKEY AND SELECTED COUNTRIES

ABSTRACT

The rapid development of the digital economy has led to the diminishing importance of the concept of physical connection, which is crucial in traditional international tax systems. This is because, in the rapidly evolving new economic order, multinational firms can generate significant profits even from markets where they have no physical presence. These developments have led to tax base erosion and profit shifting problems, making it difficult to ensure fairness in taxation in the digital economy. The digital services tax is a policy tool used to overcome these problems in taxation in the digital economy and is mostly applied unilaterally to tax the value generated by digital activities.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of digital service taxes in ensuring fair taxation, which has become increasingly difficult with the digitalization of the economy, and their impact on public revenues in selected countries where they are implemented. Accordingly, this study investigates the effects of digital service taxes on fair taxation and public revenues in the new economic order, focusing on Turkey, France, the United Kingdom, and Mexico. Research has concluded that while the implementation of digital service taxes can lead to some problems, primarily double taxation, it is

nevertheless an important step towards ensuring fairness in taxation. It has been observed that these taxes, unilaterally imposed by countries on digital activities, have contributed over time to reshaping discussions on fair taxation in the new economic order and accelerating efforts towards global cooperation in the implementation of these taxes. Furthermore, within the framework of selected countries, it was concluded that these taxes provide public revenue to these countries, but the share of revenues obtained from these taxes in total tax revenues is very low.

Keywords: Digital Economy, Digital Service Taxes, Tax Justice, Public Revenues

**YEŞİL BİNALARIN YAYGINLAŞTIRILMASINDA VERGİ TEŞVİKLERİNİN ROLÜ:
SEÇİLMİŞ ÜLKELER ÇERÇEVESİNDE TÜRKİYE İÇİN ÖNERİLER**

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ÖZET

Günümüzde çevre sorunlarının temel nedenin fosil yakıt kullanımına bağlı olarak ortaya çıkan karbon emisyonları olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Dünya genelinde fosil enerji kaynaklarının başta küresel ısınma ve iklim değişikliği olmak üzere ciddi çevresel sorunlar yarattığı ve bu enerji kaynaklarının tükenmek üzere olduğu bilinmektedir. Bu nedenle mevcut enerji kaynaklarının verimli bir şekilde kullanılması ve çevre dostu enerji kaynaklarının tercih edilmesi önemlidir.

Fosil enerjinin yoğun kullanıldığı alanlarda enerji kullanımını sınırlamak ve yenilenebilir enerjiden faydalanmak gerekmektedir. Enerjinin yoğun olarak kullanıldığı alanlardan biri de binalardır. Binalar, enerji tüketiminin fazla olduğu ve yoğunlukla fosil yakıtların kullanıldığı alanlar olup sera gazı emisyonu yaratma konusunda endişe vermektedirler. Binalar, katı atık oluşumunda ve doğal kaynakların verimsiz kullanımında da önemli paya sahiptirler. Bu nedenle binaların yapımında enerji kullanımını azaltmak, enerji verimliliğini artırmak, yenilenebilir enerji kaynaklarını kullanmak ve doğal kaynakları verimli şekilde kullanmak gerekmektedir. Yeşil binalar, bir yandan çevresel sorunları çözmek bir yandan da insan sağlığını korumak için tasarlanmış yapılardır. Bu yapılar enerji verimliliğini artıran, yenilenebilir enerjiden faydalanan, kaynak kullanımını azaltan ve böylece çevre üzerindeki olumsuzlukları minimize eden yapılardır. Buna rağmen yeşil binaların başlangıç maliyetleri yüksektir. Bu nedenle yeşil binalara yönelik yatırımların çeşitli mekanizmalarla teşvik edilmesi, bu binaların yaygınlaştırılmasında büyük öneme sahiptir. Yeşil bina yatırımlarının özellikle devlet tarafından vergi teşvikleri ile desteklenmesi, bu binaların yaygınlaştırılmasında önemlidir. Zira vergi teşvikleri, yatırımcının vergi yükünü azaltmada ve yatırımcıya mali destek sağlamada önemli politika araçlarındandır.

Tüm bu açıklamaların ışığında bu çalışmanın temel amacının yeşil bina yatırımlarının yaygınlaştırılmasında vergi teşviklerinin rolünü incelemek ve seçilmiş ülkeler çerçevesinde (ABD, Hollanda, İspanya ve Almanya) yeşil binalar için uygulanan vergi teşviklerinden yola çıkarak yeşil binalar için etkili bir vergi teşvik sisteminin temel unsurlarını ortaya koymak ve Türkiye için vergi teşviki önerilerinde bulunmak olduğu söylenebilir. Yapılan incelemeler sonucunda Türkiye’de yeşil bina yatırımlarının yaygınlaştırılması için yapılacak binaların enerji tüketimindeki performansına ve çevresel etki sonucuna bağlı olarak yatırımcılara yeşil bina yatırımlarında hızlandırılmış amortisman, bina sahiplerine emlak vergisi indirimleri, yeşil bina inşa eden veya kullanan şirketlere kurumlar vergisi indirimi gibi teşvikler yapılması önerilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yeşil Bina, Vergi Teşviki, Türkiye

**THE ROLE OF TAX INCENTIVES IN PROMOTING GREEN BUILDINGS:
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TURKEY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF SELECTED
COUNTRIES**

ABSTRACT

Today, it is possible to say that the main cause of environmental problems is carbon emissions resulting from the use of fossil fuels. It is known that fossil energy sources worldwide create serious environmental problems, primarily global warming and climate change, and that these energy sources

are nearing depletion. Therefore, it is important to use existing energy sources efficiently and to prefer environmentally friendly energy sources.

In areas where fossil fuels are heavily used, it is necessary to limit energy consumption and utilize renewable energy sources. Buildings are one such area with high energy consumption. They are places where energy consumption is high and fossil fuels are predominantly used, raising concerns about greenhouse gas emissions. Buildings also contribute significantly to solid waste generation and inefficient use of natural resources. Therefore, it is necessary to reduce energy consumption in building construction, increase energy efficiency, utilize renewable energy sources, and use natural resources efficiently. Green buildings are structures designed to both solve environmental problems and protect human health. These buildings increase energy efficiency, utilize renewable energy, reduce resource consumption, and thus minimize negative environmental impacts. Despite this, the initial costs of green buildings are high. Therefore, encouraging investments in green buildings through various mechanisms is crucial for their widespread adoption. Supporting green building investments, particularly through government tax incentives, is important for their proliferation. Tax incentives are significant policy tools for reducing the tax burden on investors and providing them with financial support.

In light of all these explanations, it can be said that the main objective of this study is to examine the role of tax incentives in the widespread adoption of green building investments, to identify the fundamental elements of an effective tax incentive system for green buildings based on tax incentives applied to green buildings in selected countries (USA, Netherlands, Spain, and Germany), and to make tax incentive recommendations for Turkey. As a result of the examinations, it can be suggested that incentives such as accelerated depreciation for investors in green building investments, property tax reductions for building owners, and corporate tax reductions for companies constructing or using green buildings should be implemented in Turkey to promote the widespread adoption of green building investments, depending on the energy consumption performance and environmental impact of the buildings.

Keywords: Green Building, Tax Incentives, Turkey

**STRATEGIC ISSUES IN THE EMERGING DRONE WARFARE IN CONTEMPORARY
INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM: TAKEAWAY LESSONS FROM THE CONFRONTATION
BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE**

By

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary political system currently faces significant threats occasioned by the confrontation between state actors struggling for territorial and economic supremacy with implications for regional and global security; This makes states to engage in strategic maneuvering, sabotage, alliance formation, arms race, technological innovation, trade war and establishment of military bases, deployment of troops, security sector reforms, maritime security provision among other initiatives. This paper examines the strategic issues that are associated with the drone warfare involving Russia and Ukraine with emphasis on the strategic. Using qualitative data, the paper identifies the dominant issues in the drone warfare that characterises the confrontation between Russia and Ukraine. The paper answers these questions: What is the nature of drone warfare in contemporary world? How have internal and external supply of drones positioned warring parties to withstand external aggression? What are the economic implications of the drone warfare? What strategic lessons (by warring parties and other countries) can be drawn from the issues associated with the use of drones by Russia and Ukraine? To a great extent, technological innovation has facilitated drone jamming and saturation efforts of the rivals whose military forces are forced to adapt to the changing weapons of war; **Is is not surprising that with 500 dollar drones, state actors are able to dismantle and weaken special forces that utilise multi-million-dollar battle tanks and fighter jets;** The paper stresses that strategic advantage of belligerent parties is aided by the innovative production of drones which also take advantage of the establishment of military bases aimed at weakening enemy targets.

Keywords: Counter-drone technology, Drone warfare, strategic advantage, military bases

**ASSESS CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN TURKISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL
DIPLOMACY.**

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Abstract

This study assesses contemporary trends in language and cultural diplomacy, highlighting their significance in advancing national interests and fostering international relationships. It examines how countries employ language as a diplomatic tool through initiatives like language education and cultural institutions. The article discusses the role of cultural exchange programs in building mutual understanding and the impact of digital platforms in disseminating cultural content globally. Furthermore, it explores the integration of cultural diplomacy with economic strategies, the focus on multilateral approaches to address global issues, and the emphasis on diversity and inclusion. By analyzing these trends, the study illustrates how language and culture serve as vital instruments for nations to enhance their soft power and navigate the complexities of global diplomacy.

Key words. Language diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, international relations, cultural exchange, cross-cultural communication

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DIASPORA POLITICS AND TRANSNATIONAL BELONGING

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Abstract

The diaspora represents an important dimension of the relationship **between the state of origin and its communities abroad**. In the context of globalization and the intensification of migration processes, the relationship between the diaspora and the country of origin is no longer limited to family and cultural ties; rather, it extends to economic, social, political, and institutional dimensions. In this context, state policies toward the diaspora play a significant role in preserving and strengthening transnational belonging.

This study aims to analyze the policies of the Republic of Kosovo toward the diaspora and their impact on strengthening the transnational ties of the Kosovar Albanian diaspora. In particular, the study focuses on the implementation of diaspora-related strategies and policies, institutional mechanisms for communication and cooperation with diaspora communities, as well as cultural, educational, economic, and social programs. Special attention is devoted to the role of the embassies and consulates of the Republic of Kosovo in implementing these policies in host countries.

The research methodology is based on a mixed-methods approach, integrating the analysis of strategic and institutional documents, official data, and reports produced by the relevant institutions, together with the collection of primary data through questionnaires administered to diplomatic missions and members of the diaspora community. A comparative analysis across countries with a significant concentration of the Kosovar diaspora will enable the identification of differences in both policy implementation and perceptions of policy effectiveness.

The study seeks to contribute to the existing literature on diaspora and transnationalism by evaluating whether Kosovo's institutional policies are effective in strengthening the cultural, social, economic, and political ties between the diaspora and the country of origin. Ultimately, the study aims to provide recommendations for improving public policies and developing more effective mechanisms for promoting diaspora engagement in Kosovo's development.

Keywords: diaspora; transnational belonging; migration; public policies; Kosovo; diaspora communities.

KÜRESELLEŞMEDEN SERBEST TİCARETE GELECEK SENARYOLARI
FUTURE SCENARIOS TO COME FROM GLOBALIZATION TO FREE TRADE

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Abstract

This study presents an analytical investigation of the mechanical bending response of porous functionally graded material (FGM) plates resting on a Pasternak elastic foundation. A quasi-three-dimensional higher-order shear deformation theory with four unknown displacement variables is employed to account simultaneously for transverse shear deformation and thickness stretching effects. The material properties of the porous ceramic-metal FGM are assumed to vary continuously through the plate thickness according to a power-law distribution, while the influence of porosity is incorporated into the effective material properties. The formulation also considers the effects of temperature and moisture variations in the plate thickness direction. The governing equations are derived using the principle of virtual work, including the contribution of the elastic foundation and hygrothermal loading. An analytical solution for simply supported rectangular plates is obtained using the Navier method. The accuracy of the proposed formulation is verified through comparisons with available results from the literature for both perfect and porous FGM plates, showing excellent agreement. A detailed parametric study is then performed to examine the effects of the power-law index, porosity factor, geometric ratios, foundation stiffness, temperature, and moisture concentration on the plate response. The results indicate that increasing the porosity factor leads to an increase in the nondimensional transverse deflection due to the reduction in the effective stiffness of the material, whereas increasing the Winkler and Pasternak foundation parameters reduces the plate deflection. Thermal and moisture effects also significantly influence the mechanical response of porous FGM plates. The proposed analytical formulation provides an efficient framework for predicting the behavior of advanced porous graded structures subjected to mechanical and hygrothermal environments.

Keywords: Functionally graded materials; Porous plates; Quasi-Three-Dimensional theory; Hygrothermal environment; Pasternak elastic foundation; Plate bending; Analytical modeling; Navier solution; Advanced materials; Structural mechanics.

Özet

Bu çalışma, Pasternak elastik bir temele oturan gözenekli fonksiyonel olarak derecelendirilmiş malzeme (FGM) plakalarının mekanik eğilme tepkisinin analitik bir incelemesini sunmaktadır. Enine kayma deformasyonunu ve kalınlık gerilme etkilerini aynı anda hesaba katmak için dört bilinmeyen yer değiştirme değişkenine sahip yarı üç boyutlu yüksek mertebeli bir kayma deformasyon teorisi kullanılmıştır. Gözenekli seramik-metal FGM'nin malzeme özelliklerinin, plaka kalınlığı boyunca bir güç yasası dağılımına göre sürekli olarak değiştiği varsayılırken, gözenekliliğin etkisi etkin malzeme özelliklerine dahil edilmiştir. Formülasyon ayrıca plaka kalınlığı yönündeki sıcaklık ve nem değişimlerinin etkilerini de dikkate almaktadır. Yönetici denklemler, elastik temelin ve higrotermal yüklemenin katkısını da içeren sanal iş prensibi kullanılarak türetilmiştir. Basitçe desteklenmiş dikdörtgen plakalar için analitik bir çözüm, Navier yöntemi kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Önerilen formülasyonun doğruluğu, hem mükemmel hem de gözenekli FGM plakaları için literatürde mevcut sonuçlarla karşılaştırmalar yoluyla doğrulanmış ve mükemmel bir uyum gösterilmiştir. Daha sonra, güç yasası indeksi, gözeneklilik faktörü, geometrik oranlar, temel rijitliği, sıcaklık ve nem konsantrasyonunun plaka tepkisi üzerindeki etkilerini incelemek için ayrıntılı bir parametrik çalışma gerçekleştirilir. Sonuçlar, gözeneklilik faktörünün artmasının, malzemenin etkin rijitliğindeki azalma

nedeniyle boyutsuz enine sapmada artışa yol açtığını, Winkler ve Pasternak temel parametrelerinin artmasının ise plaka sapmasını azalttığını göstermektedir. Termal ve nem etkileri de gözenekli FGM plakalarının mekanik tepkisini önemli ölçüde etkiler. Önerilen analitik formülasyon, mekanik ve higrotermal ortamlara maruz kalan gelişmiş gözenekli dereceli yapıların davranışını tahmin etmek için verimli bir çerçeve sağlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Fonksiyonel olarak dereceli malzemeler; Gözenekli plakalar; Yarı Üç Boyutlu teori; Higrotermal ortam; Pasternak elastik temel; Plaka bükülmesi; Analitik modelleme; Navier çözümü; Gelişmiş malzemeler; Yapısal mekanik.

**THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF VIGILANTISM IN ZAMFARA STATE: A CRITICAL
EXAMINATION OF STATE-BUILDING VERSUS COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN
SECURITY GOVERNANCE**

By

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Abstract

The paper examines the historical evolution and economic logic of vigilantism in Zamfara State, Nigeria, situating the contemporary security crisis within the broader political economy of state failure, resource competition, and community self-defense. Tracing the origins of vigilantism movement to 2011, the paper argues that these community-based security formations emerged organically as a rational economic response to the state's inability to protect lives and livelihoods against cattle rustling and armed banditry. Over more than a decade, such vigilante groups accumulated invaluable local knowledge, operational experience, and community trust (assets that represent a significant sunk investment in social capital). The paper critically evaluates Governor Dauda Lawal's 2024 decision to establish the Community Protection Guards (CPG/Askarawa) as a parallel state-owned vigilante structure, rather than investing in the monitoring, funding, and professionalization of existing vigilante networks. Drawing on principles of fiscal efficiency, institutional economics, and security governance, the paper contends that creating new security architectures from scratch entails substantial opportunity costs, including duplicated training expenditure, foregone local intelligence networks, and the erosion of community trust. The paper concludes that the economically prudent path lies not in replacement but in integration by channeling resources through mechanisms such as the Zamfara State Security Trust Fund to professionalize existing vigilante groups while establishing robust accountability frameworks.

Keywords: Vigilantism, Zamfara State, Political Economy, Security Governance, *Yan Sakai*, Community Protection Guards, Banditry, Nigeria

**TÜRKİYE’NİN BÖLGESEL ENERJİ MERKEZİ POTANSİYELİ: FİZİKSEL PORTFÖY,
PİYASA VE TEKNOLOJİ BOYUTLARI**
**TÜRKİYE’S REGIONAL ENERGY HUB POTENTIAL: PHYSICAL PORTFOLIO,
MARKET AND TECHNOLOGY DIMENSIONS**

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Özet

Türkiye’nin enerji merkezi hedefini inceleyen literatürün önemli bir bölümü ülkenin coğrafi konumuna, boru hatlarına ve enerji diplomasisine odaklanmaktadır. Piyasa kurumları, fiziksel portföy yönetimi, teknoloji üretimi ve yurt dışı üst akım faaliyetleri arasındaki ilişki ise daha az incelenmiştir. Bu çalışma, 6 Nisan 2017 ile 1 Ağustos 2026 arasındaki gelişmeleri Türkiye’yi tek örnek olay olarak ele alan nitel belge incelemesiyle değerlendirmektedir. Değerlendirme, fiziksel portföy, ticari piyasa, elektrik ve teknoloji, yurt dışı üst akım faaliyetleri ile stratejik enerji teknolojilerini karşılaştıran beş boyutlu bir çerçeveye dayanmaktadır. Bulgular, LNG terminalleri, depolama tesisleri, boru hattı bağlantıları, Karadeniz gazı, Ceyhan altyapısı ve sınır ötesi teslimatların Türkiye’ye farklı kaynakları aynı sistem içinde yönetme ve alternatif pazarlara yönlendirme imkânı kazandığını göstermektedir. EPIAŞ verileri, fiziksel kapasitenin ticari derinliğe aynı ölçüde yansımadığını ortaya koymaktadır. Spot Doğal Gaz Piyasası’nda 2024 yılında eşleşen 378,5 milyon standart metreküp, yıllık tüketimin yaklaşık yüzde 0,71’ine karşılık gelmiştir. Bu oran borsa dışı işlemleri kapsamamaktadır, ancak organize piyasadaki gözlenebilir likiditenin gelişme alanını açık biçimde göstermektedir. Yenilenebilir enerji yatırımları, ekipman üretimi, nükleer program, sınır ötesi elektrik koridoru girişimleri ve TPAO’nun yurt dışı faaliyetleri, merkez hedefinin üretim, teknoloji ve bölgesel bağlantı boyutlarını genişletmektedir. Çalışma, Türkiye’nin transit ülke işlevini aşarak farklı menşeleri ve enerji taşıyıcılarını aynı portföy içinde yönetebilen bir “entegre fiziksel portföy merkezi” niteliği kazandığını ileri sürmektedir. Önerilen kavram, fiziksel altyapıdaki ilerleme ile fiyat merkezi olgunluğunu birbirinden ayırmakta ve Türkiye’nin bölgesel referans fiyat üretme yolundaki kurumsal önceliklerini daha açık ve ölçülebilir hâle getirmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Türkiye, enerji merkezi, fiziksel portföy, doğal gaz piyasası, enerji teknolojisi

Abstract

Much of the literature on Türkiye’s energy hub ambition concentrates on geography, pipelines and energy diplomacy. Connections among market institutions, portfolio management, technology production and overseas upstream activity have received less sustained attention. This study evaluates developments between 6 April 2017 and 1 August 2026 through a qualitative document analysis of Türkiye as a single case. The assessment compares five dimensions covering physical portfolio capacity, commercial markets, electricity and technology, overseas upstream activity, and strategic energy technologies. Results show that LNG terminals, storage, pipeline links, Black Sea gas, Ceyhan infrastructure and cross-border deliveries have expanded Türkiye’s capacity to manage diverse supplies and redirect them towards alternative markets. EPIAŞ data reveal a slower expansion of observable commercial depth. In 2024, the Spot Natural Gas Market matched 378.5 million standard cubic metres,

equal to about 0.71 per cent of annual consumption. The figure excludes off-exchange transactions, yet it identifies clear room for deeper organised-market liquidity. Renewable investment, equipment manufacturing, the nuclear programme, cross-border electricity corridor initiatives and TPAO's overseas operations are widening the production, technology and regional-connectivity base of the hub strategy. The study argues that Türkiye has become an "integrated physical portfolio hub", a category that separates infrastructure progress from price-hub maturity and clarifies the institutional steps needed for a regional reference price.

Keywords: Türkiye, energy hub, physical portfolio, natural gas market, energy technology

1. Giriş

Türkiye'nin enerji politikası yüksek talep, sanayileşme, ithalat ihtiyacı ve jeopolitik konum arasındaki ilişki içinde şekillenmektedir. Ülke Hazar Havzası, Rusya, Orta Doğu, Doğu Akdeniz ve Karadeniz ile Avrupa arasında yer almaktadır. Boru hatları, LNG terminalleri, limanlar, elektrik bağlantıları ve enerji diplomasisi bu konuma güçlü bir transit ve bağlantı değeri kazandırmaktadır. Bu fiziksel temel, mülkiyet değişimi, depolama, yeniden yönlendirme, bağımsız piyasa katılımı, fiyat keşfi ve riskten korunma araçlarıyla birleştiğinde ticari merkez kapasitesine dönüşebilmektedir (Austvik & Rzayeva, 2017; IEA, 2021).

Türkiye'de enerji merkezi tartışması uzun süre doğal gaz ve petrol koridorları üzerinden yürütülmüştür. Son yıllarda Karadeniz gazı, Türkmen gazı teslimatları, doğal gaz ihracatı, TPAO'nun yurt dışı faaliyetleri, yenilenebilir kapasite, enerji ekipmanı üretimi, Akkuyu ve küçük modüler reaktör girişimleri aynı stratejik çerçeve içinde yer almaya başlamıştır. Bu genişleme, Türkiye'nin enerji merkezi kapasitesini daha kapsamlı biçimde değerlendirme imkânı sunmaktadır. Ruhsat, sismik çalışma, kurulu güç, ticari keşif, üretim ve ihracat gibi göstergelerin proje aşamalarına göre ayrıştırılması, gelişmenin hangi alanlarda somutlaştığını ve hangi alanlarda yeni fırsatlar doğduğunu göstermektedir.

1.1. Araştırma Problemi ve Sorusu

Araştırma, transit ülke, fiziksel portföy merkezi, ticari fiyat merkezi ve teknoloji merkezi kavramlarını birbirinden ayırarak Türkiye'nin her alandaki ilerlemesini görünür kılmayı amaçlamaktadır. Boru hatları stratejik görünürlük, taşıma geliri ve güzergâh çeşitliliği sağlarken gazın Türkiye'de el değiştirmesi, altyapıya tarafsız erişim ve fiyatın piyasa içinde oluşması ticari merkez niteliğini güçlendiren ilave unsurlardır. Benzer biçimde yenilenebilir kurulu güçteki artış elektrik sisteminin dönüşümünü hızlandırmakta, patent, kritik bileşen, mühendislik ihracatı ve yüksek yerli katma değer ise bu dönüşümü teknoloji merkezi kapasitesine taşımaktadır.

Çalışmanın temel sorusu şudur: 2017 sonrasında geliştirilen fiziksel altyapı, piyasa kurumları, üretim portföyü ve enerji teknolojisi yatırımları Türkiye'yi transit ülke konumunun ötesinde hangi enerji merkezi düzeyine taşımıştır? Bu soru beş analitik boyutta incelenmektedir. İlk boyut kaynak, güzergâh, depolama ve yeniden yönlendirme kapasitesidir. İkinci boyut piyasa likiditesi, altyapıya erişim ve referans fiyat oluşumudur. Üçüncü boyut elektrik sistemi ile teknoloji üretimidir. Dördüncü boyut TPAO'nun yurt dışı üst akım portföyüdür. Son boyut nükleer, küçük modüler reaktörler, hidrojen ve karbon rekabetçiliği gibi stratejik dönüşüm unsurlarıdır.

1.2. Literatür ve Analitik Çerçeve

Türkiye'nin enerji merkezi hedefini inceleyen çalışmaların bir bölümü coğrafi konum ve boru hatlarına odaklanmaktadır. Austvik ve Rzayeva (2017), Türkiye'nin coğrafi avantajının piyasa yapısı ve siyasi kurumlarla tamamlandığında merkez kapasitesine dönüşebileceğini göstermiştir. Novikau ve Muhasilović (2023), altyapı avantajlarının ekonomik ve kurumsal reformlarla güçlendirilebileceğini belirtmiştir. İcik ve Atak (2021) ise rekabet, şeffaflık ve serbestleşme düzeyini doğal gaz merkezinin gelişimini hızlandıran temel unsurlar arasında değerlendirmiştir.

İşleyen gaz merkezleri çok sayıda bağımsız alıcı ve satıcıya, standart ürünlere, şeffaf kapasite tahsisine, sürekli likiditeye ve güvenilir gösterge fiyata dayanmaktadır. Shi ve Variam (2018), dengeleme, şeffaflık, fiyat karşılaştırması ve likiditeyi temel işlevler olarak sınıflandırmaktadır. ACER, TTF'yi Avrupa doğal gaz fiyatlarının göstergesi olarak tanımlamakta ve TTF ile diğer büyük sanal ticaret noktalarının Avrupa Birliği'ndeki işlem hacminin büyük bölümüne teslim noktası oluşturduğunu belirtmektedir (Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators [ACER], 2025). Bu nitelik, teknik kapasite ile ticari fiyat merkezi arasındaki ayrımı ortaya koymaktadır.

Entegre enerji sistemleri literatürü farklı enerji taşıyıcılarının dönüşüm, depolama ve dağıtımını aynı sistem içinde incelemektedir (Geidl vd., 2007; Mancarella, 2014). Bu teknik yaklaşım, Türkiye'nin jeoekonomik merkez kapasitesini değerlendiren çerçeveyi elektrik, doğal gaz, hidrojen, depolama ve esneklik arasındaki bağlantılar bakımından tamamlamaktadır. Yüksek yenilenebilir üretim gaz santrallerinin dengeleme rolünü, şebeke ihtiyacını ve fiyat profilini değiştirirken nükleer ve kömür yatırımları baz yük, yakıt çeşitliliği, karbon maliyeti ve finansman seçeneklerini farklı biçimlerde etkilemektedir.

Çalışma üç merkez düzeyini kavramsal sonuç kategorileri olarak ayırmakta, Türkiye'nin bu kategorilerdeki konumunu beş analitik boyut üzerinden değerlendirmektedir. Fiziksel portföy merkezi, farklı menşelerden gelen enerjinin kabul edildiği, depolandığı ve alternatif çıkışlara yönlendirilebildiği yapıdır. Ticari fiyat merkezi, bağımsız katılımcıların sürekli işlem yaptığı ve oluşan fiyatın merkez dışındaki sözleşmelerde kullanıldığı piyasadır. Teknoloji merkezi ise yerli tasarım, fikrî mülkiyet, kritik bileşen, mühendislik hizmeti, nitelikli iş gücü ve ihracat kapasitesi gerektirmektedir.

Bu çalışmada kullanılan “entegre fiziksel portföy merkezi” kavramı, Türkiye vakasının özgün yapısını açıklamak için geliştirilmiş bir sınıflandırmadır. Kavram, farklı enerji taşıyıcılarının kabulü, depolanması ve yönlendirilmesiyle oluşan fiziksel yönetim kapasitesinin elektrik sistemi, teknoloji yatırımları ve yurt dışı üretim portföyüyle desteklendiği durumu ifade etmektedir. Türkiye fiyatının bölgesel referans işlevinin gelişme aşamasında bulunması, bu kategoriyi fiziksel başarıların ticari ve teknolojik derinleşmeye açıldığı stratejik bir gelişim basamağı hâline getirmektedir.

Tablo 1. Enerji merkezi boyutları, karar kuralları ve Türkiye'nin durumu

Boyut	Göstergeler	Çalışmaya özgü karar kuralı	1 Ağustos 2026 durumu
Fiziksel portföy	Kaynak ve güzergâh çeşitliliği, LNG, depolama, yerli üretim, yeniden yönlendirme ve fiilî sınır ötesi akış	Birden fazla menşenin düzenli kabulü ile depolama veya alternatif çıkış imkânının birlikte bulunması	
Ticari piyasa	Aktif katılımcı, organize ve borsa dışı işlem hacmi, vadeli ürün, açık erişim ve dış sözleşmelerde fiyat kullanımı	Organize ve borsa dışı toplam ticaretin güvenilir devir oranı üretmesi, fiyatın sınır ötesi sözleşmelerde kullanılması ve sürekli likidite	
Elektrik ve teknoloji	Şebeke, depolama, enterkonneksiyon, kritik bileşen, patent, yerli katma değer ve ihracat	Kurulu güç artışının kritik bileşen, fikrî mülkiyet ve düzenli ihracatla desteklenmesi	
Yurt dışı üst akım	İştirak, operatörlük, arama, keşif, üretim, satış hakkı ve risk ağırlıklı getiri	Ruhsat veya aramanın ticari keşif, düzenli üretim ya da ölçülebilir ekonomik değere dönüşmesi	
Stratejik teknoloji ve dönüşüm	Nükleer, SMR ve hidrojen için lisanslama, teknik doğrulama, maliyet, güvenlik ve ölçeklenebilirlik	Ar-Ge veya şirketleşmenin doğrulanmış pilot, lisans ve düzenli işletme aşamasına geçmesi	

Not. Karar kuralları, çalışma içi karşılaştırmayı şeffaflaştırmak ve Türkiye'nin farklı alanlardaki gelişimini ortak ölçütlerle izlemek amacıyla kullanılmıştır.

1.3. Analitik Beklentiler

Birinci beklenti, LNG, depolama, boru hatları, yerli üretim ve sınır ötesi bağlantıların farklı menşeleri aynı sistem içinde yönetme kapasitesini artırmasıdır. İkinci beklenti, fiziksel kapasitenin tarafsız erişim, piyasa likiditesi ve sınır ötesi fiyat kullanımıyla tamamlandıkça Türkiye'nin bölgesel referans fiyat üretme kapasitesinin güçlenmesidir. Üçüncü beklenti, elektrik ve teknoloji yatırımları ile yurt dışı üst akım faaliyetlerinin yerli katma değer, ticari keşif, üretim, ihracat ve uluslararası işletmecilik tecrübesi üzerinden merkez niteliğini genişletmesidir. Bu beklentiler, belgelerin ortak ölçütlerle karşılaştırılmasını ve Türkiye'nin gelişim yönünün belirlenmesini sağlamaktadır.

2. Materyal ve Yöntem

Çalışma, Türkiye’yi tek örnek olay olarak ele alan amaçlı nitel belge incelemesidir. Araştırma dönemi Millî Enerji ve Maden Politikası’nın açıklandığı 6 Nisan 2017 ile veri kesim tarihi olan 1 Ağustos 2026 arasında sınırlandırılmıştır. Daha eski boru hatları ve 2011 tarihli Türkiye-KKTC düzenlemesi mevcut politikanın kurumsal arka planını açıklamak için kapsama alınmıştır.

Çalışmanın kaynakları, araştırma sorusuyla doğrudan ilişkili akademik yayınlar, mevzuat metinleri, resmî istatistikler, uluslararası kuruluş raporları ve kurumsal açıklamalar arasından amaçlı örnekleme yoluyla seçilmiştir. Kaynakların değerlendirilmesinde yayımlayan kurumun niteliği, verinin açıklığı, belgenin incelenen gelişmeye yakınlığı ve farklı kaynaklarla doğrulanabilirliği dikkate alınmıştır. Hukuki düzenlemeler ve resmî istatistikler olgusal değerlendirmelerde temel alınmış, hakemli çalışmalar kavramsal çerçevenin ve ekonomik tartışmanın oluşturulmasında kullanılmıştır. Bakanlık ve şirket açıklamalarından projelerin ilan edilen kapsamını ve gelişim aşamasını belirlemek amacıyla yararlanılmıştır. Projelerin ekonomik ve stratejik sonuçlarına ilişkin değerlendirmeler ise mümkün olduğu ölçüde bağımsız kaynaklarla karşılaştırılmıştır.

İncelenen gelişmeler, çalışmada belirlenen beş analitik boyut çerçevesinde değerlendirilmiştir. Projelerin gerçekleşme düzeylerini birbirinden ayırmak amacıyla politika hedefi, kurumsal yapılanma veya araştırma geliştirme, ruhsatlandırma, arama, ticari keşif, yatırım kararı, inşaat ve düzenli işletme aşamaları esas alınmıştır. Böylece bir projenin açıklanması ile fiilen üretime veya düzenli işletmeye geçmesi arasındaki fark gözetilmiştir. Değerlendirmede kaynağı ve proje statüsü doğrulanamayan iddialara yer verilmemiş, farklı bilgilerle karşılaşıldığında resmî niteliği daha güçlü ve gelişmeye daha yakın tarihli kaynaklar esas alınmıştır.

Piyasa değerlendirmesinde EPİAŞ’ın 2024 Spot Doğal Gaz Piyasası verileri, TPAO sektör raporundaki 2024 tüketim miktarıyla karşılaştırılmıştır. Yıllık eşleşme miktarının tüketime oranı yazar tarafından hesaplanmıştır. Borsa dışı sözleşme hacimleri kamuya açık ve karşılaştırılabilir biçimde bulunmadığından hesaplanan oran organize piyasanın gözlenebilir alt sınırını göstermektedir. Türkiye’deki toplam toptan ticaretin bu miktarın üzerinde olduğu değerlendirilmektedir. Bununla birlikte organize piyasa verisi, bölgesel gösterge fiyat için gerekli işlem derinliğinin hangi ölçüde geliştirilebileceğini izlemeye imkân veren somut bir başlangıç göstergesidir.

Çalışmanın veri kapsamı, bazı projelere ve ticari işlemlere ilişkin ayrıntılı sözleşme koşullarının kamuya açık kaynaklarda bulunmaması ve proje statülerinin kısa süre içinde değişebilmesiyle belirlenmiştir. LNG anlaşmalarının fiyatlandırma esasları, bazı doğal gaz ihracat işlemlerinin ticari marjları, altyapı kullanım koşulları ve Somali’deki hidrokarbon faaliyetlerine ilişkin kâr petrolü paylaşımının ayrıntıları kamuya açık belgeler üzerinden belirlenememiştir. Bu veri alanlarının ilerleyen dönemde daha şeffaf hâle gelmesi, Türkiye’nin enerji merkezi performansının ekonomik değer, kapasite kullanımı ve uluslararası rekabet gücü bakımından daha ayrıntılı ölçülmesini sağlayacaktır. Mevcut değerlendirmede açıklanan kapasite, gerçekleşen kullanım, maliyet geri kazanımı, gelir, ruhsat, rezerv ve ekonomik performans göstergeleri kendi bağlamları içinde ele alınmıştır.

3. Bulgular ve Tartışma

3.1. Politika ve Proje Gelişiminin Özeti

Türkiye’nin koridor niteliğinin temelleri Irak-Türkiye ve Bakü-Tiflis-Ceyhan petrol hatları ile Rusya, İran ve Azerbaycan doğal gaz bağlantılarına dayanmaktadır. 2017’de açıklanan Millî Enerji ve Maden Politikası arz güvenliği, öngörülebilir piyasa ve yerileştirmeyi ortak çerçevede toplamıştır (Enerji ve Tabii Kaynaklar Bakanlığı [ETKB], 2017). Sonraki dönemde LNG ve FSRU kapasitesi, Silivri ve Tuz Gölü depoları, EPİAŞ doğal gaz piyasası, deniz arama filosu ve Karadeniz gaz üretimi öne çıkmıştır. 2022 sonrasında Trakya merkezli gaz ticaret merkezi söylemi güçlenmiştir.

Türkmen gazının İran üzerinden takas yoluyla teslimi 1 Mart 2025’te başlamıştır. Yenilenebilir enerji tarafında 2035 için 120 GW rüzgâr ve güneş hedefi açıklanmış, güneş hücresi, batarya ve rüzgâr ekipmanı yüksek öncelikli sanayi alanları arasına alınmıştır (ETKB, 2024; Sanayi ve Teknoloji

Bakanlığı, 2024, 2025). Akkuyu birinci ünitesi devreye alma hazırlığına ilerlerken TPAO 2024 sonrasında Somali, Pakistan, Libya ve Bulgaristan'daki faaliyetlerini genişletmiştir. Irak-Türkiye petrol hattındaki önceki çerçevenin sona ermesinin ardından 1 Ağustos 2026'da imzalanan bir yıllık geçiş anlaşması, Ceyhan koridorunun yeniden ölçeklenmesi için hukuki süreklilik sağlamıştır (Anadolu Ajansı [AA], 2026b; ETKB, 2026e).

Elektrik bağlantıları tarafında Azerbaycan, Gürcistan, Türkiye ve Bulgaristan arasında geliştirilen yeşil elektrik iletim ve ticaret koridoru 2026'da daha somut bir kurumsal aşamaya ilerlemiştir. 1 Ağustos 2026 tarihli Türkiye-Azerbaycan görüşmesinde dört ülkeli proje için fizibilite çalışmasının hazırlanması, hukuki ve sözleşmesel çerçevenin güçlendirilmesi ve ortak girişim kurulması ele alınmıştır (Ministry of Energy of Azerbaijan [MEA], 2026).

3.2. Doğal Gaz ve Petrol Portföyü

Türkiye Rusya, Azerbaycan ve İran'dan boru gazı almakta, LNG terminalleri ve FSRU'lar üzerinden küresel kargo piyasasına erişmektedir. TANAP kaynak çeşitliliği sağlarken TürkAkım daha çok güzergâh çeşitliliği sunmaktadır. LNG kapasitesi mevsimsel talep yönetimini ve portföy optimizasyonunu desteklemektedir. Avrupa Komisyonu, Türkiye'nin 2024'te 51,3 milyar metreküplük yeniden gazlaştırma kapasitesiyle Avrupa'da İspanya'dan sonra ikinci sıraya yükseldiğini bildirmiştir (European Commission, 2025). Fiziksel kapasitenin değeri sözleşmelerdeki yeniden satış hakkı, terminal kullanımı, depolama ve sınır çıkış imkânıyla belirlenmektedir.

Türkmen gazı teslimatı Türkiye'nin tedarik portföyüne yeni bir kaynak ülke eklemiştir. Gaz Türkmenistan tarafından İran'a teslim edilmekte, eşdeğer miktar Türkiye sınırında BOTAS'a aktarılmaktadır. ETKB 2025 sonuna kadar 1,3 milyar metreküp hedef açıklamış, 6 Ekim 2025 tarihli açıklamada mart ayından itibaren 465 milyon metreküp teslim edildiği belirtilmiştir (ETKB, 2025a, 2025g). Takas modeli yeni bir boru hattı beklenmeden ticaretin başlamasını sağlayarak Türkiye'nin sözleşme ve kaynak çeşitlendirme kabiliyetini göstermiştir. İran şebekesine dayalı bu model kısa vadeli ticari esneklik sunarken Azerbaycan ve Gürcistan üzerinden TANAP'a bağlanacak daha yüksek hacimli düzenleme, fiziksel güzergâh çeşitliliğini daha ileri bir düzeye taşıyabilecek potansiyele sahiptir (BOTAS, 2024b; ETKB, 2026b).

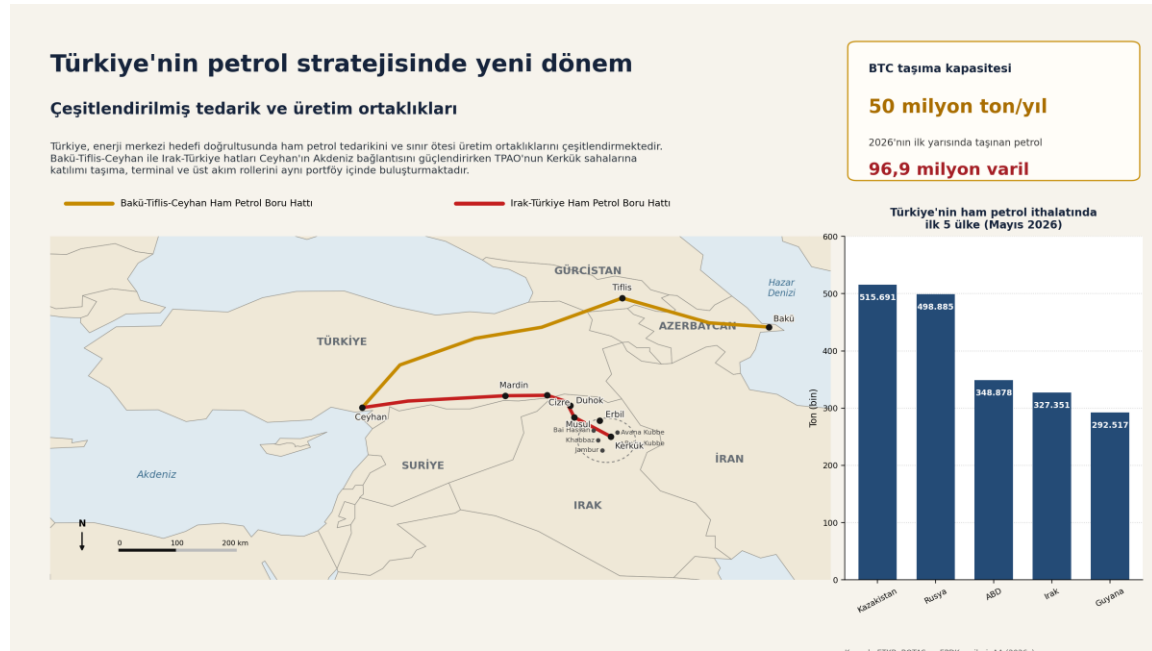
Silivri ve Tuz Gölü depoları arz güvenliğinin yanında ticari esneklik ve mevsimsel portföy yönetimi sağlamaktadır. Tuz Gölü projesi dengeleme ve ticaret kapasitesini birlikte güçlendiren bir yatırım olarak geliştirilmiştir (World Bank, 2018). Depolama tesislerinin merkez etkisi, brüt hacmin yanı sıra enjeksiyon ve geri üretim hızları, doluluk bilgilerinin yayımlanması, tarife yöntemi ve üçüncü taraf erişimiyle derinleşmektedir. Kamu portföyünün kesinti riskine karşı korunması ile kullanılmayan kapasitenin standart ürünlerle piyasaya açılması birlikte yürütüldüğünde depolar organize ticaretin büyümesine daha güçlü katkı sağlayabilmektedir.

Karadeniz üretimi Türkiye'nin ithalat sözleşmelerini, kış portföyünü ve yeniden ihracat seçeneklerini yönetme kabiliyetini artırmıştır. TPAO raporuna göre 2024'te yerli doğal gaz üretimi 2,34 milyar metreküpe, tüketim 53,2 milyar metreküpe ulaşmıştır. İthalatın toplam tüketimdeki ağırlığı sürmekle birlikte yerli üretimin düzenli biçimde büyümesi, sözleşme yenilemelerinde pazarlık alanını genişletebilmektedir ve bölgesel satış planlamasına daha fazla esneklik kazandırabilmektedir (Türkiye Petrolleri Anonim Ortaklığı [TPAO], 2025).

Petrol tarafında Bakü-Tiflis-Ceyhan ile Irak-Türkiye hatları Ceyhan'ın çok kaynaklı bir enerji düğümü olma niteliğini güçlendirmektedir. TPAO'nun 2026'da BP Energy Company of Kirkuk Limited'e %15 ortak olması Türkiye'yi Kerkük sahalarının üretim geliştirme zincirine taşımıştır. Ortaklık oranı şirket düzeyindeki payı ifade etmekte, sahadan elde edilecek üretim ve ekonomik haklar ilgili sözleşme hükümleri çerçevesinde şekillenmektedir (bp p.l.c., 2026; ETKB, 2026f). Bir yıllık yeni taşıma anlaşması Silopi-Ceyhan sistemindeki günlük 750 bin varillik kapasiteyi Irak devlet şirketlerine tahsis etmiştir. Temmuz 2026'da yaklaşık 180-200 bin varil düzeyinde açıklanan fiilî akış, mevcut kapasitenin üretim ve uzun vadeli taşıma taahhütleriyle büyütülebileceği geniş bir alan bulunduğunu göstermektedir (AA, 2026a, 2026b; ETKB, 2026e).

Hürmüz Boğazı'ndan 2024'te günlük yaklaşık 20 milyon varil ham petrol ve petrol ürünü geçmiştir (U.S. Energy Information Administration [EIA], 2025a). Ürün kapsamı farklı olduğundan Ceyhan'ın ham petrol kapasitesi bu toplamın doğrudan ikamesi olarak değil, bölgesel güzergâh çeşitliliğini artıran tamamlayıcı bir seçenek olarak değerlendirilmelidir. Irak-Türkiye koridoru Irak'ın ihracat yoğunlaşmasını azaltabilmektedir, Akdeniz'e doğrudan erişimini genişletebilmektedir ve Ceyhan'ın Körfez kaynakları açısından stratejik değerini yükseltebilmektedir. Basra bağlantısı, kapasite artışı ve diğer üreticilerin katılımı üretici taahhütleri, finansman, güvenlik ve uzun vadeli sözleşmelerle desteklendiğinde Türkiye'nin petrol merkezi rolünü belirgin biçimde büyütebilecek seçeneklerdir (ETKB, 2026e, 2026j).

Türkiye'nin petrol portföyündeki başlıca hatlar ve üretim ortaklıkları Şekil 1'de şematik olarak gösterilmiştir.



Şekil 1. Türkiye'nin petrol stratejisinde çeşitlendirilmiş tedarik ve üretim ortaklıkları

Not. Harita güzergâhları şematiktir. Taşıma kapasitesi ve ithalat verileri ETKB, BOTAŞ ve EPDK kaynaklarına dayanan Anadolu Ajansı infografiğinden türetilmiştir (AA, 2026c).

3.3. Piyasa Kurumları ve Fiyat Oluşumu

EPİAŞ bünyesindeki Spot Doğal Gaz Piyasası 2018'de, Vadeli Doğal Gaz Piyasası 2021'de faaliyete geçmiştir (Enerji Piyasaları İşletme AŞ [EPİAŞ], 2021; EPİAŞ, t.y.). Bu piyasalar günlük referans fiyatı, dengeleme ve ileri tarihli işlem altyapısı oluşturarak Türkiye'nin ticari merkez hedefi için kurumsal bir başlangıç zemini sağlamıştır. İşlem sürekliliğinin, aktif katılımcı sayısının, organize ve borsa dışı hacmin, vadeli ürün kullanımının ve fiyatın sınır ötesi sözleşmelerdeki rolünün artması bu altyapıyı bölgesel fiyat merkezine taşıyabilecek başlıca gelişim eksenleridir.

EPİAŞ'ın 2024 faaliyet raporunda Spot Doğal Gaz Piyasası için 45 kayıtlı katılımcı bildirilmiştir. Yıl içinde 20 kuruluş işlem yapmış, yıllık 29.858 teklif ve 6.425 eşleşme sonucunda 378,5 milyon standart metreküp gaz eşleşmiş, işlem tutarı 4,17 milyar liraya ulaşmıştır (EPİAŞ, 2025). TPAO'nun 53,2 milyar metreküplük 2024 tüketim verisi esas alındığında organize spot eşleşme tüketimin yaklaşık %0,71'idir. Borsa dışı işlemleri içermeyen bu oran, organize piyasanın mevcut ölçeğini göstermekte ve işlem hacmi ile aktif katılımın büyümesi için önemli bir gelişme alanı bulunduğu işaret etmektedir.

BOTAŞ ithalat, iletim, LNG, depolama, toptan satış ve ihracatta merkezi konumdadır. Bu bütünleşik yapı büyük yatırımların koordinasyonunu, uzun vadeli portföy yönetimini ve kriz dönemlerinde hızlı karar alınmasını kolaylaştırmaktadır. Ticari merkez aşamasında iletim ve ticari faaliyetler arasındaki mali, hukuki ve işlevsel sınırların güçlendirilmesi, BOTAŞ'ın yatırım kapasitesi ile bağımsız katılımcıların altyapıya erişim güvenliğini aynı sistem içinde birleştirebilmektedir. Avrupa Komisyonu da faaliyet ayrıştırması, piyasa hâkimiyeti ve şeffaf maliyet yansıtıcı fiyatlama alanlarını Türkiye'nin piyasa reform gündeminin başlıca unsurları olarak değerlendirmektedir (European Commission, 2025).

Faaliyet ayrıştırması kamu mülkiyetinin sona ermesini değil, iletim ile ticari faaliyetler arasında denetlenebilir sınırlar kurulmasını ifade etmektedir. Ayrı muhasebe, ticari bilgi duvarları, düzenleyici denetim ve kamu hizmeti maliyetlerinin açıklanması altyapıya erişim güvenliğini artırabilmektedir. Kullanılmayan LNG, depolama ve sınır kapasitesinin standart ürünlerle piyasaya sunulması da bağımsız ticaretin ölçeğini genişleterek Türkiye fiyatının bölgesel görünürlüğünü güçlendirebilmektedir.

Olgun merkezlerde fiyat, fiziksel akışın yanında risk yönetimi ve sözleşme endeksi işlevi görmektedir. ACER, TTF'yi Avrupa doğal gaz fiyatlarının göstergesi olarak tanımlamakta, TTF ve diğer büyük sanal ticaret noktalarının Avrupa'daki işlem hacminin büyük bölümüne teslim noktası oluşturduğunu belirtmektedir (ACER, 2025). Türkiye fiyatının Güneydoğu Avrupa'daki uzun vadeli sözleşmelerde kullanıldığına ilişkin kamuya açık örnekler henüz sınırlıdır. Bununla birlikte EPIAŞ fiyatının ulusal dengeleme aracı olarak yerleşmesi, bölgesel referans işlevinin geliştirilebileceği kurumsal ve teknik bir temel oluşturmuştur.

3.4. Yurt Dışı Üst Akım Portföyü ve Doğu Akdeniz

TPAO'nun yurt dışı portföyü yerleşik üretim varlıkları ile yeni arama girişimlerinden oluşmaktadır. Azerbaycan, Irak ve Rusya'daki faaliyetler üretim ve işletmecilik tecrübesi sağlarken Somali, Bulgaristan, Libya ve Pakistan Türkiye'nin yeni havzalara erişimini genişletmektedir (TPAO, 2025; ETKB, 2025d, 2025e, 2026g, 2026h; Libya National Oil Corporation, 2025). Portföyün merkez hedefine katkısı üç kanal üzerinden gelişebilmektedir. Özkaynak petrolü veya gazı tedarik portföyüne girebilmektedir. Sismik, sondaj ve saha yönetimi uluslararası hizmete dönüşebilmektedir. Üretici ülkelerle uzun vadeli ticari bağ kurulabilmektedir. Coğrafi çeşitlendirme, ortaklık yapıları ve aşamalı yatırım kararları arama, maliyet, güvenlik ve ev sahibi ülke risklerinin portföy düzeyinde yönetilmesine imkân vermektedir.

Somali hidrokarbon anlaşmasının kamuya açık metni, hidrokarbonların mülkiyetini Somali halkına ve devletine bırakmakta, üretimin %5'ine kadar devlet payı ile yıllık üretim değerinin en fazla %90'ına ulaşabilen maliyet geri kazanımı mekanizmasını düzenlemektedir. Kâr petrolünün dağılımı üretim paylaşım sözleşmesine bırakılmıştır. Bu yapı, Türkiye'nin arama ve üretim maliyetlerini proje gelirlerinden geri kazanmasına imkân veren bir çerçeve sunarken tarafların nihai ekonomik payları üretim paylaşım sözleşmesindeki koşullara göre şekillenecektir (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi [TBMM], 2025). Şubat 2024 tarihli savunma ve ekonomik iş birliği çerçevesi deniz güvenliği, kurumsal kapasite ve uzun dönemli ikili ilişkileri güçlendiren ayrı bir düzenleme olarak Türkiye'nin Somali'deki faaliyet ortamını desteklemektedir (Somali National News Agency [SONNA], 2024).

Oruç Reis üç deniz blokunda 4.464 kilometrekarelik üç boyutlu veri toplamış, Çağrı Bey'in Curad-1 sondajı Mayıs 2026 başında başlamıştır (ETKB, 2026a; SONNA, 2026). Bu aşama Türkiye'nin sismik araştırmadan derin deniz sondajına uzanan teknik kapasitesini yurt dışında kullanabildiğini göstermektedir. Somali havzaları için aktarılan 30 milyar varil aşan miktar, bölgenin geniş ölçekli jeolojik kaynak potansiyeline işaret etmektedir (Doomey, 2022; International Trade Administration, 2024). Curad-1 ve sonraki kuyulardan elde edilecek veriler, geri kazanılabilir rezerv, üretim maliyeti ve ticari geliştirme seçeneklerinin belirlenmesini sağlayarak bu potansiyelin ekonomik değere dönüşme imkânını ortaya koyacaktır.

Bulgaristan'daki Khan Tervel Blok 1-26'da Shell %42 ile operatör, TPAO %33 ve OMV %25 ortaktır. Beş yıllık ruhsat döneminde önce sismik çalışma, sonuçlara göre arama kuyusu öngörülmektedir (ETKB, 2026g). Libya'da dört deniz alanına ilişkin inceleme mutabakatı ve 2026'da iki blokta %40

ortaklık hakkı açıklanmıştır (Libya National Oil Corporation, 2025; ETKB, 2026h). Pakistan girişimi ortak teklif aşamasındadır. Bu faaliyetler TPAO'nun coğrafi çeşitlenmesini, uluslararası ortaklık ağını ve operasyon kapasitesini genişletmektedir. Başarılı arama sonuçlarının ticari keşif, üretim ve satış hakkına dönüşmesi Türkiye'nin arz portföyüne doğrudan ve ölçülebilir katkı sağlayabilmektedir.

Doğu Akdeniz'de Levant Havzası için tahmin edilen 1,7 milyar varil petrol ve 122 trilyon fit küp doğal gaz, bölgenin keşfedilmemiş ve teknik olarak üretilebilir kaynak potansiyelini göstermektedir (Schenk vd., 2010). Türkiye'nin bu potansiyelden alacağı pay, kendi ruhsat alanlarında ve ortaklıklarında ortaya çıkacak ticari keşiflere bağlıdır. Mısır mevcut LNG ihracat altyapısıyla fiilî işleme avantajına sahipken İsrail gazı Mısır üzerinden dış pazarlara ulaşmakta, Kıbrıs sahaları da Mısır bağlantısını değerlendirmektedir (EIA, 2025b). Türkiye'nin büyük iç pazarı, gelişmiş iletim sistemi, yüksek LNG kapasitesi ve deniz arama filosu bölgesel kaynakların işlenmesi ve pazara ulaştırılması bakımından güçlü avantajlar sunmaktadır. Deniz yetki alanı uyuşmazlıklarının yönetimi ve ticari keşiflerin hızlanması bu avantajların ekonomik değerini daha da artırabilmektedir.

Türkiye-KKTC Kıta Sahaneliği Sınırlandırma Anlaşması 2011'de imzalanmış, KKTC TPAO'ya ruhsat vermiştir (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2011). Bu düzenlemeler Türkiye'ye Doğu Akdeniz'de hukuki ve operasyonel bir faaliyet zemini sağlamaktadır. Türkiye ile Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti ve Yunanistan'ın farklı hukuki tutumları ile Avrupa Birliği'nin kısıtlayıcı tedbir çerçevesi yatırım ortamını etkilemektedir (European Commission, 2024, 2025; Council of the European Union, 2025). Diplomatik müzakere, ticari keşif, ekonomik bağlantı seçenekleri ve uzun dönemli talebin birlikte gelişmesi, Türkiye'nin mevcut iç pazar, altyapı ve denizcilik kapasitesini Doğu Akdeniz'de daha güçlü bir merkez avantajına dönüştürebilmektedir.

3.5. Elektrik Sistemi ve Enerji Teknolojisi

Türkiye'nin kurulu gücü 2025 sonunda 122.519 MW'a ulaşmış, yenilenebilir kaynakların payı %62,3 olmuştur (ETKB, 2026c). Haziran 2026 sonunda toplam güç 126.113 MW'a yükselmiş, rüzgâr ile güneşin toplam payı %33,7'ye çıkmıştır (ETKB, t.y.-a). 2035 yol haritası rüzgâr ve güneş kurulu gücünü 120 GW'a ulaştırmayı hedeflemektedir (ETKB, 2024). Bu büyüme ithal yakıt ihtiyacını azaltma, elektrik maliyetlerini çeşitlendirme ve Türkiye'nin düşük karbonlu elektrik ticareti kapasitesini genişletme potansiyeli taşımaktadır. Şebeke, depolama, talep esnekliği ve sınır bağlantılarındaki yatırımlar bu kapasitenin bölgesel değere dönüşmesini hızlandırabilmektedir.

Güneş üretiminin gün ortasında yoğunlaşması ve rüzgârın değişkenliği fiyat profilini dönüştürmektedir. Türkiye Ulusal Enerji Planı 2035 için 7,5 GW batarya, 5 GW elektrolizör ve 1,7 GW talep tarafı katılımı öngörmektedir (ETKB, 2022). Bu hedefler, yüksek yenilenebilir payını depolama, esneklik ve yeşil hidrojen kapasitesiyle birleştiren bütünleşik bir sistem yaklaşımına işaret etmektedir. Enterkonneksiyon kapasitesinin ve piyasa eşleştirmesinin geliştirilmesi, elektrik fazlasının bölgesel ticarete dönüşmesini ve Türkiye'nin elektrik merkezi rolünün güçlenmesini sağlayabilmektedir.

Azerbaycan-Gürcistan-Türkiye-Bulgaristan elektrik bağlantısı, Türkiye'nin elektrik merkezi rolü bakımından 2026'da öne çıkan girişimlerden biridir. Enerji ve Tabii Kaynaklar Bakanı Alparslan Bayraktar, 1 Haziran 2026'da projeyi "TANAP'ın elektrik versiyonu" olarak nitelendirmiş ve Azerbaycan'daki elektrik kaynaklarının Gürcistan üzerinden Türkiye'ye, Türkiye üzerinden de Bulgaristan ve Avrupa'ya taşınmasının hedeflendiğini belirtmiştir (ETKB, 2026b).

Bu tanımlama mevcut ve işletmede olan bir iletim kapasitesini ifade etmemektedir. Veri kesim tarihi olan 1 Ağustos 2026 itibarıyla dört ülkeli koridor için fizibilite çalışmasının hazırlanması, sözleşmesel ve hukuki çerçevenin güçlendirilmesi ile ortak girişim kurulması üzerinde çalışılmaktadır (MEA, 2026). Projenin teknik kapasitesi, finansman yapısı, ayrıntılı güzergâhı, piyasa eşleştirme düzeni ve ticari işletme takvimi kesinleşmeden Türkiye'nin elektrik merkezi performansına doğrudan katkısı nicel olarak ölçülemez. Buna karşılık girişim, enerji merkezi hedefinin hidrokarbon koridorlarının ötesine geçerek sınır ötesi elektrik ticareti ve yenilenebilir enerji akışlarını da kapsayacak biçimde genişlediğine işaret etmektedir.

YEKA modeli büyük ölçekli kapasite tahsisini yerli üretim ve araştırmayla ilişkilendirmiştir. Karapınar YEKA GES ve entegre panel tesisi bu yaklaşımın en görünür örneğidir (ETKB, t.y.-a). Güneş sektöründe panel montajı yaygınlaşmış, hücre üretiminde yeni yatırımlar açıklanmıştır. Rüzgâr sektöründe kule, kanat ve bazı jeneratör parçalarında yerli üretim gelişmiştir (ETKB, 2025a, 2025b, 2026c). Silisyum dilimi, hücre, invertör, güç elektroniği, kontrol yazılımı, aktif batarya malzemesi, patent ve ihracat alanlarında sağlanacak ilerleme Türkiye'nin mevcut üretim tabanını bölgesel teknoloji merkezine taşıyabilmektedir.

HIT-30 programı güneş hücresi, batarya, rüzgâr, hidrojen ve ileri imalat yatırımlarını desteklemektedir. Açıklanan batarya yatırımları elektrikli araç ve şebeke depolaması için güçlü bir sanayi tabanı oluşturma potansiyeline sahiptir (Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, 2024, 2025; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Yatırım Ofisi, 2024a, 2024b). Yatırım tutarıyla birlikte yerli katma değer, kapasite kullanımı, patent, kritik girdi üretimi ve dış satışın izlenmesi, bu teşviklerin teknoloji merkezi hedefine katkısını görünür kılacaktır.

Enerji teknolojisi yatırımları Türkiye'nin merkez hedefini iki yönden güçlendirebilmektedir. Elektrik sisteminin artan yenilenebilir kapasiteyi güvenli ve düşük maliyetli biçimde taşıması bölgesel elektrik ticaretini desteklerken üretim tesislerinin kritik bileşen, yazılım ve fikrî mülkiyet geliştirmesi ekipman ve mühendislik ihracatını genişletebilmektedir. Yerli tedarik zincirinin derinleşmesiyle Türkiye, kurulu güçteki büyümeyi bölgesel teknoloji ve üretim merkezliğiyle birleştirebilecek önemli bir avantaja sahiptir.

Kömür yatırımları elektrik sisteminin kapasite güvenliği ve yerli kaynak kullanımı boyutunda önem taşımaktadır. Yerli kömür, arz çeşitliliğine ve baz yük kapasitesine katkı sağlayabilmektedir. Hava kalitesi, su kullanımı, karbon maliyeti ve finansman koşullarının teknoloji seçimiyle birlikte yönetilmesi, bu kaynağın sistem içindeki ekonomik değerini belirleyecektir (ETKB, 2025f; European Commission, 2025). Doğal gaz, yenilenebilir, depolama, talep esnekliği, nükleer ve kömür seçeneklerinin toplam sistem maliyeti, emisyon ve dışa bağımlılık üzerindeki etkileriyle birlikte planlanması Türkiye'nin enerji portföyünü daha dayanıklı hâle getirebilmektedir.

3.6. Nükleer, SMR ve Hidrojen

Akkuyu dört ünite toplam 4,8 GW tasarım kapasitesine sahiptir (International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA], t.y.). Şirket, 2026'da birinci ünite inşaatın tamamlandığını ve sahte yakıt yükleme işlemlerinin yapıldığını duyurmuştur (Akkuyu Nuclear JSC, 2026a, 2026b). Birinci ünitenin devreye alma hazırlığı, Türkiye'nin nükleer düzenleme, insan kaynağı, tedarik zinciri ve işletme tecrübesi kazanmasında önemli bir aşamadır. Ticari üretimin başlamasıyla kapasite faktörü, maliyet, şebeke katkısı ve yerli sanayi katılımı daha ayrıntılı ölçülebilecek, Akkuyu'nun enerji merkezi portföyündeki rolü belirginleşecektir (European Commission, 2025).

Küçük modüler reaktörler modül başına 300 MWe'ye kadar elektrik üreten ileri reaktörler olarak tanımlanmaktadır (IAEA, 2023). NEA'nın 2025 taraması çok sayıda tasarımın farklı lisanslama, finansman ve tedarik zinciri aşamalarında olduğunu göstermektedir (Nuclear Energy Agency, 2025). Seri üretim, standartlaştırma ve kısa inşaat süresi finansman riskini azaltabilmektedir, ölçek ekonomisinin tasarım ve üretim zincirinde kurulması ise birim maliyetlerin rekabetçiliğini belirleyebilmektedir (Alonso, 2025). Yapay zekâ ve veri merkezlerinin artan elektrik talebi, kesintisiz düşük karbonlu üretim sağlayabilen SMR teknolojileri için yeni bir pazar alanı oluşturmaktadır (IEA, 2025).

TMRS Enerji Teknolojileri AŞ 2025'te ticaret siciline kaydedilmiş ve kurumsal amacını modüler reaktör teknolojileri olarak açıklamıştır (İstanbul Ticaret Odası, 2025, t.y.; TMRS Energy, t.y.). TENMAK'ın tasarım yarışmaları insan kaynağı ve kavramsal çalışma tabanı yaratmaktadır (Türkiye Enerji, Nükleer ve Maden Araştırma Kurumu, 2026). Şirketleşme, tasarım çalışmaları ve insan kaynağı programları Türkiye'nin yerli SMR ekosistemi için kurumsal bir başlangıç zemini oluşturmıştır. Lisanslı tasarım, güvenlik analizi, doğrulama tesisi, ilk örnek ve seri üretim aşamalarına geçiş bu zemini teknoloji ihracatı ve enerji bağımsızlığı bakımından stratejik bir kapasiteye dönüştürebilmektedir.

Karadeniz'in anoksik derin sularındaki hidrojen sülfür bilimsel bir kaynak ve çevresel yönetim alanıdır. Çalışmalar toplam sülfür stokunu, teorik hidrojen potansiyelini ve ayrıştırma yöntemlerini incelemiştir (Volkov & Neretin, 2007; Midilli vd., 2007; Baykara vd., 2007; Güneş-Durak & Kapkın, 2024; Cirikonda vd., 2026). Teorik hesaplamalar Karadeniz'in uzun vadeli hidrojen üretimi bakımından dikkat çekici bir potansiyel taşıdığını göstermektedir. TÜBİTAK'ın 2026-2028 önceliklerinde H₂S'den hidrojen üretimine yer verilmesi bu alanı ulusal Ar-Ge gündemine taşımıştır (Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma Kurumu, 2026). Bağımsız pilotlar, net enerji kazancı, birim maliyet, çevresel güvenlik ve ölçeklenebilirlik sonuçları, Türkiye'nin bu bilimsel potansiyeli yeni bir enerji teknolojisi ve ihracat alanına dönüştürme yolunu açabilmektedir.

3.7. Enerji İhracatı, Diplomasi ve Karbon Rekabetçiliği

BOTAŞ'ın komşu ve Avrupa ülkeleriyle yaptığı satış anlaşmaları Türkiye'nin fiziksel portföyünü dış pazarlara açmış ve sınır ötesi ticaret tecrübesini genişletmiştir (BOTAŞ, 2025, t.y.). İhracatın sürekliliği, menşei, teslim noktası, ticari marjı, altyapı geliri ve yeniden satış hakkı görünür hâle geldikçe bu anlaşmaların merkez etkisi daha ayrıntılı ölçülebilmektedir. Türkiye'nin net ithalatçı konumu, farklı menşelerden alınan enerjinin depolanması, yönlendirilmesi, mülkiyet değiştirmesi ve yeniden satılmasıyla ticaret merkezi avantajına dönüşebilmektedir.

Enerji diplomasisi altyapı, uzun vadeli sözleşme, ruhsat, teknoloji ve güvenlik iş birliğini ortak bir çerçevede yürütmektedir. Türkmen gazı, Somali, Libya, Bulgaristan ve Irak örnekleri Türkiye'nin kaynak ülke, güzergâh ve ortaklık seçeneklerini aynı anda çeşitlendirebildiğini göstermektedir. Ülke riski, kamu sermayesi ve sözleşme şeffaflığı unsurlarının portföy yönetimi içinde izlenmesi, siyasi anlaşmaların kalıcı ekonomik değere dönüşmesini güçlendirebilmektedir.

Avrupa Birliği'nin Rus gazını aşamalı biçimde azaltma kararı Türkiye'nin Güneydoğu Avrupa bağlantılarına yeni bir stratejik önem kazandırmaktadır (Council of the European Union, 2026). Türkiye, Rus gazının yanında Azerbaycan, İran, Türkmenistan, LNG ve yerli üretimi aynı portföy içinde yöneterek Avrupa'ya kaynak çeşitliliği sunabilecek bir konumdadır. Menşe bilgilerinin, karbon yoğunluğunun ve sözleşme koşullarının şeffaf biçimde izlenmesi bu rolün Avrupa enerji güvenliğiyle uyumunu güçlendirebilmektedir. Elektrik ve ekipman ihracatında doğrulanabilir yeşil sertifikalar ile düşük karbonlu üretim de Türkiye'nin Avrupa pazarındaki rekabet avantajını artırabilmektedir.

3.8. Stratejik Rekabet İçinde Türkiye'nin Enerji Merkezi Rolü

Türkiye'nin enerji merkezi olma hedefi, ulusal politika belgelerinin yanında küresel güçlerin bölgesel enerji akışlarına ilişkin değerlendirmelerinde de karşılık bulmaktadır. Rusya ve ABD'nin farklı stratejik önceliklerle Türkiye'ye atfettikleri rol, ülkenin enerji güzergâhları, depolama kapasitesi, kara bağlantıları ve Avrupa pazarlarına erişim bakımından taşıdığı jeoekonomik değeri göstermektedir. Rusya Devlet Başkanı Vladimir Putin, 12 Ekim 2022'de düzenlenen Rus Enerji Haftası'nda Kuzey Akım hatlarında kaybedilen transit hacmin Karadeniz bölgesine yönlendirilebileceğini belirtmiş ve "Türkiye'de Avrupa'nın en büyük doğal gaz merkezini kurabiliriz" ifadesini kullanmıştır. Bir gün sonra Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ile yaptığı görüşmede planlanan merkezin tedarik işleviyle birlikte fiyatlandırma platformu olarak da kullanılabileceğini dile getirmiştir (President of Russia, 2022a, 2022b).

Rusya'nın yaklaşımı, Avrupa pazarlarına erişimin Karadeniz ve Türkiye güzergâhları üzerinden yeniden düzenlenmesini öngörmektedir. Bu yönelim Türkiye'ye transit hacimlerin artmasının yanında depolama, ticaret, yeniden yönlendirme ve fiyat oluşumu alanlarında yeni imkânlar sunmaktadır. Rus gazının Türkiye'de Azerbaycan, İran, Türkmenistan, LNG ve yerli üretimle birlikte yönetilmesi, Trakya'nın Güneydoğu Avrupa'ya yönelik ticaret merkezi işlevini güçlendirebilmektedir. Fiyatlandırma işlevinin gündeme gelmesi de Türkiye'nin fiziksel altyapısını ticari piyasa kapasitesiyle birleştirme hedefini uluslararası düzeyde görünür kılmaktadır.

ABD'nin Ankara Büyükelçisi ve Suriye Özel Temsilcisi Tom Barrack ise 17 Nisan 2026'da Antalya Diplomasi Forumu'nda Türkiye'nin rolünü tedarik zinciri güvenliği ve alternatif bağlantılar çerçevesinde ele almıştır. Barrack, jeopolitik risklerin küresel tedarik sistemlerini "just in time" anlayışından "just in case" yaklaşımına yönelttiğini belirtmiş ve "Her şey Türkiye ve Suriye üzerinden geçiyor" ifadesini kullanmıştır. Petrol, doğal gaz, bilgi, veri, malzeme ve fiber optik ağlarını bu bağlantı sistemi içinde değerlendiren Barrack, Azerbaycan ve Ermenistan üzerinden geliştirilebilecek doğu-batı geçişlerine de işaret etmiştir (Anadolu Agency, 2026).

Barrack'ın çizdiği çerçeve, Türkiye'yi deniz geçitlerine bağımlılığı azaltabilecek kara güzergâhlarının merkezinde konumlandırmaktadır. Bu yaklaşımda Türkiye petrol ve doğal gaz akışlarının yanında ulaştırma, iletişim, veri ve ticaret bağlantılarını bir araya getiren çok katmanlı bir jeoekonomik düğüm niteliği kazanmaktadır. Türkiye'nin Suriye üzerindeki siyasi ve ekonomik etkisi, Irak ve Körfez kaynaklarının Akdeniz'e ulaştırılmasında yeni seçenekler oluşturabilmektedir. Ceyhan, Irak-Türkiye petrol koridoru, Suriye üzerinden geliştirilebilecek bağlantılar ve doğu-batı ulaştırma hatları birlikte değerlendirildiğinde Türkiye'nin bölgesel erişim ve pazarlık alanı genişlemektedir.

Putin ve Barrack'ın açıklamaları farklı stratejik yönelimlere dayanmaktadır. Rusya, Avrupa'ya doğal gaz erişimini Türkiye üzerinden güçlendirmeyi amaçlarken ABD, Hürmüz çevresindeki yoğunlaşmayı azaltacak ve bölgesel tedarik zincirlerini çeşitlendirecek kara bağlantılarına önem vermektedir. İki yaklaşımın Türkiye'de kesişmesi, ülkenin kuzey-güney ve doğu-batı enerji koridorlarını aynı anda yönetebilme potansiyelini ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Bu kesişme Türkiye'nin belirli bir üreticiye veya güzergâha bağlı bir transit ülke yerine farklı kaynak, rota ve pazarları bir araya getirebilen çok yönlü bir enerji merkezi olarak konumlanmasını desteklemektedir.

Türkiye açısından temel kazanım, stratejik rekabet içindeki farklı aktörlerin enerji ve ticaret planlarında vazgeçilmesi güç bir bağlantı alanı hâline gelmesidir. Bu konum Ankara'nın enerji diplomasisindeki pazarlık kapasitesini genişletebilmektedir, yeni boru hattı ve terminal yatırımlarını teşvik edebilir, Ceyhan ile Trakya'nın bölgesel işlevlerini güçlendirebilmektedir ve sınır ötesi enerji ticaretinin ölçeğini büyütebilmektedir. Mevcut LNG, depolama, boru hattı, yerli üretim ve yurt dışı üst akım kapasitesinin piyasa derinliğiyle tamamlanması, bu jeopolitik ilginin kalıcı ekonomik değere dönüştürülmesini sağlayabilmektedir. Putin ve Barrack'ın açıklamaları bu bakımdan Türkiye'nin "entegre fiziksel portföy merkezi" niteliğini dış aktörlerin farklı stratejik ihtiyaçları üzerinden teyit eden tamamlayıcı göstergelerdir.

3.9. Tartışma

Türkiye örneği, Austvik ve Rzayeva (2017) ile Novikau ve Muhasilović'in (2023) coğrafi avantajın piyasa kurumları ve ekonomik kapasiteyle tamamlanması gerektiği yönündeki değerlendirmelerini somutlaştırmaktadır. LNG, depolama, boru hatları, Karadeniz üretimi ve Ceyhan bağlantıları farklı menşelerin aynı portföy içinde yönetilmesini sağlamış ve transit işlevin ötesinde güçlü bir fiziksel esneklik yaratmıştır. Kamu şirketlerinin yüksek sermaye gerektiren yatırımları koordine etme kapasitesi bu ilerlemede belirleyici olmuştur. Bir sonraki gelişim alanı, bu koordinasyon gücünü şeffaf kapasite tahsisi, bağımsız ticaret ve tarafsız altyapı erişimiyle birleştirerek fiziksel üstünlüğü ticari piyasa derinliğine taşımaktır.

Shi ve Variam (2018) işleyen gaz merkezlerini likidite, şeffaflık, dengeleme ve güvenilir fiyat göstergesi üzerinden tanımlamaktadır. ACER'in TTF için kullandığı ölçütler de fiyatın merkez dışındaki işlemlerde referans işlevi kazanmasını gerektirmektedir (ACER, 2025). EPIAŞ'ın 2024 verileri Türkiye'de teknik piyasa altyapısının kurulduğunu ve ulusal dengeleme fiyatının yerleşmeye başladığını göstermektedir. Organize spot hacmin ve aktif katılımın artması, borsa dışı işlemlerin daha görünür hâle gelmesi ve BOTAS'ın iletim ile ticari faaliyetleri arasındaki sınırların güçlendirilmesi Türkiye fiyatının güvenilirliğini ve bölgesel kullanımını genişletebilmektedir. Türkiye bu bakımdan sıfırdan bir piyasa kurmak yerine mevcut teknik ve kurumsal temelini derinleştirme avantajına sahiptir.

Çalışmanın özgün katkısı, Türkiye'nin fiziksel başarılarını ticari ve teknolojik gelişim yönüyle birlikte ele alan "entegre fiziksel portföy merkezi" sınıflandırmasıdır. Entegre enerji sistemleri literatürü

elektrik, gaz, depolama ve farklı enerji taşıyıcıları arasındaki teknik bağlantıları açıklamaktadır (Geidl vd., 2007; Mancarella, 2014). Türkiye vakası bu teknik bütünleşmeye jeoekonomik portföy yönetimi boyutunu eklemektedir. Irak-Türkiye hattındaki kapasite tahsisi, TPAO'nun yurt dışı girişimleri, yenilenebilir kapasite ve enerji ekipmanı yatırımları merkezin farklı bileşenlerini genişletmektedir. Proje aşamalarının ayrı değerlendirilmesi, mevcut başarıların görünür kılınmasını ve ruhsat, keşif, üretim, teknoloji mülkiyeti ile ticari değer arasındaki ilerleme zincirinin izlenmesini sağlamaktadır.

İncelenen yatırımlar arz güvenliği, sanayi politikası ve dış politika hedeflerini aynı anda desteklemektedir. Bu çok amaçlı yapı, enerji merkezi hedefinin boru hatlarından daha geniş bir ekonomik ve stratejik tabana oturduğunu göstermektedir. Somali, Libya, Bulgaristan ve Pakistan'daki anlaşma ve arama faaliyetleri TPAO'nun uluslararası operasyon kapasitesini, ortaklık ağını ve yeni havzalara erişimini genişletmektedir. Ticari keşif, üretim ve satış haklarının gelişmesi bu kapasiteyi doğrudan arz ve gelir katkısına dönüştürebilmektedir. Kamuya açık sözleşme ayrıntılarının artması ve proje statülerinin düzenli güncellenmesi ise portföyün ekonomik getirisinin daha hassas biçimde ölçülmesini sağlayacaktır.

Türkiye için stratejik sonraki aşama, Güneydoğu Avrupa, Karadeniz, Kafkasya ve Doğu Akdeniz çevresinde bölgesel fiziksel portföy ve ticaret kapasitesini derinleştirmektir. Mevcut LNG, depolama ve sınır kapasitesinin şeffaf biçimde tahsis edilmesi, bağımsız katılımcı sayısının artması, vadeli ürünlerin derinleşmesi ve Türkiye fiyatının sınır ötesi sözleşmelerde daha yaygın kullanılması bu geçiş hızlandırabilmektedir. Elektrik ve teknoloji tarafında kurulu güç artışının kritik bileşen, fikrî mülkiyet, yazılım ve düzenli ihracatla desteklenmesi Türkiye'nin enerji merkezi niteliğini ticari ve teknolojik boyutlara taşıyabilmektedir.

Azerbaycan-Gürcistan-Türkiye-Bulgaristan elektrik koridoru, “entegre fiziksel portföy merkezi” sınıflandırmasının elektrik boyutunu genişleten güncel bir örnektir. Girişim yenilenebilir üretimi, enterkonneksiyonu ve sınır ötesi ticareti aynı bölgesel hat üzerinde ilişkilendirmeyi hedeflemektedir. Projenin fizibilite ve kurumsal yapılanma aşamasında bulunması nedeniyle mevcut kapasite ile gelecekteki potansiyel ayrı değerlendirilmelidir. Bu ayrım, proje ilanını gerçekleştirmiş merkez kapasitesiyle eşitlemeden Türkiye'nin elektrik bağlantısallığındaki yönelimini analize dâhil etmeyi mümkün kılmaktadır (ETKB, 2026b; MEA, 2026).

4. Sonuç ve Öneriler

Türkiye, 2017-2026 döneminde farklı enerji kaynaklarını kabul etme, depolama, yeniden yönlendirme ve sınır ötesine teslim etme kapasitesini belirgin biçimde geliştirmiştir. LNG girişleri, Silivri ve Tuz Gölü depoları, Karadeniz üretimi, Ceyhan bağlantıları ve yurt dışı iştirakler transit işlevin ötesinde güçlü bir fiziksel portföy esnekliği sağlamıştır. EPİAŞ piyasası, vadeli ürün altyapısı ve artan sınır ötesi satışlar ticari merkez yönündeki kurumsal temeli oluşturmuştur. Elektrik, teknoloji ve yurt dışı üst akım yatırımları da Türkiye'nin merkez hedefini kaynak çeşitliliği, sanayi kapasitesi ve uluslararası faaliyet alanı bakımından genişletmektedir.

Bu bulgulara göre Türkiye, 1 Ağustos 2026 itibarıyla çalışmaya özgü “entegre fiziksel portföy merkezi” kategorisinde yer almaktadır. Bu kategori, farklı menşeleri aynı sistem içinde yönetebilen güçlü bir fiziksel altyapıyı, genişleyen üretim ve teknoloji portföyünü ve bölgesel ticarete açılan bağlantıları birlikte ifade etmektedir. Türkiye'nin bu temeli yüksek ve gözlenebilir işlem hacmi, denetlenebilir faaliyet ayrıştırması, şeffaf kapasite tahsisi, düzenli sınır ötesi ticaret ve Türkiye fiyatının bölgesel sözleşmelerde daha yaygın kullanımıyla tamamlaması, ülkeyi bölgesel referans fiyat merkezi yönünde ileri taşıyabilmektedir.

İlk politika önceliği, mevcut fiziksel üstünlüğü piyasa derinliği ve veri şeffaflığıyla tamamlamaktır. BOTAS'ın iletim ve ticari faaliyetleri arasında denetlenebilir mali ve işlevsel sınırların güçlendirilmesi, kamu şirketinin yatırım ve kriz yönetimi kapasitesiyle bağımsız piyasa katılımını birlikte geliştirebilmektedir. Kullanılmayan LNG, depolama ve sınır kapasitesinin standart ürünlerle piyasaya sunulması işlem hacmini artırabilmektedir. EPİAŞ ve EPDK'nın organize ve borsa dışı hacim, aktif

katılımcı, vadeli işlem, kapasite kullanımı ve yeniden ihracat verilerini ortak tanımlarla yayımlaması Türkiye fiyatının bölgesel güvenilirliğini güçlendirebilmektedir.

İkinci öncelik, elektrik ve teknoloji politikasını değer zinciri derinliğiyle büyütmektir. Şebeke, depolama, talep tarafı katılımı ve enterkonneksiyon yatırımlarının yenilenebilir büyümeyle eş zamanlı ilerlemesi elektrik fazlasını bölgesel ticarete açabilmektedir. Güneş, rüzgâr, batarya, elektrolizör ve şebeke ekipmanlarında ithal girdi, kritik bileşen, patent, kapasite kullanımı ve ihracatın düzenli açıklanması sanayi politikasının sonuçlarını görünür kılabilmektedir. Teşviklerin güç elektroniği, yazılım, aktif malzeme ve geri dönüşüm gibi yüksek katma değerli aşamalara yönelmesi Türkiye'nin bölgesel ekipman ve mühendislik merkezi olma kapasitesini artırabilmektedir. Azerbaycan-Gürcistan-Türkiye-Bulgaristan elektrik koridorunda fizibilite, ortak girişim, teknik kapasite, finansman, piyasa entegrasyonu ve işletmeye alma aşamalarının ayrı raporlanması, projenin enerji merkezi hedefine fiilî katkısının izlenmesini kolaylaştıracaktır. Koridorun ilerlemesi, Türkiye'nin hidrokarbon portföy yönetimini elektrik ve yenilenebilir enerji akışlarıyla tamamlama kapasitesinin sınanacağı yeni bir alan olarak değerlendirilmelidir (ETKB, 2026b; MEA, 2026).

Üçüncü öncelik, nükleer ve yeni enerji teknolojilerini açık kilometre taşlarıyla ilerletmektir. Akkuyu için düzenleyici izin, devreye alma, ticari üretim ve yerli katkının ayrı raporlanması nükleer programın sanayi ve şebeke etkisini görünür kılabilmektedir. SMR girişimlerinde kavramsal tasarım, güvenlik analizi, lisans, doğrulama tesisi, ilk örnek ve seri üretim basamaklarının aşamalı biçimde planlanması yerli teknoloji ekosistemini hızlandırabilmektedir. H2S gibi Ar-Ge alanlarında bağımsız pilotlardan elde edilecek net enerji kazancı, çevresel güvenlik ve ekonomik uygulanabilirlik sonuçları büyük ölçekli yatırım kararları için güçlü bir bilgi temeli sağlayabilmektedir.

Dördüncü öncelik, yurt dışı üst akım portföyünü risk ve performans esaslı biçimde büyütmektir. TPAO'nun ülke ve saha bazında iştirak oranı, operatörlük, arama harcaması, kuyu sonucu, rezerv ekleme maliyeti, üretim, satış hakkı ve ülke riskini ortak göstergelerle raporlaması portföy değerini daha görünür hâle getirebilmektedir. Mutabakat, ruhsat, arama, keşif ve üretim aşamalarının ayrı gösterilmesi başarılı projelerin ölçeklendirilmesini kolaylaştırabilmektedir. Irak-Türkiye koridorunda uzun vadeli anlaşmanın tarife, asgari taşıma, üçüncü taraf erişimi, terminal hizmetleri ve aylık fiilî akış verilerini açık biçimde düzenlemesi Ceyhan'ın bölgesel petrol merkezi rolünü güçlendirebilmektedir.

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**RUSYA’NIN YAKIN ÇEVRE POLİTİKASI ÇERÇEVESİNDE DIŞ POLİTİKA
KONSEPTLERİNİN UKRAYNA VE GÜRCİSTAN’A UYGULANMASI (1993–2023)**

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Özet

Bu çalışma, Rusya’nın 1993–2023 döneminde şekillenen yakın çevre politikasını dış politika konseptleri üzerinden incelemekte ve bu politikanın Ukrayna ile Gürcistan’daki uygulamalarını karşılaştırmalı olarak değerlendirmektedir. Çalışmada 1993, 2000, 2008, 2013, 2016 ve 2023 tarihli dış politika konseptleri kronolojik olarak ele alınarak Rusya’nın güvenlik algısı, bölgesel nüfuz anlayışı ve kullandığı politika araçlarındaki değişim incelenmektedir. Bulgular, yakın çevrenin Rus dış politikasında stratejik önemini koruduğunu, ancak bu alanın tanımlanma biçiminin ve kullanılan araçların dönemsel olarak değiştiğini göstermektedir. 1993 ve 2000 dönemlerinde güvenlik, bölgesel istikrar, BDT mekanizmaları ve ekonomik ilişkiler öne çıkarken, 2008 sonrasında askerî gücün ağırlığı artmıştır. 2013 ve 2016 konseptleriyle kimlik, medeniyet, bilgi ve çok boyutlu güvenlik unsurları daha belirgin hâle gelmiş; 2023 Konsepti ise yakın çevreyi devlet-medeniyet, çok kutupluluk ve Batı ile sistemik rekabet çerçevesinde yeniden konumlandırmıştır. Gürcistan örneğinde Abhazya ve Güney Osetya üzerinden uzun süreli ve kurumsallaşmış bir nüfuz modeli ortaya çıkarken, Ukrayna örneğinde Kırım, Donbas ve 2022 sonrasında yaşanan gelişmeler daha kapsamlı bir güvenlik ve jeopolitik krize dönüşmüştür. Sonuç olarak Rusya’nın yakın çevre politikası temel hedefleri bakımından süreklilik gösterirken, politika araçları ve söylemi bakımından önemli bir dönüşüm geçirmiştir. Bu dönüşüm, Rusya’nın yakın çevreyi yalnızca eski Sovyet coğrafyasında nüfuz alanı olarak değil, aynı zamanda ulusal güvenlik, güç dengesi, tarihsel kimlik ve uluslararası düzen anlayışının kesiştiği çok boyutlu bir stratejik alan olarak değerlendirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rusya, yakın çevre politikası, dış politika konsepti, Ukrayna, Gürcistan

**APPLICATION OF FOREIGN POLICY CONCEPTS TO UKRAINE AND GEORGIA
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF RUSSIA’S NEAR-ABROAD POLICY (1993–2023)**

Abstract

This study examines Russia’s near-abroad policy during the 1993–2023 period through its foreign policy concepts and comparatively evaluates the implementation of this policy in Ukraine and Georgia. The study analyzes the foreign policy concepts adopted in 1993, 2000, 2008, 2013, 2016, and 2023 chronologically, focusing on changes in Russia’s security perceptions, understanding of regional influence, and policy instruments. The findings demonstrate that the near abroad has maintained its strategic importance in Russian foreign policy, while the way this area has been conceptualized and the instruments employed have changed over time. During the 1993 and 2000 periods, security, regional stability, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) mechanisms, and economic relations were prominent, whereas the role of military power increased after 2008. With the 2013 and 2016 concepts, identity, civilization, information, and multidimensional security became more prominent. The 2023 Foreign Policy Concept, in turn, repositioned the near abroad within the framework of a state-civilization, multipolarity, and systemic competition with the West. In the case of Georgia, a long-term and institutionalized model of influence developed through Abkhazia and South Ossetia, whereas in Ukraine, developments involving Crimea, Donbas, and the post-2022 period evolved into a more comprehensive security and geopolitical crisis. Overall, Russia’s near-abroad policy has demonstrated

continuity in terms of its fundamental objectives, while undergoing significant transformation in terms of its policy instruments and discourse. This transformation demonstrates that Russia views the near abroad not merely as a sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space, but also as a multidimensional strategic area where national security, the balance of power, historical identity, and its understanding of the international order intersect.

Keywords: Russia, near-abroad policy, foreign policy concept, Ukraine, Georgia

Giriş

Sovyetler Birliği'nin 1991 yılında dağılması, Rusya Federasyonu'nun dış politika önceliklerini ve uluslararası sistemdeki konumunu yeniden tanımlamasını zorunlu kılmıştır. Sovyet sonrası dönemin ilk yıllarında Batı ile bütünleşme ve liberal ekonomik reformlar ön plana çıkmış olsa da kısa süre içerisinde eski Sovyet coğrafyasının Rusya'nın güvenliği, ekonomik çıkarları ve bölgesel güç statüsü açısından stratejik önemi yeniden belirginleşmiştir. Bu dönüşüm, 1993, 2000, 2008, 2013, 2016 ve 2023 tarihli dış politika konseptlerine yansımış ve söz konusu belgeler Rusya'nın değişen uluslararası sistem algısını ve yakın çevre politikasını izlemek açısından temel kaynaklar hâline gelmiştir.

Rusya'nın dış politika konseptleri, devletin temel dış politika ilkelerini, tehdit algılarını, önceliklerini ve politika araçlarını sistematik biçimde ortaya koyan stratejik belgelerdir. Bu belgelerin kronolojik olarak incelenmesi, yakın çevrenin Rus dış politikasındaki sürekliliğin yanı sıra, güvenlik, ekonomik ve enerji ilişkileri, askerî güç, siyasi nüfuz ve bölgesel entegrasyon gibi araçların dönemsel olarak değişen ağırlığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Bu çerçevede Ukrayna ve Gürcistan, Rusya'nın yakın çevre politikasındaki dönüşümü karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemek açısından iki önemli örnek oluşturmaktadır. Gürcistan; Abhazya ve Güney Osetya sorunları, Rus askerî varlığı, vatandaşlık politikası ve NATO ile yakınlaşması nedeniyle Rusya'nın Güney Kafkasya'daki nüfuz politikasının önemli bir uygulama alanı olurken, Ukrayna; Kırım, Sivastopol ve Karadeniz Filosu, enerji ilişkileri ve Avrupa-Atlantik kurumlarıyla bütünleşme süreci nedeniyle Rusya'nın güvenlik ve jeopolitik yaklaşımının en kritik örneklerinden biri hâline gelmiştir. Bu iki örneğin karşılaştırılması, Rusya'nın yakın çevre politikasında yaşanan dönüşümün farklı bölgesel bağlamlarda nasıl uygulandığını göstermektedir.

Rusya'nın güvenlik anlayışı da bu süreçte yalnızca askerî tehditlerle sınırlı kalmamış; güç dengesi, ulusal çıkar, tarihsel bağlar, kimlik, enerji güzergâhları, ekonomik ilişkiler ve jeopolitik nüfuz gibi unsurları kapsayacak şekilde genişlemiştir. Bu bağlamda güvenlik ikilemi yaklaşımı, Rusya'nın kendi güvenliğini güçlendirmek amacıyla geliştirdiği politikaların Ukrayna ve Gürcistan tarafından tehdit olarak algılanmasını ve bunun karşılıklı güvensizlik ile bölgesel rekabeti nasıl derinleştirdiğini açıklamak açısından işlevsel bir analitik çerçeve sunmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, Rusya'nın dış politika konseptlerini kronolojik olarak inceleyerek yakın çevre politikasındaki dönüşümü Gürcistan ve Ukrayna örnekleri üzerinden değerlendirmektedir. Temel argüman, Rusya'nın yakın çevre politikasının 1993'te güvenlik, nüfuz ve bölgesel istikrar arayışıyla şekillendiği; 2000'li yıllarda ekonomik, enerji, diplomatik ve hukuki araçlarla daha sistematik hâle geldiği; 2008 sonrasında askerî gücün daha belirgin bir politika aracına dönüştüğü; 2013'te kimlik ve medeniyet vurgusunun güçlendiği ve 2016'da güvenlik anlayışının çok boyutlu bir nitelik kazandığıdır. 2023 Konsepti ise bu birikimi "devlet-medeniyet", çok kutupluluk ve Batı ile sistemik rekabet çerçevesinde daha geniş bir jeopolitik anlayışa taşımıştır.

Bu doğrultuda Rusya'nın yakın çevre politikası, 1993–2023 döneminde stratejik süreklilik ile politika araçları ve söylemindeki değişimin birlikte görüldüğü bir süreç olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Yakın çevrenin Rusya açısından taşıdığı stratejik önem korunurken, bu alanın tanımlanma biçimi ve kullanılan araçlar zaman içerisinde değişmiş; güvenlik ve nüfuz odaklı başlangıç yaklaşımı, ekonomik ve enerji araçları, askerî güç, çok boyutlu güvenlik ve nihayetinde medeniyet-devlet ve sistemik rekabet söylemiyle genişleyen bir stratejik çerçeveye dönüşmüştür.

Yöntem

Bu çalışma nitel araştırma yaklaşımına dayalı belge incelemesi ve karşılaştırmalı vaka analizi kullanmaktadır. Araştırmanın temel materyalini Rusya Federasyonu'nun 1993, 2000, 2008, 2013, 2016 ve 2023 tarihli dış politika konseptleri oluşturmaktadır. Bu belgeler kronolojik olarak incelenerek Rusya'nın yakın çevreye ilişkin güvenlik algısı, stratejik öncelikleri, politika söylemi ve kullandığı araçlardaki değişim ortaya konulmaktadır. Ukrayna ve Gürcistan karşılaştırmalı vaka olarak seçilmiş; her iki ülke üzerinden konseptlerde ortaya konulan yaklaşımın somut politika uygulamalarına nasıl yansıdığı değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışmada ikincil literatürden yararlanılarak kavramsal ve tarihsel değerlendirmeler desteklenmiş, iki vaka arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıklar birlikte ele alınmıştır.

Bulgular ve Tartışma**1. 1993 Dış Politika Konsepti**

Boris Yeltsin döneminde kabul edilen 1993 Dış Politika Konsepti, Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasının ardından Rusya'nın eski Sovyet coğrafyasına yönelik politika anlayışını kurumsallaştırdığı temel belgelerden biridir. Konseptte ulusal güvenlik, bölgesel istikrar, eski Sovyet cumhuriyetleriyle siyasi ve ekonomik bağların sürdürülmesi ile Rusça konuşan toplulukların korunması öncelikli hedefler olarak belirlenmiştir. BDT ülkeleri ve diğer eski Sovyet cumhuriyetleri Rus dış politikasında özel bir konuma yerleştirilmiş ve bölgesel çatışmaların Rusya'nın güvenliği üzerindeki etkileri vurgulanmıştır. Bu çerçevede "yakın çevre" yaklaşımı, toprak genişlemesinden ziyade güvenlik, bölgesel nüfuz ve Sovyet sonrası bağların korunmasına dayanan bir politika anlayışını yansıtmıştır.²

Bu yaklaşımın temel araçları arasında Rusça konuşan nüfusun korunması, BDT çerçevesinde ortak güvenlik mekanizmalarının geliştirilmesi ve Rus "barış gücü" varlığının sürdürülmesi yer almıştır. Gürcistan'da Abhazya ve Güney Osetya çatışmaları, Rusya'nın BDT barış gücü mekanizmaları ve askerî varlık aracılığıyla etkisini sürdürdüğü başlıca alanlardan biri olmuştur (Phutkaradze, 2023:128–130). Ukrayna açısından ise Kırım, Sivastopol ve Karadeniz Filosu öne çıkmış; bu unsurlar Rusya'nın Karadeniz'deki askerî kapasitesi ve bölgesel güç statüsü açısından önem taşımıştır (Allison, 2014:1260). Dolayısıyla 1993 Konsepti, Rusya'nın yakın çevre politikasının oluşum ve kurumsallaşma aşamasını temsil etmektedir. Diplomasi, ekonomik ilişkiler, BDT mekanizmaları ve bölgesel güvenlik araçlarının birlikte kullanılması, sonraki dönemlerde daha sertleşecek politikanın temelini oluşturmıştır.

2. 2000 Dış Politika Konsepti

2000 yılında Vladimir Putin'in devlet başkanlığı görevine başlamasıyla Rus dış politikasında güçlü devlet, merkezi otorite ve uluslararası etkinliğin yeniden artırılması hedefleri belirginleşmiştir. Eski Sovyet coğrafyası, bu dönemde Rusya açısından güvenlik ve jeopolitik çıkarların korunması gereken stratejik bir alan olarak değerlendirilmiş; NATO ve Batı'nın bölgedeki etkisinin artması Moskova'nın tehdit algısını güçlendirmiştir. 28 Haziran 2000'de kabul edilen Dış Politika Konsepti; egemenlik ve toprak bütünlüğünün korunması, büyük güç statüsünün güçlendirilmesi ve yurtdışındaki Rus vatandaşları ile soydaşlarının haklarının korunmasını temel hedefler arasında belirlemiştir. BDT ülkeleri ise iyi komşuluk, stratejik ortaklık, ekonomik iş birliği ve askerî-siyasi güvenlik bakımından öncelikli bölge olarak tanımlanmıştır. Böylece 2000 Konsepti, 1993'te şekillenen yakın çevre politikasını terk etmekten ziyade daha sistematik ve güvenlik merkezli bir çerçeveye taşımıştır.³

2000–2008 döneminde bu politika; enerji, ekonomi, ticaret, diplomasi ve vatandaşlık gibi araçlarla desteklenmiştir. Gürcistan'ın NATO ve AB ile yakınlaşması ve Hazar enerji kaynaklarının Batı'ya

² Bknz: Rusya Federasyonu Dış Politika Konsepti. (1993). Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации. Национальная электронная библиотека (НЭБ). https://rusneb.ru/catalog/000200_000018_rc_163064/ (Erişim tarihi: 28.08.2026).

³ Bknz: Rusya Federasyonu Dış Politika Konsepti. (2000). Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации. ГАРАНТ. <https://base.garant.ru/2560651/> (Erişim tarihi: 28.08.2026).

taşınmasındaki konumu, Moskova-Tiflis ilişkilerindeki jeopolitik rekabeti artırmıştır (Phutkaradze, 2023:133). Baku-Tbilisi-Supsa, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) ve Güney Kafkasya Doğal Gaz Boru Hattı gibi projeler ise Gürcistan'ın jeostratejik önemini güçlendirmiştir (Papava, 2009:85). Aynı dönemde Abhazya ve Güney Osetya'da Rus vatandaşlığının yaygınlaştırılmasıyla şekillenen "pasportization" politikası, Rusya'nın bölgesel nüfuz araçlarından biri hâline gelmiştir (Connable et al., 2020:31). Ukrayna'da ise enerji ilişkileri ekonomik olduğu kadar siyasi bir araç niteliği kazanmıştır. 2006 ve 2009 Rusya-Ukrayna gaz krizleri, enerji ilişkilerinin ekonomik çıkarlarla birlikte siyasi ve güvenlik boyutları taşıdığını göstermiştir. Bununla birlikte bu politikayı yalnızca "enerjinin silah olarak kullanılması" şeklinde açıklamak yerine, ekonomik ve siyasi hedeflerin birlikte değerlendirilmesi gerekmektedir (Artymyshyn, 2019:150–153). Bu nedenle 2000-2008 dönemi, yakın çevre politikasının daha güçlü devlet kapasitesi ve çeşitlenen araçlarla yeniden yapılandırıldığı bir aşama olarak değerlendirilebilir. Gürcistan ve Ukrayna örnekleri, Rusya'nın yakın çevreyi güvenlik, enerji ve jeopolitik rekabetin kesiştiği stratejik bir alan olarak ele aldığını göstermektedir.

3. 2008 ve 2013 Dış Politika Konseptleri

2008 Dış Politika Konsepti, Rusya'nın yakın çevre politikasında önemli bir dönüm noktasıdır. 12 Temmuz 2008 tarihli belgede çok kutupluluk, ulusal çıkarların korunması ve BDT ülkeleriyle ilişkilerin önceliği vurgulanırken, NATO'nun genişlemesine ve özellikle Ukrayna ile Gürcistan'ın NATO üyeliği ihtimaline yönelik güvenlik kaygıları ortaya konmuştur. Böylece yakın çevredeki çıkarların korunmasında askerî gücün kullanılması daha belirgin bir seçenek hâline gelmiştir.⁴ Bununla birlikte "Medvedev Doktrini"⁵ ile 2008 Konsepti birbirinden ayrılmalıdır. "Ayrıcalıklı çıkar alanları" yaklaşımı doğrudan Konsept metninden ziyade, Medvedev'in 31 Ağustos 2008'de açıkladığı beş dış politika ilkesiyle belirginleşmiştir. Gürcistan Savaşı sonrasında Rus güvenlik yaklaşımındaki sertleşme de bu dönemde daha görünür hâle gelmiştir. Ağustos 2008'de Rusya'nın askerî müdahalede bulunması ve savaş sonrasında Abhazya ile Güney Osetya'nın bağımsızlığını tanıması, yakın çevre politikasında askerî gücün ağırlığının arttığını göstermiştir (Phutkaradze, 2023:136).

2013 Dış Politika Konsepti ise 2008 sonrasında güçlenen güvenlik ve jeopolitik yaklaşımın daha belirgin bir kimlik ve medeniyet söylemiyle desteklendiği aşamayı temsil etmektedir. Konseptte Rusya'nın bağımsız bir güç merkezi ve çok kutuplu uluslararası sistemin önemli aktörlerinden biri olduğu vurgulanırken, tarihsel, kültürel ve medeniyetsel unsurlar dış politika söyleminde daha görünür hâle gelmiştir.⁶ Bu yönüyle 2013 Konsepti, 2008'de güçlenen güvenlik merkezli yaklaşım ile sonraki dönemde belirginleşecek medeniyet-devlet ve kimlik merkezli anlayış arasında bir geçiş niteliğindedir.

Ukrayna, bu dönüşümün en kritik uygulama alanlarından biri olmuştur. Ukrayna'nın Avrupa Birliği ve Avrupa-Atlantik kurumlarıyla yakınlaşması, Rusya açısından giderek daha fazla güvenlik ve jeopolitik mesele olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Ukrayna, Rusya'nın yakın çevre politikasının en kritik uygulama alanlarından biri hâline gelmiştir. Ukrayna'nın Avrupa Birliği ve NATO ile yakınlaşması, Moskova tarafından yalnızca dış politika tercihi olarak değil, Rusya'nın güvenliği ve bölgesel nüfuzu açısından stratejik bir mesele olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Özellikle 2013 sonlarında başlayan Euromaidan süreci, Ukrayna'nın Batı yönelimini güçlendirmiş ve Rusya'nın Ukrayna üzerindeki jeopolitik etkisinin zayıflaması endişesini artırmıştır. Euromaidan sonrasında Yanukoviç yönetiminin çökmesi ve Ukrayna'nın NATO'ya yeniden yönelme ihtimalinin ortaya çıkması, Moskova açısından mevcut güvenlik dengesi bakımından daha ciddi bir tehdit olarak görülmüştür. Kırım ise bu rekabetin en somut biçimde ortaya çıktığı alan olmuş; Rusya, 2014 yılında Kırım'ı ve Sivastopol'u kontrol altına alarak

⁴ Bknz: Rusya Federasyonu Dış Politika Konsepti. (2008). Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации. Президент России. <https://special.kremlin.ru/acts/785> (Erişim tarihi: 28.08.2026).

⁵ Bknz: Medvedev, D. (2008, August 31). Interview given by Dmitry Medvedev to television channels Channel One, Russia, NTV. President of the Russian Federation. https://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2008/08/31/1850_type82912type82916_206003.shtml (Erişim tarihi: 28.08.2026).

⁶ Bknz: Rusya Federasyonu Dış Politika Konsepti. (2013). Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2013/2013-foreign-policy-concept.htm> (Erişim tarihi: 28.08.2026).

bölgedeki askerî konumunu güçlendirmiştir (Allison, 2014:1256-1260). Kırım'ın Rusya açısından önemi yalnızca tarihsel ve siyasi boyutla sınırlı olmayıp, Sivastopol'daki Karadeniz Filosu üssü ve yarımadanın Karadeniz'de güç projeksiyonu sağlaması nedeniyle stratejik bir nitelik taşımaktadır. Kırım'ın ardından Donetsk, Luhansk ve daha geniş Donbas bölgesinde ortaya çıkan ayrılıkçı çatışmalar ise Rusya'nın Ukrayna'nın doğusundaki etkisini sürdürme ve Kiev'in dış politika tercihlerine müdahale etme çabalarının önemli bir boyutunu oluşturmuştur (Allison, 2014:1275, 1281).

Bu çerçevede 2008–2013 dönemi, Rusya'nın dış politika anlayışında daha iddialı ve aktif bir diplomatik çizginin belirginleştiği ve 2013 Dış Politika Konsepti ile birlikte Rusya'nın medeniyet ve özgünlük vurgusunun güç kazandığı kritik bir aşamayı temsil etmektedir (Ayar, 2024:685–686). Böylece 1993 ve 2000'de kurumsallaşan yakın çevre yaklaşımı, daha aktif ve güvenlik merkezli bir stratejik çerçeveye doğru evrilmiştir.

4. 2016 Dış Politika Konsepti

2014 Kırım Krizi ve Ukrayna'daki çatışmalar sonrasında Rusya'nın dış politika ve güvenlik anlayışı daha kapsamlı ve çok boyutlu bir nitelik kazanmıştır. 30 Kasım 2016'da kabul edilen Dış Politika Konsepti, Rusya'nın uluslararası sistemde etkili bir güç merkezi olarak konumunu güçlendirmesini, egemenliğini ve toprak bütünlüğünü korumasını ve çok taraflılığı geliştirmesini temel hedefler arasında ortaya koymuştur.⁷ 2016 Konsepti'nin önemli özelliklerinden biri, askerî güç, diplomasi, ekonomi, enerji, insani ilişkiler, medya ve bilgi faaliyetlerinin birlikte değerlendirilmesidir. Aynı dönemde kabul edilen Bilgi Güvenliği Doktrini de bilgi alanının ulusal güvenliğin bir unsuru hâline geldiğini göstermektedir.⁸

2016 döneminde Rusya ile Batı arasındaki ilişkiler daha da kötüleşmiş ve Moskova, Batı ile yaşanan rekabeti çok kutuplu uluslararası düzenin savunulması bağlamında değerlendirmiştir (Kochtcheeva, 2020:469–470). Bu dönemde Rus dış politikasında askerî gücün yanı sıra ekonomik, enerji, bilgi, propaganda ve siber araçların birlikte kullanıldığı daha kapsamlı bir araç seti belirginleşmiştir (Smith, 2016:4). Ukrayna'da Donbas çatışması devam ederken Rusya'nın bölgedeki askerî ve siyasi desteği sürmüştür; Minsk I ve Minsk II süreçleri ise çatışmanın diplomatik yollarla yönetilmesine yönelik temel müzakere çerçevelerini oluşturmuştur (Hvenmark Nilsson, 2016: 4-5).

Gürcistan'da ise Abhazya ve Güney Osetya üzerindeki askerî, siyasi ve ekonomik etkisini sürdürmüştür. Bu dönemde Abhazya ve Güney Osetya ile ilişkilerin kurumsallaştırılması öne çıkmıştır. 2008-2015 döneminde imzalanan anlaşmalar, Rusya ile bu bölgeler arasındaki ilişkileri yapılandıran kapsamlı bir hukuki çerçeve oluşturmuş; anlaşmalar güvenlik, ekonomik ve kurumsal alanlarda bağların derinleşmesine katkıda bulunmuştur (Ambrosio & Lange, 2016:674-675). Bu çerçevede 2016 Konsepti, Rusya'nın yakın çevre politikasında güvenlik anlayışının genişlediği ve politika araçlarının daha bütünleşik biçimde kullanılmaya başlandığı bir aşamayı temsil etmektedir. Ukrayna'da askerî ve diplomatik araçların birlikte işletilmesi, Gürcistan'da ise hukuki ve kurumsal bağların güçlendirilmesi, yakın çevre politikasının çok boyutlu bir yapıya dönüştüğünü göstermektedir.

5. 2023 Dış Politika Konsepti

31 Mart 2023'te kabul edilen Dış Politika Konsepti, Rusya'nın Ukrayna'daki geniş çaplı savaş sonrasında dış politika anlayışında meydana gelen dönüşümün en belirgin ifadelerinden biridir. Konseptte Rusya “özgün devlet-medeniyet” olarak tanımlanmış; tarihsel, kültürel ve medeniyetsel unsurlar dış politika kimliğinin temel bileşenleri hâline getirilmiştir. 2023 Konsepti'nde yakın çevre yeniden merkezi bir konuma taşınmıştır. Rusya'nın bu bölgede ekonomik ve siyasi bütünleşmeyi

⁷ Bknz: Rusya Federasyonu Dış Politika Konsepti. (2016). Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/2542248/ (Erişim tarihi: 28.08.2026).

⁸ Bknz: Rusya Federasyonu Dış Politika Konsepti. (2016b). Доктрина информационной безопасности Российской Федерации. Российская газета. <https://rg.ru/documents/2016/12/06/doktrina-infobezobasnost-site-dok.html> (Erişim tarihi: 28.08.2026).

güçlendirmesi, müttefikleriyle ilişkilerin geliştirilmesini engelleyen dış müdahaleleri sınırlandırması ve düşmanca devletlerin askerî altyapılarının bölgeye yerleşmesini önlemesi temel öncelikler arasında yer almaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, Sovyet sonrası coğrafyanın Rusya açısından yalnızca komşuluk ilişkileri bağlamında değil, tarihsel ve medeniyet bağları üzerinden daha geniş bir güvenlik alanı olarak değerlendirildiğini göstermektedir.⁹ Anti-hegemonizm, çok kutupluluk, bağımsız bir güç merkezi olma ve medeniyet-devlet kimliği 2023 Konsepti'nin temel söylemsel unsurlarını oluşturmuş; önceki belgelerde bulunan bu unsurlar daha merkezi bir konuma taşınmıştır "State-civilization" kavramının Rus dış politika düşüncesindeki ağırlığının artması da bu dönüşümü desteklemektedir (Ayar, 2024:694-695).

Ukrayna Savaşı, Rusya'nın dış politika yaklaşımının şekillenmesinde belirleyici bir aşama olmuştur. Rusya savaşı yalnızca Ukrayna ile yaşanan ikili bir çatışma olarak değil, Rusya ile Batı arasındaki daha geniş stratejik ve medeniyetsel mücadelenin bir parçası olarak değerlendirmiştir (Egedy, 2024, 499-500). Bu çerçevede Ukrayna, Rusya-Batı rekabetinin temel alanlarından biri hâline gelmiş ve önceki dönemlere kıyasla daha geniş bir jeopolitik çerçevede ele alınmıştır (Egedy, 2024, 505-506). Eylül 2022'de Rusya, Donetsk, Luhansk, Herson ve Zaporijya bölgelerinin Rusya Federasyonu'na katıldığını ilan etmiş; ancak söz konusu ilhaklar uluslararası toplumun büyük bölümü tarafından tanınmamıştır (Mills & Butchard, 2022:3-4). Gürcistan açısından ise 2023 Konsepti, Abhazya ve Güney Osetya'yı Rusya'nın Güney Kafkasya'daki güvenlik ve bölgesel çıkarları bağlamında ele almaktadır. Belgede bu bölgelerle Rusya arasındaki ilişkilerin geliştirilmesi ve Rusya ile daha derin entegrasyonun desteklenmesi öne çıkarılmaktadır.

Önceki dış politika konseptleri birlikte değerlendirildiğinde, Rusya'nın yakın çevre politikasında temel bir sürekliliğin varlığını koruduğu, ancak bu alanın Rusya'nın değişen güvenlik algıları ve uluslararası sistem değerlendirmelerine bağlı olarak farklı anlamlar kazandığı görülmektedir. Yakın çevre, başlangıçta Rusya'nın güvenliği, siyasi nüfuzu ve bölgesel konumunun korunması açısından öncelikli bir alan olarak öne çıkarken, sonraki dönemlerde ekonomik ve enerji ilişkileri, askerî kapasite, diplomatik girişimler ve jeopolitik rekabet gibi farklı araçların bir arada kullanıldığı daha kapsamlı bir politika alanına dönüşmüştür. Özellikle 2008 sonrasında Rusya'nın bölgesel gelişmelere yaklaşımında askerî ve jeopolitik unsurların ağırlığı artarken, 2014 sonrası dönemde Batı ile ilişkilerde yaşanan gerilim bu eğilimi daha da belirginleştirmiştir. 2023 Konsepti ile birlikte ise yakın çevre, Rusya'nın güvenliği ve egemenliğinin yanı sıra kendisini ayrı bir devlet-medeniyet olarak konumlandığı daha geniş bir jeopolitik ve medeniyetsel çerçeve içerisinde ele alınmaya başlanmıştır. Böylece yakın çevre politikası, yalnızca eski Sovyet coğrafyasında nüfuzun korunmasına yönelik bir politika olmaktan çıkarak, Rusya'nın güvenlik, güç, kimlik ve uluslararası düzen anlayışının birlikte yansıdığı çok boyutlu bir dış politika alanına dönüşmüştür.

Sonuç

Rusya'nın 1993-2023 dönemindeki yakın çevre politikası, birbirinden kopuk dış politika tercihlerinden ziyade, değişen tehdit algıları, güç kapasitesi ve jeopolitik koşullara uyum sağlayan süreklilik arz eden bir stratejik yönelim olarak değerlendirilebilir. Bu süreçte temel süreklilik, eski Sovyet coğrafyasının Rusya açısından ulusal güvenlik, ekonomik çıkarlar, bölgesel güç statüsü ve stratejik nüfuz bakımından öncelikli bir alan olarak görülmesidir. Buna karşılık bu alanın korunması ve yönetilmesinde kullanılan araçların niteliği dönemsel olarak değişmiştir.

1993 Konsepti ile kurumsallaşan yakın çevre politikası, 2000'de daha sistematik ve güvenlik merkezli bir yapıya kavuşmuştur. 2008 Rusya-Gürcistan Savaşı, askerî gücün daha belirgin bir politika aracı hâline geldiği dönüm noktası olurken, diplomatik, ekonomik ve enerji araçları da kullanılmaya devam etmiştir. 2013 ve 2016 Konseptleriyle güvenlik anlayışı kimlik, bilgi, enerji ve siyasi etki boyutlarını kapsayacak şekilde genişlemiş; Ukrayna ve Gürcistan bu yaklaşımın farklı uygulama alanlarını

⁹ Bknz: Rusya Federasyonu Dış Politika Konsepti. (2023). Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации. Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации. <https://www.mid.ru/ru/detail-material-page/1860586/> (Erişim tarihi: 28.08.2026).

oluşturmuştur. 2023 Konsepti ise bu dönüşümü medeniyet-devlet, çok kutupluluk ve Batı ile sistemik rekabet çerçevesine taşıyarak yakın çevreyi Rusya'nın güvenlik ve medeniyet alanının bir parçası olarak yeniden tanımlamıştır.

Ukrayna ve Gürcistan karşılaştırması, bu dönüşümün aynı biçimde gerçekleşmediğini göstermektedir. Gürcistan örneğinde Rusya'nın etkisi özellikle Abhazya ve Güney Osetya üzerinden uzun süreli ve kurumsallaşmış bir bölgesel nüfuz modeli şeklinde gelişirken, Ukrayna örneğinde süreç giderek daha geniş ölçekli ve sistemik bir güvenlik krizine dönüşmüştür. Her iki durumda da Batı ve NATO ile yakınlaşma Rusya tarafından güvenlik açısından risk olarak değerlendirilmiş, ancak Ukrayna'da bu algı çok daha kapsamlı askerî ve jeopolitik sonuçlar doğurmuştur.

Bu bulgular, Rusya'nın yakın çevre politikasının yalnızca yayılmacılık ya da savunmacı güvenlik politikası kavramlarından biriyle açıklanamayacağını göstermektedir. Rusya'nın davranışı; güç dengesi, güvenlik ikilemi, tarihsel kimlik, ekonomik çıkarlar ve jeopolitik rekabetin birlikte şekillendirdiği çok katmanlı bir stratejik çerçevede değerlendirilmelidir. Rusya'nın güvenliğini güçlendirme amacıyla attığı adımlar, komşu devletler tarafından egemenlik ve güvenliklerine yönelik tehditler olarak algılanmış; bu karşılıklı tehdit algısı bölgesel rekabetin ve askerileşmenin derinleşmesine katkıda bulunmuştur.

Sonuç olarak, 1993-2023 döneminde Rusya'nın yakın çevre politikası temel hedefleri bakımından süreklilik gösterirken, kullanılan araçlar ve politika söylemi bakımından önemli bir dönüşüm geçirmiştir. Güvenlik ve bölgesel nüfuzla başlayan bu yaklaşım, ekonomik ve enerji araçlarıyla güçlendirilmiş, 2008 sonrasında askerî kapasiteyle desteklenmiş, 2016'da çok boyutlu bir güvenlik anlayışına dönüşmüş ve 2023'te medeniyet-devlet kimliği ile Batı ile sistemik rekabeti içeren daha geniş bir jeopolitik çerçeveye taşınmıştır. Bu nedenle yakın çevre, Rusya açısından yalnızca bir dış politika alanı değil, güvenlik anlayışının, bölgesel güç iddiasının ve uluslararası sistemde bağımsız bir merkez olma arayışının temel unsurlarından biri hâline gelmiştir.

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**LANGUAGE AS COLLATERAL DAMAGE? THE STATUS OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE
IN THE “NEAR ABROAD” POST-2022**

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Abstract

Since 2022, the post-Soviet region has witnessed the rekindling of conflicts along cultural frontlines, including issues of language policy and language use. This should not come as a surprise, given the highly contested and politicized nature of language issues in the region. The protection of the rights of Russian speakers in Ukraine has remained firmly embedded in Russia’s official narratives justifying its military invasion. Russia’s critics and opponents in the region and beyond have highlighted the imperialistic nature of such narratives and the auxiliary role of the Russian language in Russia’s assertive foreign policy. Hence, advocates of eliminating Russian from their countries’ linguistic landscapes have arguably received their most powerful symbolic weapon yet. Nevertheless, impetus for changes in official language policy still faces post-Soviet institutional inertia and incentives to retain Russian in some capacity. This paper surveys the trajectory of language policy changes in fourteen former Soviet republics with a focus on the post-2022 period. It presents an exploratory comparison of change and continuity concerning the recognition of the official status of the Russian language and its use in education. The paper also situates these developments within the contexts of Russia’s view of the Russian language as an important contributor to its influence abroad and Russia’s continuing commitment to promoting the language. It suggests that post-2022 trends may signal the erosion of Russia’s linguistic reach, but these changes remain uneven, likely shaped by both geopolitical factors and domestic institutional legacies.

Keywords: language policy, post-Soviet region, Russian language, Russia-Ukraine War

Introduction

Throughout the twenty-first century, Russia has increasingly promoted the Russian language as an important element of its soft-power projection in the “Near Abroad” and beyond, investing in cultural and educational institutions designed to preserve and expand its linguistic reach. Russia reaffirmed this commitment through initiatives launched even after 2022. The invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 profoundly transformed the regional political context of these efforts. Because the protection of Russian speakers and the status of the Russian language in Ukraine have featured prominently among Russia’s official justifications for the war, the advocates of removing Russian from the linguistic landscapes of the former Soviet republics have gained a powerful new argument. Whether this argument is strong enough to overcome post-Soviet institutional inertia, remaining economic incentives to retain Russian in some official capacity, and fears of backlash from Russophone populations and from Russia itself remains an open question. What is clear is that the invasion has intensified domestic debates on language policy across the region, potentially also harming the prospects for status and position of the Russian language in the process and exposing it as the cultural collateral damage of the Russia-Ukraine war.

Against this backdrop, the central question of this paper is how the status and position of the Russian language in the post-Soviet space have evolved since 1991, with particular attention to the period after February 2022. The paper examines developments across fourteen former Soviet republics in the domains of officially recognized legal status and use in education, both as a medium of instruction and as a school subject. Drawing on an exploratory comparative analysis of constitutions, language laws, official websites, and secondary sources, the paper finds that empirical evidence remains mixed. The

formal status of the Russian language, which had already varied substantively before 2022, has remained largely stable, altering only marginally in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. More changes have been concentrated in education, most dramatically in the Baltic states and Ukraine, where Russian-medium schooling and instruction have been curtailed or eliminated. The Central Asian and South Caucasus republics so far have shown comparatively little change to the pre-war status quo.

This unevenness may reflect the interaction of geopolitical context with domestic institutional legacies, as the most significant retreats of Russian have occurred where the language was already politically contested or in institutional decline. Russia's own language promotion efforts seem to concentrate on countries where such efforts remain politically viable. The result may be a gradual narrowing of the post-Soviet Russian-language space and a corresponding, if uneven, erosion of the infrastructure underpinning Russia's linguistic reach and broader soft-power potential in the region.

From Soviet Legacy to Perceived Soft-Power Investment: Russian Language in the Post-Soviet Region

Since its introduction in the early 1990s, the concept of soft power has become a mainstay in both academic and foreign policy-making discourses and has been employed for interpreting the overall power dynamics in international relations, as well as for understanding and shaping the foreign policy strategies of individual countries. While the concept itself may lack a precise, uncontested definition and is prone to concept-stretching (Fan, 2008), it aptly captures an underlying idea about the importance of attraction, rather than coercion or immediate material incentives, in obtaining desired foreign policy outcomes (Nye, 2004; 2017). Soft-power resources, such as the cumulative output of both “high” and mass cultures, and particular values, norms, and political ideals a country “broadcasts” to foreign audiences, are assets that produce such attraction. They are generally more dispersed and more difficult to reliably quantify and measure, compared to conventional hard power resources. Such soft-power resources are also harder to mobilize and direct, because they seldom yield immediate and guaranteed short-term policy returns, and much of them are produced and reproduced outside of the government's direct control — by civil society actors, commercial organizations, and even private individuals.

Strictly speaking, a language, being only a medium, albeit a culturally loaded one, does not constitute a country's soft power resource in itself. Rather, it functions as a key facilitator in disseminating cultural and ideational output, aiding more direct foreign policy efforts, such as strategic communication, public diplomacy, cultural exchanges, or scientific and educational cooperation. An international language, which is widely known and spoken beyond a country's borders, is thus an invaluable cultural and communicational asset (Phillipson, 1992). Unsurprisingly, many governments have engaged in the preservation and expansion of such linguistic infrastructure either directly or indirectly in cooperation with non-state actors. This is also valid in the case of Russian, historically the language of an imperial metropolis, which has been framed and promoted by the Russian authorities as a vehicle for cultural cohesion, collective identity reproduction, and the projection of influence abroad (Laruelle, 2015; Feklyunina, 2016).

By the second half of the 20th century, Russian emerged as an international language thanks to the political, ideological, military, economic, and scientific weight of the Soviet Union, where it functioned as the de facto official language. Russian's global influence and appeal have diminished dramatically in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's defeat in the Cold War and the country's eventual disintegration. The situation in the post-Soviet region itself was markedly different. Here Russia inherited extensive linguistic infrastructure thanks to the cumulative effect of Soviet language policies (Grenoble, 2003; Ryazanova-Clarke, 2014). The Russian language served as a lingua franca in official communication, administration, education, and other public domains across the USSR as a whole and among different ethnic groups within individual Soviet republics. The Soviet Union developed a large network of schools and classes with Russian as the medium of instruction, trained a vast number of instructors, and produced plentiful teaching materials. By the time the USSR disintegrated, all of its population had at least some knowledge of the Russian language, whereas younger generations as well as administrative, intellectual and economic elites throughout the Union were nearly universally proficient in the

language. In addition, Soviet republics hosted sizeable numbers of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking populations (ethnic non-Russians who declared Russian their “mother tongue”), particularly the Baltic republics, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Moldova (Table 1).

Table 1. Statistics on Russian Language, Census Data

	Russian as mother tongue/native language		Russian Language Prevalence
	1989 Census	Latest Census	
Armenia	2%	0.5% (2022)	65% (“fluent in Russian” per the 2022 census)
Azerbaijan	7.50%	0.8% (2019)	7.4% (“fluent spoken” language per the 2019 census)
Belarus	31.90%	43.3% (2019)	71.4% (language “normally spoken at home” per 2019 census)
Estonia	34.80%	28.5% (2021)	66.6% (native and foreign language combined per 2021 census)
Georgia	8.90%	1.4% (2024)	ND
Kazakhstan	47.40%	ND	83.7% (language people “have proficiency in” per 2021 census)
Kyrgyzstan	25.60%	4.4% (2022)	82% (language people have “sufficient” and above proficiency per the 2022 census)
Latvia	42.10%	37.7% (2022 Adult Education Survey)	93.2% (“independent” and “proficient users” per the 2022 Adult Education Survey)
Lithuania	11.70%	6.8% (2021)	67.4% (native language and language people have “command of” combined per the 2021 census)
Moldova	23.10%	11.6% (2024)	68.2% (“mother tongue, usually spoken or other known language” per 2024 Census)
Tajikistan	9.70%	ND	18.4% (language people “freely speak” per 2020 Census)
Turkmenistan	11.90%	1.9% (2022)	18.7% (either native or foreign language per 2022 Census)
Ukraine	32.80%	29.6% (2001)	ND
Uzbekistan	10.70%	ND	ND

In the first years after the collapse of the USSR, Russia was generally less concerned with the protection and maintenance of its language inheritance in the post-Soviet region and had insufficient institutional and material resources to do so. The issue of ethnic Russians and other Russian-speakers abroad, who now found themselves living outside Russia’s borders in rapidly nationalizing and often conflict-torn post-Soviet republics, still featured prominently on the domestic political agenda in that period, but it was dominated by nationalist politicians and amounted to calls for hostile measures against the governments of post-Soviet republics, which arguably diminished rather than increased Russia’s soft-power potential in this regard (Hill, 2006). Only with the evolution of Russian foreign policy discourse in the second half of the 1990s did ideas regarding the value and soft-power potential of Russia’s cultural and linguistic legacies in the “Near Abroad” receive greater prominence.

The view of language as a uniquely valuable soft-power amplifying asset was incorporated in Russia’s official discourse and institutionalized at the beginning of the 21st century (Mkhoyan, 2017), with particular priority given to this foreign policy dimension by the outcomes of color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine (Koval & Tereshchenko, 2023). President Putin’s 2007 address to the Federal Assembly is emblematic in this regard: “The Russian language not only preserves an entire layer of truly global achievements but is also the living space for the many millions of people in the Russian-speaking world, a community that goes far beyond Russia itself ... In my view, we need to support the initiative put forward by Russian linguists to create a National Russian Language Foundation, the main

aim of which will be to develop the Russian language at home, support Russian language study programmes abroad and generally promote Russian language and literature around the world. Looking after the Russian language and expanding the influence of Russian culture are crucial social and political issues” (Putin, 2007).

The *Russkiy mir* (Russian world) Foundation was established in the same year with the aim of promoting the Russian language, heritage, and culture. The foundation explicitly declares that the Russian world “also includes foreign citizens who speak Russian, study or teach it, and all those who are genuinely interested in Russia and concerned about its future” (Russkiy Mir, n.d.). The federal agency *Rossotrudnichestvo* was founded in 2008. It has followed an inclusive cultural definition of the term compatriots (*sootechestvenniki*) in accordance with the 2010 amendments to the text of Federal Law on the State Policy of the Russian Federation toward Compatriots Abroad, originally adopted in 1999 (Rossiiskaia Federatsiia, 1999). The strengthening of the positions of the Russian language by providing opportunities for language learning, training of language instructors, and receiving education in Russian is listed among “the most important activities of the Agency” (Rossotrudnichestvo, n.d.). Both organizations have subsequently become the central pillars of Russia’s institutionalized efforts in supporting and promoting the Russian language and culture beyond its borders (Koval & Tereshchenko, 2023). In 2008, the value of the common cultural and civilizational heritage of the post-Soviet region was also explicitly acknowledged in the country’s official foreign policy doctrine (Rossiiskaia Federatsiia, 2008).

Since 2022, Russia has demonstrated its continuing commitment to language support and promotion in the post-Soviet region. An agreement to create the International Organization for the Russian Language was signed in 2023 by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv, 2023). The organization, headquartered in Sochi, began its work in 2026 (Redaktsiia portala «Russkiy mir», 2026). In the same period, Russia also doubled down on its investments in Russian-language education, entering bilateral agreements to establish joint schools with Kyrgyzstan (Redaktsiia saitа TASS, 2023), Kazakhstan (Korzun, 2025), and Uzbekistan (Novoselova, 2023). Such schools, funded in great part by the Russian government, which is also responsible for school program and curriculum oversight, are qualitatively different from Russian-language schools and classes inherited from the Soviet period, which are fully administered by the national authorities and remain outside of Russia’s direct influence or control.

However, Russia’s language promotion in the 21st century has been taking place against the backdrop of profound regional political transformations, dramatically accelerated by the invasion of Ukraine and a broader geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the West, whose effects have been acutely felt throughout the post-Soviet region. To outline this new political context for the Russian language, the remainder of the paper proceeds with a survey of the status and position of Russian in the post-Soviet region and an account of changes that have happened in this area since February 24, 2022.

Materials and Methods

The empirical section of this paper presents an exploratory comparative study combining an analysis of formal language-policy frameworks in fourteen post-Soviet countries with a qualitative review of publicly reported post-2022 developments concerning the position of the Russian language. Country-based evidence was compiled from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including constitutions, language laws, other official documents and government websites, as well as publicly available media reports in English, Russian, and national languages. The available evidence was then summarized and assessed to identify broader regional patterns and differences in national trajectories.

During the first stage of the analysis, the current and historical texts of constitutions and language laws in fourteen republics were examined with the aim of identifying the status of the Russian language or the absence thereof. Particular attention was paid to whether Russian was explicitly referenced in these texts and whether it had a legally recognized status distinct from that of other minority or foreign languages. Where relevant changes occurred after 2022, the earlier and revised versions were compared to assess the extent and nature of these changes. The analysis also reviewed the position of Russian as

the language of instruction in the education system and the availability of Russian as a subject in public-school curricula across the region, focusing on publicly reported post-2022 changes in these domains. The following section presents the detailed report of empirical findings.

Findings

Officially Recognized Status

The language question in the region had been symbolically charged and politically polarized already in the 1980s, before the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 (Katliarou, 2024). On the one hand, the Soviet-era language policies and practices, widespread use of Russian, and the region's uncertain geopolitical future all made the continuation of some form of bilingualism a near political and social necessity in soon-to-be independent republics. On the other hand, local ethnolinguistic nationalist movements, engaged in cultural and linguistic revival efforts alongside the struggle for political autonomy or independence, demanded changes to the language policies of the republics, such as the provision of supreme legal status to national languages and promotion of their use in public life, administration, and education.

This tension and desire to secure a clear legal status for national languages were reflected in language laws adopted in eleven Soviet socialist republics between 1989 and 1990 (Table 2). Nine of them, while declaring their respective national languages “state”/official, also granted Russian the special status of the language of interethnic (“international” in literal translations) communication, allowing its use in public communication, administration, and education. No Soviet-era language laws were adopted in the republics of the Caucasus because the texts of their 1978 Brezhnev-era constitutions already granted official status to their national languages as the result of public protests in Georgia and requests by regional authorities (Grenoble, 2003, p. 117-18).

Table 2. Legal Status of Russian in Soviet-Era Language Laws

	Legal Status
Belarus	Yes, language of international (i.e., interethnic) communication (Zakon Belaruskai Savetskai Satsyialistychnai Respubliki ab movakh, 1990)
Estonia	None, referred to as “widely spoken” (Zakon Estonskoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki o Iazyke, 1989)
Kazakhstan	Yes, language of international (i.e., interethnic) communication (O iazykakh v Kazakhskoi SSR, 1989)
Kyrgyzstan	Yes, language of international (i.e., interethnic) communication (O gosudarstvennom iazyke Kirgizskoi SSR, 1989)
Latvia	Yes, language of international (i.e., interethnic) communication (Latvijas Padomju Socialistiskas Republikas Valodu Likums, 1989)
Lithuania	None, referred to as language of communication with other SSRs (Decree on the Lithuania SSR Official Language Usage, 1989)
Moldova	Yes, language of international (i.e., interethnic) communication (O funktsionirovanii iazykov na territorii Moldavskoi SSR, 1989)
Tajikistan	Yes, language of international (i.e., interethnic) communication (Zakon Tadjikskoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki o Iazyke, 1989)
Turkmenistan	Yes, language of international (i.e., interethnic) communication (Zakon Turkemenskoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki o Iazyke, 1990)
Ukraine	Yes, language of international (i.e., interethnic) communication (Pro movi v Ukrainskii RSR, 1989)
Uzbekistan	Yes, language of international (i.e., interethnic) communication (O gosudarstvennom iazyke Uzbekskoi SSR, 1989)

The evolution of the status of the Russian language in the post-Soviet region began already in the 1990s. This process was primarily driven by the trajectories of independent nation-building, domestic political dynamics, and, to a lesser degree, by geopolitical considerations. Latvia and Uzbekistan had removed

earlier forms of official recognition of Russian by 1992 (LR likums par grozījumiem un papildinājumiem LPSR Valodu likumā, 1992) and 1995 (Oliy Majlis Respubliki Uzbekistan, 1995), respectively. Belarus moved in the opposite direction, establishing Russian as a co-official language with the 1995 referendum (Tsentralnaia izbiratelnaia komissii Respubliki Belarus, n.d.) and the 1998 revisions to its language law (NGO.by, n.d.). Kazakhstan established a peculiar form of bilingualism in which the Kazakh language retained symbolic primacy as “state” language while Russian maintained a separate official status (O iazykakh v Respublike Kazakhstan, 1997). A similar symbolic hierarchy of recognized statuses was also established in Kyrgyzstan (Ob ofitsialnom iazyke Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki, 2000).

Some countries, most notably Ukraine, did not decisively change the late-Soviet status quo on the language question until the 2010s. The text of Ukraine’s 1996 constitution, while not directly negating the 1989 language law, referred to Russian only in the following context: “Ukraine guarantees the free development, use and protection of the Russian language, other languages of Ukraine’s national minorities” (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 1996), creating a degree of conceptual and legal ambiguity. The legal status of Russian was eventually redefined as that of a “regional” language with the adoption of a new language law in 2012 (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2012). This law was eventually replaced with a new one in 2019, which stripped Russian of this status (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2019).

Table 3. Special Legal Status for Russian

	Constitution	Language Law	Changes Since 2022
Armenia	None	None	
Azerbaijan	None	None	
Belarus	Co-Official	Co-Official	
Estonia	None	None	
Georgia	None	None	
Kazakhstan	Official	Official	2026 constitution dropped the “on equal grounds” bit
Kyrgyzstan	Official	Official	2023 revision of the law on the state language gave more support to Kyrgyz
Latvia	None	None	
Lithuania	None	None	
Moldova	None	None	The 2024 version of the constitution kept a reference to Russian
Tajikistan	Language of communication between the nationalities	None	
Turkmenistan	None	Language of interethnic communication	
Ukraine	As a national minority language	None	No changes to the constitution due to martial law
Uzbekistan	None	None	

In the period since February 2022, the legal status of the Russian language has largely remained unchanged across the region (Table 3). Ukraine is the most conspicuous example of such a lack of change, as the text of its constitution still contains a reference to state protection for Russian and other languages of national minorities. This paradoxical (given the ongoing war with Russia and Ukraine’s ensuing efforts to de-Russify the country) situation arises from the inability to amend the current text until the martial law period ends (Interfax-Ukraine, 2025).

Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan are the only two republics in which amendments to language-related legislation happened. Only in the Kazakh case can the amendment be interpreted as a subtle, but potentially consequential (given Kazakhstan’s long-term commitment to supporting the Kazakh

language) adjustment to the relative status of the Russian language. Russian retained its status as an “officially used” language, granted in the 1995 constitution (*Konstitutsiia Respubliki Kazakhstan*, 1995). However, the 2026 version introduces an adverbial change that can be interpreted as the equivalent to the omission of the qualification “on equal grounds” when translated into English (Gramota.ru, 2026). Notably, the president of Kazakhstan publicly mentioned this change amid criticism but did not directly address its substantive nature or the rationale behind it (Ekspert, 2026). In Kyrgyzstan, the somewhat controversial 2023 revision of the law on the state language strengthened the position of Kyrgyz in official communication, administration, documentation, and public services (Postnikova, 2023). Russian, nevertheless, retained its official status, which it had previously enjoyed.

Moldova’s situation is somewhat peculiar. Until 2021, Russian had maintained the status of a language of interethnic communication, in accordance with the 1989 Law on Functioning of Languages. A special status was not granted to Russian in the 1994 Moldovan constitution, but the language was mentioned by name in the following context: “The state recognizes and protects the right to preserve, develop, and use the Russian language and other languages spoken in the country” (*Konstitutsiia Respubliki Moldova*, 1994, Art. 13). In January 2021, the constitutional court of Moldova ruled that the revised 2020 version of the Law on Functioning of Languages, among other things, granted Russian unfair privileges, declaring the law unconstitutional and consequently stripping Russian of any special legal status in the country (Zhukov, 2021). Thus, Russian lost its status in Moldova already before 2022. However, when Moldova updated its constitution in 2024, the same explicit reference to the Russian language, dating back to 1994, remained unchanged in the new version (*Konstitutsiia Respubliki Moldova*, 2024, Art. 13).

Education in Russian

A vast network of public schools and classes with Russian as the medium of instruction continued operating in the post-Soviet region after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Arefyev, 2012). Table 4 summarizes the current situation with Russian-language education in fourteen post-Soviet republics. As of 2026, eleven countries provide an opportunity to receive secondary education fully or predominantly in Russian. In practice, access to such education can vary greatly, depending on physical capacity, availability of teachers, and willingness of local and national authorities to greenlight the establishment of new Russian-language schools or classes with Russian as the medium of instruction.

Table 4. State-Provided Education in Russian

	Schooling in Russian	Changes Since 2022
Armenia	Yes, enrollment restricted.	
Azerbaijan	Yes	
Belarus	Yes	
Estonia	Being phased out	The 2023 amendment mandates transition to Estonian by 2029.
Georgia	Yes	
Kazakhstan	Yes	
Kyrgyzstan	Yes	
Latvia	No	Eliminated since 2025 per the 2022 amendment.
Lithuania	Yes	
Moldova	Yes	
Tajikistan	Yes	
Turkmenistan	Yes	
Ukraine	No	Eliminated before 2022
Uzbekistan	Yes	

Among republics that offer public education in Russian, Armenia has the strictest regulatory environment: children of ethnic Armenians who are born and raised in the country and whose parents are Armenian citizens cannot enroll in public schools with language of instruction other than Armenian

(ARKA, 2022). In Azerbaijan, children wishing to study in Russian-language schools must, since 2019, pass a state-mandated and coordinated interview to demonstrate an adequate command of the language before enrollment (İsmayıl, 2023).

The most profound changes regarding the provision of Russian-medium education since 2022 have occurred in the Baltics. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania all inherited a network of schools and classes with Russian as the medium of instruction upon independence from the Soviet Union. Notably, the former two also host proportionally very large Russian-speaking minorities (see Table 1). Both Latvia and Estonia had already committed to the gradual phasing out of Russian-language education before Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. Latvia amended its legislation in 2018 mandating the transition of the upper levels of secondary education (public and private) to Latvian as the medium of instruction by 2021/2022. Four days after the beginning of the invasion, the Latvian governing coalition was already reviewing a proposal for the complete elimination of minority-language education (Pettai, 2024). The proposal was followed through with amendments to the law on education in the fall of the same year, which mandated a transition to Latvian-language education in Latvian schools for all grades by 2025. As a result, Latvia does not have any schools or classes with Russian as the sole or complementary medium of instruction in 2026.

In Estonia, the first plan for a full transition to Estonian as the medium of instruction in the country's school system was presented by the ministry in December 2021, but the governing coalition of that time was reluctant to follow through (Pettai, 2024). The new ruling coalition, which formed after parliamentary elections in June of the following year, amid the unfolding invasion of Ukraine, revitalized the idea, and it was swiftly translated into corresponding legislative amendments on December 12, 2022 (Pettai, 2024). Unlike Latvia, Estonia has opted for a more gradual approach to phasing out Russian-language education, with a complete transition anticipated only in the 2030/31 academic year (*Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia, n.d. -b*). *As of 2026, the transition continues despite domestic criticism and requests to postpone implementation at the local and regional levels in areas with a heavy concentration of Russian-language schools and classes, such as the capital city of Tallinn (ERR, 2026).*

Lithuania remains an exception. While being one of the strongest critics of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Lithuania continues to maintain a network of public Russian-language schools and classes with no current plans for phasing out Russian-medium education. It should be noted, however, that the Russian-speaking minority in the country is relatively small compared to its Polish counterpart, which typically acts as a locomotive behind pro-minority advocacy. An obligation to provide education in minority languages is embedded in Lithuanian national legislation, particularly in the Law on National Minorities, adopted in December of 2024 (BNS, 2024, December 12). Notably, the minister of education did propose phasing out Russian-language education, citing the examples of Latvia and Estonia and suggesting that "schools in Lithuania should not use the languages of 'unfriendly countries' as languages of instruction" (BNS, 2024, January 5) at the beginning of the same year. This proposal was met with criticism from within the ruling coalition and external legal experts alike. As of 2026, Russian-language schools and classes remain open for enrollment to all Lithuanian citizens and are protected by national legislation.

Russian Language as School Subject

Russian language became a compulsory school subject in all schools throughout the Soviet Union in 1938 (Grenoble, 2003, p. 58) and remained so until its collapse in December of 1991. Seven out of fourteen post-Soviet republics, including all of Central Asia, have kept it as a mandatory part of their curricula (Table 5). Studying Russian became optional in the Baltic states, as well as in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine.

Table 5. Russian as Subject in Public Schools

	School Curriculum	Changes Since 2022
Armenia	Mandatory (Sarkisian, 2024)	
Azerbaijan	Optional (Sharifova, 2023)	
Belarus	Mandatory	
Estonia	Optional	
Georgia	Optional (Sausheva, 2014)	
Kazakhstan	Mandatory (Vaiskopf, 2022)	Moved from 1 st to 2 nd grade
Kyrgyzstan	Mandatory (Bulatova, 2023)	
Latvia	Scheduled for complete removal	Per a 2024 government decision, elimination since the 2026/27 academic year
Lithuania	Optional	
Moldova	Optional (Pravfond.ru, 2014)	
Tajikistan	Mandatory (Sboeva, 2021)	
Turkmenistan	Mandatory (Bolshaia Aziia, 2022)	
Ukraine	Not available	Not offered since the 2022/2023 academic year
Uzbekistan	Mandatory (Russkii dom v Tashkente, n.d.)	

The two most consequential developments in this area since 2022 have taken place in Latvia and Ukraine. In Ukraine, Russian was still offered as a school subject before the outbreak of the war in February 2022. However, already in August of 2022, the ministry of education removed the Russian language from the school curriculum (Gordon, 2022). Until recently, Russian remained a common alternative for Latvian students choosing a compulsory second foreign language. In fact, in the 2023/24 academic year it was the only available option in 43% of all Latvian schools (LSM, 2024), which made Russian a de facto compulsory subject in those cases. In 2024, the Latvian government introduced amendments to the school curriculum mandating that “only an official language of the EU or EEA or a foreign language regulated by intergovernmental agreements will be taught as the second foreign language” starting from the 2026/27 academic year (Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia, 2024). Additionally, the government offered immediate opt-outs from studying a second foreign language to those students who had already started learning Russian, explicitly linking this decision to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Russian as a foreign language remains in school curricula both in Estonia (Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia, n.d. -a) and in Lithuania. In the latter, its removal from the curriculum was brought up and discussed at the level of the parliament and the ministry of education but was deemed unfeasible given the lack of second-foreign language alternatives in many schools and, thus, did not result in concrete state-driven measures in this direction (Gaidamavičius, 2025).

Conclusion

This paper examined the status and position of the Russian language across the post-Soviet region, with particular attention to developments or lack thereof since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Empirical evidence indicates that the most fundamental status-related changes had already taken place prior to the aforementioned period, and the formal legal status of Russian has since remained largely unchanged. Only Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan marginally amended relevant legislation after 2022 in favor of their national languages, while Ukraine’s constitution still nominally protects the Russian language due to constraints on amendments under martial law. The most significant post-2022 changes have occurred in the domain of education in Latvia, Estonia and Ukraine, where the position of Russian was already precarious. The Russia-Ukraine war clearly accelerated existing trends toward linguistic de-Russification there.

The evidence therefore does not demonstrate a uniform post-2022 collapse of the Russian-language space as the immediate collateral damage of the ensuing geopolitical turmoil. Instead, uneven contraction has concentrated in particular countries and institutional domains, especially in education.

These trends could still present a tangible challenge to Russia's foreign policy vision for the region if the weakening of the language's position continues, further constraining the reproduction and transmission of Russian cultural influence there.

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**REPRESENTING THE NATION IN AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE:
DIPLOMATIC ARCHITECTURE AND THE PARADOX OF MODERNISM IN ANKARA**

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Abstract

How can an architectural language that claims to be universal represent a specific state? This paper examines this question through the physical fabric of Ankara's diplomatic district, where national identity, state-driven modernization, and foreign representation converged during the early and mid-twentieth century. The inquiry opens with the diplomatic landscape of late Ottoman Istanbul, where European embassies relied on monumental historicism and Neoclassicism to assert imperial presence and extraterritorial autonomy. This established setting offers a baseline for evaluating Ankara's spatial reordering after 1923.

Following the founding of the Turkish Republic, Ankara was planned as the administrative center of a secular nation-state. Concurrently, avant-garde modernism, structural rationalism, and regionalist tendencies were reshaping architectural practice across Europe and its periphery. Foreign missions entering Ankara were drawn directly into local and international debates over form, traditional precedent, and political legitimacy.

Through four comparative case studies; the Soviet Embassy (1927) by Genrikh Ludwig, the Yugoslav Residence (1932–1936) by Kosta J. Jovanović, the Austrian Embassy (1930s) by Clemens Holzmeister, and the Pakistan Embassy (1960s) by Sedat Hakkı Eldem, this paper documents how distinct design strategies negotiated the demands of international architectural culture alongside explicit directives for national self-representation.

Combining archival contextualization with formal analysis, the study addresses the core tension between Modernism's claim to a borderless, universal syntax and the sovereign obligation of an embassy to embody a unique national narrative. It argues that this tension was not a design failure or a marginal contradiction, but the defining structural condition of diplomatic building in the twentieth century. Ankara provides a critical site for analyzing this friction between an architecture oriented toward global universality and structures designed to mark national boundaries.

Keywords: Diplomatic Architecture, Modernism, National Identity, Regionalism, Architectural Representation.

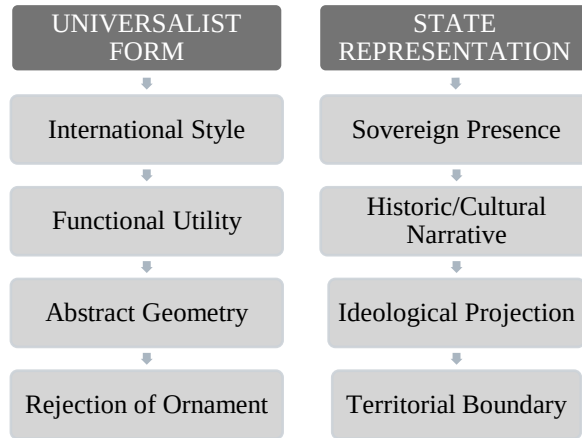
Introduction: The Core Friction of Diplomatic Modernism

Early and mid-twentieth-century architectural modernism relied on a foundation of universalist claims. Driven by functional efficiency, structural clarity, material honesty, and an explicit turn away from revivalist ornament, the avant-garde and its subsequent codification as the International Style, sought an architectural language unburdened by geographic limits or dynastic historicism (Hitchcock & Johnson, 1932). Its advocates championed an approach grounded in geometry and utility, framing it as a syntax applicable across diverse political, economic, and cultural landscapes (Curtis, 1996).

Yet this universalist ideal ran directly against the geopolitical function of diplomatic real estate. An embassy or ambassadorial residence is fundamentally an instrument of state assertion. Established under international law as sovereign territory, a diplomatic compound is tasked with conveying a state's history, political orientation, cultural authority, and strategic alignment to both its host country and the broader international community (Loeffler, 1998).

This institutional mandate created a persistent formal problem: *How can an architectural language predicated on universality, structural abstraction, and the absence of regional ornament represent the specific historical identity of an individual state?*

Table 1. Characteristics of Modernism and State Representation



The dynamic between international modernism and national identity drove much of twentieth-century diplomatic architecture (Vale, 2008). Ankara made this tension particularly obvious in the decades after the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923.

When foreign governments moved their embassies from Istanbul to the new capital on the Anatolian plateau, they stepped onto a site undergoing a deliberate spatial overhaul (Kezer, 2015). Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's government was building a secular, modern nation-state from the ground up (Bozdoğan, 2001). Setting up an embassy in Ankara meant stepping into a direct debate over modern aesthetics, the display of state power, and the representation of national identity on the global stage.

Tracking this shift from Istanbul to Ankara through four specific diplomatic sites, representing Soviet Constructivism, Yugoslav Regional Folklorism, Austrian Stripped Classicism, and Pakistani Regional Modernism, reveals how embassy design served as a key channel for political translation and cultural diplomacy.

The Spatial Break: From Imperial Pera to Republican Çankaya

Understanding the architectural shift in Ankara requires examining the spatial logic that governed foreign representation in late Ottoman Istanbul (Batur, 2005). In nineteenth-century Istanbul, foreign embassies were configured around European imperial authority, legal autonomy, and clear spatial separation from the city (Çelik, 1986). Concentrated along the elevated ridge of Pera (now İstiklal Avenue), these diplomatic compounds formed a prominent urban line: Sir Charles Barry and William J. Smith's British Embassy (1844–1851) (Figure 1), styled as a dense Florentine Renaissance palazzo to project aristocratic durability (Crinson, 1996) ; Gaspare Fossati's Russian Embassy (1837–1845) (Figure 2), built as a heavy Neo-Renaissance and Baroque complex set behind iron gates to highlight Tsarist scale (Batur, 2005); and (Batur, 2005) Hubert Goebbels' German Embassy (1877) (Figure 3), occupying a dominant site overlooking the Bosphorus, where its masonry mass asserted the power of the newly unified empire (Çelik, 1986). Under the Capitulations and treaties granting extraterritorial rights to foreign citizens, these grounds operated outside Ottoman legal jurisdiction as self-contained enclaves (Bozdoğan, 2001). Their physical forms directly mirrored this political isolation, using high perimeter walls, heavy masonry, and historicist styles to systematically separate foreign legations from the surrounding urban fabric



Figure 1. British Embassy in Istanbul (Arup Archive)



Figure 2. Russian Embassy in Istanbul (State Archives of the Canton of Ticino, Bellinzona)



Figure 3. German Embassy in Istanbul (Wikimedia Commons)

The Republican Capital and the Jansen Plan

The founding of the Turkish Republic on October 29, 1923, reshaped this geographic arrangement (Kezer, 2015). Moving the capital to Ankara was both a strategic defense decision and a firm break with the Ottoman past (Akgün & Tankut, 1992). Istanbul was tied to imperial collapse, foreign naval vulnerability, and religious governance; Ankara was an Anatolian town that provided an open site for building a secular, modern republic (Bozdoğan, 2001).

A critical move by the new government was the complete abolition of the Capitulations through the Treaty of Lausanne 1923 (Kezer, 2015). Reassessing its sovereign authority, the state required all foreign missions to close their primary embassies in Istanbul and move to Ankara. European legations initially resisted, reluctant to leave their Pera palatial compounds for the dusty terrain of the Anatolian plateau. For years, several Western powers delayed construction, keeping their core operations in Istanbul while maintaining small temporary offices in the new capital.

To manage the expansion, the Turkish government expropriated land south of the historic citadel and established a comprehensive urban master plan (Akgün & Tankut, 1992). Designed by German planner Hermann Jansen, who won the international competition for Ankara in 1929, the layout featured zoned areas framed by green belts and open boulevards, with foreign legations assigned plots along the southern axis extending toward the Presidential Residence at Çankaya (Jansen, 1937; Akgün & Tankut, 1992). This shift transformed diplomatic design by forcing foreign missions to abandon isolated urban fortresses set behind dense street walls in favor of suburban footprints defined by broad avenues, open setbacks, and strict civic zoning. Furthermore, to align with a host state implementing secular reforms, legal changes, and language standardization, diplomatic architecture could no longer rely on nineteenth-century European historicism; instead, foreign governments were forced to re-evaluate their visual presence and engage directly with modern architectural forms (Bozdoğan, 2001)

III. Four Embassies, Four Formal Strategies

The diplomatic compounds constructed in Ankara between the late 1920s and the 1960s illustrate distinct formal responses to this context (Aslanoğlu, 2001). The following four cases show how different states approached the balance between international architectural currents and national representation.

1. The Soviet Embassy (1927): Constructivism as Political Alignment

The Soviet Union was the first foreign power to construct a dedicated diplomatic compound in Republican Ankara, opening its Kavaklıdere complex in 1927 under the design of avant-garde architect Genrikh Ludwig (Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Türkiye, n.d.) (Figure 4). This structure directly reflected the strategic alignment between Ankara and Moscow



Figure 4. The Soviet Union Embassy in Ankara Ludwig

(Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Türkiye)

during the 1920s, built on Bolshevik Russia's crucial financial and military backing of Turkish nationalist forces during the War of Independence (Perinçek, 2011). Though the Turkish Republic explicitly rejected domestic communist politics, both revolutionary governments shared a staunch anti-imperialist posture against European powers during the early post-war years. Ludwig's design marked a total break from Tsarist diplomatic traditions, bypassing ornate Neo-Baroque revivalism in favor of an uncompromising Constructivist design, making it one of the earliest realized Constructivist buildings outside the Soviet Union (Khan-Magomedov, 1987). The complex was organized around asymmetric, intersecting geometric volumes using plain rendered white walls without surface moldings, flat roofs that broke with traditional pitched profiles, continuous horizontal ribbon windows enabled by a reinforced concrete frame, and a clear functional grid that separated administrative offices, residence quarters, and public reception halls. Through this approach, the Soviet state accomplished two clear goals: internally, it signaled an absolute break with its Tsarist past by presenting the USSR as an industrial, forward-looking society where form followed structural logic and social utility rather than imperial luxury (Khan-Magomedov, 1987); externally, it provided the Turkish state with a non-Western template for modernization, arguing that entering the modern era did not require copying Western

historicist styles, but that modernity could instead serve as an industrial driver of state transformation while framing both nations as partners in a forward-looking project (Bozdoğan, 2001).

2. The Yugoslav Diplomatic Residence (1932–1936): Vernacular Form and Regional Ties

While the Soviet compound relied on abstract industrial geometry, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia took a different approach for its diplomatic site in Ankara by using Regional Folklorism (Kadijević, 2014). Designed between 1932 and 1936 by Belgrade architect Kosta J. Jovanović, the Yugoslav residence challenged the assumption that modern diplomacy required an International Style (Figure 5). This choice reflected the geopolitical realities of interwar diplomacy in the Balkans, which were shaped by shifting security concerns after the fall of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. Under King Alexander I, Yugoslavia prioritized regional alliances, leading directly to the 1934 Balkan Pact (Balkan Entente) signed by Turkey, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Romania to ensure mutual defense and preserve regional stability against outside interference (Kadijević, 2014). King Alexander I and Atatürk maintained close diplomatic ties that emphasized their shared Balkan geography and history.



Figure 5. The Yugoslav Diplomatic Residence (Kadijević, 2014)

In terms of architectural design, Jovanović avoided both Western European modernism and Belgrade's urban Neoclassicism, drawing instead from traditional Balkan domestic architecture—specifically the residential typologies of the Dinaric region (Kadijević, 2014). The resulting Yugoslav Residence features a heavy stone base of grounded local masonry that establishes visual weight and ties the building to the landscape, broad steeply pitched roofs with extended timber eaves (*saçak*) referencing regional construction methods common to both the Balkans and Anatolia, and artisanal interiors with detailed woodwork, carved timber ceilings (*çıtavari*), exposed beams, and custom ironwork highlighting traditional craft. Rather than adopting an imposing institutional profile, the building maintains a residential massing that emphasizes a domestic scale.

Through this strategy, the Yugoslav Residence demonstrates how traditional vernacular forms were used within interwar diplomacy (Kadijević, 2014). Erecting a structure rooted in Balkan folk architecture in Ankara was not a retreat to nostalgic traditionalism, but an explicit statement of regional identity against Western architectural dominance. The design asserted that sovereign parity did not depend on adopting

uniform Western industrial aesthetics, positioning regional stability and diplomatic cooperation within shared cultural traditions instead. Ultimately, shared architectural details such as overhanging eaves and combined stone-and-timber construction present in both Balkan domestic architecture and traditional Anatolian houses created a clear visual bridge between the host nation and the diplomatic mission.

3. The Austrian Embassy (1930s): Stripped Classicism and Civic Order

The third approach is demonstrated by the Austrian Embassy, designed during the 1930s by Austrian architect Clemens Holzmeister (Figure 6). Understanding this building requires looking

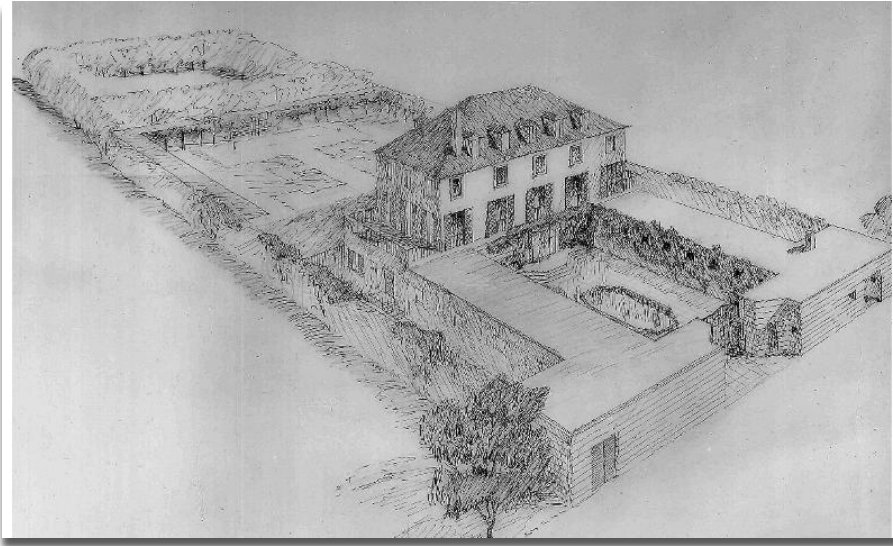


Figure 6. Holzmeister's Sketch for The Austrian Embassy in Ankara (Austrian State Archives)

at Holzmeister's role within early Republican Turkey, where the government engaged leading Austrian and German architects, including Holzmeister, Theodor Postel, Ernst Egli, and later Bruno Taut to design the core civic infrastructure of the new capital (Bozdoğan, 2001). Holzmeister served as the primary architect for Ankara's central government quarter (*Devlet Mahallesi*), designing key institutional structures such as the Grand National Assembly (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*), the Ministry of Defense (*Milli Savunma Başkanlığı*), the General Staff Headquarters (*Genelkurmay Başkanlığı*), the Supreme Court (*Yargıtay*), and the Central Bank (*Merkez Bankası*) (Aslanoğlu, 2001). Consequently, when the Austrian government commissioned Holzmeister to design its embassy on Atatürk Boulevard, it selected an architect who was simultaneously defining the civic identity of the host nation itself.

Architecturally, Holzmeister designed the embassy using Stripped Classicism (*Reduzierter Klassizismus*), an approach occupying a clear middle ground between historicist classicism and radical avant-garde functionalism. The design relies on symmetrical massing with rectilinear geometric volumes organized around a central axis, unornamented smooth plaster and dressed stone facades stripped of carved capitals, pediments, or historic moldings, and proportional rhythms created through tall, deeply recessed rectangular windows rather than applied ornament. Furthermore, the building integrates local Ankara stone (pink and gray trachyte) along its base, directly linking Austrian design methods with local Anatolian building materials.

Through this formal strategy, Austria presented itself as a stable, disciplined Central European state focused on institutional order and civic rationality, setting aside both radical functionalism and Habsburg-era imperial historicism. Because Holzmeister used the same formal vocabulary for the embassy that he employed across the Turkish Parliament and key ministries, the building fit directly into its immediate context, ensuring Austria did not appear as an alien power in Ankara, but rather as a natural peer structure within the administrative

4. The Pakistan Embassy (1960s): Regional Modernism and Post-Colonial Identity

By the 1960s, the global architectural landscape had shifted toward modernism defined by exposed concrete frames, curtain walls, and industrial components as the standard for corporate and state construction worldwide (Frampton, 2020) (Figure 7). Yet for post-colonial states emerging across Asia and the Middle East, this globalized style raised a critical design question: how could a nation use modern structural systems without flattening its specific cultural identity? (Curtis, 1996) The Pakistan Embassy in Ankara, designed in the late 1960s by Turkish architect Sedad Hakkı Eldem, offered a direct answer through Regional Modernism (Eldem, 1984; Tanju, 2009). Following its independence in 1947, Pakistan sought to establish an international presence as a modern nation-state while maintaining close diplomatic and defense ties with Turkey throughout the Cold War, formalized through the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1955. When planning its embassy on the slopes of Çankaya, Pakistan bypassed Western firms and selected Eldem—Turkey’s leading architectural historian and practitioner of regional modernism, renowned for his documentation and contemporary reinterpretation of the traditional Turkish House (*Türk Evi*) (Bozdoğan et al., 1987; Eldem, 1984).



Figure 7. The Pakistan Embassy in Ankara (Salt Research Archives)

Rather than applying historic ornament to a modern box, Eldem translated spatial principles common to both Ottoman Anatolia and Mughal South Asia into an articulated reinforced concrete framework (Bozdoğan et al., 1987). The building's key formal features include an exposed concrete structural grid that establishes clear visual order across the facade, integrated concrete sun-screens (*brise-soleil*) that reinterpret traditional lattice screens (*mashrabiya* or *jaali*) into modern shading elements, deep cantilevered eaves and overhanging roof planes that offer passive solar shading while referencing traditional timber projections (*cumba* and *saçak*), and an internal modular layout based on a strict structural grid that balances spatial openness with traditional privacy requirements (Tanju, 2009).

Through this synthesis, Eldem’s design demonstrated that concrete framing could adapt to regional climate demands and spatial customs rather than functioning as an imported Western template (Bozdoğan et al., 1987). For Pakistan, the compound provided an architectural expression of a modern post-colonial state that avoided both generic glass-and-steel boxes and literal historicist revivalism. Ultimately, by commissioning a Turkish architect who integrated Ottoman and South Asian spatial traditions, Pakistan used its Ankara embassy to reinforce its political ties with Turkey through a shared approach to modern design (Tanju, 2009).

IV. Diplomatic Form and Architectural Ideology

Examining these four diplomatic compounds demonstrates how mid-twentieth-century architecture operated as a primary medium for formal and political positioning (Vale, 2008). Far from representing a static style, modernism functioned as an adaptable, highly contested structural language shaped by the tension between universalist design claims and specific national representations (Loeffler, 1998). In Ankara, foreign missions resolved this conflict by developing distinct formal strategies: the Soviet Embassy (1927) deployed avant-garde Constructivism using asymmetric geometric volumes and horizontal ribbon windows to project industrial functionalism and signal an absolute break from historic precedent; the Yugoslav Residence (1932–36) embraced Dinaric Regional Folklorism through grounded local stone bases, steep tile roofs, and overhanging timber eaves to articulate regional craft, vernacular continuity, and anti-hegemonic solidarity; the Austrian Embassy (1930s) utilized Stripped Classicism characterized by unornamented rectilinear volumes lined with local Ankara stone to express civic order and institutional discipline; and the Pakistan Embassy (1960s) adopted Regional Modernism by embedding concrete solar screens and cantilevered roof planes within an exposed structural grid to construct a post-colonial identity responsive to climate and shared Islamic-Ottoman spatial models.

These spatial strategies reflect a broad architectural spectrum that refutes the notion of modernism as a uniform Western movement, spanning structural abstraction in the Soviet vanguard model, civic rationalism in Austria's bureaucratic classicism, climatic hybridity in Pakistan's structural synthesis, and vernacular traditionalism in Yugoslavia's regional folk typologies (Curtis, 1996; Frampton, 2020). Ultimately, constructing an embassy in Ankara functioned as a reciprocal negotiation where foreign powers adapted modern design methods to support specific geopolitical goals mirroring Turkey's revolutionary stance, reinforcing shared Balkan security ties, integrating directly into the new host state's administrative center, or forging non-Western solidarity through modern architectural synthesis (Kezer, 2015; Vale, 2008).

V. Conclusion

The diplomatic district of Çankaya in Ankara stands as a detailed physical record of twentieth-century political and architectural history (Kezer, 2015). Embedded within its embassy compounds are the spatial strategies, diplomatic alignments, and formal experiments of a transforming international order. The shift from the isolated, historicist enclaves of late Ottoman Pera to the planned diplomatic layout of Republican Ankara marked a fundamental transition in foreign representation (Batur, 2005; Bozdoğan, 2001). In the new capital, foreign legations had to confront the core paradox of diplomatic modernism: expressing the specific identity of a nation through an architectural language predicated on universal validity (Loeffler, 1998).

As demonstrated across these four sites, foreign powers resolved this tension through distinct formal strategies. The Soviet Union turned to radical avant-garde abstraction to signal revolutionary alignment; Yugoslavia drew on regional folklorism to reinforce shared Balkan security ties; Austria relied on stripped classicism to project civic order and institutional parity; and Pakistan synthesized concrete framing with regional shading systems to articulate a post-colonial identity. Ultimately, these diplomatic compounds demonstrate that architecture does not merely serve as a passive backdrop for international relations, but actively carries out diplomacy in three dimensions (Vale, 2008). In Ankara, the dialogue between international modernism and national representation produced a diverse built environment, revealing how states used architectural form to navigate between a globalizing world and the persistent demands of national self-definition.

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**TURKEY'S SOFT POWER IN TUNISIA: TİKA, THE YUNUS EMRE INSTITUTE, AND
THE TURKISH MAARIF FOUNDATION**

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Abstract

The Republic of Turkey launched its soft power initiatives in 1992 by establishing TİKA—which operates across five continents—within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide international technical assistance to the Central Asian Republics. Then in 2007, the Yunus Emre Institute was established as a new soft power initiative to promote Turkish culture and strengthen ties of friendship, and in 2016, the Turkish Maarif Foundation was founded to conduct educational activities abroad on behalf of the Republic of Turkey. These activities have focused particularly on Central Asia and Europe, with an emphasis on developing bilateral relations in these regions. Thanks to these organizations, which are working to increase their effectiveness in regional and global relations, Turkey is active not only in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans, but also in Africa. These activities also take place in North Africa, specifically in the Maghreb countries stretching along the Mediterranean. As instruments of Turkey's soft power, these organizations are actively engaged in Tunisia—one of the Maghreb countries—thereby facilitating the reflection of historical ties on contemporary Tunisia and contributing to current perceptions of the country.

The aim of this study is to analyze Turkish-Tunisian relations within the framework of the work carried out through TİKA, the Yunus Emre Institute, and the Turkish Maarif Foundation. Qualitative research methods and document analysis are the methods of the study; the institutional publications of these institutions as well as data obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkish Republic and other relevant academic studies were examined.

The study's main argument is that Türkiye's influence in Tunisia cannot be explained only by political and economic means; rather, intercultural ties are deepened through development aid, cultural activities, Turkish language instruction, and educational institutions.

Keywords: TİKA, Yunus Emre Institute, Turkish Maarif Foundation, Tunisia, Soft Power

Introduction

In the 21st century international relations has changed and given rise to a multilayered international environment in which countries do not rely only on military, economic, and diplomatic instruments to achieve their foreign policy objectives. Within this transformation, public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, development cooperation, and educational activities have become important tools which enable states to establish direct or indirect communication with foreign societies. As conceptualized by Joseph S. Nye, soft power refers to a state's ability to achieve desired outcomes through its capacity to attract, rather than by coercing others or directing them through material incentives.

When we look at Turkey's point of view, especially since the 2000s, the institutional dimension of public diplomacy and soft power practices has strengthened alongside the diversification of foreign policy means. the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), the Yunus Emre Institute (YEE), the Turkish Maarif Foundation (TMV), and other publicly supported organizations represent different dimensions of this new diplomatic approach. In the academic literature as well, TİKA's development activities, the Yunus Emre Institute's cultural activities, and in the field of education the Turkish Maarif Foundation's work are considered among the key elements of Turkey's soft power and public diplomacy capabilities.

Tunisia represents a special case in terms of Turkey's Maghreb policy. Relations between Turkey and Tunisia are multifaceted. It was based not only on historical and cultural ties dating back to the Ottoman period but also on diplomatic relations established in 1956. According to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ottoman presence in Tunisia, which lasted for over three centuries, is one of the fundamental elements of the shared historical and cultural perception between the two countries. Modern diplomatic relations, however, were established following Tunisia's independence in 1956 (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA], n.d.-a). Particularly following 2011, Turkey diversified its foreign policy tools. Tunisia has gained importance not only in terms of political and economic relations but also in the areas of public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, development cooperation, and educational diplomacy. In this process, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, the Yunus Emre Institute, and the Turkish Maarif Foundation have emerged as the primary institutional actors enhancing Turkey's visibility and capacity for social engagement in Tunisia. Consequently, Turkey-Tunisia relations do not remain limited to intergovernmental political and economic ties. It has been representing a multilayered relationship model encompassing historical ties, cultural interaction, development cooperation, and educational activities.

Moreover, the Jasmine Revolution that took place in Tunisia in 2011 marked the beginning of a new era in Turkey-Tunisia relations. Turkey provided technical and financial support to Tunisia following the revolution; the institutional foundation of the relationship was strengthened through the 2011 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. In 2012, a joint declaration was signed regarding the establishment of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council between the two countries (MFA, n.d.-b). These developments necessitate an assessment of Turkey's policy toward Tunisia not only at the level of intergovernmental diplomacy but also at the level of people-to-people relations.

The Historical and Political Background of Turkey-Tunisia Relations

In terms of Turkish policy toward the Maghreb, its historical legacy serves as an important symbolic resource. In the case of Tunisia, while the Ottoman past is not the sole factor determining the political legitimacy of relations between the two countries. Historical commonality is merely one component of contemporary social perception. Tunisian society's own historical memory, its experience of French colonialism, its relations with the Arab and Islamic worlds, and its Mediterranean identity are at least as important as the Ottoman past in shaping perceptions of Turkey. Therefore, Turkey's cultural diplomacy in Tunisia can be effective only to the extent that it links the "shared past" narrative to current social needs.

The historical foundation of Turkey-Tunisia relations dates back to the Ottoman period. The Ottoman Empire's presence in Tunisia lasted for over three centuries, and this period laid the groundwork for political, military, economic, and cultural interactions. It is also noted that shared history and culture play a significant role in the foundation of the close relations between the two countries today (MFA, n.d.-a). Following Tunisia's independence in 1956, diplomatic relations were established between Tunisia and Turkey. While relations developed particularly in the political and economic spheres during the Republican era, they gained new momentum after 2011. During this period, Turkey's policy toward Tunisia has evolved toward a broader model of engagement that goes beyond intergovernmental relations. TİKA's launch of operations in Tunisia in 2012 and the opening of its Program Coordination Office in 2013 are key indicators of this transformation (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency [TİKA], 2024).

Soft Power and Public Diplomacy

The concept of soft power is based on the assumption that states can exert influence in the international system not only through coercive capacity or economic incentives, but also through the cultural, political, and social elements of attraction they possess (Nye, 2004).

Public diplomacy, on the other hand, refers to the activities undertaken by states to shape perceptions and understanding of their countries by communicating with foreign publics. For this reason, unlike the traditional understanding of interstate diplomacy, public diplomacy incorporates societies, educational

institutions, media organizations, cultural actors, and civil society elements into the diplomatic process. TİKA, YEE, and TMV fulfill three distinct complementary functions:

Table 1. Turkey's Public Diplomacy Activities

Organization	Main Area of Activity	Role in Public Diplomacy
TİKA	Development, Health, Education, Agriculture, Infrastructure, Cultural Heritage	Development Diplomacy
YEE	Turkish Language, Culture, Arts, Academic Activities	Cultural Diplomacy
TMV	Education from preschool through high school, Academic Partnerships	Educational Diplomacy

Consequently, rather than being viewed as separate projects, the activities of these institutions can be considered as part of a complementary public diplomacy ecosystem that enables Turkey to reach different segments of society.

TİKA and Development Diplomacy

TİKA is one of the most important institutions which represents the development dimension of Turkey's public diplomacy capacity in Tunisia. When the agency was established in 1992, it aimed to develop cooperation with the newly independent states in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The activities of the institution has expanded to Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East, and other regions (TİKA, n.d.-a; n.d.-b).

TİKA started operations in Tunisia in 2012 and opened a Program Coordination Office in 2013. According to data which was published by the agency in 2024, 208 projects and activities were completed in Tunisia over a twelve-year period. These activities spanned a wide range of fields, including education and vocational training, health, agriculture and livestock, administrative and civil infrastructure, cultural activities, and humanitarian aid (TİKA, n.d.-a). A key feature of TİKA's activities in Tunisia is that the projects are not limited only to the capital city, Tunis. In previous periods, the agency has carried out agriculture and livestock projects in various regions such as Monastir, Bizerte, Sidi Bouzid, Medenine, Cendouba, Manouba, Gabès, and Béja; it has collaborated with local actors in fields such as beekeeping, poultry farming, greenhouse cultivation, and fishing. It is reported that 355 families benefited from the 13 agriculture and livestock projects implemented between 2012 and 2020 (TİKA, n.d.-c). This situation demonstrates that TİKA fulfills two important functions in terms of public diplomacy: First, it fosters a positive perception of Turkey's technical capacity through the transfer of Turkey's development experience. Second, by ensuring that projects address local needs, it enables Turkey to establish direct contact with Tunisian society. In this regard, TİKA's activities differ from traditional cultural diplomacy initiatives (Islam, 2021). While an exhibition or cultural event may create short-term visibility, vocational training, health, or agricultural production projects can directly impact individuals' daily lives. This makes development cooperation a more long-term tool of public diplomacy.

The projects carried out by TİKA in 2026 at vocational training centers in Nabeul and Kelibia demonstrate that Turkey's activities in Tunisia continue to this day. These projects focus on technical training, production infrastructure, and enhancing the employability of young people (TİKA, 2026). Consequently, TİKA's activities in Tunisia can be viewed as a means of re-establishing historical closeness through contemporary development cooperation.

The Yunus Emre Institute and Cultural Diplomacy

One of the most prominent actors in Turkey's cultural diplomacy in Tunisia is the Yunus Emre Institute. The Institute's activities in Tunisia began in 2017. In addition to teaching the Turkish language, the

Institute aims to foster direct contact between Turkish and Tunisian societies through cultural, artistic, academic, and scientific activities. The Yunus Emre Institute's institutional mission is to enhance Turkey's international visibility, credibility, and reputation, and to forge lasting bonds between Turkey and diverse societies. The Institute's areas of activity in Tunisia range from Turkish language instruction to cultural and artistic events (YEE, n.d.).

In this context, Turkish language instruction should not be viewed only as a language education activity. Language is a means that not only transmits culture but also provides an opportunity to gain direct knowledge about Turkey and establish social ties with the country. This is particularly important in the case of Tunisia. This is because the appeal Turkey generates through its television series, popular culture, tourism sector, and educational opportunities, when combined with the demand for learning Turkish, can broaden the social base of cultural diplomacy (Kaya, 2025).

It is important to note here that cultural diplomacy should not be equated with propaganda. To be effective, cultural diplomacy must become a process of mutual communication that takes into account the cultural values and sense of identity of the target society. In the academic literature, the Yunus Emre Institute is also discussed as one of Turkey's actors in public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy (Okumuş & Çelik, 2024).

The Turkish Maarif Foundation and Educational Diplomacy

The Turkish Maarif Foundation is another important soft power instrument that enhances Turkey's capacity for long-term social engagement in Tunisia. Established in 2016 under Law No. 6721, the Foundation has become one of the key institutional actors in Turkey's educational activities abroad.

Tunisia is one of the countries to which the Turkish Maarif Foundation attached particular importance in its early activities. In 2017, the International Maarif School was opened in Tunisia. Over time, the Maarif Foundation's activities in Tunisia have evolved into an educational structure spanning from preschool through secondary education. The Foundation's current organizational information regarding its operations in Tunisia includes the International Maarif Schools of Tunisia and the International Maarif High School (Turkish Maarif Foundation [TMV], n.d.).

The fundamental difference between an educational diploma and other public diplomacy tools is that its impact is long-term. When a student receives an education at a Turkey-based educational institution over the course of several years, it allows perceptions of Turkey to be shaped not merely through a single event or media message, but through the daily educational experience. From this perspective, Maarif Schools can be viewed as institutional structures that can contribute to Turkey's direct development of human resources and social networks within Tunisian society.

Furthermore, the Maarif Foundation's activities are not limited solely to K-12 education. The organization of education fairs in Tunisia to promote Turkish universities also increases the visibility of Turkey's higher education system among Tunisian students. At a fair organized by the Maarif Agency, part of the Maarif Foundation, 29 universities from Turkey were seen promoting themselves in Tunisia (TMV, n.d.). This situation demonstrates that educational diplomacy constitutes a two-way mechanism:

Education in Tunisia → Contact with Turkey → Higher education in Turkey → Post-graduation social and professional networks.

These three structures shifts Turkey's public diplomacy in Tunisia from the framework of intergovernmental relations to that of people-to-people relations. While TİKA's projects address local needs and development challenges, YEE establishes channels for cultural and linguistic exchange. TMV, meanwhile, builds long-term educational partnerships.

From this perspective, there is also a temporal complementarity among the activities of these three institutions. While development projects can generate tangible benefits in the short or medium term, cultural events increase Turkey's visibility, and education can foster long-term human relationships and

social networks. Therefore, it is possible to conceptualize Turkey's public diplomacy model in Tunisia as follows:

Historical heritage → cultural affinity → development cooperation → cultural interaction → educational ties → social engagement → perception of Turkey

However, we must particularly emphasize that this relationship is not automatic. It should also be noted that the factors determining the impact of public diplomacy activities on the perception of Turkey are not limited solely to activities carried out by Turkey.

Evaluation and Conclusion

It is methodologically insufficient to assess Turkey's activities in Tunisia solely as a positive "soft power success." Turkey's policies in the region must be evaluated in the context of Tunisia's domestic political developments and Maghreb geopolitics.

Since 2011, Tunisia has faced serious economic and political challenges alongside its democratization process. For this reason, Turkey's policies toward Tunisia may be perceived in different ways amid the political polarization within Tunisian society. Indeed, an assessment published by the *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik* journal notes that, in addition to security, defense, and economic relations, Turkey's policy toward Tunisia also involves cultural, humanitarian, and development-focused activities carried out through these institutions. The same study emphasizes that Turkey's cultural diplomacy in Tunisia must take into account the country's political fault lines (Tanrıverdi Yaşar & Aksoy, 2021). In future empirical studies, interviews with Tunisian students, Turkish language learners, graduates of Maarif Schools, beneficiaries of TİKA projects, academics, and individuals participating in cultural and artistic activities present an important area of research.

The fact that TİKA carried out 208 projects and activities in Tunisia between 2012 and 2024 demonstrates the continuity of Turkey's development cooperation in the country. The activities of YEE, which began in 2017, have focused on fostering intercultural exchange through Turkish language instruction, cultural, and artistic events. The Maarif Foundation, starting with the schools it opened in 2017, has established a more permanent and institutionalized platform for Turkey-Tunisia engagement in the field of education.

When the activities of these three institutions are evaluated collectively, it becomes clear that characterizing Turkey's presence in Tunisia solely as "foreign aid" or "cultural promotion" is insufficient. Viewed from a broader perspective, these institutions emerge as institutional tools for Turkey's capacity to foster inter-societal relations.

However, when assessing Turkey's activities in Tunisia, one should avoid a one-sided narrative of success. The success of public diplomacy should be measured not by the number of activities carried out, but by the response these activities generate within Tunisian society. Therefore, future research should include field studies, interviews, and media analyses that measure Tunisian society's perception of Turkey, in addition to quantitative data on institutional activities.

In conclusion, the activities of TİKA, YEE, and TMV in Turkey-Tunisia relations represent a significant example of how historical ties are being revitalized through contemporary foreign policy tools. The fundamental nature of Turkey's public diplomacy in Tunisia can be described as supporting a shared historical narrative with concrete engagements in the fields of development, culture, and education. This framework holds significant potential to enhance Turkey's long-term social and cultural influence in the Maghreb region.

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**BALANCING STATES IN THE AGE OF WEAPONIZED INTERDEPENDENCE AND
TÜRKİYE'S TRANSPORT CORRIDOR DIPLOMACY**

*SİLAHLAŞTIRILMIŞ KARŞILIKLI BAĞIMLILIK ÇAĞINDA DENGELİYİCİ DEVLETLER:
TÜRKİYE'NİN ULAŞTIRMA KORİDORU DİPLOMASİSİ*

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Abstract

During the era of globalization, transport networks that supported economic integration and commercial interdependence have increasingly become important instruments of great power competition. Control over critical ports, railways, maritime passages, and logistics hubs enables states to direct trade flows, restrict the access of their rivals, and exert economic pressure. The theory of weaponized interdependence developed by Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman explains how actors located at the centre of networks exploit asymmetric connections through surveillance and chokepoint mechanisms. However, while the existing literature focuses primarily on the network-based coercive capacity of great powers, it pays more limited attention to the hedging and risk-mitigation strategies developed by middle powers located along critical transit routes.

This study examines how middle powers preserve their transit sovereignty in a system in which global supply and transport routes have become subjects of geopolitical competition, with a particular focus on Türkiye. It investigates the strategic objectives behind Türkiye's support for the Middle Corridor and the Development Road projects, as well as the ways in which security dynamics between Türkiye and Iraq affect the sustainability of the Development Road. The central argument of the study is that Türkiye pursues a multidirectional hedging strategy by supporting multiple transport routes simultaneously rather than becoming fully dependent on either the Western-backed India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor or China's Belt and Road Initiative. This policy contributes to the diversification of Türkiye's external economic relations, the strengthening of its transit autonomy, and the enhancement of its geoeconomic bargaining capacity.

The study employs qualitative content analysis and a comparative case study method. The strategic orientations of the Belt and Road Initiative and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor are compared with those of the Middle Corridor and the Development Road. The analysis draws on data published by UNCTAD, the OECD, the World Bank, and the Turkish Statistical Institute.

The study applies the theory of weaponized interdependence to physical transport infrastructure, extending it beyond financial and technological networks. It also examines this approach together with the hedging strategies of middle powers. The findings are expected to demonstrate that middle powers which diversify their transport corridors can provide alternative routes during systemic disruptions, mitigate supply chain shocks, and transform their geographical position into a capacity that generates strategic autonomy.

Keywords: Weaponized Interdependence, Middle Powers, Hedging Strategy, Transport Corridor Diplomacy, Middle Corridor, Development Road Project.

Özet

Küreselleşme döneminde ekonomik bütünleşmeyi ve ticari karşılıklı bağımlılığı destekleyen ulaştırma ağları, son yıllarda büyük güç rekabetinin önemli araçlarından biri hâline gelmiştir. Kritik limanlar, demiryolları, deniz geçitleri ve lojistik merkezler üzerindeki kontrol, devletlere ticaret akışlarını yönlendirme, rakiplerin erişimini sınırlandırma ve ekonomik baskı oluşturma imkânı vermektedir.

Henry Farrell ve Abraham Newman tarafından geliştirilen silahlaştırılmış karşılıklı bağımlılık yaklaşımı, ağların merkezinde bulunan aktörlerin asimetrik bağlantıları gözetim ve tıkaç mekanizmaları üzerinden nasıl kullandığını açıklamaktadır. Bununla birlikte literatür, büyük güçlerin ağ temelli baskı kapasitesine yoğunlaşırken kritik transit güzergâhlarında yer alan orta güçlerin geliştirdiği stratejik koruma (hedging) ve risk azaltma stratejilerine daha sınırlı yer vermektedir.

Bu çalışma, küresel tedarik ve ulaştırma hatlarının jeopolitik rekabete konu olduğu bir sistemde orta güçlerin transit egemenliklerini nasıl koruduklarını Türkiye örneği üzerinden incelemektedir. Araştırmada Türkiye'nin Orta Koridor ve Kalkınma Yolu projelerini hangi stratejik amaçlarla desteklediği ve Türkiye ile Irak arasındaki güvenlik dinamiklerinin Kalkınma Yolu'nun sürdürülebilirliğini nasıl etkilediği ele alınmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel savı, Türkiye'nin Batı tarafından desteklenen Hindistan-Orta Doğu-Avrupa Ekonomik Koridoru'na veya Çin'in Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi'ne tam bağımlılık geliştirmek yerine farklı ulaştırma güzergâhlarını eş zamanlı biçimde destekleyen çok yönlü bir stratejik koruma (hedging) politikası izlediğidir. Bu politika, Türkiye'nin dış ekonomik bağlantılarını çeşitlendirmesine, transit otonomisini güçlendirmesine ve jeo-ekonomik pazarlık kapasitesini artırmasına katkı sağlamaktadır.

Araştırmada nitel içerik analizi ve karşılaştırmalı vaka incelemesi yöntemleri kullanılmaktadır. Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi ile Hindistan-Orta Doğu-Avrupa Ekonomik Koridoru'nun stratejik yönelimleri, Orta Koridor ve Kalkınma Yolu projeleriyle karşılaştırılmaktadır. Analizde UNCTAD, OECD, Dünya Bankası ve TÜİK tarafından yayımlanan veriler kullanılmaktadır.

Çalışma, silahlaştırılmış karşılıklı bağımlılık yaklaşımını finansal ve teknolojik ağların ötesine taşıyarak fiziki ulaştırma altyapılarına uygulamaktadır. Ayrıca bu yaklaşımı orta güçlerin stratejik koruma (hedging) stratejileriyle birlikte ele almaktadır. Elde edilen bulguların, ulaştırma koridorlarını çeşitlendiren orta güçlerin sistemik kesintiler karşısında alternatif güzergâh sağlayabildiğini, tedarik zinciri şoklarını hafifletebildiğini ve coğrafi konumlarını stratejik otonomi üreten bir kapasiteye dönüştürebildiğini göstermesi beklenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Silahlaştırılmış Karşılıklı Bağımlılık, Orta Güçler, Stratejik Koruma, Ulaştırma Koridoru Diplomasisi, Orta Koridor, Kalkınma Yolu

Giriş

Ulaştırma Koridorlarının Silahlaştırılması

Silahlaştırılmış karşılıklı bağımlılık yaklaşımı, küreselleşmeyle derinleşen ekonomik, finansal ve bilgi ağlarının belirli merkezî düğümler etrafında yoğunlaşarak devletler arasında asimetrik güç ilişkileri ürettiği varsayımına dayanmaktadır. Bu düğümleri kendi egemenlik veya yargı alanında bulunduran devletler, sahip oldukları yapısal avantajı dış politika alanında bir zorlama kapasitesine dönüştürebilmektedir. Bu kapasite iki temel mekanizma üzerinden ortaya çıkmaktadır. Panoptikon etkisi, merkezî düğümlerden geçen bilgi akışlarının izlenmesi yoluyla rakip aktörlerin faaliyetleri, niyetleri ve finansal bağlantıları hakkında stratejik bilgi elde edilmesini ifade etmektedir. Tıkaç etkisi ise hedef aktörlerin kritik ağlara erişiminin sınırlandırılması veya kesilmesi yoluyla ekonomik maliyet yaratılmasına ve davranış değişikliğinin teşvik edilmesine dayanmaktadır. Böylece ekonomik verimlilik ve karşılıklı bağımlılık temelinde gelişen küresel ağlar, merkezî konumdaki devletler açısından asimetrik güç ve zorlama araçlarına dönüşebilmektedir (Farrell ve Newman 2019: 44-55). Bu çerçevede, silahlaştırılmış karşılıklı bağımlılık ilişkilerini hegemonik ve zayıf aktörler arasındaki ikili yapı ile sınırlamamaktadır. Bu iki aktör haricinde, orta gücü de bu ağsal güç ilişkilerinin bağımsız bir aktörü olarak konumlandırmaktadır.

Asimetrik karşılıklı bağımlılık, alternatif tedarik kanallarını ve yerel kapasitesini geliştiremeyen orta güç açısından ciddi bir kırılma kaynağıdır. Küresel ağların az sayıdaki güç merkezinde yoğunlaşması, orta gücün dış politika özerkliğini kısıtlamakta ve büyük güçlerin ekonomik yaptırım veya teknolojik kısıtlamalarının ağır maliyetler doğurmasına neden olmaktadır. Buna karşın, silahlaştırılmış karşılıklı bağımlılık orta gücü tamamen pasif bir konuma itmemektedir. Jeopolitik rekabet ortamında ekonomik ve teknolojik ortaklıklarını çeşitlendiren ve esnek bir dış politika izleyen

orta güç, tek bir merkeze yönelik aşırı bağımlılığını azaltarak dış baskılar karşısındaki manevra alanını koruyabilmektedir. Bu çerçevede stratejik özerklik, küresel entegrasyonun ekonomik getirileri ile asimetrik bağımlılığın güvenlik risklerini dengeleme kapasitesine dayanmaktadır. Dış ortaklıkların çeşitlendirilmesi, esnekliğin korunması ve yerel kapasitenin güçlendirilmesi, orta gücün büyük güçler arasındaki hareket alanını genişletmekte ve bağımsız politika üretme kapasitesinin korunmasına katkı sağlamaktadır (Farag 2026: 4-17). Orta gücün bu stratejik özerklik arayışı, jeoekonomik rekabetin yoğunlaştığı ortamda ulaştırma koridorlarının ve kritik altyapıların kontrolünü de dış politika manevra alanının önemli unsurlarından biri hâline getirmektedir. Çünkü bu koridorlar, ticaret ve lojistik akışlarının yönünü belirleyerek orta gücün tek bir güzergâha veya güç merkezine bağımlılığını azaltmasına imkân tanımaktadır.

Silahlaştırılmış karşılıklı bağımlılığın ulaştırma altyapılarına yansımaları, küresel değer zincirlerinin siyasileşmesiyle birlikte daha görünür hâle gelmektedir. Jeoekonomik rekabetin yoğunlaşması, ulaştırma koridorlarını ekonomik bağlantısallığın teknik unsurları olmaktan çıkararak devletler arasındaki güç mücadelesinin stratejik araçlarına dönüştürmektedir. Bu süreçte ortaya çıkan altyapısal ayrışma, enerji ve ulaştırma akışlarının rakip jeopolitik merkezler doğrultusunda yeniden yönlendirilmesine ve birbirine paralel lojistik ağların oluşmasına neden olmaktadır. Rusya'yı baypas eden Hazar Geçişli Doğu-Batı Orta Koridoru ile İran üzerinden ilerleyen Kuzey-Güney Uluslararası Taşıma Koridoru gibi güzergâhlar, değişen jeopolitik koşulların ulaştırma coğrafyasını nasıl yeniden biçimlendirdiğini göstermektedir. Böylece ulaştırma koridoru, büyük gücün coğrafya ve kaynaklar üzerindeki etkisini artırabildiği bir jeoekonomik kaldıraç işlevi kazanırken, devletin küresel akışlar üzerindeki konumunu yeniden düzenleyerek bağımlılık ile özerklik arasındaki ilişkiyi kendi lehine şekillendirebildiği bir stratejik alana dönüşmektedir (Reznikova, Panchenko ve Grod 2025: 144-153). Ulaştırma koridorlarının jeoekonomik rekabet alanına dönüşmesi, bu ağların kritik geçiş noktalarında yoğunlaşan kırılğanlıkların stratejik önemini de artırmaktadır.

Ulaştırma ağları ile jeopolitik güç arasındaki ilişkinin derinleşmesi, tedarik zincirleri ve kritik lojistik hatlar üzerindeki denetimin stratejik önemini artırmaktadır. Tedarik zincirlerinin ve ulaştırma rotalarının silahlştırılması, lojistik darboğazların ve kritik altyapının rakibe ekonomik ve stratejik maliyet yüklemek amacıyla kullanılmasına imkân vermektedir. Hürmüz ve Malakka boğazları, Süveyş Kanalı ve Güney Çin Denizi gibi stratejik geçiş alanları, küresel ticaret akışlarının yoğunlaştığı başlıca kırılğan düğüm noktaları arasında yer almaktadır. Bu alanlardaki akışı kolaylaştırma, sınırlandırma veya kesintiye uğratma kapasitesine sahip olan devlet, doğrudan askerî çatışmaya başvurmadan rakibinin ekonomik hareket alanını daraltabilmektedir. Limanlar, deniz rotaları, nakliye altyapıları ve lojistik platformlar üzerindeki denetim bu nedenle ekonomik işlevlerinin ötesine geçerek stratejik güç üretme kapasitesi kazanmaktadır. Ulaştırma koridorlarının ve lojistik hatların güvenliği de bu çerçevede işletme yönetiminin sınırlarını aşarak millî güvenliğin doğrudan bir unsuru hâline gelmektedir (Bukhari, Nazir ve Khan 2026: 36-46). Ulaştırma ağlarının bu ölçüde stratejik ve güvenlik odaklı bir nitelik kazanması, orta gücün söz konusu baskılar karşısında doğrudan taraflaşma yerine riskleri dağıtan ve hareket alanını koruyan daha esnek stratejilere yönelmesini gerekli kılmaktadır.

Hedging olarak ifade edilen stratejik koruma, uluslararası sistemde artan belirsizlik karşısında devletin rekabet kapasitesini geliştirirken sistem lideriyle doğrudan çatışmadan kaçındığı bir davranış biçimidir. Güç dağılımındaki değişimin yarattığı belirsizlik ortamında bu strateji, dengeleme, ittifaka katılma ve sorumluluktan kaçma seçeneklerine alternatif oluşturmaktadır. Stratejik koruma izleyen devlet, ekonomik ve askerî kapasitesini artırmakta, ancak bu artışı sistem liderini doğrudan karşısına alacak bir politikaya dönüştürmemektedir. Bu nedenle hedging, rekabet gücünün artırılması ile çatışmadan kaçınma arasındaki dengeye dayanmaktadır. Ekonomik kapasite ve stratejik rezervlerin güçlendirilmesi, ölçülü askerî kapasite artışı ve merkezî politika koordinasyonu bu stratejinin temel unsurlarını oluşturmaktadır. Yüksek kamu borcu, aşırı silahlanma ve karar alma sürecini zorlaştıran unsurlar ise stratejik koruma kapasitesini sınırlayabilmektedir (Geeraerts ve Salman 2016: 60-66). Bu genel stratejik çerçeve, ekonomik alanda tek bir aktöre bağımlılığın azaltılması ve değişen koşullar karşısında alternatif seçeneklerin korunması yoluyla daha somut bir nitelik kazanmaktadır.

Stratejik koruma, güç dağılımının belirsiz olduğu ortamlarda tek bir aktöre aşırı bağlanmanın doğurabileceği risklerden kaçınarak alternatif manevra alanlarını açık tutma anlayışına dayanmaktadır.

Bu strateji kapsamında, ekonomik getirileri artıran adımlar ile muhtemel kayıpları sınırlandıran risk önlemleri eş zamanlı olarak uygulanmaktadır. Jeoekonomik düzlemde bu yaklaşım, yükselen güçlerle kurulan ticari ilişkilerden sağlanan faydaların sürdürülmesi, ancak olası bağımlılık risklerinin pazar ve yatırım çeşitlendirmesi yoluyla dağıtılmasıyla şekillenmektedir. Bir risk önlemi ve yedek pozisyon işlevi gören ekonomik çeşitlendirme, ticari kazanımların stratejik kırılganlığa dönüşme ihtimalini azaltmakta ve devletin gelecekteki hareket alanını korumasına katkı sağlamaktadır. ASEAN örneği bu stratejinin uygulamadaki karşılığını göstermektedir. Çin'in 2009-2015 döneminde bölgenin başlıca ticaret ortağı, doğrudan yabancı yatırım ve kalkınma yardımı kaynağı hâline gelmesi, Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi ile Asya Altyapı Yatırım Bankası'nın sunduğu altyapı ve finansman imkânlarıyla birlikte ekonomik yakınlaşmayı teşvik etmiştir. Buna rağmen bölge devleti, Çin'e yönelik ekonomik bağımlılığın yaratabileceği riskleri sınırlandırmak amacıyla diğer küresel aktörlerle ticari bağlarını sürdürmekte ve ekonomik çeşitlendirme politikasını korumaktadır. Aynı zamanda ABD ile askerî iş birliğini devam ettirerek olası olumsuz koşullar karşısında başvurabileceği bir yedek pozisyon oluşturmaktadır (Kuik 2016: 504-514).

Bu kuramsal yaklaşımlar birlikte değerlendirildiğinde, orta gücün asimetrik karşılıklı bağımlılıktan kaynaklanan kırılganlığını azaltma arayışının ekonomik ve diplomatik ilişkilerin çeşitlendirilmesiyle sınırlı kalmadığı görülmektedir. Ulaştırma koridorlarının jeoekonomik rekabetin araçlarına dönüşmesi, alternatif güzergâhlara erişimi ve farklı güç merkezleriyle bağlantı kurabilme kapasitesini stratejik korumanın fiziki boyutlarından biri hâline getirmektedir. Bu bağlamda koridor çeşitlendirmesi, tek bir ağ veya güç merkezine bağımlılığın azaltılmasına, alternatif seçeneklerin korunmasına ve orta gücün manevra alanının genişletilmesine katkı sağlayan bir araç olarak değerlendirilebilir. Bu kuramsal ilişki, küresel ulaştırma ağlarında ortaya çıkan koridor rekabetinin ve Türkiye'nin bu rekabet içerisindeki transit diplomasisinin incelenmesi için analitik bir zemin oluşturmaktadır.

Küresel Koridor Rekabeti Ve Türkiye'nin Transit Diplomasisi

Ekonomik büyümenin dış pazarlara entegrasyonla doğrudan bağlantılı hâle gelmesi, ulaştırma koridorlarını devletlerin küresel rekabet gücünü belirleyen stratejik bir enstrümana dönüştürmüştür. Gelişmiş bir ulaştırma altyapısı, mal ve hizmetlerin uluslararası pazarlara daha hızlı, güvenli ve uygun maliyetle aktarılmasını sağlayarak dış ticaret performansını ve lojistik verimliliği artırmaktadır. Artan ticaret hacmi devleti kesintisiz ve daha ekonomik rotalar geliştirmeye yöneltmekte, bu durum koridorları fiziksel bir bağlantı olmanın ötesinde pazar erişimini ve maliyet avantajını şekillendiren bir mekanizma hâline getirmektedir. Petrol ve doğal gaz gibi kritik enerji kaynaklarının güvenli transfer ihtiyacı ise bu ağların stratejik değerini daha da artırmaktadır. Sonuç olarak ulaştırma güzergâhlarının inşası ve kontrolü, ticari akışların yönünü belirlerken bölgesel ve küresel güç dengelerini de etkilemekte, bu altyapı projelerini jeopolitik rekabetin başlıca alanlarından biri hâline getirmektedir (Özdemir ve Çökerdenoğlu 2024: 86-106). Bu çerçevede ulaştırma koridorları üzerindeki rekabet, ticaret akışlarından ekonomik fayda sağlama arayışının ötesine geçerek devletin kendi bağlantı ağını güçlendirme ve rakip güç merkezlerine olan bağımlılığını sınırlandırma mücadelesinin bir parçası hâline gelmektedir.

Bir Kuşak Bir Yol Girişimi (BKBY)

Çin'in ulaştırma ve lojistik bağlantısallık yaklaşımı, fiziki altyapı yatırımları aracılığıyla dış pazarlarla bütünleşmeyi derinleştirme ve ekonomik etki alanını genişletme hedefi taşımaktadır. Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi, kara ve deniz güzergâhlarını bütünleşik bir ağ içinde ele alırken bağlantısallığı politika koordinasyonu, finansal iş birliği, ticaretin kolaylaştırılması, altyapı geliştirme ve toplumlar arası ilişkiler üzerinden desteklemektedir. Bu yapı içerisinde demiryolları ve kara koridorları Çin'in üretim merkezlerini Avrasya, Orta Doğu, Güney ve Güneydoğu Asya ile Avrupa pazarlarına bağlarken limanlar, kara taşımacılığını deniz ticaretiyle bütünleştiren temel düğüm noktaları olarak işlev görmektedir. Böylece Kuşak ve Yol, Çin'in dış pazarlara erişimini artıran, ticaret ve enerji akışlarını farklı coğrafyalara bağlayan ve ekonomik varlığını daha geniş bir alana taşıyan çok katmanlı bir bağlantısallık ağı oluşturmaktadır (Aoyama 2016: 4-22). Bu genişleyen bağlantısallık ağı, ekonomik ve

lojistik fırsatlar üretirken aynı zamanda finansman yapısı, altyapı kontrolü ve bağımlılık ilişkileri bakımından yeni jeoekonomik riskleri de beraberinde getirmektedir.

Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi kapsamındaki ulaştırma yatırımları, küresel ticaret ağlarını genişletmekte ve üçüncü ülkelerin alternatif güzergâhlara erişimini artırmaktadır. Ulaştırma projelerinin girişim içindeki ağırlığı, kara bağlantıları ile transit koridorların Çin ve güzergâh ülkeleri açısından taşıdığı stratejik önemi göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte yüksek finansman ihtiyacı, bazı gelişmekte olan ülkelerde ağır borç yükleri ve ekonomik bağımlılık riski doğurabilmektedir. Sri Lanka'daki Hambantota Limanı örneği, borç geri ödeme sorunlarının stratejik tesislerin kontrolü üzerinde sonuçlar yaratabileceğini göstermektedir. Bu nedenle Çin'in altyapı finansmanı, bağlantısallığı artıran bir araç olmanın yanında jeoekonomik nüfuz üretme kapasitesi de taşımaktadır. Kara ulaştırma rotaları Çin açısından deniz yollarındaki olası kesintilere karşı alternatif oluştururken, üçüncü devlet açısından küresel pazarlara erişim ile finansman ve altyapı bağımlılığı arasında bir ikilem ortaya çıkarmaktadır (Yawar ve ark. 2025: 48-66).

Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi, ulaştırma bağlantısallığını genişletirken Çin'in alternatif güzergâhlar oluşturmaya ve jeoekonomik etkisini artırmasına imkân veren stratejik bir araçtır. Girişimin sunduğu altyapı ve finansman olanakları yeni erişim imkânları yaratırken bağımlılık ve altyapı kontrolüne ilişkin riskleri de beraberinde getirmektedir. Bu ikili yapı, Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi'ni küresel koridor rekabetinin başlıca unsurlarından biri hâline getirmektedir.

Hindistan-Orta Doğu-Avrupa Ekonomik Koridoru (IMEC)

Avrasya ticaret rotalarını çeşitlendirmek ve Hindistan'ın küresel ağlardaki stratejik konumunu güçlendirmek amacıyla 2023 yılında hayata geçirilen Hindistan-Orta Doğu-Avrupa Ekonomik Koridoru (IMEC), deniz ve demiryolu hatlarını bütünleştiren çok modlu bir altyapı girişimidir. Hindistan'dan Körfez'e deniz yoluyla, Arap Yarımadası ve Levant üzerinden demiryoluyla, ardından Hayfa Limanı aracılığıyla Avrupa'ya uzanan bu güzergâh, kritik ulaştırma düğümlerinin yanı sıra enerji ve dijital bağlantıları da kapsayan bütünleşik bir mimari sunmaktadır. Bu yapının, Hindistan'ın jeopolitik risklerini dağıtarak stratejik özerkliğini korumasına ve katılımcı devletler arasındaki ekonomik uyumu güçlendirmesine katkı sağlaması öngörülmektedir (Mukherjee ve Gautam 2026: 2-13). Koridorun bu çok katmanlı yapısı, projeye katılan aktörlerin aynı güzergâh içerisinde farklı ekonomik ve stratejik kazanımlar aramasına imkân vermektedir.

Koridor, taraf olan her bir aktör açısından farklı stratejik ve jeoekonomik çıkarlara hizmet etmektedir. Hindistan bu girişimle Çin-Pakistan Ekonomik Koridoru'nu baypas ederek Avrupa, Orta Asya ve Körfez pazarları ile enerji kaynaklarına daha doğrudan erişim sağlamayı, aynı zamanda Körfez'deki Hint diasporasıyla ilişkilerini derinleştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri ve Suudi Arabistan açısından girişim, söz konusu ülkelerin bölgeler arası ve küresel lojistik merkez olma hedeflerini destekleyen bir araç niteliğindedir. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri koridoru, Çin'in Orta Doğu'daki jeoekonomik etkisini sınırlandırma ve Körfez ülkelerini Batı'nın etki alanına yakınlaştırma aracı olarak değerlendirmektedir. Avrupa Birliği ise projeyi Çin'e yönelik ekonomik bağımlılığı azaltma, pandemi sonrası ekonomik toparlanmayı destekleme, Küresel Geçit (Global Gateway) stratejisini güçlendirme ve transatlantik ilişkileri pekiştirme hedefleri doğrultusunda ele almaktadır (Delivorias ve Falkenberg 2024: 1-10). Aktörlerin farklı çıkarlarının aynı koridorda buluşması, IMEC'in tek merkezli bir bağlantısallık modelinden ziyade çok taraflı bir ortaklık çerçevesinde sunulmasının da temelini oluşturmaktadır.

Projede yer alan aktörler, Hindistan-Orta Doğu-Avrupa Ekonomik Koridoru'nu Çin'in Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi'nden farklı bir ekonomik ortaklık modeli olarak konumlandırmaktadır. Söz konusu farklılaşma, BKBY'nin Çin merkezli ve borç odaklı yapısına yönelik eleştirilere karşılık IMEC'in çok yönlü ekonomik entegrasyon, şeffaf iş birliği ve demokratik ortaklık ilkeleri üzerinden tanımlanmasıyla belirginleşmektedir. Bu yönüyle girişim, katılımcı devletler tarafından tek merkezli bir bağlantısallık modeline alternatif oluşturan çok taraflı bir iş birliği çerçevesi olarak sunulmaktadır (Singh 2025: 7). Bununla birlikte, IMEC'in çok taraflı ve şeffaf bir ortaklık modeli olarak sunulması, koridorun karşı karşıya bulunduğu jeopolitik, finansal ve teknik sorunları ortadan kaldırmamaktadır.

IMEC'in başarıyla hayata geçirilebilmesi, bölgesel güvenlik krizlerinin, kurumsal ve teknik uyumsuzlukların ve finansal engellerin aşılmasına bağlıdır. İsrail-Gazze çatışması projenin Doğu Akdeniz ayağını ve diplomatik koordinasyonu belirsizleştirirken, İran'ın güzergâh dışında tutulması bölgesel jeopolitik rekabeti artırma potansiyeli taşımaktadır. Altyapı yatırımları için gereken yüksek finansman ihtiyacı ve özel sektörün risk algısı, projenin uygulanabilirliği önünde önemli bir engel oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcı devletlerin gümrük mevzuatları ile teknik standartlarındaki farklılıklar da koridorun bütünleşik biçimde işlemlerini zorlaştırmaktadır. Akdeniz, Kızıldeniz, Umman Denizi ve Aden Körfezi'ndeki askerî gerilimler, terör ve korsanlık ise projenin deniz güzergâhlarında kalıcı güvenlik kırılganlıkları yaratmaktadır (Gautam ve Singh 2026: 139-140).

BKBY ile IMEC birlikte değerlendirildiğinde, iki girişimin küresel bağlantısallığı genişletme hedefinde ortaklaştığı, ancak bunu farklı kurumsal ve jeoekonomik modeller üzerinden gerçekleştirmeye yöneldiği görülmektedir. BKBY, Çin merkezli geniş bir kara ve deniz ağı ile altyapı finansmanını öne çıkarırken IMEC, Hindistan, Körfez ülkeleri, ABD ve Avrupa Birliği arasında çok taraflı bir bağlantısallık modeli geliştirmektedir. Her iki girişim de alternatif ticaret güzergâhları oluşturarak katılımcı devletlere yeni ekonomik fırsatlar sunmakta, ancak aynı zamanda bağımlılık, güvenlik ve uygulanabilirlik bakımından farklı kırılganlıklar üretmektedir. Bu ayrışma, küresel koridor rekabetinin güzergâh tercihinin daha geniş bir jeoekonomik mücadele alanına dönüştüğünü göstermektedir.

Bir Dengeleme Aracı Olarak Orta Koridor ve Kalkınma Yolu

Türkiye'nin Avrupa, Asya ve Afrika kıtalarını birbirine bağlayan coğrafi konumu, ülkeyi doğu-batı ve kuzey-güney eksenli ticari ve enerji rotalarının buluştuğu kilit bir geçiş noktası hâline getirmektedir. Özellikle kuzey koridorlarında artan jeopolitik riskler, Türkiye'nin Karadeniz, Kafkasya ve Körfez havzalarını birbirine bağlayan alternatif ulaştırma hatlarındaki önemini daha da artırmıştır. Avrupa Gümrük Birliği'nin yanı sıra TEN-T, TRACECA ve Orta Koridor gibi girişimlerdeki rolü de ülkenin bu geçiş potansiyelini güçlendirmektedir. Türkiye'nin jeoekonomik önemi ise yüklerin ülke topraklarından geçmesiyle sınırlı değildir. Paketleme, depolama, montaj ve elleçleme gibi katma değer yaratan lojistik hizmetlerin geliştirilmesi, transit konumun daha yüksek ekonomik değer üreten bir lojistik merkez kapasitesine dönüşmesine katkı sağlamaktadır (Özbekler 2026: 589-602). Coğrafi konumun ekonomik değere dönüşebilmesi ise transit geçiş kapasitesinin ötesine geçerek ulaştırma ve enerji ağları üzerinde daha etkin bir merkezî rol geliştirilmesini gerektirmektedir.

Türkiye'nin ulaştırma ve enerji ağlarında sahip olduğu merkezî konum, ülkenin edilgen bir geçiş alanından ziyade çevresindeki ekonomik ve stratejik akışları etkileyebilen aktif bir merkez olarak değerlendirilmesine imkân vermektedir. Bakü-Tiflis-Kars demiryolu, Marmaray, Orta Koridor, TürkAkım ve TANAP gibi altyapı yatırımları, ülkenin Avrasya eksenli enerji ve ticaret akışlarındaki düğüm noktası niteliğini güçlendirmektedir. Elde edilen bu kapasite, Türkiye'ye transit gelir ve kaynak yönlendirme imkânı sunarken Orta Asya, Kafkasya, Orta Doğu ve Balkanlar'daki stratejik manevra alanını da genişletmektedir. Ülkenin bir taraftan Batı ittifakı içindeki konumunu korurken diğer taraftan Avrasya odaklı ulaştırma ve iş birliği mekanizmalarını eş zamanlı biçimde sürdürebilmesi, jeoekonomik fırsatlar ile jeopolitik baskılar arasında denge kurabilen bir dış politika çizgisini desteklemektedir (Aksu 2026: 603-627). Türkiye'nin bu çok yönlü bağlantısallık ve dengeleme kapasitesinin ulaştırma alanındaki en belirgin örneklerinden birini Orta Koridor oluşturmaktadır.

Trans-Hazar Uluslararası Taşıma Güzergâhı olarak da bilinen Orta Koridor, Çin'den başlayarak Kafkasya ve Türkiye üzerinden Avrupa'ya uzanan çok modlu bir ticaret ağıdır. Rusya-Ukrayna savaşının Kuzey Koridoru'nda yarattığı jeopolitik ve yaptırım riskleri, bu güzergâhın Rusya'ya bağımlılığı azaltan alternatif bir hat olarak önemini artırmıştır. Türkiye ise Orta Koridor'u transit geçiş işlevinin ötesinde, Avrasya'da lojistik, enerji ve üretim merkezi olma hedefini destekleyen stratejik bir araç olarak değerlendirmektedir. Bakü-Tiflis-Kars demiryolu, Alat Limanı'nın genişletilmesi ve Smart TITR gibi altyapı girişimleri koridorun kapasitesini ve operasyonel verimliliğini geliştirmeye yönelikken, Çin-Avrupa arasındaki transit sürenin 12-15 güne kadar düşmesi zaman ve maliyet açısından rekabet avantajı sağlamaktadır. Buna karşın sınır bürokrasisi, mevzuat farklılıkları, ray açıklığı uyumsuzlukları ve intermodal altyapı eksiklikleri koridorun etkinliğini sınırlamaktadır. Bu

nedenle Orta Koridor'un stratejik ve rekabetçi kapasitesi, söz konusu operasyonel ve kurumsal darboğazların ne ölçüde giderilebildiğine bağlı olarak şekillenmektedir (Katıtaş 2025: 42-65). Koridorun taşıdığı potansiyel, mevcut doğu-batı güzergâhının etkinleştirilmesinin yanında farklı bölgesel ulaştırma ağlarıyla kurulabilecek yeni bağlantılar üzerinden de genişleyebilmektedir.

Orta Koridor'un jeostratejik değeri, doğu-batı hattındaki işlevinin yanı sıra Irak'taki Kalkınma Yolu gibi bölgesel ağlarla bütünleşerek Orta Asya, Güney Kafkasya, Orta Doğu ve Avrupa arasındaki bağlantıyı genişletme potansiyelinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Hâlihazırda Kuzey Koridorundaki yük hacminin yaklaşık yüzde 5'ini karşılayabilen bu hattın ana ticaret arterlerinden birine dönüşebilmesi, kapsamlı altyapı yatırımlarının gerçekleştirilmesine bağlıdır. Büyük güçler tarafından dışarıdan tasarlanan modellerden farklı olarak güzergâh ülkelerinin iç talepleri ve ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda gelişen bu yapı, koridorun bölgesel düzeyde sahiplenilmesini desteklemektedir. Koridor rekabeti Batılı aktörlerin stratejik önceliklerindeki ayrışmayı da görünür hâle getirmektedir. Avrupa Birliği tedarik güvenliği açısından Orta Koridor'a yönelirken, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri önceliğini IMEC'e vermektedir (Hamzaoglu 2026: 377, 381). Orta Koridor'un bu bölgesel ve jeoekonomik işlevi, Türkiye'nin farklı güç merkezleriyle ilişkilerini çeşitlendirme ve tek bir bağlantı ağına bağımlılığını azaltma arayışıyla birlikte değerlendirildiğinde, koridorun stratejik korunma politikasındaki rolünü de görünür hâle getirmektedir.

Uluslararası sistemde orta ölçekli bir aktör olan Türkiye, herhangi bir küresel güce bütünüyle bağımlı hâle gelmekten kaçınarak stratejik korunma (hedging) politikası izlemektedir. Bu yönelim, tek bir güç merkezine angaje olmak yerine dış ilişkilerin çeşitlendirilmesine ve farklı küresel aktörlerle eş zamanlı bağlantıların sürdürülmesine dayanmaktadır. Çin'in Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi ile bağlantıyı sağlayan Orta Koridor ve Çin sermayesinin Türkiye'deki altyapı projelerine yönelik ilgisi, Batı dışındaki ekonomik seçenekleri genişleterek ülkenin dış politika manevra alanını desteklemektedir. Türkiye'nin NATO bünyesindeki konumunu korurken Çin ile lojistik ve Rusya ile enerji temelli ilişkilerini eş zamanlı biçimde geliştirmesi, bloklar arasında kesin bir tercih yapmadan stratejik esnekliğini sürdürme arayışının bir göstergesidir. Bu nedenle Orta Koridor etrafında gelişen Avrasya bağlantıları, Batı ile yaşanabilecek dönemsel gerilimlerin etkisini dengeleyen ve Türkiye'nin küresel aktörler karşısındaki pazarlık kapasitesini destekleyen bir hedging aracı olarak değerlendirilmektedir (Tüysüzoglu 2025: 23-43). Türkiye'nin ulaştırma ağları üzerinden geliştirdiği bu stratejik çeşitlendirme, Orta Koridor'un doğu-batı eksenyle sınırlı kalmamakta, Kalkınma Yolu aracılığıyla güney-kuzey doğrultusunda da yeni bir bağlantı seçeneği kazanmaktadır.

Kalkınma Yolu, Irak'taki Büyük Fav Limanı'nı demiryolu ve kara yolu ağı üzerinden Türkiye'ye, buradan da Avrupa'ya bağlamayı öngören çok taraflı bir ulaştırma projesidir. Türkiye, Irak, Katar ve Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri'nin iş birliğiyle geliştirilen koridor, Süveyş Kanalı güzergâhına kıyasla taşıma süresini yaklaşık 15 gün azaltma ve Asya-Avrupa ticaretine daha hızlı ve uygun maliyetli bir alternatif sunma iddiası taşımaktadır. Doğu-batı ve kuzey-güney koridorlarını birbirine bağlayan yapısı, Türkiye'nin transit konumunu güçlendirirken ülkenin Avrupa'ya uzanan ticaret ağlarında merkezî bir bağlantı düğümü hâline gelmesine katkı sağlamaktadır (T.C. Ulaştırma ve Altyapı Bakanlığı 2024). Bununla birlikte söz konusu jeoekonomik kazanımların gerçekleşmesi, koridorun geçtiği Irak coğrafyasındaki güvenlik ve yönetim koşullarının elverişliliğine bağlıdır.

Kalkınma Yolu'nun Irak sınırları içerisinde geçen güzergâhı, Kandil, Sincar ve Süleymaniye gibi PKK unsurlarının varlık gösterdiği alanlara coğrafi yakınlığı nedeniyle önemli güvenlik riskleri taşımaktadır. Bu nedenle projenin sürdürülebilirliği, Türkiye'nin Erbil ve Bağdat yönetimleriyle geliştireceği güvenlik koordinasyonunun etkinliğine bağlıdır. Irak'ın federal yapısından kaynaklanan yetki ve kaynak paylaşımı sorunları, Irak Kürdistan Bölgesel Yönetimi'nin sürece sınırlı katılımı, yönetsel kapasite sorunları ve bütçe gecikmeleri de koridorun uygulanmasını zorlaştıran kurumsal engeller arasında yer almaktadır. Yüksek yatırım maliyetleri ile Irak ekonomisinin hidrokarbon gelirlerine bağımlı yapısı ise projeye ilave finansal riskler yüklemektedir. Bu unsurlar, Kalkınma Yolu'nun Türkiye açısından jeostratejik fırsatlar sunarken Irak'ın iç siyasi ve güvenlik koşullarına bağlı yeni bir asimetrik kırılganlık alanı da oluşturabileceğini göstermektedir (Bilgiç 2026: 76-87). Bu kırılganlıklar projenin uygulanabilirliğini sınırlasa da Kalkınma Yolu'nun diğer bölgesel koridorlarla bütünleşme kapasitesi, Türkiye açısından daha geniş bir stratejik işlev üretme potansiyelini korumaktadır.

Kalkınma Yolu Projesi, Türkiye'nin doğu-batı eksenindeki mevcut transit kapasitesini kuzey-güney yönlü ticaret akışlarıyla bütünleştirerek farklı ulaştırma hatlarının kesiştiği çok yönlü bir bağlantı yapısı oluşturmaktadır. Projenin Orta Koridor ve Zengezur Koridoru ile entegrasyon potansiyeli, Türkiye'nin ulaşım ağlarını daha geniş bir coğrafi ölçekte birbirine bağlamasına imkân sağlamaktadır. Bu bütünleşme, zaman ve maliyet avantajlarının yanında bölgesel ekonomik entegrasyonun derinleşmesi, siyasi diyalogun güçlenmesi ve Türkiye'nin Irak ile Körfez ülkeleriyle yeni iş birliği alanları geliştirmesi bakımından da önem taşımaktadır. Kalkınma Yolu'nun işlerlik kazanması, Türkiye'nin Avrasya'daki ticaret ağlarındaki konumunu güçlendirme ve bölgesel ölçekte daha etkin bir aktör hâline gelme potansiyeli taşımaktadır (Coşkun ve Çetin 2026: 2-25). Koridorlar arasındaki bu bütünleşme, Türkiye'nin lojistik kapasitesini genişletmenin yanı sıra tek bir güzergâha bağımlılıktan kaynaklanabilecek jeopolitik riskleri dağıtmasına da imkân tanımaktadır.

Kalkınma Yolu Projesi, Hürmüz Boğazı gibi kritik tıkaç noktalarında yoğunlaşan jeopolitik risklere karşı alternatif bir kara bağlantısı sunmaktadır. Tek bir güzergâha aşırı bağımlılığın yarattığı kırılganlık karşısında ticaret ve ulaştırma hatlarının çeşitlendirilmesi, bölgesel ekonomik dayanıklılığın artırılmasına ve dışsal şoklardan kaynaklanan risklerin dağıtılmasına katkı sağlamaktadır. IMEC ve Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi gibi farklı koridorların rekabet ettiği bir ortamda Kalkınma Yolu, Türkiye açısından ekonomik kazanım üretmenin ötesinde alternatif bağlantıları koruyan ve asimetrik bağımlılığı sınırlandıran bir stratejik korunma (hedging) aracı olarak değerlendirilmektedir (Akın 2026).

Orta Koridor ile Kalkınma Yolu birlikte değerlendirildiğinde, Türkiye'nin tek bir güzergâha veya güç merkezine bağımlılık geliştirmek yerine farklı coğrafi eksenlerde alternatif bağlantıları güçlendirdiği görülmektedir. Orta Koridor doğu-batı yönünde Avrasya bağlantısını desteklerken, Kalkınma Yolu güney-kuzey ekseninde Körfez ile Avrupa arasında yeni bir bağlantı alanı oluşturmaktadır. Bu çeşitlilik, Türkiye'nin ticaret seçeneklerini açık tutmasına, güzergâh risklerini dağıtmasına ve dış politika manevra alanını korumasına katkı sağlamaktadır. Bu yönüyle ulaştırma koridorları, Türkiye açısından stratejik korunma (hedging) politikasının fiziki ve jeoekonomik araçları olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Ampirik Bulgular: Türkiye'nin Ulaştırma Koridoru Diplomasisi Ve Jeo-Ekonomik Kapasitesi

Ampirik değerlendirmede 2021–2025 dönemi temel inceleme aralığı olarak belirlenmiş, uluslararası kuruluşların farklı veri üretim ve yayın takvimleri nedeniyle bazı yapısal göstergelerde mevcut en güncel gözlem yılı esas alınmıştır. Farklı dönemlere ait göstergeler ortak bir zaman serisi oluşturmak amacıyla değil, Türkiye'nin ticari kırılganlık, ulaştırma kapasitesi, lojistik performans ve düzenleyici yapı boyutlarını tamamlayıcı biçimde değerlendirmek amacıyla kullanılmıştır.

Türkiye'nin küresel deniz taşımacılığı ağlarıyla bağlantısallığını değerlendirmek amacıyla Liner Shipping Connectivity Index (LSCI) kullanılmaktadır. Endeks, bir ülkenin düzenli konteyner taşımacılığı hizmetleri üzerinden küresel denizcilik ağlarına entegrasyon düzeyini ölçmektedir (UNCTAD, t.y.). Türkiye'nin 2021–2025 dönemindeki bağlantısallık eğiliminin ortaya konulması amacıyla çeyreklik LSCI değerleri yıllık ortalamalara dönüştürülmüş ve bu değerler üzerinden yıllık büyüme oranları hesaplanmıştır.

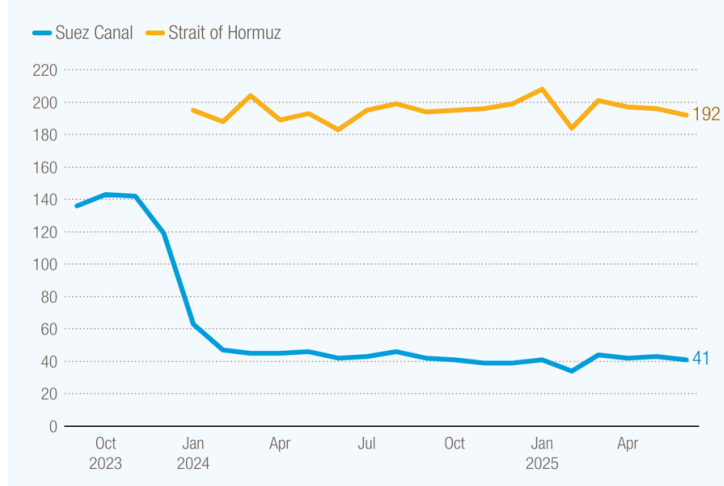
Tablo 1. LSCI değerleri yıllık büyüme oranı (UNCTAD, 2026)

Yıl	Büyüme Oranı
2021	1,78
2022	8,82
2023	10,02
2024	1,33
2025	9,88

Türkiye'nin düzenli konteyner taşımacılığı ağlarıyla bağlantısındaki yıllık değişim, 2021–2025 döneminde dalgalı ancak ağırlıklı olarak pozitif bir seyir göstermektedir. Bağlantısallıktaki artış

2021’de yüzde 1,78 ile sınırlı kalırken 2022’de yüzde 8,82’ye, 2023’te ise yüzde 10,02’ye yükselmiştir. Artış hızının 2024’te yüzde 1,33’e gerilemesinin ardından 2025’te yüzde 9,88’e çıkması, Türkiye’nin küresel düzenli konteyner taşımacılığı ağıyla bağlantısının dönem boyunca kesintisiz ve doğrusal bir gelişim göstermediğini, ancak özellikle 2022, 2023 ve 2025 yıllarında belirgin biçimde güçlendiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu eğilim, Türkiye’nin küresel deniz taşımacılığı ağlarıyla entegrasyonunun önemini koruduğunu göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte söz konusu bağlantısallığın büyük ölçüde deniz ulaştırma ağlarına dayanması, kritik deniz geçiş noktalarında meydana gelebilecek kesintilerin Türkiye’nin dış ticaret bağlantıları üzerindeki etkisinin ayrıca değerlendirilmesini gerekli kılmaktadır.

Türkiye’nin küresel deniz taşımacılığı ağlarıyla artan bağlantısallığı, bu ağların dayandığı kritik deniz geçiş noktalarında ortaya çıkabilecek jeopolitik kırılganlıkların da dikkate alınmasını gerekli kılmaktadır.



Şekil 1. Hürmüz Boğazı ve Süveyş Kanalından Aylık Gemi Geçiş Hacmi, Eylül 2023–Haziran 2025 (UNCTAD)

Süveyş Kanalı ve Hürmüz Boğazı verileri, küresel deniz ticaretinin kritik geçiş noktalarında yoğunlaşmasının yarattığı kırılganlığı açık biçimde ortaya koymaktadır. UNCTAD verilerine göre Süveyş Kanalı üzerinden geçen aylık gemi tonajı 2023 sonrasında keskin biçimde gerileyerek Haziran 2025’te yaklaşık 41 milyon gros ton seviyesine inerken, Hürmüz Boğazı’ndaki trafik aynı dönemde yüksek seyrini koruyarak yaklaşık 192 milyon gros ton düzeyinde gerçekleşmiştir. Süveyş’teki bu daralma, güvenlik krizlerinin kritik bir deniz geçiş noktasındaki ticaret akışını kısa sürede ciddi biçimde etkileyebildiğini göstermektedir. Buna karşılık Hürmüz’de devam eden yüksek trafik yoğunluğu, küresel ticaret ve enerji akışlarının stratejik boğazlara bağımlılığının sürdüğüne işaret etmektedir. Bu görünüm, deniz taşımacılığının yerine geçecek bir alternatif yaratmaktan ziyade, olası kesintiler karşısında ticaret akışlarını çeşitlendirecek kara ve demiryolu bağlantılarının jeoekonomik önemini artırmaktadır.

Bu kırılganlığın Türkiye açısından somut karşılığını değerlendirmek için dış ticaretin taşıma türlerine göre dağılımının incelenmesi önem taşımaktadır.

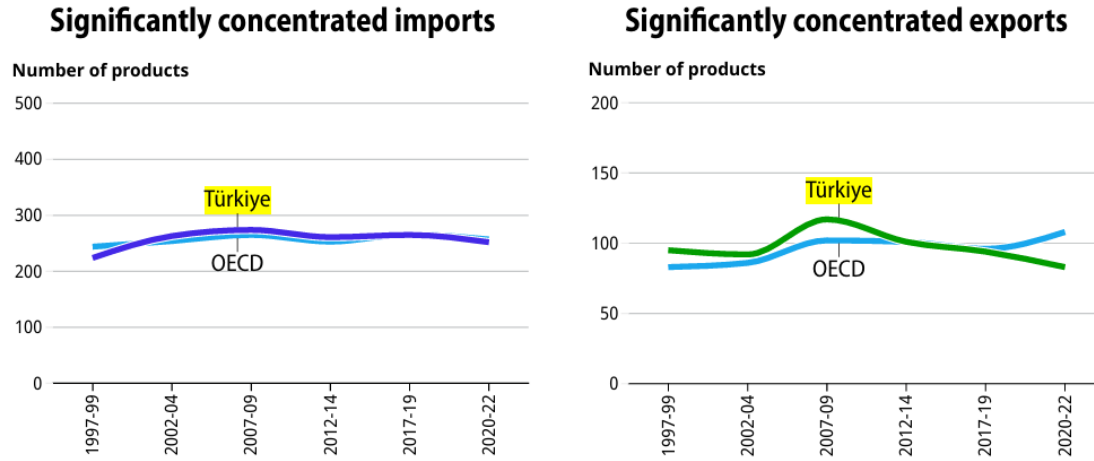
Tablo 2. Türkiye’nin Dış Ticaretinin Başlıca Taşıma Şekillerine Göre Dağılımı, 2021–2025 (TUIK)

Yıl	Deniz bağlantılı İhr./İth.	ve Karayolu İhr./İth.	Demiryolu bağlantılı İhr./İth.	ve Havayolu İhr./İth.	Toplam İhr./İth.
2021	133,7 / 157,4	68,7 / 48,9	1,6 / 2,9	18,7 / 26,1	225,2 / 271,4
2022	150,3 / 193,8	78,8 / 59,4	2,5 / 3,0	20,7 / 38,6	254,2 / 363,7
2023	143,3 / 195,4	83,1 / 67,0	2,0 / 2,0	25,5 / 53,8	255,6 / 362,0
2024	146,2 / 187,7	85,8 / 66,0	1,8 / 2,7	26,0 / 47,4	261,8 / 344,0

2025	153,7 / 196,0	87,2 / 69,5	1,9 / 3,4	28,3 / 53,6	273,2 / 365,4
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Taşıma şekline göre dış ticaret verileri, Türkiye'nin 2021–2025 döneminde deniz ağırlıklı ancak karayolunun da önemli bir yer tuttuğu çok modlu bir ticaret yapısına sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Deniz ve deniz bağlantılı taşımaların toplam ihracat içindeki payı 2021'de yaklaşık yüzde 59,4 iken 2025'te yüzde 56,3, ithalattaki payı ise aynı yıllarda sırasıyla yüzde 58,0 ve yüzde 53,6 düzeyinde gerçekleşmiştir. Karayolunun ihracattaki payı yüzde 30,5'ten yüzde 31,9'a, ithalattaki payı ise yüzde 18,0'den yüzde 19,0'a yükselmiştir. Buna karşılık demiryolu ve demiryolu bağlantılı taşımaların dış ticaret değerindeki payı dönem boyunca yaklaşık yüzde 1 düzeyinde kalmıştır. Bu yapı, Türkiye'nin dış ticaret bağlantılarında deniz yollarının ağırlığını koruduğunu ve karayolunun güçlü bir tamamlayıcı işlev üstlendiğini, buna karşılık demiryolu temelli dış ticaret bağlantılarının henüz sınırlı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Kritik deniz geçiş noktalarında ortaya çıkan kırılganlıklarla birlikte değerlendirildiğinde söz konusu dağılım, Orta Koridor ve Kalkınma Yolu gibi kara ve demiryolu bağlantılarının mevcut deniz ağının yerine geçen güzergâhlar olarak değil, ulaşım seçeneklerini çeşitlendiren ve dışsal şoklar karşısında alternatif erişim kapasitesi oluşturan stratejik hatlar olarak önem kazandığını göstermektedir. Taşıma türleri arasındaki bu dağılım, alternatif kara ve demiryolu bağlantılarının geliştirilmesinin yanında, söz konusu güzergâhları işler kılacak ulaştırma altyapısına yönelik yatırım kapasitesinin de önemini artırmaktadır.

Kritik deniz geçiş noktalarından kaynaklanan güzergâh risklerinin yanı sıra, ticaretin sınırlı sayıda tedarikçi veya pazarda yoğunlaşması da Türkiye'nin dış ekonomik bağlantılarındaki kırılganlığın değerlendirilmesini gerekli kılmaktadır.



Şekil 2. Türkiye’de Önemli Ölçüde Yoğunlaşmış İthalat ve İhracat Ürünlerinin Gelişimi, 1997–2022 (OECD, 2025)

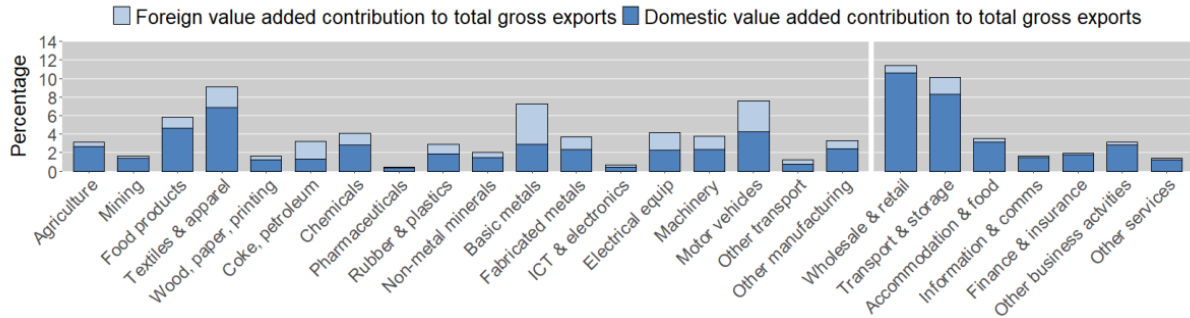
OECD verileri, Türkiye’de ticari yoğunlaşmanın ithalat ve ihracat tarafında farklı eğilimler gösterdiğine işaret etmektedir. Önemli ölçüde yoğunlaşmış ithalat ürünlerinin sayısı 1990’ların sonundan 2007–2009 dönemine kadar artmış, sonraki dönemlerde ise yüksek düzeyini büyük ölçüde korumuştur. İhracat tarafında ise 2007–2009 döneminde yükselen yoğunlaşmanın izleyen yıllarda gerilediği ve 2020–2022 döneminde OECD ortalamasının altında kaldığı görülmektedir. Bu asimetrik görünüm, Türkiye açısından kırılganlığın özellikle ithalat tarafında daha kalıcı olduğunu ve tedarik seçeneklerinin çeşitlendirilmesinin önemini koruduğunu göstermektedir. Ulaştırma koridorlarının çeşitlendirilmesi bu bağımlılığı tek başına ortadan kaldırmasa da alternatif tedarik ve erişim kanallarının korunmasına katkı sağlayabilecek tamamlayıcı bir stratejik kapasite oluşturmaktadır

Tablo 3. Türkiye’de Ulaştırma Sektörünün Cari Fiyatlarla Sabit Sermaye Yatırımları İçindeki Payı, 2021–2025 (%) (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Strateji Ve Bütçe Başkanlığı)

Yıl (Program)	Kamu (%)	Özel (%)	Toplam (%)
2021	34,5	30,1	30,7
2022	32,5	30,5	30,8
2023	33	29,3	29,7
2024	36,2	30,5	31,1
2025	35,1	32,5	32,8

Türkiye’de ulaştırma sektörünün cari fiyatlarla sabit sermaye yatırımları içindeki payı, 2021–2025 döneminde yüksek ve süreklilik gösteren bir düzeyde seyretmiştir. Ulaştırmanın toplam sabit sermaye yatırımları içindeki payı 2021’de yüzde 30,7 iken 2023’te yüzde 29,7’ye gerilemiş, ardından 2024’te yüzde 31,1’e ve 2025’te yüzde 32,8’e yükselmiştir. Kamu yatırımlarındaki ulaştırma payının dönem boyunca yüzde 32,5–36,2 aralığında kalması, özel sektör payının ise 2021’de yüzde 30,1’den 2025’te yüzde 32,5’e çıkması, ulaştırma altyapısının hem kamu hem de özel yatırım tercihleri açısından kalıcı bir ağırlığa sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu yatırım yapısı, Türkiye’nin coğrafi konumunu fiili transit kapasiteye dönüştürebilecek altyapı tabanının güçlendirildiğine işaret etmektedir. Orta Koridor ve Kalkınma Yolu gibi farklı güzergâhlarla birlikte değerlendirildiğinde söz konusu yatırım sürekliliği, Türkiye’nin ulaştırma ağlarındaki merkezî konumunu ve transit otonomi geliştirme kapasitesini destekleyen maddi unsurlardan biri olarak değerlendirilebilir.

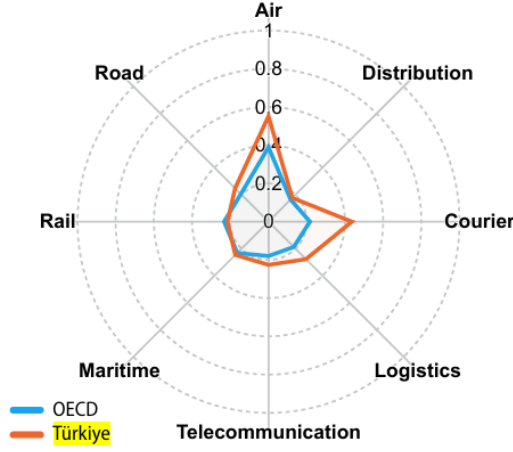
Ulaştırma altyapısına yönelik yatırım ağırlığının ekonomik karşılığının değerlendirilmesi, ulaştırma ve depolama faaliyetlerinin Türkiye’nin dış ticaretinde ürettiği katma değer de dikkate alınmasını gerekli kılmaktadır.



Şekil 3. Türkiye’de Sektörlerin Brüt İhracata Yerli ve Yabancı Katma Değer Katkısı, 2022 (OECD)

OECD TiVA verileri, ulaştırma ve depolama faaliyetlerinin Türkiye’nin dış ticaret yapısında önemli bir yerli katma değer kaynağı olduğunu göstermektedir. Ulaştırma ve depolama sektörünün 2022 yılında toplam brüt ihracata sağladığı yerli katma değer katkısının yüzde 8,3 düzeyinde gerçekleşmesi, sektörü toptan ve perakende ticaretin ardından ikinci sıraya taşımaktadır. Bu bulgu, Türkiye’nin ulaştırma ağlarındaki konumunun transit geçiş işleviyle sınırlı kalmadığını, lojistik faaliyetlerin doğrudan ekonomik değer üretme kapasitesi taşıdığını ortaya koymaktadır. Söz konusu ekonomik ağırlık, ulaştırma altyapısına yönelik yatırımlar ve alternatif koridorların geliştirilmesiyle birlikte değerlendirildiğinde, Türkiye’nin coğrafi konumunu daha yüksek katma değer üreten bir bağlantısallık kapasitesine dönüştürme potansiyelini desteklemektedir. Bu nedenle Orta Koridor ve Kalkınma Yolu gibi güzergâhlar, transit hareketliliğin yanında lojistik ve bağlantılı hizmetler üzerinden ekonomik değer üretme kapasitesi bakımından da önem taşımaktadır.

Ulaştırma ve depolama faaliyetlerinin dış ticarete yarattığı katma değer in sürdürülebilirliği, fiziki altyapının yanında küresel değer zincirlerini destekleyen ulaştırma ve lojistik hizmetlerindeki düzenleyici ortamın etkinliğine de bağlıdır.



Şekil 4. Türkiye’de Küresel Değer Zincirlerini Destekleyen Hizmetlerde Ticaret Kısıtları, 2024 (OECD, 2025)

OECD verileri, Türkiye’nin küresel değer zincirlerini destekleyen hizmetlerdeki düzenleyici kısıtlılığının sektörler arasında farklılaştığını göstermektedir. Türkiye’nin özellikle hava taşımacılığı ve kurye hizmetlerinde OECD ortalamasının üzerinde bir kısıtlılık düzeyine sahip olduğu, lojistik ve bazı ulaştırma hizmetlerinde de düzenleyici engellerin sürdüğü görülmektedir. Bu görünüm, ulaştırma altyapısına yapılan yatırımların transit kapasiteye dönüşmesinde fiziki altyapının tek başına yeterli olmadığını, hizmet piyasalarının açıklığı ve düzenleyici etkinliğin de belirleyici olduğunu göstermektedir. Dolayısıyla Orta Koridor ve Kalkınma Yolu üzerinden geliştirilen transit otonominin güçlenmesi, altyapı yatırımlarının yanında lojistik ve ulaştırma hizmetlerindeki düzenleyici engellerin azaltılmasına da bağlıdır. Bu düzenleyici koşulların Türkiye’nin genel lojistik kapasitesine nasıl yansığının değerlendirilmesi açısından Dünya Bankası Lojistik Performans Endeksi (LPI) tamamlayıcı bir gösterge sunmaktadır.

Tablo 4. Türkiye’nin Lojistik Performans Endeksi (LPI) ve Alt Bileşenleri, 2023 (World Bank, 2023)

Gösterge	Türkiye puanı	Gruplandırılmış sıra
Genel LPI	3,4	38
Gümrük	3	47
Ulaştırma ve ticaret altyapısı	3,4	43
Uluslararası sevkیات	3,4	26
Lojistik yetkinlik ve hizmet kalitesi	3,5	38
Zamanında teslimat	3,6	35
Takip ve izleme	3,5	37

Dünya Bankası Lojistik Performans Endeksi’ne göre Türkiye’nin 2023 yılı genel LPI puanı 3,4’tür. Alt bileşenlerde zamanında teslimat 3,6 ile en yüksek değeri alırken, lojistik yetkinlik ile takip ve izleme göstergeleri 3,5 düzeyindedir. Gümrük performansının 3,0 ile diğer bileşenlerin gerisinde kalması, Türkiye’nin lojistik kapasitesinde sınır ve gümrük süreçlerinin görece daha zayıf bir alan oluşturduğuna işaret etmektedir. Bu görünüm, ulaştırma altyapısına yapılan yatırımların transit kapasiteye dönüşmesinde fiziki altyapının yanında kurumsal ve operasyonel etkinliğin de belirleyici olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu görünüm, ulaştırma altyapısına yapılan yatırımların transit kapasiteye dönüşmesinde fiziki altyapının yanında kurumsal ve operasyonel etkinliğin de belirleyici olduğunu göstermektedir.

Bu bulgular birlikte değerlendirildiğinde, Türkiye'nin küresel ticaret ve ulaştırma ağlarına güçlü biçimde entegre olurken kritik deniz geçişleri, ithalat yoğunlaşması ve düzenleyici darboğazlardan kaynaklanan kırılganlıklarını sürdürdüğü, buna karşılık ulaştırma yatırımları, lojistik katma değer ve mevcut lojistik kapasitesiyle Orta Koridor ve Kalkınma Yolu gibi alternatif güzergâhlar üzerinden transit otonomisini güçlendirebilecek maddi ve kurumsal bir zemine sahip olduğu görülmektedir.

Sonuç

Küresel ulaştırma ağlarının jeopolitik rekabetin bir parçası hâline gelmesi, ekonomik karşılıklı bağımlılığın devletler açısından taşıdığı anlamı da değiştirmiştir. Ticaretin belirli limanlar, boğazlar, demiryolu hatları ve lojistik düğümler üzerinde yoğunlaşması, bağlantısallığın sağladığı ekonomik faydaların yanında kesinti ve dış baskı risklerini de artırmaktadır. Silahlaştırılmış karşılıklı bağımlılık yaklaşımı bu yapının merkezî ağ aktörlerine sağladığı güç kapasitesini açıklarken, çalışma orta gücün bu asimetrik yapı karşısındaki hareket alanına odaklanmıştır. Türkiye örneği, ulaştırma koridorlarının orta güç açısından ekonomik bağlantısallığın yanında bağımlılık risklerini dağıtma ve alternatif erişim imkânlarını koruma aracı olarak da değerlendirilebileceğini göstermektedir.

BKBY ve IMEC'in incelenmesi, küresel koridor rekabetinin farklı bağlantısallık modelleri üzerinden şekillendiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Çin merkezli altyapı ve finansman ağına dayanan BKBY ile çok taraflı bir ortaklık modeli olarak geliştirilen IMEC, farklı kurumsal özelliklere sahip olmakla birlikte ulaştırma altyapısının jeoekonomik rekabetteki artan önemini yansıtmaktadır. Türkiye'nin bu rekabet ortamındaki yaklaşımı ise tek bir koridor sistemine bütünüyle eklemlenmek yerine farklı coğrafi yönlerde bağlantı seçeneklerini geliştirme arayışıyla belirginleşmektedir. Orta Koridor'un Çin, Orta Asya, Kafkasya, Türkiye ve Avrupa arasında doğu-batı eksenli bir bağlantı oluşturması, Kalkınma Yolu'nun ise Körfez ile Avrupa arasında güney-kuzey yönlü yeni bir güzergâh öngörmesi, Türkiye'ye birbirini tamamlayan farklı transit seçenekleri sunmaktadır. Bu yapı, hedging yaklaşımındaki alternatif seçeneklerin korunması ve risklerin dağıtılması mantığının ulaştırma altyapısındaki karşılığı olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Ampirik bulgular da koridor çeşitlendirmesini gerekli kılan ekonomik ve lojistik koşulların Türkiye açısından mevcut olduğuna işaret etmektedir. LSCI göstergeleri Türkiye'nin küresel konteyner taşımacılığı ağlarıyla bağlantısının 2021–2025 döneminde genel olarak güçlendiğini, buna karşılık Süveyş Kanalı'nda 2023 sonrasında yaşanan keskin trafik kaybının stratejik geçiş noktalarındaki güvenlik şoklarının ticaret akışlarını kısa sürede etkileyebileceğini göstermektedir. Türkiye'nin dış ticaretinin taşıma türlerine göre dağılımı da deniz taşımacılığının ağırlığını koruduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Demiryolu ve demiryolu bağlantılı taşımaların dış ticaret değerindeki sınırlı payı ise alternatif kara ve demiryolu koridorlarının mevcut deniz ağlarının yerine geçecek güzergâhlardan çok, taşıma seçeneklerini çeşitlendiren tamamlayıcı hatlar olarak değerlendirilmesinin daha gerçekçi olduğunu göstermektedir.

Türkiye'nin kırılganlığı taşıma güzergâhlarıyla sınırlı değildir. OECD verilerinde ithalat tarafındaki ürün yoğunlaşmasının kalıcılık göstermesi, alternatif tedarik ve erişim seçeneklerinin korunmasının önemini artırmaktadır. Buna karşılık ulaştırma sektörünün 2021–2025 döneminde sabit sermaye yatırımları içerisindeki yüksek ağırlığını koruması ve ulaştırma ile depolama faaliyetlerinin 2022 yılında Türkiye'nin brüt ihracatına sağladığı yerli katma değer katkısının yüzde 8,3'e ulaşması, coğrafi konumun ekonomik kapasiteyle desteklenebileceğini göstermektedir. Bu bulgular, Türkiye'nin transit konumunun fiziki geçiş işleviyle sınırlı olmadığını ve ulaştırma bağlantısallığının katma değer üreten ekonomik faaliyetlerle desteklenebileceğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Bununla birlikte altyapı yatırımlarının tek başına transit otonomi üretmeye yeterli olmadığı görülmektedir. OECD göstergeleri ulaştırma ve lojistik hizmetlerinde düzenleyici kısıtların devam ettiğini ortaya koyarken, Dünya Bankası Lojistik Performans Endeksi'nde Türkiye'nin 2023 genel puanı 3,4 düzeyinde gerçekleşmiştir. Zamanında teslimat, lojistik yetkinlik ve takip-izleme göstergeleri görece güçlü bir görünüm sergilerken gümrük performansının 3,0 ile diğer bileşenlerin gerisinde kalması, sınır ve gümrük süreçlerinin geliştirilmesi gereken alanlardan biri olduğunu göstermektedir. Dolayısıyla transit otonominin güçlendirilmesi fiziki yatırımların yanında gümrük işlemleri,

düzenleyici uyum, dijitalleşme, intermodal bağlantılar ve lojistik hizmet kalitesinde sağlanacak ilerlemeye de bağlıdır.

Kalkınma Yolu bakımından Irak'taki güvenlik ve yönetim koşulları ilave bir sınır oluşturmaktadır. Güvenlik sorunları, federal ve bölgesel yönetimler arasındaki yetki ve kaynak paylaşımı, finansman ihtiyacı ve yönetsel kapasite, projenin öngörülen jeoekonomik işlevini gerçekleştirmesini doğrudan etkileyebilecek unsurlardır. Bu durum, ulaştırma koridorlarının asimetrik bağımlılığı azaltırken farklı coğrafyalara ve siyasi aktörlere bağlı yeni kırılğanlıklar da üretebileceğini göstermektedir. Transit otonomi bu nedenle bağımlılığın tamamen ortadan kaldırılması olarak değil, bağımlılıkların çeşitlendirilmesi ve herhangi bir güzergâhtaki kesintinin oluşturacağı maliyetin alternatif bağlantılar aracılığıyla sınırlandırılabilmesi olarak değerlendirilmelidir.

Sonuç olarak Türkiye'nin Orta Koridor ve Kalkınma Yolu politikası, tek bir güç merkezine veya ulaştırma güzergâhına bağımlılıktan kaçınmayı amaçlayan stratejik korunma yaklaşımının fiziki ve jeoekonomik boyutu olarak yorumlanabilir. Orta Koridor doğu-batı, Kalkınma Yolu ise güney-kuzey ekseninde alternatif bağlantı alanları oluşturarak Türkiye'nin güzergâh seçeneklerini çoğaltma potansiyeli taşımaktadır. Bu çeşitlendirme, Türkiye'nin küresel ticaret ağlarından kopmadan farklı güç merkezleriyle ilişkilerini sürdürebilmesine ve dışsal şoklar karşısında hareket alanını koruyabilmesine katkı sağlayabilir. Ancak mevcut veriler Orta Koridor ve Kalkınma Yolu'nun sistemik kesintilerin etkisini fiilen azalttığını doğrudan ölçmemektedir. Bulgular daha sınırlı fakat akademik olarak daha savunulabilir biçimde, Türkiye'nin koridor çeşitlendirmesini gerekli kılan kırılğanlıklara sahip olduğunu ve alternatif güzergâhları destekleyebilecek önemli bir ulaştırma, lojistik ve ekonomik kapasite geliştirdiğini göstermektedir. Koridorların gerçekleştirmiş yük hacimleri, taşıma süreleri ve kesinti dönemlerindeki yön değiştirme etkilerini içeren karşılaştırmalı verilerin ilerleyen yıllarda oluşması, transit otonomi ile koridor çeşitlendirmesi arasındaki ilişkinin daha doğrudan sınanmasına imkân sağlayacaktır.

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TEMPORAL PROXIMITY DOES NOT ESTABLISH INSTITUTIONAL FOLLOW UP: UN PRACTICE CONCERNING ICJ PROVISIONAL MEASURES (2002–2025)

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ABSTRACT

Although *LaGrand* clarified the binding force of provisional measures indicated by the International Court of Justice, their institutional reception within the United Nations remains insufficiently examined at the level of individual orders. Existing scholarship has focused primarily on state compliance, the enforcement of judgments under Article 94(2) of the UN Charter, and the political constraints surrounding Security Council decision making. Less attention has been paid to whether subsequent UN activity responds to a particular judicial order or simply reflects the continuing political life of the underlying dispute. This article addresses that distinction through a doctrinal examination of 41 ICJ decisions on requests for provisional measures in 27 contentious cases, combined with a document-based analysis of official United Nations records. Rather than treating temporal proximity as evidence of institutional follow-up, the study requires documentary evidence linking a Security Council or General Assembly process to the relevant order. The findings show that same-dispute political attention is considerably more common than verifiable order-specific engagement. Confirmed engagement is concentrated in *South Africa v. Israel* and appears through both Security Council and General Assembly processes, although none of the identified processes resulted in adopted collective action. The General Assembly pathway is legally distinct from the notification mechanism established by Article 41(2). The findings therefore demonstrate that notification, political attention, and institutional engagement should not be treated as interchangeable concepts. The article develops an auditable empirical-legal framework for distinguishing engagement with a specific judicial order from broader crisis diplomacy.

Keywords: International Court of Justice, provisional measures, Article 41(2), UN Security Council, General Assembly, institutional engagement.

INTRODUCTION

The binding force of provisional measures under Article 41 of the ICJ Statute is no longer the principal doctrinal uncertainty that it once was. In *LaGrand*, the Court reconciled the authentic English and French texts of Article 41 through the interpretive logic reflected in Articles 31 to 33 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and held that indicated measures create legal obligations for the addressee state.¹⁰ Rosenne (2005) reconstructs the same interpretive development from the earlier bilingual ambiguity to *LaGrand*.¹¹ That clarification did not, however, resolve a different institutional problem: what happens within the United Nations after a provisional measures order is issued and, under Article 41(2), communicated to the Security Council? Bindingness, notification, and downstream political organ practice are analytically distinct stages, and notification itself runs only to the parties and the Security Council, not to the General Assembly.

The distinction has become especially consequential in disputes already embedded in sustained Security Council and General Assembly activity. The 2022 *Ukraine v. Russian Federation* proceedings and the

10 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 23 May 1969, 1155 U.N.T.S. 331, arts. 31 to 33.

11 International Court of Justice, *LaGrand* (Germany v. United States of America), Judgment, 27 June 2001, Case No. 104.

three provisional measures orders issued in *South Africa v. Israel* in 2024 illustrate the difficulty.¹² In such settings, a UN meeting, draft resolution, vote, or statement occurring shortly after an ICJ order may simply reflect the continuing political life of the dispute. Temporal sequence alone cannot establish that the political organ engaged with the judicial order itself.

The literature identifies the legal and political components of this problem but has not supplied a common measurement rule. Ramsden and Jiang (2023) show that ICJ provisional measures can enter the deliberative practice of UN political organs, while documenting substantial variation in the form and intensity of that engagement. Schulte (2004) reads Article 94(2) restrictively, emphasizing that its textual reference to a “judgment” does not automatically extend to provisional measures. A recent contrary view argues that Article 94(2) can be invoked to secure compliance with binding provisional measures, particularly in *South Africa v. Israel* (Akhtar, 2026). The present article does not attempt to settle that doctrinal controversy. Its narrower question is empirical: after a provisional measures order is issued, what observable UN practice, in either the Security Council or the General Assembly, can be linked to the specific order rather than merely to the underlying dispute?

The article addresses that question by combining doctrinal analysis with a document based empirical design. It constructs a legal corpus of 41 provisional measures orders in 27 contentious cases and an assembled universe of Security Council and General Assembly records within predefined document categories. A symmetric 180 day temporal screen identifies potentially proximate order event combinations. A case dictionary screen then selects candidates for manual full text review. The primary outcome is not “implementation” or “collective action” in the strong sense. It is order specific institutional engagement, defined through observable documentary conditions and disaggregated into deliberative engagement, proposed collective action, and adopted collective action. This narrower terminology is important because the positive records include a vetoed draft resolution and Council/Assembly meeting records, none of which constitutes an adopted collective decision.

The empirical contribution is therefore principally one of measurement. Posner and de Figueiredo (2005) demonstrated that ICJ practice can be analysed systematically through quantitative methods. This article extends that empirical orientation to the institutional aftermath of provisional measures. The design asks whether temporal proximity, dispute level attention, and order specific institutional engagement produce materially different pictures of UN practice, and whether the Security Council and General Assembly channels, which rest on different legal bases, should be reported separately rather than pooled. It also examines reporting requirements and permanent member involvement only as exploratory descriptive patterns, because the primary outcome occurs in two orders located within a single case file.

Literature review

Binding effect and the scope of provisional measures

The doctrinal starting point is no longer whether provisional measures can create binding legal obligations. LaGrand resolved the long standing controversy by interpreting Article 41 of the ICJ Statute through the authentic English and French texts, read in light of context, object, and purpose.¹³ The interpretive logic corresponds to Articles 31 to 33 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties,

12 International Court of Justice, *Allegations of Genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Ukraine v. Russian Federation)*, Order of 16 March 2022, Case No. 182. See also *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, Orders of 26 January, 28 March, and 24 May 2024, Case No. 192.

13 International Court of Justice, *LaGrand (Germany v. United States of America)*, Judgment, 27 June 2001, Case No. 104.

while Rosenne (2005)¹⁴ reconstructs the path by which the Court moved from bilingual ambiguity to binding legal obligation. That holding matters here because it separates the legal force of the Court's order from a different question that positive law does not answer automatically: how a binding interim order enters the institutional practice of other United Nations organs after it is issued.

The subsequent doctrine has developed around the protective function of provisional measures rather than around bindingness alone. Palchetti (2008) shows that the Court's power to prevent aggravation of a dispute has generally remained linked to the protection of identifiable rights, while Oellers-Frahm (2011) places interim protection within the institutional history of international adjudication and treats it as part of the judicial function itself. The Rules of Court provide the procedural architecture for requests and proprio motu action in Articles 73 to 75.¹⁵ Read together, these sources indicate that provisional measures are neither an exceptional political intervention nor a mere procedural recommendation. They are a judicial device whose authority is legally structured even when later enforcement remains institutionally contingent.

Miles (2017) broadens that point through comparison across the ICJ, ITLOS, inter state arbitration, and investor state arbitration. Requirements such as prima facie jurisdiction, plausibility, linkage between the right asserted and the measure requested, irreparable prejudice, and urgency have produced a recognizable trans institutional law of interim protection. The relevance for this study is analytical. A mature doctrine governing the issuance of interim measures does not itself tell us what political organs do with those measures after they are issued. The downstream institutional stage therefore requires a separate object of inquiry rather than an inference from the strength of the judicial doctrine.

The most recent empirical literature also makes the post LaGrand period important in its own right. Saengkrai and Yüksel (2026) identify a 'LaGrand effect' in the demand and supply of ICJ provisional measures, reporting patterns consistent with increased state demand and a more cautious judicial response after bindingness was clarified. Their unit of analysis is the request and the individual measure before the Court. The present article begins where that analysis ends. If provisional measures have become more salient to litigants and more consequential in judicial practice, the institutional afterlife of those orders within the United Nations becomes a distinct empirical question. This article therefore shifts attention from the production of provisional measures to their reception by political organs.

Article 41(2), Article 94(2), and inter organ relations

Article 41(2) of the ICJ Statute and Article 94(2) of the UN Charter perform different legal functions.¹⁶ The Statute requires notice of provisional measures to the parties and to the Security Council specifically, it creates no corresponding notification channel to the General Assembly. Article 94(2) of the Charter, by contrast, authorizes a party to a case to have recourse to the Council when the other party fails to perform obligations incumbent upon it under a Court judgment. The distinction matters because notification is automatic institutional transmission to one organ only, while enforcement depends on a further legal and political process. Treating either as evidence of the other, or treating General Assembly engagement as if it arrived through the same Article 41(2) channel, would collapse legally distinct stages and institutions.

The relationship between Articles 41(2) and 94(2) is contested rather than settled. Schulte (2004) emphasizes the Charter's reference to a 'judgment' and accordingly resists an automatic extension of Article 94(2) to provisional measures merely because LaGrand established their binding character. Akhtar (2026), writing directly in the context of *South Africa v. Israel*, advances a broader reading under which the Security Council may be engaged to secure compliance with binding provisional measures

14 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 23 May 1969, 1155 U.N.T.S. 331, arts. 31 to 33.

15 International Court of Justice, Rules of Court (1978), arts. 73 to 75.

16 Statute of the International Court of Justice, art. 41(2). Charter of the United Nations, art. 94(2).

and argues that Article 94 can support such recourse. These positions differ on the legal availability of an enforcement route. The present study does not choose between them, and it does not treat the Security Council's actual conduct in this dataset as an Article 94(2) action merely because it references a provisional measures order: none of the official Security Council records reviewed for this study (including S/PV.9552) itself invokes Article 94(2) by name. The study instead asks an anterior empirical question: what, if anything, do the political organs actually do after a provisional measures order is issued, and can that conduct be linked to the particular order rather than to the dispute generally?

The broader Court Council literature reinforces the need to avoid a hierarchical model. Gowlland-Debbas (1994) reads the Lockerbie episode as an instance of overlapping judicial and political competence. Alvarez (1996) approaches the same institutional field through the possibilities and limits of judicial scrutiny of Security Council action, while Reisman (1993) situates Lockerbie within a wider constitutional debate about authority inside the United Nations. These accounts do not imply that the Court and Council perform equivalent functions. They show instead that both organs may address the same conflict through different legal mandates, which makes documentary specificity essential when attributing a later Council or Assembly act to a particular ICJ order.

Ramsden and Jiang (2023) come closest to the present empirical problem. Their study demonstrates that ICJ provisional measures decisions can enter the deliberative practice of United Nations political organs and that the character of this interaction varies considerably across cases. That contribution establishes the plausibility of an inter organ dialogue. It also exposes the measurement problem developed here. A political organ may discuss the same crisis, cite the Court, or debate a related draft without necessarily responding to the operative content of the matched order. The central gap is therefore not proof that interaction can occur, but a replicable rule for distinguishing dispute level political activity from order specific institutional engagement, applied separately to each political organ rather than pooled into a single legal mechanism claim.

Compliance, enforcement, and Security Council politics

Compliance scholarship provides a further reason not to infer institutional consequences from legal obligation. Paulson (2004) documents substantial variation in compliance with final ICJ judgments, and Llamzon (2007) shows that jurisdictional form and institutional context complicate simple compliance classifications. Those studies concern state behaviour and merits judgments rather than UN organ engagement with provisional measures. Their analytical relevance is nonetheless direct. Binding law does not mechanically produce a uniform behavioural response, and the absence of a simple legal to political transmission mechanism should be treated as an empirical proposition rather than an assumption.

Security Council politics adds a distributional dimension. Voeten (2005) conceptualizes the Council's legitimating capacity as rooted in bargains among powerful states, while Luck (2006) emphasizes the institutional discretion built into the Charter system. These perspectives place the present study closer to a realist or institutionalist account than to a purely legalist one. Judicial authority may establish a binding norm, but the conversion of that norm into political organ engagement occurs in an arena structured by veto power, alliance relationships, agenda control, and strategic selectivity. The article does not model those mechanisms causally because the observed positive outcome is too sparse. It treats them as theoretically relevant constraints that discipline interpretation of the descriptive patterns.

Judicial independence, legitimacy, and institutional effectiveness

A parallel body of international relations and international law scholarship asks whether the effects of adjudication can be separated from the political conditions under which courts operate. Higgins (1968) treated the boundary between legal and political considerations as a foundational problem of international adjudication. Briggs (1987), writing after the Nicaragua merits judgment, defended the Court's capacity to decide highly politicized disputes through recognizably judicial reasoning. The

tension between these positions remains relevant here because post order political activity may reflect the normative authority of the Court, the strategic interests of states, or a combination of both.

Posner and Yoo (2005) formulate the problem in institutional design terms and question the assumption that greater judicial independence necessarily maximizes tribunal effectiveness. Their claim has been extensively contested, but it identifies a useful distinction between judicial autonomy and downstream institutional consequence. A legally authoritative order can encounter political filters after it leaves the courtroom. Alter's (2008) agent trustee framework offers a different vocabulary for the same institutional tension by distinguishing delegated bodies that remain closely vulnerable to political principals from institutions granted more autonomous authority. The Security Council is not a principal of the Court in a simple bilateral sense, yet these theories help explain why legal authority and political uptake should not be treated as the same dependent variable.

Voeten's work further complicates any simple autonomy versus control dichotomy. His analysis of international judicial appointments shows how states can shape courts *ex ante* through selection processes (Voeten, 2009), while his broader treatment of international judicial independence cautions against reducing independence to a single institutional attribute (Voeten, 2012). For the present article, these insights matter less as causal hypotheses than as safeguards against a sequential story in which a Court acts independently and politics begins only afterward. Judicial institutions and political organs are embedded in a common system of delegation, authority, and state power even though they exercise distinct competences.

Shany's (2012) goal based framework provides the most useful bridge from this theoretical debate to measurement. He argues that international court effectiveness should be assessed against specified goals rather than inferred from visibility, citation, or generalized influence. Applied here, that principle requires a deliberately narrow outcome. The study does not measure whether a provisional measures order is politically salient, whether states comply with it, or whether the ICJ is generally effective. It measures whether a subsequent Security Council or General Assembly process can be linked through official documentary evidence to the specific order. The operational definition is therefore a function of the institutional outcome being studied rather than a claim about the total impact of the Court.

The distinction also bears on legitimacy and public authority. Von Bogdandy and Venzke (2013) argue that international courts perform functions beyond dispute settlement, including stabilizing normative expectations, contributing to law making, and exercising public authority. Dothan (2013) emphasizes the strategic relationship between international courts, states, and wider audiences in the production of legitimacy. These approaches imply that an ICJ order may matter even when it does not generate a formal Council or Assembly decision. References to an order may legitimate a position, structure debate, or signal legal constraint. Such effects are analytically important, but they should not be mislabeled as order specific collective implementation.

Accountability scholarship points in the same direction. Kingsbury, Krisch, and Stewart (2005) conceptualize global governance as a dispersed field of administrative and accountability relationships rather than a single chain of command. Grant and Keohane (2005) distinguish participation based from delegation based forms of accountability and show why global accountability is distributed across institutions with different sources of authority. A provisional measures order can be placed within this broader architecture as the origin of formal and informal transmission mechanisms that differ by organ: a formal notification channel to the Security Council under Article 41(2), and a separate, non notification based political and legal reception by the General Assembly. Whether either channel produces deliberation, a proposed collective measure, an adopted decision, or no identifiable political organ response is an empirical matter that must be established from the documentary record, organ by organ.

Research gap and analytical proposition

The literature therefore supports a narrower and more defensible research gap than the claim that UN treatment of provisional measures is wholly unexamined. Doctrine establishes bindingness and frames

the disputed legal routes to enforcement. International relations scholarship explains why political uptake is likely to be selective. Existing work also demonstrates that political organs sometimes engage with ICJ provisional measures. What remains insufficiently measured is the transition between these levels at the order specific scale, reported separately for the Security Council and the General Assembly rather than as a single pooled institutional outcome. Temporal proximity is an especially tempting proxy because it is easy to observe, yet in a crisis already before either organ it risks attributing ongoing diplomacy to a judicial order that the political record never actually engages.

The article's analytical proposition follows from this synthesis. A provisional measures order should be treated as the beginning of a possible inter organ process, not as evidence that institutional follow up has occurred, and the Security Council's Article 41(2) notification channel should not be conflated with the General Assembly's separate, non notification based engagement. A subsequent act is classified as order specific institutional engagement only when the documentary record establishes the same dispute, a connection to the matched order, an identifiable UN political organ process, and an official evidentiary source. This proposition is compatible with different views of Article 94(2), judicial independence, and Security Council politics because it does not presuppose why engagement occurs. It establishes a threshold for identifying whether it occurs at all, separately for each organ.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design, scope, and units of analysis

The study adopts an observational, document-based research design that combines doctrinal classification with the systematic analysis of United Nations records. The legal corpus comprises 41 ICJ decisions on requests for provisional measures issued in 27 contentious cases between 10 July 2002 and 12 September 2025. Twenty decisions indicated new binding measures and four modified measures already in force. These 24 orders constitute the primary analytical sample. Three additional orders reaffirmed existing measures and are included only in the sensitivity analysis, producing a 27-order sensitivity sample. Twelve requests were rejected and two were withdrawn or discontinued. These decisions remain part of the legal corpus but are excluded from the downstream engagement rate because they did not produce operative provisional measures for subsequent institutional follow-up.

The 24 primary orders are distributed across 17 case files rather than 24 independent disputes. Multiple qualifying orders may therefore arise within the same contentious case, as occurred in *South Africa v. Israel*. This clustering matters because orders issued within the same dispute share parties, factual circumstances, and much of the surrounding United Nations agenda. The 27 contentious cases in the full legal corpus are therefore analytically distinct from the 27 orders included in the sensitivity sample. The numerical equality reflects different units of analysis rather than the same set of observations.

The empirical analysis links ICJ orders to subsequent activity in the Security Council and General Assembly. Four analytical units are distinguished throughout the study: the UN document or event, the ICJ order–UN event pair, the individual ICJ order, and the ICJ case file. Security Council and General Assembly practice is analysed separately because the two organs engage with provisional measures through different legal and institutional pathways. Earlier authorities such as *Nicaragua*, *Lockerbie*, and *LaGrand* inform the doctrinal framework but are not included in the empirical estimands.¹⁷

17 International Court of Justice, *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v. United States of America)*, Provisional Measures, Order of 10 May 1984, Case No. 70. *Questions of Interpretation and Application of the 1971 Montreal Convention arising from the Aerial Incident at Lockerbie (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya v. United Kingdom)*, Provisional Measures, Order of 14 April 1992, Case No. 88. *LaGrand (Germany v. United States of America)*, Judgment of 27 June 2001, Case No. 104.

Table 1. Analytical samples and units

Component	Definition	N	Analytical role
Legal corpus	All Court decisions on requests for provisional measures, 2002 to 2025	41 decisions / 27 cases	Doctrinal population
Primary sample	Orders indicating new or modified binding measures	24 orders / 17 cases	Headline order specific engagement rate
Sensitivity sample	Primary sample + reaffirmation orders	27 orders	Robustness check only
Manual review layer	Dictionary screened order event pairs	233 pairs / 154 events / 137 documents	Source of the nominal linkage codes

UN record universe and candidate selection

Data collection and coding were closed on 30 August 2026. The UN side dataset contains 13,692 unique structured event records assembled from official Security Council and General Assembly meeting records, agenda records, draft resolutions, resolutions, voting records, and veto records, including records available through the United Nations Digital Library.¹⁸ The term “assembled universe” is used deliberately: the study claims completeness only within these predefined sources and document categories, not across every possible form of UN activity. Let O denote the set of 41 ICJ orders and E the set of 13,692 structured UN events. The theoretical order event search space is therefore:

$$|\Omega| = |O \times E| = 41 \times 13,692 = 561,372 \quad (1)$$

For each order i and event j , temporal distance is measured in calendar days:

$$\Delta_{ij} = \text{date}(e_j) - \text{date}(o_i) \quad (2)$$

A symmetric 180 day screen is applied only as an eligibility rule:

$$R_{ij} = \mathbb{1} \{ |\Delta_{ij}| \leq 180 \} \quad (3)$$

The temporal screen reduces 561,372 theoretical combinations, generated from the full 41 order corpus, not from the 24 order primary sample, to 17,413 eligible pairs. The 17,413 pairs were not all treated as manually adjudicated observations. Case dictionaries, comprising party names, distinctive dispute terms, official agenda labels, known document symbols, and case specific exclusion terms, served as the candidate selection mechanism for full text review. Pairs identified by that screen were advanced to manual documentary review. The dictionary match itself was never treated as evidence of legal linkage. The screen yielded 233 order event pairs corresponding to 154 unique UN events represented by 137 official files.

Because the dictionary stage determines which temporally eligible pairs enter manual review, false negatives among the screened out pairs cannot be excluded. A dedicated post hoc recall check confirmed this concern directly: cross referencing the 17,413 pair universe against an independent, evidence based

¹⁸ United Nations Digital Library, official repository for Security Council and General Assembly records, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/>.

re screen identified one General Assembly record, A/78/PV.59 (4 March 2024), that had been entirely absent from the 17,413 pair universe despite explicitly discussing the binding character of the 26 January 2024 South Africa v. Israel order, and flagged 120 additional pairs across the corpus carrying the strongest independent evidence of an explicit ICJ term match for further review. All 120 were subsequently opened and read in full. None satisfied the same dispute and explicit order link conditions required for order specific engagement, 113 concerned routine ICJ judicial elections, 5 were routine closed meeting briefings by the sitting ICJ President to the Security Council with no case specific content disclosed, 1 concerned an unrelated judgment (*Avena, Mexico v. United States*), and 1 (a closed Security Council briefing, S/PV.9756) could not be linked to any specific case from its available text. A/78/PV.59 was added as a fourth positive documentary record once verified. The article therefore describes the 233 pair layer, plus the one verified addition, as a dictionary screened manual review set subject to an independent recall check, not as an exhaustive adjudication of all 17,413 eligible pairs. This limitation also narrows the reproducibility claim: the downstream calculations are reproducible from the archived coding tables and scripts, but the present conference paper does not claim that every temporally eligible pair was independently hand reviewed.

Document integrity and manual coding

All substantive legal and institutional coding was conducted manually by the sole author through direct review of official ICJ and UN materials. File integrity controls use SHA 256 digests: the digest stored at retrieval is compared with the digest recomputed at analysis time. This verifies that the file used in analysis has not changed. It does not validate the legal classification by itself. Substantive validity rests on the documentary passage, case identity, explicit order linkage, institutional process, and official source status recorded in the coding workbook.

Event duplication is controlled at the document/process level by a composite key using event date, document symbol, and institutional process. Multiple representations of the same Council or Assembly process, for example, a draft resolution and its associated meeting/vote record, are preserved as distinct documentary event keys when analytically relevant but are not automatically interpreted as separate institutional processes. This distinction is reported explicitly in the findings.

Security Council and General Assembly as separate institutional channels

Article 41(2) creates a notification channel that runs only to the parties and the Security Council. It creates no corresponding channel to the General Assembly. Any General Assembly engagement with a provisional measures order therefore arises through a separate institutional and legal pathway, in the one verified instance identified in this study, through the General Assembly's standing procedure for debating the use of the veto under resolution 76/262, triggered by a Security Council veto rather than by the ICJ order itself. Accordingly, this study reports Security Council and General Assembly results separately rather than as a single pooled "UN political organs" measure. Where an aggregate figure is reported for descriptive convenience, it is explicitly labelled as a cross organ summary and not as evidence of one unified legal mechanism.

Operationalization of institutional engagement

These four conditions are conjunctive, not disjunctive: a state representative merely mentioning the Court, or a general debate that touches the same crisis, satisfies at most the same case condition and does not by itself establish an explicit connection to the matched order or an identifiable institutional process. Only a record that independently satisfies all four conditions is coded as order specific engagement.

The primary construct is order specific institutional engagement, not implementation or adopted collective action. Four observable conditions are evaluated independently for each reviewed pair, for each organ. First, the event must concern the same case or dispute. Second, the record must contain an

explicit connection to the relevant ICJ order. Third, the record must form part of an identifiable institutional process within the Security Council or General Assembly. Fourth, the evidence must come from an official source. Broad dispute level attention is defined only by same dispute identity:

$$Broad_{ij} = \mathbb{1} \{ SameCase_{ij} = 1 \} \quad (4)$$

The primary order specific engagement indicator is defined from the observable conditions rather than from a pre existing code label:

$$Engage_{ij} = \mathbb{1} \{ SameCase_{ij} \wedge ExplicitOrderLink_{ij} \wedge InstitutionalProcess_{ij} \wedge OfficialSource_{ij} \} \quad (5)$$

The nominal 0 to 3 coding scheme is a derived reporting classification, not an input into Equation (5). Code 0 denotes an unrelated case or file. Code 1 denotes thematic overlap without same dispute identity. Code 2 denotes same dispute attention that does not satisfy all order specific engagement conditions. Code 3 denotes a pair satisfying Equation (5). Code 9 is reserved for unresolved document or case identity. This ordering removes the circularity that would arise if code 3 were used to define the outcome that, in turn, defines code 3.

Order specific engagement is further described by institutional form. Deliberative engagement refers to official meeting or briefing records that explicitly engage the relevant order. Proposed collective action refers to a draft resolution or comparable proposal that explicitly engages the order but is not adopted. Adopted collective action is the highest threshold and requires an adopted collective output explicitly connected to the order. All three verified positive institutional processes in the present sample fall into the first two categories. None is described as adopted collective action.

Temporal estimands and aggregation

For each post order window w in $\{30, 90, 180\}$, an order is positive for outcome k when at least one qualifying pair occurs between the date of the ICJ order and day w :

Here $Q_{ij}^{(k)}$ is an indicator equal to 1 if reviewed pair (i, j) satisfies outcome k 's own definition (Equation 4 for dispute level attention, Equation 5 for order specific engagement) and 0 otherwise. It is not a separately coded variable, but shorthand for whichever pair level condition defines the outcome k currently being aggregated.

$$Y_i^{(k)}(w) = \mathbb{1} \{ \exists j: 0 \leq \Delta_{ij} \leq w \wedge Q_{ij}^{(k)} = 1 \} \quad (6)$$

Windows are anchored to the order date because no separate Article 41(2) notification date was collected for the orders in this corpus. Article 41(2) is retained as legal and institutional context for the Security Council channel but is not used as a measured temporal origin. The study does not report a separate pre order diagnostic because the available analytical dataset does not support a systematic pre order distribution. Removing it from the estimand architecture avoids introducing an unreported measure.

Order level rates are calculated as the share of legally eligible orders with a positive window specific indicator:

$$\hat{p}_k(w) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N Y_i^{(k)}(w) \quad (7)$$

The same estimator produces the 30, 90, and 180 day dispute level attention rates, the order specific engagement rate, and the $N = 27$ sensitivity estimate reported below, calculated separately for the 24 order primary sample.

Reporting requirements: a descriptive comparison

Only two primary orders satisfy the order specific engagement definition, and both belong to the same case file. Conventional inferential statistics are therefore not appropriate for this comparison. The relationship between an explicit reporting requirement and order specific engagement is reported descriptively only, as a 2x2 cross tabulation (Table 4), without a formal significance test or confidence interval: with the outcome concentrated in a single case file, any p value or interval would rest on an independent observations assumption the design cannot support, and reporting one risks conveying more inferential confidence than the data can bear.

Computational workflow and research responsibility

Python and R were used only after substantive coding for data assembly, validation, aggregation, and figure production. All legal definitions, inclusion decisions, linkage judgments, and substantive interpretations were made manually by the author. The project archive contains the coding tables and analytical scripts used for downstream verification, but the conference manuscript makes no claim that a public replication repository accompanies this version.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Sample construction and coding distribution

The evidence architecture narrows sharply between temporal proximity and document supported engagement. The theoretical cross product, generated from the full 41 order legal corpus, contains 561,372 order event combinations. The symmetric temporal screen retains 17,413 eligible pairs, also drawn from the full 41 order corpus. The case dictionary selection mechanism advances 233 pairs to manual full text review, corresponding to 154 unique UN events represented by 137 official files, plus one further verified record (A/78/PV.59) recovered through the independent recall check described in Materials and Methods. At the order level, 24 observations form the primary sample and 27 the sensitivity sample. Figure 1 visualises these stages on a logarithmic count axis while explicitly identifying the different analytical units. The bars are not interpreted as directly comparable quantities.

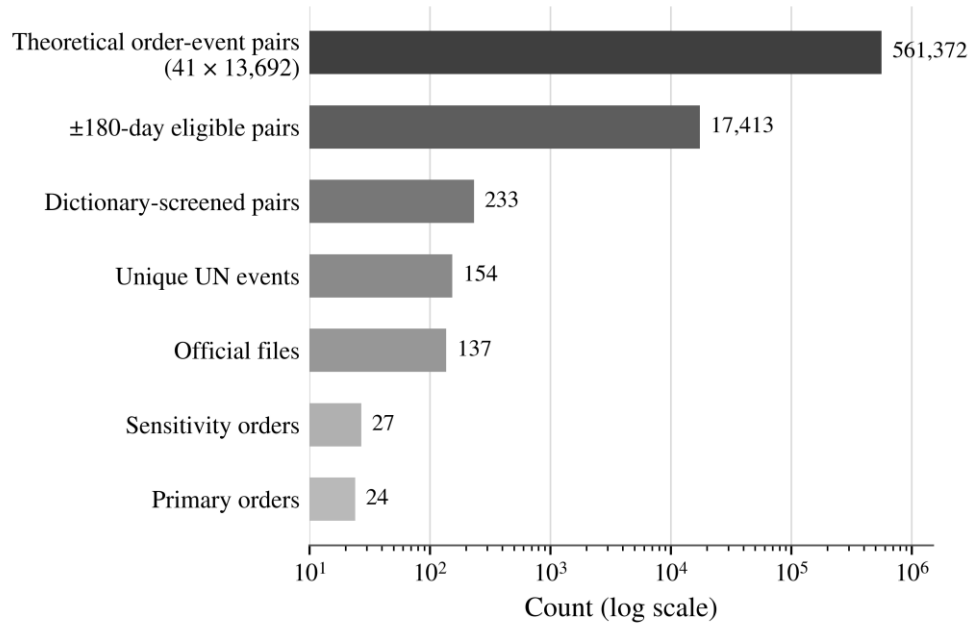


Figure 1. Evidence architecture and sample construction. Note. The logarithmic axis is used only to display the screening stages compactly. Labels identify distinct analytical units, and A/78/PV.59 was recovered separately through the independent recall check.

The derived nominal distribution is dominated by same dispute activity that does not satisfy the order specific engagement definition. Of the 233 reviewed pairs, 73 are unrelated (code 0), 31 reflect thematic overlap (code 1), 126 concern the same dispute without order specific engagement (code 2), and three satisfy Equation (5) (code 3). No unresolved code 9 observations remain in the final reviewed set. (A/78/PV.59, verified separately through the recall check rather than the original 233 pair screen, adds a fourth positive documentary record without altering this 233 pair distribution.)

Table 2. Nominal linkage code distribution

Code	Meaning	Pair level (N=233)	Event level (N=154)
0	Unrelated / different case	73	47
1	General thematic overlap	31	26
2	Same dispute, no order specific engagement	126	78
3	Order specific institutional engagement	3	3
9	Unresolved	0	0

From dispute level attention to order specific engagement

Dispute level attention increases as the post order window expands, but order specific engagement does not. Six of 24 primary orders (25.0%) receive broad same dispute attention within 30 days, seven (29.2%) within 90 days, and ten (41.7%) within 180 days. By contrast, only two orders (8.3%) satisfy the order specific engagement definition in any of the three windows. The N = 27 sensitivity estimate is 7.4%. Figure 2 shows the temporal divergence, while Figure 3 expresses the same result as a conversion bottleneck.

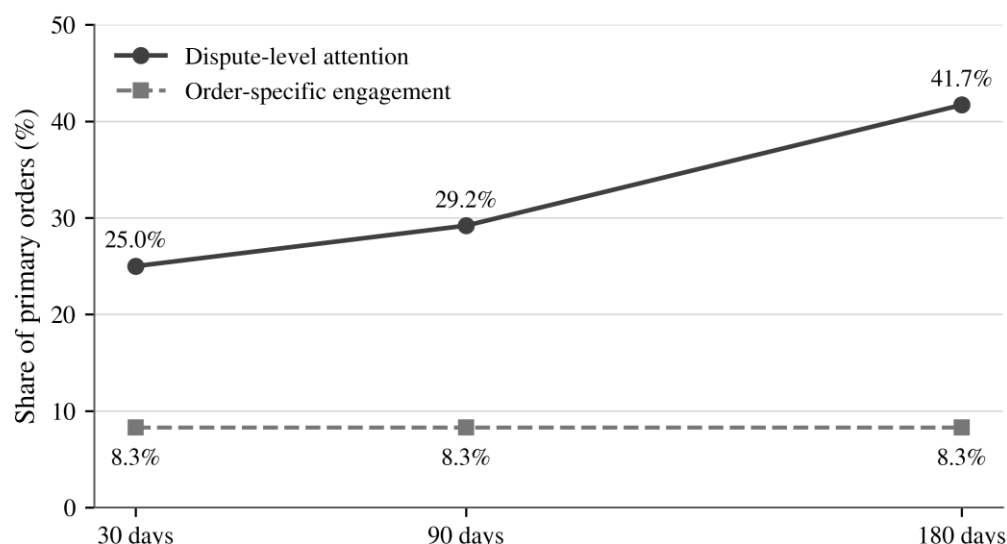


Figure 2. Temporal window sensitivity of downstream UN activity. Note. Dispute level attention rises with the observation window. Order specific engagement remains 2/24 in every post order window.

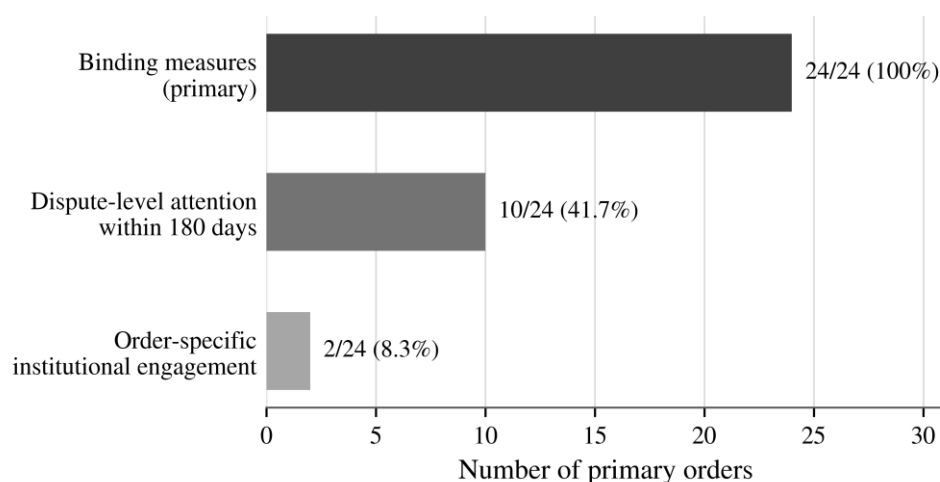


Figure 3. Institutional conversion bottleneck. Note. Ten primary orders receive dispute level attention by 180 days, but only two satisfy the order specific engagement definition.

Documented positive engagement and institutional form

Four positive documentary records were verified, mapping onto three distinct institutional processes, two in the Security Council and one in the General Assembly, all concerning South Africa v. Israel. The first Security Council process follows the 26 January 2024 order. Algeria's draft resolution S/2024/173 explicitly recalls that order.¹⁹ The associated Security Council meeting record S/PV.9552 documents the Council's consideration and vote on the draft 25 days after the order. Because the draft was vetoed, this process is classified as proposed collective action accompanied by deliberative engagement, not as

¹⁹ International Court of Justice, South Africa v. Israel, Order of 26 January 2024, Case No. 192. United Nations Security Council, Algeria: Draft resolution, S/2024/173, 20 February 2024. United Nations Security Council, 9552nd meeting, S/PV.9552, 20 February 2024.

adopted Council action. The second Security Council process follows the 24 May 2024 order. S/PV.9638, dated 29 May 2024, records order specific Council deliberation five days later²⁰ and is classified as deliberative engagement, again not as an adopted collective decision.

The General Assembly process is analytically distinct from both Security Council processes and from the Article 41(2) notification channel. On 4 March 2024, 38 days after the 26 January 2024 order, the General Assembly held its 78th session, 59th plenary meeting (A/78/PV.59)²¹, a debate held under the Assembly's standing procedure for reviewing the use of the veto (General Assembly resolution 76/262), convened because the S/2024/173 draft had been vetoed in the Security Council, not because of any Article 41(2) notification to the Assembly. The debate explicitly and repeatedly discusses the 26 January 2024 order. One delegation states directly that “the 26 January 2024 order of the International Court of Justice is legally binding on the parties and must be complied with.” This record satisfies the same case, explicit order link, institutional process, and official source conditions and is accordingly classified as deliberative engagement in the General Assembly. Because it concerns the order already counted as positive through the Security Council channel, it does not add a third positive order to the 2/24 primary sample rate. It does add a third confirmed institutional process and the study's only confirmed General Assembly engagement.

This distinction resolves the apparent discrepancy between four positive documentary records and three institutional processes. S/2024/173 and S/PV.9552 are separate official records generated by the same Security Council process. S/PV.9638 represents the second Security Council process. A/78/PV.59 represents the third, and only, General Assembly process. The analysis therefore reports four order event documentary records corresponding to three substantive institutional processes, two Security Council and one General Assembly, and two order level positive outcomes.

Table 3. Primary documentary evidence for positive order specific engagement

ICJ order	UN organ	UN record	UN record date	Lag	Institutional form
26 Jan 2024	Security Council	S/2024/173	20 Feb 2024	25 days	Proposed collective action (vetoed)
26 Jan 2024	Security Council	S/PV.9552	20 Feb 2024	25 days	Deliberative / voting record
26 Jan 2024	General Assembly	A/78/PV.59	4 Mar 2024	38 days	Deliberative engagement (use of veto debate, not an Article 41(2) notification process)
24 May 2024	Security Council	S/PV.9638	29 May 2024	5 days	Deliberative engagement

Reporting requirements: a descriptive relationship

An explicit reporting requirement accompanies a higher observed order specific engagement rate, but the pattern is too sparse and too clustered for confirmatory inference and is reported descriptively only.

20 International Court of Justice, *South Africa v. Israel*, Order of 24 May 2024, Case No. 192. United Nations Security Council, 9638th meeting, S/PV.9638, 29 May 2024.

21 United Nations General Assembly, 78th session, 59th plenary meeting, A/78/PV.59, 4 March 2024 (use of the veto debate under General Assembly resolution 76/262).

Two of the twelve orders containing a reporting requirement satisfy the engagement definition, compared with none of the twelve orders without such a requirement.

Figure 4 presents the same counts graphically as a descriptive stacked comparison, without a superimposed test statistic.

Table 4. Reporting requirement and order specific institutional engagement (N=24)

Reporting requirement	Engagement	No engagement
Present (N=12)	2	10
Absent (N=12)	0	12

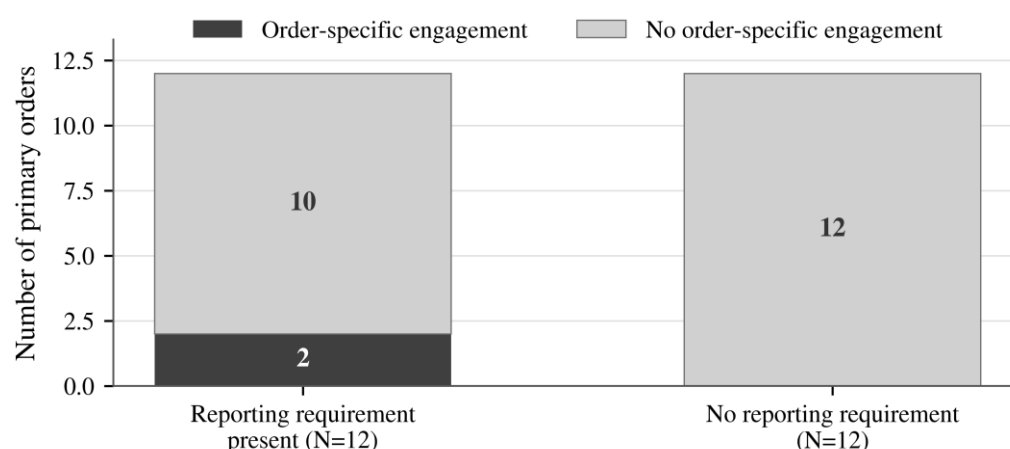


Figure 4. Reporting requirement and order specific engagement. Note. Counts only. No inferential test is reported given the single case file concentration of positive outcomes.

Case concentration and political selectivity

Case level comparison reinforces the concentration of positive engagement. The 19 April 2017 Ukraine v. Russian Federation order under the ICSFT and CERD, the 23 January 2020 order in The Gambia v. Myanmar, and the 16 March 2022 Ukraine v. Russian Federation order under the Genocide Convention²² generate no positive order specific engagement within the defined windows, in either the Security Council or the General Assembly. Within South Africa v. Israel, the 26 January order is followed by the S/2024/173 S/PV.9552 Security Council process and the A/78/PV.59 General Assembly

²² International Court of Justice, Ukraine v. Russian Federation, provisional measures, Order of 19 April 2017, Case No. 166. The Gambia v. Myanmar, provisional measures, Order of 23 January 2020, Case No. 178. Ukraine v. Russian Federation, provisional measures, Order of 16 March 2022, Case No. 182.

process²³, the 28 March order is not followed by a positive engagement record under the coding rule in either organ, and the 24 May order is followed by S/PV.9638 within five days.

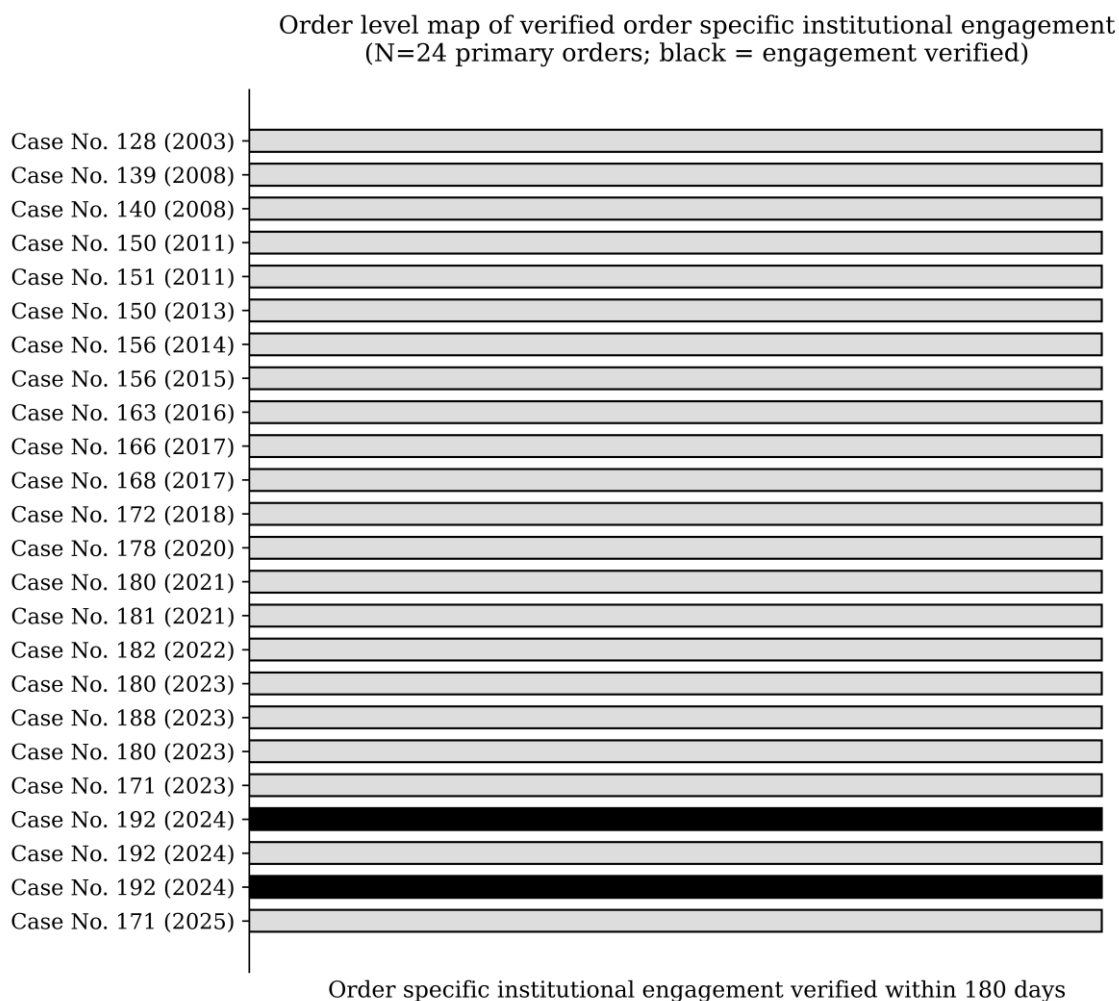


Figure 5 maps this concentration across all 24 primary orders.

Figure 5. Order level map of verified order specific institutional engagement. Note. N=24 primary orders, identified by ICJ case number and order year. Black indicates that at least one order specific engagement record (Security Council or General Assembly) was verified within 180 days. Positive outcomes are concentrated entirely within South Africa v. Israel (Case No. 192).

The permanent member pattern is similarly concentrated. Six of the 24 primary orders name the Russian Federation, a Security Council permanent member, as respondent, and none satisfies the order specific engagement definition within 180 days. Two of the eighteen orders involving non permanent member respondents do. This is an exploratory descriptive asymmetry, not evidence that permanent member status causes the absence of engagement. The two positive orders belong to a single case file and cannot sustain causal attribution.

Temporal proximity and effectiveness as measurement problems

²³ International Court of Justice, South Africa v. Israel, Orders of 26 January, 28 March, and 24 May 2024, Case No. 192.

The principal finding is not simply that the order specific engagement rate is low. It is that the apparent level of UN response changes substantially depending on the measurement rule. Figure 2 already demonstrates this directly: same dispute attention rises from 6 of 24 orders (25.0%) within 30 days to 10 of 24 orders (41.7%) within 180 days, while verified order specific engagement remains 2 of 24 orders in every reporting window. Temporal proximity alone is therefore not sufficient evidence of order specific institutional engagement, although this does not establish that timing and engagement are statistically independent or that the underlying linkage classes follow identical temporal distributions.

Shany's (2012) goal based approach helps clarify the point. The study does not measure the ICJ's general effectiveness. It measures one specific downstream institutional outcome, checked separately for each organ: whether a UN political organ process explicitly engages a particular provisional measures order. A measure based only on post order timing would classify ten of 24 primary orders as receiving a response within 180 days, while the documentary rule identifies only two. This is not a minor coding dispute but evidence that the substantive conclusion changes when the proxy changes. References to the Court, broad crisis diplomacy, and same dispute activity may be politically important, but they are not equivalent to order specific engagement, and the article avoids stretching the concept of institutional effectiveness beyond the observable process being measured.

The implication is methodological as well as doctrinal. Empirical legal studies often require translation between legal categories and observable records. That translation is vulnerable to construct inflation when easily measurable events are substituted for legally specific outcomes. Here, a meeting, vote, or draft resolution is not inherently evidence of follow up. The event becomes probative only when the text or process connects it to the relevant order. By preserving that distinction, and by keeping the Security Council and General Assembly channels separate, the study avoids treating the political life of the underlying conflict as if it were an institutional consequence of a provisional measures order.

Institutional visibility versus order specific engagement

The gap between dispute level attention and order specific engagement is not best interpreted as a binary distinction between institutional relevance and institutional silence. Voeten's (2005) account of the Security Council emphasizes that collective authorization and legitimation are filtered through bargaining among powerful states. Von Bogdandy and Venzke (2013), by contrast, emphasize that international courts can exercise public authority through functions that extend beyond formal enforcement. Read together, these perspectives suggest that the 41.7% dispute level attention rate at 180 days may include legally meaningful visibility, agenda signalling, legitimation, or dispute management even where the strict order specific threshold is not satisfied. The coding framework intentionally does not convert those possible effects into direct engagement because the documentary evidence cannot establish the motive or institutional function of every same dispute act.

This distinction is particularly important in high salience crises. A Security Council or General Assembly meeting may occur because hostilities have intensified, humanitarian conditions have deteriorated, a member state has requested an emergency session, a Council veto has triggered a standing Assembly review procedure (as with A/78/PV.59), or an ICJ order has altered the legal framing of the dispute. Several of those mechanisms can operate simultaneously. Temporal ordering cannot identify which one generated the meeting. The article therefore treats institutional visibility as substantively important but analytically separate from an order linked political organ process. This is a conservative measurement choice. It reduces false attribution at the cost of leaving some weaker or indirect forms of judicial influence in the broader dispute level category.

P5 constraints, institutional design, and accountability

The permanent member comparison is best understood as an institutional design signal rather than a causal finding. Six of the 24 primary orders name the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, as respondent, and none satisfies the order specific engagement definition within 180 days. The two positive orders involve a non permanent member respondent and arise in a single case

file. Posner and Yoo (2005) and Alter (2008) offer contrasting ways to think about political control over international adjudication, but neither framework licenses a causal inference from this pattern. The observed distribution is compatible with the proposition that political power constrains downstream institutional conversion. It is equally compatible with case specific explanations that the current sample cannot distinguish.

The South Africa v. Israel observations show why a respondent only P5 variable is also incomplete. Israel is not a permanent member, yet the 20 February 2024 draft resolution was vetoed by the United States. The relevant political constraint may therefore operate through alliance protection as well as through the formal status of the respondent. The study records the veto as an attribute of a verified institutional attempt rather than as evidence that linkage existed in the first place. This sequencing matters. It prevents the presence of a veto from mechanically producing a positive outcome while still recognizing that veto power can determine whether order specific deliberation becomes adopted collective action, and, in the General Assembly's case, can itself trigger a separate deliberative process (the use of veto debate) that has no counterpart on the Security Council side.

Inter organ practice and the Article 94(2) controversy

The empirical findings sharpen the Article 94(2) debate without resolving it. Schulte's (2004) restrictive reading and Akhtar's (2026) expansive reading concern the legal availability of Council mechanisms for securing compliance. The dataset addresses a different question: whether Security Council or General Assembly records actually display order specific engagement after a provisional measures order is issued, and none of the official records reviewed for this study, including S/2024/173, S/PV.9552, S/PV.9638, and A/78/PV.59, itself invokes Article 94(2) by name. The observed engagement is therefore evidence of institutional uptake and deliberative reception, not evidence that Article 94(2) recourse actually occurred or was relied upon by either organ. The distinction is consequential because legal competence and institutional use are not the same proposition: a route may be legally available but politically unused, and political deliberation may invoke an order without culminating in an adopted measure under Article 94(2) or Chapter VII.

The South Africa v. Israel records illustrate the range of possibilities without resolving the doctrinal question. The S/2024/173 S/PV.9552 process demonstrates that an ICJ order can become part of a proposed collective response while veto power prevents adoption. S/PV.9638 demonstrates order specific Security Council deliberation without an adopted decision. A/78/PV.59 demonstrates that the General Assembly can also engage substantively with an order's binding character, through a channel entirely independent of Article 41(2) notification. These observations support a conception of inter organ relations based on differentiated competence rather than automatic enforcement, and they explain why the article retains separate categories for deliberative engagement, proposed collective action, and adopted collective action, and separate reporting for the Security Council and General Assembly channels.

Limitations

Four limitations define the inferential boundary of the article. First, the case dictionary screen reduces 17,413 temporally eligible pairs to 233 manual review pairs. An independent recall check performed for this revision confirmed that this screen is not fully reliable: one true positive (A/78/PV.59) was entirely absent from the 17,413 pair universe rather than merely screened out, and 120 additional strongly flagged candidate pairs required individual verification, all of which were reviewed and none of which yielded a further positive record. The 233 pair layer, plus this verified addition, should therefore be understood as a transparent screened review set subject to one completed recall audit, not as an exhaustive adjudication of the entire temporal universe. Second, the outcome is sparse and clustered: only two of 24 primary orders are positive and both belong to one case file. For this reason the reporting requirement relationship is reported descriptively only, without a formal significance test. Third, no separate Article 41(2) notification date was collected for any order in the corpus. All temporal

windows are anchored to the order date, and Article 41(2) notification is retained only as legal context for the Security Council channel. Fourth, the manuscript reports an internally auditable workflow based on archived coding tables, official source checks, and downstream scripts. It does not claim public replication package availability for this conference version.

Rejected or withdrawn requests remain part of the legal corpus but do not enter the reported estimands. No pre order diagnostic is reported because its distribution is not systematically available in the analytical results. The article likewise does not equate a vetoed draft or an official meeting record with adopted collective action, and it does not equate Security Council or General Assembly engagement with an Article 94(2) enforcement action absent an official document that says so. These choices narrow the claim while improving correspondence between the operational definition and the evidence actually observed.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Article 41(2) is a transmission rule, not an enforcement mechanism. It places the Security Council on notice of binding provisional measures, but it neither prescribes a response nor converts subsequent UN activity concerning the same crisis into engagement with the order. General Assembly practice must be assessed through a separate institutional channel because the Assembly receives no Article 41(2) notification. This distinction prevents the binding force recognized in *LaGrand* from being conflated with institutional implementation.

The findings reveal a sharp conversion deficit. Same-dispute attention reaches ten of 24 primary orders within 180 days, but only two orders, both in *South Africa v. Israel*, meet the order-specific engagement test. The record-level evidence consists of four official documents across three processes: two Security Council processes and one General Assembly use-of-veto debate. None constitutes adopted collective action, and none invokes Article 94(2). Reporting requirements accompany both positive orders, yet their concentration in one case supports only a mechanism-oriented hypothesis, not a causal reporting effect. The observed bottleneck therefore lies between notification and political uptake, where agenda control, veto power, alliance protection, and crisis salience may shape whether judicial authority acquires institutional consequence.

The contribution is methodological and theoretical. Time-window matching without documentary linkage produces false positives and should not be treated as evidence of compliance pressure. The findings support an institutionalist account constrained by realist power asymmetries: bindingness supplies normative authority, while political-organ uptake remains contingent. Two research priorities follow. The assembled dataset of 13,692 UN event records should be subjected to a broader independently verifiable recall audit, and the method should be replicated across other international courts using preregistered linkage criteria. For current UN practice, the implication is clear: notification makes an ICJ order visible, but only documented uptake, established separately for each organ, makes that visibility institutionally consequential.

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NEOREALİST PRİZMADAN MUTLAK VE GÖRELİ KAZANÇLAR TEORİSİ: ZENGİZUR KORİDORUNA YAKLAŞIMIN METODOLOJİK ÇERÇEVESİ

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Özet

Bu çalışmada, 2020 yılı İkinci Karabağ Savaşı sonrasında Güney Kafkasya'da şekillenen yeni jeopolitik gerçeklikler bağlamında Zengezur Koridoru projesi, neorealizm teorisinin mutlak ve görelî kazançlar konsepti çerçevesinde metodolojik bir analize tabi tutulmaktadır. Projenin bölgesel ekonomik entegrasyon ve trans-Avrasya lojistik ağları açısından taşıdığı makroekonomik öneme rağmen, bölgesel aktörlerin farklı jeostratejik tepkileri uluslararası ilişkilerin yapısal anarşisi prizmasından incelenmektedir.

Çalışmada; K. Waltz'un yapısal realizmi ile J. Grieco ve J. Mearsheimer'in saldırgan realizm tezleri temelinde, bölgesel aktörlerin ekonomik refah yerine güvenlik ve egemenlik kaygılarına öncelik verdiği temellendirilmektedir. Ermenistan ve İran'ın projenin vadettiği çok milyon dolarlık mutlak kazançlara "kör kalması", sistemin "kendi kendine yardım" içgüdüğü ve Bakü-Ankara ekseninin asimetrik biçimde güçlenmesinden (görelî kazanç) kaynaklanan varoluşsal kaygılarla açıklanmaktadır.

Devletlerin karar alma mekanizması, D. Russo'nun:

$$U=V-r(W)$$

matematiksel modeli ile yorumlanmaktadır. Burada, stratejik rakip faktörüne bağlı olarak görelî kazanç katsayısının ($r > 0$) maksimize edilmesi, sübjektif fayda endeksini (U) negatife doğru çekmekte ve tarafları iş birliğini engellemeye sevk etmektedir.

Aynı zamanda, R. Schweller'in statüko ve revizyonizm çatışması bağlamında, Azerbaycan'ın Nahçıvan ile coğrafi bağlantı kurmaya yönelik savunmacı (defansif) ihtiyacının, niyetlerin belirsizliği nedeniyle karşı tarafça saldırgan (ofansif) bir tehdit olarak algılandığı ve bölgesel güvenlik ikilemini (security dilemma) derinleştirdiği ortaya konmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, projenin neoliberal karşılıklı bağımlılık temelinde değil, tamamen neorealist bir güvenlik dengelemesi rejimi altında yönetildiği kanıtlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Zengezur Koridoru, neorealizm, mutlak ve görelî kazançlar, güvenlik ikilemi, kendi kendine yardım.

A NEOREALIST PERSPECTIVE ON ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE GAINS: THE METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE ZANGEZUR CORRIDOR APPROACH

Summary

In this study, the Zangezur corridor project is methodologically analyzed within the framework of the neorealist theory of absolute and relative gains, against the backdrop of the new geopolitical realities in the South Caucasus following the 2020 Second Karabakh War. Despite the macroeconomic importance

of the project for regional economic integration and trans-Eurasian logistical networks, the diverse geostrategic responses of regional actors are examined through the prism of structural anarchy.

Based on K. Waltz's structural realism and the offensive realism theses of J. Grieco and J. Mearsheimer, the study argues that regional actors prioritize security and sovereignty considerations over economic prosperity. The refusal of Armenia and Iran to acknowledge the multimillion-dollar absolute gains promised by the project is explained by the system's "self-help" instinct and existential anxieties arising from the asymmetric strengthening (relative gain) of the Baku-Ankara axis. The decision-making mechanism of the states is interpreted through D. Rousseau's mathematical model:

$$U = V - r(W)$$

where the maximization of the relative gain coefficient ($r > 0$) due to the strategic rival factor drags the subjective utility index (U) into the negative, prompting the parties to block cooperation. Concurrently, within R. Schweller's context of status-quo versus revisionism clash, it is demonstrated that Azerbaijan's defensive need to establish a geographical connection with Nakhchivan is misperceived by the opposing side as an offensive threat due to the uncertainty of intentions, thereby deepening the regional security dilemma. Consequently, it is proven that the project is governed by a pure neorealist security-balancing regime rather than neoliberal interdependence.

Keywords: Zangezur corridor, Neorealism, Absolute and relative gains, Security dilemma, Self-help.

Giriş

Güney Kafkasya'nın jeopolitik ve jeoekonomik manzarası, 2020 yılı İkinci Karabağ Savaşı sonrasında köklü bir şekilde yeniden şekillenmiştir. Bölgesel entegrasyonun ve trans-Avrasya lojistik ağlarının merkezinde yer alan en önemli altyapı projelerinden biri şüphesiz Zengezur Koridoru'dur. Bu koridor, Azerbaycan'ın ana karasını onun ayrılmaz bir parçası olan Nahçıvan Özerk Cumhuriyeti ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile; daha geniş ölçekte ise Orta Asya'yı Avrupa ile bağlama potansiyeline sahip stratejik bir mega projedir.

Zangezur Koridoru projesinin uygulanma olasılıklarını ve bölgesel aktörlerin bu projeye karşı gösterdiği farklı jeostratejik tepkileri anlamak için, uluslararası ilişkiler teorisindeki en temel tartışmalardan biri olan mutlak ve göreceli kazanımlar arasındaki tartışmaya bakmak gerekir.

MATERYAL VEYA YÖNTEM

Araştırmanın veri tabanını (materyal bazını); uluslararası ilişkiler teorisinin klasik neorealist kaynakları (K. Waltz, J. Grieco, J. Mearsheimer, D. Russo ve R. Schweller'ın temel eserleri) ve bunun yanı sıra İkinci Karabağ Savaşı'ndan (2020) sonra bölgesel iletişim hatlarının (bağlantılarının) açılmasına ilişkin imzalanan resmi bildiriler, devletlerin dış politika doktrinleri ve stratejik lojistik projelere dair analitik raporlar oluşturmaktadır. Metodolojik çerçeve olarak çalışmada, nitel analiz (qualitative analysis) ve neorealizmin "mutlak ve göreceli kazançlar" kavramı çerçevesinde tündengelimsel (dedüktif) analiz yöntemi uygulanmıştır. Araştırma sürecinde; D. Russo'nun devletlerin karar alma mekanizmasını belirleyen

$$U = V - r(W)$$

matematiksel fayda modeli ile R. Schweller'ın "statüko / revizyonizm" matrisi, Zengezur Koridoru etrafında gelişen jeopolitik süreçlere kavramsal olarak uyarlanmıştır. Bölgesel aktörlerin (Ermenistan ve İran) makroekonomik çıkarlara karşı sergilediği direnç politikası; ampirik ve karşılaştırmalı analiz yöntemleriyle neorealist güvenlik ikilemi (dilemması) ve güç dengesi süzgecinden geçirilerek değerlendirilmiştir.

KURAMSAL ÇERÇEVE VE ANALİZ**Neorealizmin Yapısal Baskıları ve Bölgesel Dengeleme**

Kenneth Waltz'un yapısal realizm teorisinde, uluslararası sistemin merkezi bir otoriteden yoksun olan anarşik yapısının devletleri kaçınılmaz olarak "kendi kendine yardım" rejimine sevk etmesi ve güvenlik kaygılarının ekonomik kazancı siyasi çıkarlara tabi kılması yasallığı, Zengezur Koridoru etrafındaki rekabetin temel dayanağını oluşturmaktadır (Waltz, 1979, s. 105). Waltz'un sistemsal analizine göre, uluslararası ortamda anarşi, şiddetin her an gerçekleşmesini değil; şiddet tehdidinin potansiyel olarak her zaman var olmasını ifade eder. Bu objektif yapı, devletlerarası iş birliğini iki temel mekanizmayla mutlak bir biçimde sınırlandırır: Bunlardan birincisi, aktörlerin geleceğe yönelik karşılıklı niyetleri konusunda belirsizlik koşullarında yaşamaları ve kendilerinden başkasına üstünlük sağlayabilecek kazançların paylaşımından, yani "göreceli kazanç asimetrisinden" endişe duymalarıdır. İkincisi ise devletlerin ekonomik, ticari veya lojistik iş birliği yoluyla başkalarına bağımlı hale gelme korkusudur (Waltz, 1979, s. 105-107).

Kendi kendine yardım sisteminde devletlerin birincil ve temel amacının net ekonomik kârı maksimize etmek değil, kendi egemenliklerini korumak olduğunu savunan yazar; devletlerin kendilerini bağımsızlığın yiteceği ve bağımlılığın artacağı jeostratejik durumlara gönüllü olarak sokmadıklarını beyan etmektedir. Zengezur Koridoru projesine alt bölgesel aktörlerin, özellikle de Ermenistan ve İran'ın yaklaşımında bu kendi kendine yardım içgüdüğü açık bir şekilde tezahür etmektedir. Zira Ermenistan'ın transit güzergah üzerindeki egemenlik kaybı korkusu ve İran'ın bölgesel statükonun değişmesinden kaynaklanan endişesi; projenin vadettiği makroekonomik temettülere ve bölgesel ulaşım kârlarına karşı her iki aktörü de tamamen kör bırakarak onları projeyi engelleme stratejisine sevk etmektedir. Çünkü taraflar, Bakü-Ankara hattının bu proje vasıtasıyla orantısız (asimetrik) bir şekilde güçleneceğinden ve gelecekte bölgenin lojistik bağımlılık mekanizmasını tamamen kontrolü altına alacağından endişe duymaktadırlar.

Söz konusu bu yapısal baskıların nötrale edilmesi amacıyla Waltz'un güç dengesi teorisinde öne sürülen içsel dengeleme (*internal balancing*) ve ittifaklar kurma yoluyla gerçekleştirilen dışsal dengeleme (*external balancing*) stratejileri, bölgesel aktörlerin krizdeki davranış modelini açıkça ortaya koymaktadır (Waltz, 1979, s. 116-128). Üniter yapıları ve kendilerini koruma içgüdüleri tarafından yönlendirilen devletler, gücü başlı başına bir amaç değil, sadece bağımsızlıklarını korumak için bir araç olarak kabul ederler. Bu nedenle, uluslararası sistemde güçlü olan koalisyonla katılmak (yani güce eklenmek / *bandwagoning*) yerine, mevcut tehdide karşı zayıf olan tarafı güçlendirmeyi ve rakip koalisyonlardan daha zayıf olanına katılmayı, yani dengelemeyi (*balancing*) tercih ederler (Waltz, 1979, s. 126).

Zengezur Koridoru etrafında şekillenen rakip eksenlerin jeopolitik manevraları tam olarak bu yapısal mantığı doğrulamaktadır. Nitekim Azerbaycan ve Türkiye stratejik ortaklığının bölgesel alt sistemde artan gücü karşısında; Ermenistan ve İran'ın tek taraflı olarak askeri-güvenlik ittifaklarını çeşitlendirmeye çalışması, askeri kapasitelerini artırmaya yönelik içsel adımları ve mevcut statükonun korunması amacıyla dışsal dengeleme araçlarına başvurusu, sistemin hayatta kalma zorunluluğundan doğan kaçınılmaz bir savunma reaksiyonudur.

Ekonomik İşbirliğinin Sınırları: Grieco, Mearsheimer ve Rousseau Modelleri

Joseph Grieco ve John Mearsheimer'in mutlak ve göreceli kazanç ikilemine ilişkin saldırgan analizleri bağlamında, ekonomik işbirliğinin barış ve karşılıklı bağımlılık getirdiğini savunan uluslararası kurumsalcılık tezine karşı çıkan neorealist düşünürler, işbirliği ortamında göreceli kazançların hassasiyetini ayrıntılı olarak ele almışlardır. Anarşik bir uluslararası sistemde, devletler ortaklık kurduklarında, yalnızca ne kadar kazanacaklarına, yani mutlak kazançlara değil, aynı zamanda bu işbirliğinin sonucunda diğer tarafın daha güçlü hale gelip gelmeyeceğine, yani göreceli kazançlara da dikkat ederler. Grieco, devletlerin yalnızca "Bugün ne kadar kazandım?" sorusuyla değil, aynı zamanda "Bu kazanç, diğer tarafı gelecekte benim için daha tehlikeli bir rakip haline getirecek mi?" sorusuyla da hareket ettiklerini savunmaktadır (Grieco, 1988, s. 485). Çünkü ekonomik kaynaklar gelecekte askeri

güce dönüştürülebilir ve bu asimetri devletin varlığını tehdit ettiğinde, devlet her türlü ekonomik kazanımı reddederek işbirliğini kararlı bir şekilde engeller.

Joseph Grieco'nun neorealist karşı taarruzu ve Zengezur mukavemeti konsepti çerçevesinde; uluslararası sistemde gücün tamamen göreceli bir karakter taşıması ve herhangi bir devletin herhangi bir projeden asimetrik olarak güçlenmesinin, diğer devlet için otomatik olarak doğrudan bir tehdit oluşturması tezi son derece önemli bir kavramsal değere sahiptir (Rousseau, 2002, s. 396). Bu teorik tez, Zengezur Koridoru'na karşı çıkan bölgesel güçlerin, özellikle de İran'ın sergilediği jeopolitik direncin temel ideolojik altyapısını mükemmel bir şekilde açıklamaktadır.

Şöyle ki, koridorun açılması Azerbaycan ve Türkiye ekseninin bölgesel nüfuz imkanlarını lojistik ve stratejik açıdan asimetrik bir biçimde artıracaktır. Bu nedenle alt bölgesel sistemin diğer aktörleri, kendi göreceli konumlarının zayıflamasını (yani göreceli kayıp faktörünü) kendi milli güvenliklerine ve egemen sınır mimarilerine yönelik varoluşsal bir askeri tehdit olarak kabul etmekte ve projenin önünde jeopolitik bir set çekmeye çalışmaktadırlar.

Saldırgan realizmin öncü temsilcisi olan John Mearsheimer ise bu yaklaşımı daha radikal bir boyuta taşıyarak ekonomik kaynakların sadece net bir refah göstergesi olmadığını, aksine potansiyel askeri gücün en temel bileşeni olduğunu savunur (Mearsheimer, 1994, s. 12). Devletler iş birliği yaparken, karşı tarafın asimetrik olarak daha fazla avantaj elde etmesinden endişe duyarlar. Eğer askeri-stratejik dengenin tek taraflı olarak bozulması riski ortaya çıkarsa, devlet kendi güvenliğini korumak adına her türlü makroekonomik menfaatten vazgeçer ve iş birliğini engeller (Mearsheimer, 1994, s. 19-20).

Bu teorik çerçeve, Ermenistan'ın ve bölgesel müttefiki olan İran'ın Zengezur Koridoru'na karşı yürüttüğü direnç politikasının temel sütununu oluşturmaktadır. Ermenistan, koridorun açılması ve bölgesel blokajdan çıkması neticesinde milyonlarca dolarlık transit geliri elde edebileceğini (mutlak kazanç) bilse de; Mearsheimer'ın modeline uygun olarak, Azerbaycan ve Türkiye ekseninin elde edeceği stratejik ve lojistik üstünlüğün boyutunu (göreceli kazanç) hesaplamaktadır. Bakü ve Ankara'nın ekonomik ve taşımacılık açısından kazanacağı bu asimetrik üstünlük, Erivan ve Tahran tarafından gelecekte doğrudan savunma sanayisine ve askeri modernizasyona (yani askeri güce dönüştürülmeye) aktarılabilecek bir kaynak olarak kodlanmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, askeri-stratejik dengenin kesin olarak Azerbaycan lehine değişeceği korkusu, Ermenistan'ı mutlak ekonomik faydaları kurban etmeye sevk etmektedir.

David Rousseau'nun Stratejik Matrisi

David Rousseau'nun stratejik matrisi, göreceli kazancın önem derecesi bağlamında realizm ve liberalizm okullarının mutlakiyetçi iddialarını eleştirerek devletlerin karar alma mekanizmasında göreceli kazançların hangi koşullarda ön plana çıktığını ampirik olarak incelemektedir (Rousseau, 2002, s. 394). Bu doğrultuda ortaya konan ilk kurallardan biri olan tehdit algısının önem derecesine etkisi, Rousseau'nun ampirik modelinde askeri-stratejik güvenlik meselelerinin, saf ticari ve ekonomik konulara kıyasla devletlerdeki göreceli kazanç hassasiyetini çok daha agresif bir şekilde tetiklediğini kanıtlamaktadır (Rousseau, 2002, s. 395). Tam da bu bilimsel tezle örtüşecek biçimde Zengezur Koridoru, Ermenistan ve İran tarafından sadece bir ulaşım altyapısı olarak değil; doğrudan bir sınır konfigürasyonu ve egemenlik sorunu, yani bir güvenlik tehdidi olarak algılandığı için projenin vadettiği makroekonomik rasyonellik, bölgesel aktörlerin kararlarında tamamen sıfırlanmıştır.

Söz konusu analitik çerçevenin ikinci sütununu oluşturan ortağın karakteri ve göreceli kazancın önem derecesi formülünü (r), David Rousseau devletlerin iş birliği veya rekabet koşullarında kararlarını şekillendiren fayda fonksiyonu üzerinden şu formülle ifade etmektedir (Rousseau, 2002, s. 399):

$$U = V - r(W)$$

(Not: Orijinal Rousseau modelinde fayda fonksiyonu bu şekilde formüle edilmektedir).

Bu matematiksel modelde devletin genel sübjektif faydası (U), kendisinin elde ettiği mutlak kazanç (V) ile karşı tarafın kazancının (W) göreceli kazanç katsayısı (r) ile çarpımı arasındaki farkla belirlenir. Rousseau'nun temellendirdiği üzere, göreceli kazancın önem katsayısı (r) sabit bir parametre olmayıp,

diyalog kurulan ortağın karakterine ve sistemdeki tehdit statüsüne bağlı olarak dinamik bir şekilde değişmektedir. Eğer karşı taraf potansiyel bir askeri, siyasi veya ekonomik tehdit (stratejik rakip) olarak kodlanıyorsa, bu katsayı pozitif bir değer olarak maksimize olur ($r > 0$). Bu durum, ortağın elde edeceği herhangi bir kazancın (W), doğrudan doğruya devletin milli çıkarlarına ve fayda endeksine (U) negatif bir darbe vurması anlamına gelir (Rousseau, 2002, s. 399).

Çatışma sonrası dönemin bölgesel gerçekliklerinde Ermenistan ve İran'ın, Bakü-Ankara stratejik eksenini potansiyel bir varoluşsal tehdit olarak kabul etmesi, Rousseau'nun modelindeki r katsayısının zirve noktasına ulaşmasına neden olmuştur. Sonuç olarak, Zengezur Koridoru'nun açılması çerçevesinde Azerbaycan'ın elde edeceği her bir lojistik veya jeopolitik avantaj (W), Erivan ve Tahran tarafından kendi fayda endekslerinin (U) doğrudan azalması olarak değerlendirilmekte ve bu matematiksel bağımlılık onları projeyi engellemeye sevk etmektedir.

Nisbi kazançların önem derecesine dayanan bu teorik modelin üçüncü temel sütununu ise karar alma mekanizmasındaki 5 ana saf strateji konsepti oluşturmaktadır. Rousseau, devletlerin uyguladığı 5 stratejik yaklaşımı şu şekilde tanımlamaktadır: göreceli (nisbi) kazançlar, mutlak kazançlar, ortak (birlikte) kazançlar, eşitlik ve altruizm (diğerkamlık) (Rousseau, 2002, s. 412-414).

Bu matris bağlamında değerlendirildiğinde, Azerbaycan ve Türkiye bölgesel alt sistemde hem kendi ekonomik çıkarlarını güvence altına almayı (mutlak kazanç) hem de bölgesel ortaklar için kolektif bir refah ve lojistik güvenlik ortamı oluşturmayı (ortak kazançlar ve eşitlik) hedefleyen stratejileri sentezlemeye çalışmaktadır. Ancak karşı tarafın tamamen göreceli kazançlar stratejisine sığınması, projenin önündeki en büyük kavramsal ve pratik engeli teşkil etmektedir.

Schweller'in Statüko Analizi ve Zengezur Koridoru'nda Güvenlik İkilemi

Bu teorik çerçevenin bölgesel dış politika stratejilerine projeksiyonunu sağlayan dördüncü önemli sütununu, Randall Schweller'in eleştirel statüko (*status-quo*) ve revizyonizm çatışması tezi oluşturmaktadır. Randall Schweller'in uluslararası ilişkiler sisteminde devletlerin davranışlarını, saf yapısal anarşi ile devletlerin içsel çıkarları arasındaki karşılıklı etkileşim üzerinden analiz eden yaklaşımı çerçevesinde; kendi kendine yardım ilkeleri ve Zengezur Koridoru projesinin hayata geçme koşulları metodolojik olarak birbirine sıkı sıkıya bağlıdır.

Neorealizmde uluslararası sistemin merkezi bir otoriteden yoksun olan anarşik yapısı, devletleri kaçınılmaz olarak kendi kendine yardım rejimine sevk etmektedir. Schweller, bu anarşi koşullarında devletlerin, diğer aktörlerin niyetlerinden hiçbir zaman tam olarak emin olamayacaklarını temellendirerek; onların birincil amacının güç artırmaktan ziyade kendi varlıklarını ve egemenliklerini korumak olduğunu vurgulamaktadır (Schweller, 1996, ss. 90-91). Mevcut bölgesel jeostratejik konjonktürde Azerbaycan, Ermenistan, İran, Rusya ve Türkiye gibi aktörlerin koridor projesine küresel hukuk bağlamında değil, tamamen kendi kendine yardım prizmasından yaklaşması, Schweller'in teorik modeliyle bütünüyle örtüşmektedir. Zira Ermenistan'ın transit güzergah üzerindeki egemenlik kaybı korkusu veya İran'ın bölgesel statükonun değişmesinden kaynaklanan endişesi; tam olarak sistemin anarşik yapısından kaynaklanan ve kendi güvenliğini tek taraflı olarak güvence altına almayı amaçlayan stratejik bir savunma içgüdüsünün doğrudan yansımasıdır.

Söz konusu bu yapısal kısıtlamaların doğrudan bir sonucu olarak şekillenen mutlak kazançlar ve göreceli kazançlar ikilemi, Schweller'in çalışmalarında K. Waltz'a atıfla, ekonomik çıkarın güvenlik önceliği karşısında her zaman ikinci planda kaldığını ortaya koymaktadır. Schweller, anarşi koşullarında iş birliği fırsatı doğduğunda devletlerin birlikte ne kadar kazanacakları, yani "mutlak kazançlar" sorusundan ziyade; kimin daha fazla güç elde edeceği, yani "göreceli kazançlar" kaygısıyla hareket ettiklerini savunmaktadır. Çünkü bir devletin elde ettiği orantısız kazanç, daha sonra diğer devleti baskı altına almak veya onun egemenliğini kısıtlamak için askeri-stratejik bir kaynağa dönüşebilir (Schweller, 1996, ss. 91, 101-103).

Bu bilimsel yasa çerçevesinde, bölgesel entegrasyon ve ticaret yollarının açılmasının ekonomik açıdan tüm taraflara mutlak kazanç vadetmesine rağmen, Ermenistan ve bölgesel ortaklarının meseleye tek taraflı olarak bir "sıfır toplamli oyun" gözüyle bakması; Zengezur Koridoru'nun açılmasının

Azerbaycan ve Türkiye eksenine kazandıracağı jeopolitik üstünlüğü kendi milli güvenliklerine yönelik varoluşsal bir askeri tehdit olarak görmelerinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu durum, devletlerin subjektif güvenlik riskleri mevcut olduğunda, kendi göreceli konumlarını korumak adına her türlü makroekonomik menfaatten vazgeçmeye hazır olduklarını ampirik olarak kanıtlamaktadır.

Zengezur Koridoru etrafındaki bölgesel gerginliğin iç dinamiklerini tam olarak anlamak için, R. Schweller'in neorealizmin "statüko eğilimi"ne (*status-quo bias*) yönelttiği eleştirel yaklaşım büyük bir metodolojik önem taşımaktadır. Schweller, neorealizmin "tüm devletler yalnızca güvenlik arayışındadır ve birbirinin benzeridir" varsayımını reddederek; devletleri ulusal çıkarlarına göre statükocu (mevcut durumdan memnun olanlar) ve revizyonist (sistemi ve haritayı değiştirmek isteyenler) olmak üzere iki farklı kategoriye ayırır (Schweller, 1996, ss. 98, 103).

Mevcut bölgesel taşımacılık mimarisindeki krizi tam anlamıyla kavramak adına özel bir önem taşıyan bu tipoloji bağlamında, İran ve Ermenistan projeye karşı temelde statükocu bir pozisyonundan yaklaşarak mevcut bölgesel sınırların, geleneksel transit hatlarının ve jeostratejik konfigürasyonun değişmesini istememektedirler. Buna tam tezat olarak Azerbaycan ve Türkiye eksenini, bölgede karşılıklı ekonomik entegrasyonu sağlayacak yeni bir gerçeklik yaratmak istedikleri için karşı tarafça jeopolitik statükoyu sarsan "revizyonist girişimciler" olarak kabul edilmektedirler. Bu durum, Schweller'in modeline uygun şekilde, bir tarafın statükoyu değiştirme arzusunun derhal diğer tarafta tek taraflı bir güvenlik reaksiyonu ve agresif bir dengeleme eğilimi yaratması yasallığını tam anlamıyla kanıtlamaktadır.

Robert Jervis'in "güvenlik ikilemi" (*security dilemma*) teorisini genişleten Schweller; bir devletin sırf kendi güvenliği veya egemen lojistik ihtiyacı için attığı savunmacı (defansif) bir adımın, niyetlerin belirsizliği (*uncertainty of intentions*) sebebiyle diğer devlet tarafından agresif bir revizyonizm ve saldırgan (ofansif) bir tehdit olarak algılandığını göstermektedir (Schweller, 1996, ss. 116-118).

Bu teorik ayrım Zengezur Koridoru krizine uygulandığında manzara tamamen netleşmektedir. İran ve Ermenistan bu meselede kararlılıkla statükocu bir pozisyonundan yaklaşmaktadır: Onlar bölgesel sınırların, geleneksel transit hatlarının ve 2020 yılı öncesindeki mevcut jeopolitik konfigürasyonun korunmasını istemektedirler. Azerbaycan ve Türkiye ise bölgesel taşımacılık mimarisinde bölgesel entegrasyonu sağlayacak yeni bir gerçeklik yaratmak istedikleri için, statüko aktörleri tarafından jeopolitik dengeyi sarsan "revizyonist girişimciler" olarak sınıflandırılmaktadırlar. Azerbaycan için Zengezur Koridoru, sadece kendi eksklavı (Nahçıvan) ile egemen, engelsiz, insani ve ekonomik bir bağlantı kurma (savunmacı/defansif ihtiyaç) niteliği taşısa da; karşı taraf bunu Ermenistan'ın güneyinin (Sünik/Zengezur bölgesinin) ilhak edilmesi ve İran'ın Ermenistan ile olan coğrafi bağlantısının kesilmesi tehlikesi (salıdırgan/ofansif tehdit) olarak kodlamaktadır. Niyetlerin bu şekilde farklı okunması ise kaçınılmaz bir güvenlik sarmalı oluşturmaktadır.

Araştırma sürecinde neorealist analitik araçların Zengezur Koridoru etrafında gelişen jeopolitik süreçlere uygulanması sonucunda aşağıdaki temel bilimsel bulgular elde edilmiştir:

- **Jeostratejik Önceliklendirme ve Ekonomik Körlük:** K. Waltz'un "kendi kendine yardım" (*self-help*) ilkesine uygun olarak, Güney Kafkasya alt-sistemindeki aktörlerin (Ermenistan ve İran) ulusal egemenlik ve sınır güvenliği kaygıları, net makroekonomik rasyonelliği tamamen gölgede bırakmıştır. Projenin vaat ettiği milyonlarca dolarlık transit kâr paylarına karşı sergilenen "jeopolitik körlük", sistemin anarşik yapısından kaynaklanan korunma içgüdüsünün doğrudan bir sonucudur.
- **Kaynakların Askeri Güce Dönüştürülmesi Riski:** J. Grieco ve J. Mearsheimer'in ofansif realizm tezleri çerçevesinde tespit edilmiştir ki, Zengezur Koridoru'nun açılması sonucunda Bakü-Ankara stratejik ekseninin elde edeceği lojistik ve mali avantajlar, rakip aktörler tarafından yalnızca bir ekonomik refah göstergesi olarak değil; gelecekte doğrudan askeri modernizasyona yönlendirilecek stratejik bir kaynak (göreceli kazanç asimetrisi) olarak kodlanmaktadır.
- **Fayda Endeksinin Matematiksel Sıfırlanması:** D. Russo'nun $U = V - r(W)$ modelinin bölgesel konjonktür projeksiyonu kanıtlamaktadır ki, karşı tarafın bölgesel güç merkezlerini varoluşsal bir tehdit olarak algılaması, göreceli kazancın duyarlılık katsayısını ($r > 0$) zirve noktasına ulaştırmıştır.

Sonuç olarak, Azerbaycan'ın elde edeceği her bir lojistik üstünlük (W), rakip tarafların öznel fayda endeksini (U) negatife doğru çekmekte ve onları iş birliğini engellemeye sevk etmektedir

- **Algısal Asimetri ve Güvenlik Dilemması:** R. Schweller'in statüko ve revizyonizm çatışması bağlamında tespit edilmiştir ki, Azerbaycan için kendi eksklavı (Nahçıvan) ile egemen, engelsiz insani ve lojistik bağlantı kurmak defansif bir ihtiyaç niteliği taşıırken; niyetlerin belirsizliği nedeniyle statüko aktörleri (Ermenistan ve İran) tarafından bölgesel dengeyi sarsan ofansif bir revizyonizm ve sınır ilhakı tehdidi olarak algılanmaktadır.

TARTIŞMA

Bu araştırmanın bulguları, uluslararası ilişkiler teorisinde neoliberal kurumsalcılığın "*ekonomik iş birliği, karşılıklı bağımlılık ve bölgesel entegrasyon barış getirir*" şeklindeki temel tezine karşı, Güney Kafkasya bölgesel alt-sistemi örneğinde güçlü bir neorealist antitez ortaya koymaktadır.

Liberal yaklaşım Zengezur Koridoru'nu bölgesel refah ve makroekonomik pragmatizm süzgecinden geçirse de, bölgesel aktörlerin ampirik davranış modelleri farklı bir gerçekliği gözler önüne sermektedir. Mevcut alt-sistemde devletler, mutlak kazançlardan (*absolute gains*) ziyade, göreceli kazançlara (*relative gains*) ve güç dengesizliğine karşı aşırı duyarlılık göstermektedir.

Tartışılan temel kavramsal yenilik; transkontinental altyapı projelerinin ve mega-koridorların modern aşamada yalnızca birer ticari-nakliye aracı olmaktan çıkarak, doğrudan bir "ulusal egemenlik ve sınır güvenliği tehdidi" olarak kodlanmasıdır. Azerbaycan ve Türkiye'nin alt-bölgesel ulaştırma mimarisinde yeni bir entegrasyon gerçekliği yaratma girişimi, 2020 öncesindeki mevcut jeopolitik statükoyu korumaya çalışan aktörlerde agresif bir savunma reaksiyonu ve dengeleme eğilimi tetiklemektedir. Robert Jervis'in temelini attığı ve Randall Schweller'in geliştirdiği bu "güvenlik dilemması sarmalı", alt-bölgesel aktörlerin rasyonel diyalog penceresini tamamen kapatarak bölgesel entegrasyon girişimlerini kaçınılmaz olarak sıfır toplamı bir oyuna (*zero-sum game*) dönüştürmektedir.

BİLİMSEL YENİLİKLER

Araştırma sürecinde elde edilen ve savunmaya sunulan temel bilimsel yenilikler aşağıdaki temel maddelerle karakterize edilmektedir:

- **Lojistik Projelerin Güvenlik Tehdidi Olarak Kavramsallaştırılması:** J. Grieco (Joseph Grieco) ve J. Mearsheimer'ın (John Mearsheimer) uluslararası kurumların etkinliğine yönelik teorik-eleştirel yaklaşımları temelinde; günümüz aşamasında transkontinental lojistik koridorların rakip aktörler tarafından yalnızca birer jeoekonomik rekabet aracı değil, doğrudan "ulusal egemenlik ve sınır güvenliği tehdidi" olarak kodlanması yasallığı fundamental düzeyde temellendirilmiştir. Böylece devletlerin mutlak kazançlardan feragat ederek göreceli kazançlar dinamizmine sığındığı savunma reaksiyonları bağlamında, klasik neorealist tezlere niteliksel açıdan yeni bir jeostratejik boyut kazandırılmıştır.
- **Çatışma Sonrası Alt-Sistemde Jeostratejik Önceliklendirmenin Kanıtlanması:** Güney Kafkasya'nın çatışma sonrası (2020 İkinci Karabağ Savaşı sonrası) alt-sisteminde güvenlik ve egemenlik kaygılarının saf makroekonomik pragmatizmi tahakkümü altına alması ve devletlerin milyonlarca dolarlık transit kâr paylarına "kör kalması" (jeopolitik körlük) fenomeninin ekonomik yasallıklarla değil; anarşik sistemin dikte ettiği "kendi kendine yardım" (*self-help*) içgüdüsüyle koşullandığı, Zengezur Koridoru bağlamında ilk kez kapsamlı bir şekilde kanıtlanmıştır.
- **D. Russo'nun Matematiksel Fayda Modelinin Bölgesel Konjonktüre Adaptasyonu:** D. Russo'nun (David Rousseau) matematiksel fayda modeli bölgesel konjonktüre başarıyla adapte edilerek metodolojik açıdan temellendirilmiştir. Buna göre; stratejik rakip faktörüne bağlı olarak göreceli kazancın duyarlılık katsayısının ($r > 0$) maksimize edilmesi, bölgesel aktörlerin öznel fayda endeksini (U) negatife doğru çekmektedir. Sonuç olarak, Azerbaycan'ın elde edeceği her bir lojistik üstünlük (W), rakiplerin fayda endeksini sıfırlayarak onları iş birliğini engellemeye sevk etmektedir.

- **Algısal Asimetrinin ve Güvenlik Dilemması Sarmalının Deşifre Edilmesi:** R. Schweller'in statüko ve revizyonizm çatışması çerçevesinde; Azerbaycan'ın kendi eksklavı (Nahçıvan) ile egemen ve engelsiz iletişim kurmaya yönelik defansif (savunma amaçlı) ihtiyacının, niyetlerin belirsizliği sebebiyle karşı taraf (Ermenistan-İran eksenini) tarafından bölgesel dengeyi sarsan ofansif (saldırgan) bir revizyonizm ve sınır ilhaki tehdidi olarak algılandığı ortaya koyulmuş ve alt-bölgesel "güvenlik dilemması sarmalının" matematiksel-kavramsal anatomisi çıkarılmıştır.

SONUÇ

Gerçekleştirilen kavramsal analiz; anarşik bölgesel alt-sistemde devletlerin süreçlere, neoliberalizmin iddia ettiği gibi mutlak kazançlar (*absolute gains*) ve makroekonomik pragmatizm penceresinden değil, öznel risk endeksleri ve göreceli kazançlar üzerinden yaklaştığını kanıtlamaktadır.

Buna göre, Zengezur Koridoru etrafındaki bölgesel gerilim devletlerin sırf ticari çıkarlarıyla değil; neorealist süzgeçten geçen potansiyel güç değişimlerine, asimetrik kazançlara ve egemenlik risklerine karşı sergiledikleri stratejik direnç mekanizmalarıyla koşullanmaktadır. Lojistik projelerin milli güvenlik unsuru olarak kodlanması, alt-bölgesel aktörlerin rasyonel diyalog penceresini kapatarak süreci tamamen bir güvenlik dengelemesi rejimine mahkum etmektedir.

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THE SYRIAN CRISIS IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND CHINA: SHARED POSITION, DIVERGENT INTERESTS, DIVERGENT STRATEGIES

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SUMMARY

The Syrian crisis (2011-2024) has emerged as one of the most complex geopolitical crises in the history of contemporary international relations. The foreign policies of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China towards Syria have exerted a considerable influence on both the escalation of the crisis and the course of its resolution process. Both states extended their support to the Bashar al-Assad regime and exercised their veto power in a coordinated manner against the United States and European nations within the UN Security Council. Notwithstanding their shared positions on resolutions pertaining to the Syrian crisis, the interests of the two countries in Syria and their respective mechanisms of influence over the conflict differed substantially from one another. Whereas the Russian Federation intervened militarily in Syria in a direct capacity, endeavouring to transform the country into a geopolitical outpost in the Middle East, China remained committed to non-coercive methods, seeking to consolidate its position through economic investment, diplomatic mediation, and strategic pragmatism. The collapse of the Assad regime in December 2024 has necessitated a comprehensive reassessment of both countries' Syrian policies. This article undertakes a comparative analysis of the positions, interests, and strategies of these two major powers with respect to the Syrian crisis. The comparative analysis conducted herein demonstrates that, while Russia's strategy premised upon direct military intervention yielded certain short-term successes, it ultimately suffered a fundamental failure coinciding with the fall of the Assad regime in 2024, effectively rendering Russia a marginal actor in Syrian affairs.

In contrast, grounded in economic pragmatism and diplomatic flexibility China's strategy enabled a more expeditious adaptation to the change of regime, thereby preserving Beijing's long-term position in Syria.

Keywords: Syria, crisis, Russia, China, foreign policy, UN Security Council, Assad regime, Astana process

INTRODUCTION

The crisis that erupted in Syria in 2011 as part of the broader Arab Spring has persisted for more than fourteen years, profoundly reshaping the geopolitical landscape of the region. The Syrian crisis did not remain a purely domestic matter. It precipitated Syria's transformation into an arena of great power competition within the international system. Throughout the duration of the Syrian crisis, the principal factor uniting the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China was their shared support for the Bashar al-Assad regime and their joint veto policy against initiatives pursued by the United States and European states within the UN framework. Nevertheless, the interests of the two countries in Syria and the instruments of influence they employed differed substantially from one another. For Russia, Syria represented an opportunity to restore the influence it had lost in the Middle East following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Exploiting the conditions that emerged in the course of the crisis, Russia endeavoured to safeguard its military bases in the Mediterranean and to establish a platform for geopolitical counter-offensive aimed at preventing the further entrenchment of the United States and European powers in the Middle East. For China, by contrast, the Syrian crisis constituted a process through which it tested its transition from the traditional principle of non-interference towards greater strategic flexibility, within which framework Beijing sought to present itself as a reliable partner of the Global South.

The sudden developments that occurred in November 2024, culminating in the fall of the Assad regime in December of the same year, fundamentally undermined the Syrian policies of both major powers, compelling each of them to confront the necessity of adapting to an entirely new set of realities.

This turning point simultaneously affords an opportunity to reassessively and comparatively re-evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies adopted by each of the two countries.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

In this article, the respective approaches of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China towards the Syrian crisis are examined within the framework of comparative foreign policy analysis methodology. In the course of the research, the positions, interests, instruments employed, and outcomes achieved by the two major powers in the Syrian crisis were subjected to systematic comparative analysis; events spanning the period from 2011 to 2026 were traced sequentially by means of the historical-chronological method; and policy shifts were assessed within a dynamic context. Draft resolutions of the UN Security Council, bilateral agreements, official statements, and diplomatic documents were utilised as primary sources and subjected to content analysis. The source base of the research comprises official documents and draft resolutions of the UN Security Council, official statements of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, press releases of the Russian Ministry of Defence, analytical reports of international research centres pertaining to the Syrian crisis, academic monographs and scholarly articles, as well as materials from the leading news agencies of the period. In view of the diversity of sources, the principle of source criticism was observed throughout the research, and contradictory data were verified against multiple sources.

I The Syrian Crisis in the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, insufficient attention was devoted to the Middle Eastern dimension of Russia's foreign policy, resulting in a considerable weakening of Russia's position in the region. The number of states traditionally classified as Russia's allies underwent a marked decline (Ходынская-Голенищева, 2018, p. 553). By the early 21st century, however, Russia once again elevated the Middle East to one of the foremost priorities of its foreign policy. Two countries – Iran and Syria played an instrumental role in augmenting Russia's influence in the Middle East, in as much as anti-Western sentiment had, in practical terms, managed to persist in these two states to a greater degree than elsewhere. Prior to 2015, Bashar al-Assad had visited Russia on four occasions (in 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2015), while Russia's then-President Dmitry Medvedev undertook an official visit to Damascus in 2010 (Подцероб, 2015, p. 120).

Russia saw the Arab Spring as a chance to weaken the influence of its geopolitical rivals in Syria. At that time, the United States and European countries still hoped that Bashar al-Assad could become a reformer. Russia was also concerned about the Syrian crisis and the growing power of ISIS and other radical terrorist groups. These organisations became stronger in areas outside Assad's control and later turned into a global threat. Russia justified its support for Syria for several reasons. First, it wanted to keep its naval base in Tartus and the Hmeimim air base, which were important for Russia's military presence in the Mediterranean region. Second, Russia wanted to protect its economic interests. It tried to block new routes that could transport Middle Eastern oil and natural gas to European markets. Another reason was security. Russia wanted to stop Russian Muslim citizens influenced by ISIS from returning to the North Caucasus and other Muslim-majority regions. For these reasons, Russia began to openly support Syria. (Наумкин, 2012, p. 235).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated at the end of May 2011 that Russia was opposed to UN intervention in Syria, on the grounds that “the situation does not pose a threat to international peace and security. Syria is a highly significant country in the Middle East, and the destabilisation of Syria will have grave consequences well beyond its borders” (Тренин, 2013, p. 24).

In July of the same year, the situation in Syria was discussed between Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who deliberated on the elaboration of a joint strategy aimed at persuading the Syrian government to cease hostilities and engage in constructive dialogue with the protesters. The Russian side was of the view that such an approach could prevent Syria from being drawn into a civil war in the same manner as Libya. (Тренин, 2013, p. 25). It soon became apparent, however, that the United States and the leading member states of the European Union sought to utilise international mechanisms to bring about a change of regime in Syria. Under these circumstances, Russia began to act in concert with China. On 4 October, Russia and China exercised a double veto against a draft resolution proposed by the other members of the Security Council (Security Council Fails to Adopt Draft Resolution Condemning Syria's Crackdown on Anti-Government Protestors, Owing to Veto by Russian Federation, China: Press Release, 2011).

The draft had stipulated the cessation of violence in Syria, the accountability of those bearing responsibility, the granting of a 30-day period to the Assad regime to comply with the resolution, and the necessity of subsequent additional measures by the Security Council, including "measures provided for in the UN Charter".

On 15 December 2011, Russia submitted to the UN Security Council a draft resolution condemning "violence by all parties, including the disproportionate use of force by the Syrian authorities". The draft resolution also expressed concern regarding "the illegal transfer of arms to armed groups in Syria". The proposal constituted a revised version of the Russian-Chinese draft resolution that had been submitted to the Security Council several months prior (Lynch, 2011).

The United States, along with a number of European and Arab nations, drafted an alternative resolution to Russia's December 15, 2011 UN Security Council resolution in late January 2012. Unlike the December draft resolution, the new document primarily condemned the acts of violence committed by the Assad regime and did not exclude the possibility of military intervention in Syria. Russia announced that it would not support this draft and would make efforts to ensure the adoption of its own version (Security Council Members Diverge over Path towards Implementation of Draft Resolution Backing Arab League Proposal on Resolving Crisis in Syria: Press Release, SC/10534, 2012).

On February 7th of the same year, Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov, together with the Director of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service Mikhail Fradkov, held a meeting with Bashar al-Assad. Following the meeting, Lavrov stated that President Assad had agreed on the necessity of carrying out reforms in the constitutional and electoral processes (Assad Ready For Constitutional Referendum Says Lavrov, 2012).

At the same time, the Russian side declared that, without external interference, only the Syrian government holds the right to determine the fate of its own people. However, in March of the same year a number of authoritative figures from Russia made statements regarding the Syrian leadership's disregard for Russia's warnings and its commission of "numerous errors" that had brought the country to the brink of civil war.

In the spring of 2012, Kofi Annan, the special envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, developed a plan for a peaceful settlement in Syria. The plan stipulated that all parties were to cease armed hostilities. To this end, a special UN monitoring mechanism was to be implemented, humanitarian assistance was to be provided to those affected, and an inter-party political dialogue was to be initiated within Syria (Norlen, 2013). At the insistence of Russia and China, the provision concerning the imposition of international sanctions on Syria in the event of the plan's non-implementation was removed from the document.

In June, Russia stated that the United States had no right to demand an end to Russian arms deliveries to the Assad government while it was also supplying weapons to rebel groups. Russia argued that such demands seriously damaged its political position and international reputation. In July, Russia and China vetoed yet another UN Security Council resolution on Syria. This resolution provided for the imposition of sanctions against the government of Bashar al-Assad should it fail to cease the use of heavy weaponry against the civilian population. The document, submitted by the United States, France, Germany, and Portugal, was characterized by official Moscow and official Beijing as unbalanced and as serving the

interests of only one party to the conflict namely, the rebels (Россия и Китай ветоировали резолюцию по Сирии, 2012).

As Russia and China's approaches to the crisis became increasingly aligned, the divergence of views between Russia and the United States continued to deepen. This was brought into sharper relief during the Geneva-2 negotiations on Syria in January 2014, where discussions concerning Bashar al-Assad's role in Syria's future transitional government made these differences all the more apparent. It was precisely due to Russia's resistance that Assad's departure from power was not accepted as a precondition for direct negotiations between the Syrian opposition and the government. (Вахшitez, 2018, p. 515). By recognizing the results of the presidential elections held in Syria in 2014 and the parliamentary elections held in 2016, Russia and China effectively sought to prevent the delegitimization of the regime (Долгов, 2015, pp. 401-421). In 2014, a draft resolution providing for the referral of documents concerning possible war crimes in Syria to the International Criminal Court was likewise blocked by Russia (Гулиева, 2015).

As Russia gradually expanded its role in the process of resolving the Syrian crisis, it became one of the principal initiators of the Vienna discussions on Syria in 2015, held with the participation of the US, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye. During the multilateral meetings attended by nearly 20 states, an agreement was reached on the development of a reconstruction plan for Syria. It was envisaged that representatives of both the Assad government and the opposition would participate in the process, alongside the drafting of a new constitution and the holding of elections (Statement of the International Syria Support Group (Vienna Communiqué), 2015). On March 15, 2016, the Geneva negotiations were resumed with the participation of all parties with a vested interest in the Syrian conflict.

As mentioned earlier, Russia wanted to strengthen its position in the Middle East, especially in Syria. Its main goal was to protect its interests in the country. For this reason, it strongly supported the Assad government. At the same time, it also kept contact with opposition groups. This was done to prepare for different possible outcomes. The initial contacts between Russia and Syria's internal opposition were established as early as 2011. Between 2011 and 2014, delegations from the People's Front for Change and Liberation and the National Coordination Committee in Syria made visits to Moscow. In particular, during 2013 and 2014, visits by Syrian opposition representatives to Moscow assumed a regular character (Крылов, 2016, p. 12).

During his visit to the Russian capital in 2015, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad held extensive discussions with Vladimir Putin covering not only military operations but also issues pertaining to the socio-economic reconstruction of the country (Подцероб, Россия и Арабский мир, 2015, p. 187). In 2015, Moscow served as a platform for consultations bringing together more than thirty representatives of Syrian opposition groups and civil society. As a result of these meetings, the "Moscow Principles" and "Appeals to the International Community" were agreed upon.

On August 26 of the same year, an agreement was concluded between Russia and Syria concerning the deployment of an aviation group of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on Syrian territory. Under the terms of the agreement, the Russian aviation group was to be stationed at the Khmeimim airbase in the city of Latakia. With the consent of the Syrian government, the airbase was made available to Russian armed forces free of charge (Барабанов, Денисенцев, & Васильев, 2016, p. 106). In the context of the growing threat posed by ISIL, the United States and its allies adopted a considerably more cautious stance toward such measures. Russia proposed to the United States that their forces be joined with those of Russia, Iran, and the Syrian army in the fight against ISIL in Syria; however, Washington declined to agree to this proposal.

On September 30, 2015, the aviation group of the Russian Air Force in Syria commenced strikes against targets belonging to forces opposed to the Assad regime. A week later, Assad's forces began a major military operation against opposition groups. It was officially presented as an anti-ISIL and counter-terrorism campaign. In November of the same year, Russia further augmented its air assault capabilities in the region. By that period, Russia's aviation group participating in operations in Syria comprised 69 frontline and long-range aircraft (Барабанов, Денисенцев, & Васильев, 2016, p. 106).

On November 24th, the downing of a Russian Su-24 bomber near the Syrian-Turkish border by a Turkish F-16 aircraft gave rise to a significant cooling and serious deterioration in Türkiye-Russian relations in Syria, a state of tension that persisted until June 2016.

By intervening militarily in Syria, Russia emerged as a prominent actor in Middle Eastern geopolitics, if only in the short-term perspective. The Russian military operation prolonged the tenure of Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria. At the same time, it played a significant role for the entire international community in the fight against ISIL terrorists (Сучков, 2020, p. 188). After strengthening Assad's position, Russia decided to shift most of its air forces from Syria. It aimed to focus more on Eastern Europe and possible developments in Ukraine. Because of this, Russia announced on March 16, 2016, just before talks in Geneva, that it would withdraw most of its troops from Syria. At the time, the move seemed surprising. However, it later became more understandable when looking at events in the following years. The remaining elements of the Russian armed forces stationed in Syria were tasked with monitoring compliance with the ceasefire and continuing counter-terrorism operations (Скупарова, 2017, s. 146). In early 2016, the co-chairs of the International Syria Support Group (Russia and the US) put forward an initiative to conclude a ceasefire agreement with armed opposition groups. This agreement was reached through intensive negotiations and was subsequently endorsed by the presidents of the Russian Federation and the US, Vladimir Putin and Barack Obama respectively (Rumer & Sokolsky, 2021, p. 27).

On February 23, 2016, the Russian Ministry of Defence established a Reconciliation Coordination Centre for the conflicting parties on the grounds of the Khmeimim airbase in Syrian territory (Российские интересы на Ближнем Востоке и в Турции, 2005, p. 26). On February 27, a ceasefire agreement between government forces and armed opposition forces in Syria came into effect. The ceasefire did not extend to the ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra, and several other terrorist organizations recognized as such by the United Nations. The reconciliation of the conflicting parties was facilitated by the Coordination Centre at the Khmeimim airbase, the American reconciliation centre in Amman, Jordan, and the working group in Geneva.

The capture of Palmyra in March and Aleppo in December was achieved with the support of Russian military forces operating in Syria. These developments increased Russia's confidence in its role in the conflict. At a meeting of the Russian Ministry of Defence on December 22, 2016, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu reviewed the early results of the Syrian operation. He stated that Russia's air force had played a key role in preventing the collapse of the Syrian state (Инициативы России и США по урегулированию сирийского конфликта, 2016).

Upon assuming presidential duties in the United States in January 2017, Donald Trump declared that one of his primary objectives was to defeat ISIS, and stated that he was prepared to cooperate with Russia in pursuit of this goal (Строкань & Федуненко, 2017). Following the meeting between Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump in Hamburg in July, a ceasefire agreement was reached between government forces and the moderate opposition in the provinces of Daraa, Quneitra, and As-Suwayda.

The conclusion of the military phase of the conflict in Syria and the transition to a political settlement phase led to an intensification of Russia's diplomatic contacts with the principal actors of the Syrian conflict. From January 28 to 30, 2018, the Congress of Syrian National Dialogue was held in the Russian city of Sochi. The Congress was attended by nearly 1,400 representatives of various political forces in Syria, both residing within the country and abroad, as well as trade union members, tribal elders, clergy, activists and human rights defenders, representatives of student unions loyal to both the opposition and the incumbent Syrian regime and President Bashar al-Assad, international observers, and representatives of Russia, Türkiye, and Iran. At the forum, a decision was made to establish a competent body comprising representatives of Syria's official authorities, the opposition, and independent politicians, tasked with drafting a new Syrian constitution under the auspices of the United Nations in Geneva. (Война в Сирии, 2018) Among the participating forces, there were no separatist Kurdish organizations from Syria. The Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), which controlled vast territories along the Turkish border in northern Syria and had proclaimed itself the Northern Syria Federation, was not admitted to the congress by the Republic of Türkiye on the grounds of its engagement in separatism and terrorism. Türkiye was opposed to the participation of such separatist and terrorist groups in a

gathering concerned with Syria's future. In this situation, the PYD said it would not carry out any agreement reached in Sochi. The Kurdish National Council (KNC), another major Kurdish group in northern Syria, was also not invited to the talks in Sochi. This happened even though Türkiye did not oppose their participation.

On December 18, 2018, the “Astana Troika” comprising Russia, Türkiye, and Iran submitted a list of candidates for the commission tasked with drafting Syria's new constitution to UN representatives; however, the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, stated that further consultations would need to be conducted in order to establish an “inclusive, credible, and balanced constitutional committee”. The summit of Russia, Türkiye, and Iran on the Syrian crisis was held in Sochi on February 14, 2019. Vladimir Putin, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Hassan Rouhani adopted a joint statement summarizing the developments in the situation in Syria since their previous meeting held on September 7, 2018. The parties emphasized their firm and unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Syria. Russia, Türkiye, and Iran declared their determination to resist separatist plans aimed at undermining Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the national security of neighboring states, while rejecting “*attempts to create new realities on the ground in Syria under the pretext of combating terrorism*” (Joint statement of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the President of the Russian Federation and the President of the Republic of Turkey, 2019).

In return for the support rendered to Assad, Russia gained significant military and economic advantages, albeit in the short-term perspective. As a result of negotiations conducted between 2017 and 2019, Russia and Syria signed an agreement on the 49-year lease of one of the two major ports on the Mediterranean Sea under Syrian control port of Tartus. At the end of 2018, the Syrian authorities announced plans by Russian companies to construct an airport in Tartus (Бологов, 2015). In November 2020, Moscow allocated more than one billion dollars to Damascus, with the funds designated for “humanitarian purposes, the restoration of electricity networks, industrial production, and religious sites”. By September 1, 2021, Syrian and Russian forces had gained full control over the province of Daraa. A ceasefire agreement was concluded between the opposition and the Syrian government. More than 400 rebels agreed to surrender, and over 300 units of weaponry were confiscated from them, including mortars and grenade launchers (Кривошеев, 2021).

Russia was already urging that Syria be transformed, in many respects, into a forward position for its interests in the Middle East. Under conditions of intense sanctions pressure, the Middle East has become one of Russia's “windows” of access to the wider world. The significance of relations with Türkiye, Iran, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia in particular grew increasingly important for Russia as the sanctions were intensified. However, the sudden offensive launched by anti-government forces on November 27, 2024, and the subsequent collapse of the Assad regime on December 8 resulted in the failure of Russia's Syria policy. Russia found itself effectively sidelined in Syria, while Türkiye emerged as the dominant power in the country. One of the first steps taken by the newly established transitional government was to demand that Russia vacate Khmeimim. Although the fall of Bashar al-Assad deepened mistrust and uncertainty in relations following his flight to Moscow, it is also known that certain pragmatic and practical steps have been taken. Al-Sharaa's official visits to Moscow in 2025 and 2026 indicate that the new Damascus government has a vested interest in maintaining strategic ties with Russia in order to gain international legitimacy and rebuild the country's infrastructure (Russia-Syria talks. Vladimir Putin held talks in the Kremlin with President of Syria Ahmed al-Sharaa, who is in Russia on a working visit, 2025). In particular, the ongoing negotiations regarding the status of the military facilities at Khmeimim and Tartus create conditions for the continuation of Russia's military-political presence in the region under new terms. The formal demands of the Ahmed al-Sharaa government concerning the extradition of deposed leader Bashar al-Assad and the repatriation of funds frozen in Russian banks remain the principal source of tension in bilateral relations.

II. China's Middle East Strategy and Interests in Syria

The Syrian crisis has been one of the geopolitical processes through which China has openly articulated its claims and positions with regard to the Middle East. China's opposition to the United States' stance on Syria and its support for the Assad regime during the Syrian crisis can be explained precisely within this context. China did not hesitate to veto international resolutions concerning the Syrian crisis and, at best, abstained from voting. Beijing officially supported the six-point plan proposed by Kofi Annan. The plan called for a ceasefire, internal dialogue, and respect for Syria's sovereignty. China also sent its envoy Li Huaxin to Damascus. The goal was to encourage talks between the government and opposition groups (Zreik, 2019, p. 56). Subsequently, China dispatched Deputy Foreign Minister Zhang Ming who had previously visited Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and France to the region to discuss approaches to resolving the Syrian crisis (China sending envoy on Syria to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, France, 2012). In so doing, China, for the first time in its modern history, departed from its policy of non-interference in crises beyond its direct interests and immediate geopolitical sphere.

China supported the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria both politically through the exercise of its veto power within the framework of the UN Security Council and by providing economic assistance. Unlike Russia, China adhered to its approach of non-violent methods in international politics and had no direct military involvement in the Syrian war. The Chinese government conducted a series of meetings with delegations from both the Assad regime and the opposition in order to initiate a negotiation process and bring the conflict to an end. In so doing, China became one of the few countries maintaining dialogue with both the Assad regime and the opposition. The rationale behind such an approach lay in China's perception of Syria as one of its strategic allies in the region. In all circumstances, however, China's approach served more to preserve the Assad regime than to affirm the legitimacy of the opposition. From March 2017 onwards, China played a significant role in the reconsolidation of the Bashar al-Assad regime. One reason for supporting Assad was to reduce U.S. influence in the Middle East. China views the United States as a geopolitical and economic competitor. One of China's subsequent steps toward strengthening its position in the Middle East was the appointment of a special envoy to Syria on March 29, 2016. Analyses indicate that China supported the discussions within the Geneva, Vienna, and Astana formats, as well as a peaceful resolution of the Syrian crisis, for several reasons. First, as an advocate of the principle of "no foreign interference," the Chinese government regarded the Assad regime as a preferable alternative to the chaos that could arise as a result of external intervention. Nevertheless, as noted above, Beijing never entered into conflict with the forces representing the Syrian opposition; on the contrary, it supported national reconciliation and dialogue. One of the primary concerns for China throughout the course of the crisis was the possibility of Uyghurs from the Xinjiang region joining Syrian separatist groups. By demonstrating an exceedingly sensitive approach to this issue and bringing it to the fore, China also sought to create a pretext for intensifying pressure on the Uyghurs and strengthening totalitarian control measures in the Xinjiang region. One noteworthy aspect was China's cooperation with Saudi Arabia on matters pertaining to Syria. As an importer of Saudi oil, China sought to take maximum account of Saudi Arabia's support for the opposition and its position on Syria. In this manner, by simultaneously developing cooperation with Assad on the one hand and the opposition on the other, China both took into consideration the interests of the opposing actors in Syria and adopted forward-looking measures for the future. It is with this in mind that researcher M. Zreik from the Chinese University of Hong Kong writes that neutral status is the factor that distinguishes China's position and ensures a promising future for China in the Middle East (Zreik, 2019, p. 61).

The civil war in Syria posed an obstacle to China's economic ambitions, namely, the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative and as a result, China worked consistently to bring the Syrian crisis to an end as swiftly as possible. Criticizing the United States' military support for the Syrian opposition, the People's Republic of China expressed support for Syria's restoration of sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which remain under Israeli occupation.

During the ongoing crisis, on February 5, 2015, Syria and China signed an agreement on the provision of humanitarian assistance within the framework of technical and economic cooperation between the two countries, and in July of the same year, a contract was signed securing Chinese investment of two

billion dollars in projects in Syria. The latter agreement envisaged the participation of 150 Chinese companies in Syria and the creation of 40,000 jobs for Chinese nationals in the country's labor market.

In August 2017, a Chinese military delegation led by General Guan Youfei, head of the International Military Cooperation Bureau of China's Central Military Commission, paid an official visit to Damascus and was received by Fahd Jassim al-Frej, the Defence Minister of the Assad regime. The two countries had discussed matters pertaining to the intensification of military cooperation. It should be noted that at that time, approximately 15 percent of the military equipment in the Syrian army was supplied by China. Unmanned reconnaissance drones were provided to Syria exclusively by China, and Chinese specialists conducted training for the country's sniper units.

Prior to the outbreak of the crisis, China had made significant investments in Syria's energy sector. The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) held stakes in all of Syria's major oil companies. Unlike the United States and European states, China did not join the sanctions imposed against Syria even after the onset of the crisis and after the Assad regime had effectively begun applying repressive measures against the civilian population and perpetrating massacres; on the contrary, China condemned the Western sanctions imposed on Syria's oil production and exports and continued to purchase Syrian crude oil.

The rise to power of Ahmed al-Sharaa in December 2024 necessitated a fundamental restructuring of Syria-China relations. The collapse of the Assad regime compelled China to rebuild its Syria policy from scratch. In the initial period, China hesitated to formally recognize the new Syrian authorities. One reason was the connection between the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, linked to Uyghur militants in China, and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. China, which had consistently supported Assad, claimed that following HTS's seizure of power in Syria, approximately 3,500 Uyghur fighters affiliated with the East Turkestan Islamic Movement had been integrated into the 84th Division of the Syrian army (Aboudouh, 2025). China also adopted a negative stance in UN Security Council votes on the lifting of sanctions against Syria; when a resolution on the removal of sanctions applied to Ahmed al-Sharaa was put to a vote in the Security Council in November 2025, while 14 members voted in favor of the draft, China abstained (Lennon, 2025).

On 21 February 2025, Chinese Ambassador Shi Hongwei met Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa in Damascus. This meeting took place about ten weeks after the fall of Assad's government. It was the first officially recorded bilateral contact after the change of power. The purpose was to assess the positions of both sides after al-Sharaa took office. (Marks, 2025). However, once it became evident that the new authorities had consolidated their position sufficiently, China began to gradually normalize its relations with the Syrian government from the second half of 2025 onwards. Traditionally, Chinese companies were the first to engage in the process. In mid-2025, Syria signed an investment agreement with China's Fidi Contracting company for the construction of industrial zones near Homs and Damascus, which is considered the first significant Chinese investment in Syria in the post-Assad period. In October 2025, the vessel "Queen Vivian" delivered 16,000 tons of steel and equipment from China to Syria as the first direct post-war shipment (İşık, 2025).

The visit of Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani to China marked a further step toward the establishment and development of relations; during the meeting held in the course of that visit, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that China was prepared to restructure bilateral relations. Taking into account China's concerns regarding Taiwan and the Uyghurs, the head of the Syrian Foreign Ministry pledged his country's support for the "One China" policy and gave assurances that no organization would be permitted to use Syrian territory against China (Marks, 2025).

Thus, it can be said that China-Syria relations are currently at the outset of a new phase. However, sensitive points remain in these relations. Damascus seeks to benefit from China's economic capabilities and to secure its support on the matter of lifting sanctions in the UN Security Council. China, for its part, remains concerned about the weakening of its post-Assad positions in Syria and about the ruling force in the country's cooperation with Uyghur Muslims. China's principal demands pertain to the removal of Uyghur fighters from Syrian military structures. However, a resolution of this issue in the

short-term perspective is not feasible, as these fighters constitute a vital component of the government's fragile coalition.

CONCLUSION

A comparative analysis of the Syria policies of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China during the crisis period demonstrates that, although these two major powers acted as a unified allies in opposition to the positions demonstrated by the United States and European states in the Middle East, there were nonetheless significant differences in their approaches and in the instruments they employed. Both countries consistently vetoed draft resolutions directed against the Assad regime in the UN Security Council and declared their support for a peaceful resolution of the conflict on the basis of internal dialogue. Behind Russia's position lay strategic interests such as protecting its military bases on the Mediterranean Sea (Tartus, Khmeimim), consolidating its geopolitical influence in the Middle East, and challenging Western regional dominance. For China, engagement with the Syrian crisis served primarily to defend the principle of “non-interference in internal affairs” and to ensure the establishment of reliable new routes for the Belt and Road Initiative. Russia directly intervened militarily in Syria, conducting air operations from 2015 onwards, supporting the capture of strategic cities such as Aleppo and Palmyra by the Assad regime, and effectively supporting Assad's army by all available means. In addition to military intervention, Russia also carried out active diplomatic activities and was one of the initiators of the establishment of the Astana format. China, by contrast, categorically rejected military intervention. It favored “soft” instruments such as economic investments, the supply of military equipment, the dispatch of special envoys, and diplomatic mediation. In this regard, China was one of the rare actors maintaining parallel dialogue with both the Assad regime and the opposition, and this ostensibly neutral position afforded it considerable room for maneuver in Syria.

Russia achieved significant successes in the short-term perspective, managing to prolong the tenure of the Assad regime and securing a 49-year lease on the port of Tartus. However, the fall of Assad in December 2024 brought Russia's decade-long Syria policy to a resounding failure. Having found itself effectively sidelined in Syria, Russia has been able to preserve its position only partially, on the basis of pragmatic relations arising from the new authorities' pursuit of international legitimacy. The status of the Khmeimim and Tartus bases remains uncertain to this day. China, by virtue of its “dual approach,” succeeded in rapidly restructuring its relations with Syria even after the fall of Assad. The signing of investment agreements in 2025, the resumption of diplomatic visits, and the securing of safety guarantees from the Syrian authorities regarding the Uyghur issue have revealed that China's distinct strategy is considerably more resilient for the longer-term perspective. Thus, the Syrian crisis has brought into sharp relief both the existence and the fundamental differences of the partnership between Russia and China. These two powers acted as a coordinated bloc in opposition to Western pressure, yet diverged substantially from one another in terms of objectives, instruments, and long-term intentions. Russia opted for classical great power politics in Syria, while China chose a more far-sighted strategy grounded in the principles of economic pragmatism, diplomatic flexibility, and non-violence.

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THE AFGHAN PROBLEM AND THE US STRATEGY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN

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Abstract

The article analyzes the US policy in Afghanistan, the evolution of American policy to a new stage after the end of the military campaign in Afghanistan. The US intervention in Afghanistan began with the words of US President George Bush "war on terrorism" after the September 11, 2001 attacks. The main factors that led to the reduction of decision-making periods on the Afghan issue during the second presidency of Barack Obama were taken into account. During the reign of Donald Trump, the main components of the Afghan strategy and the prospects for its implementation were analyzed. The dynamics of the development of the Afghan conflict against the background of the restructuring of the international presence are examined. The results and prospects of the activities of international powers in Afghanistan are assessed.

On December 1, 2009, US President B. Obama announced his new policy on Afghanistan, stating that the main goal is to successfully end the war in Afghanistan. In order to achieve this goal, the US President emphasized the importance of depriving Al-Qaeda militants of their sanctuaries, strengthening cooperation with Pakistan, withdrawing US troops from Afghanistan, as well as increasing the effectiveness of the Afghan government, and announcing the dispatch of a 30,000-strong contingent to Afghanistan. Other issues highlighted in the new strategy, which envisages the dispatch of additional troops in early 2010 and the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan from July 2011, are the Afghan government's responsibility to fight corruption, improving the living standards of the Afghan people, and strengthening control over the border with Pakistan.

Any country that the US enters under the guise of "democracy" and "stability" collapses, and it is impossible to get out of this chaos without outside intervention. Washington hoped that democracy would be established in Afghanistan and women's rights would be protected. However, as a result of the US choosing the wrong people for the troops, everything ended in capitulation. With the coming to power of Donald Trump, peace talks with the Kabul government began. Trump stated that the US would no longer use its military power to establish democracy in distant countries. In 2021, US military troops left Afghanistan.

Key words: Afghanistan, Barack Obama's policy, Donald Trump's Afghanistan strategy

Introduction

One of the most important strategic centers for the United States is Afghanistan. The operation launched by the United States' international armed intervention in Afghanistan occupies a special place. At the initial stage, the United States relied on the assistance of its closest ally Great Britain, Pakistan, Russia and the Northern Alliance forces. Then, within the framework of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (deployed on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 20, 2001), NATO member states and a number of other states participated in the operation (Кулагин, В.М., 2012). The operation was carried out on legal grounds with the aim of overthrowing the Taliban regime and eliminating the threat posed by the transnational terrorist organization Al-Qaeda, which was responsible for the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001.

The long-term results of the military operation in Afghanistan were not successful. The ease and speed of the initial victories were replaced by the weakening participation of the US and NATO in the asymmetric conflict. Many years of efforts by international forces did not lead to the stabilization of the situation in the country. The limits of the use of coalition resource potential for the implementation of

the tasks of socio-economic improvement of the country were clearly defined. The increase in calls from the territory of Afghanistan threatened the security of neighboring regions. Despite the lack of alternatives to resolving the Afghan conflict through political and diplomatic means, the prospect of reaching a compromise with the Taliban seemed remote.

Given the worsening situation in Afghanistan during the reconstruction of the NATO mission, American politicians and experts began to talk about the danger of developing events according to the "Iraq scenario". The consequences of the policy of the two administrations of Barack Obama on regional and international security for the situation in Afghanistan were critically reviewed. The election of D. Trump as president, which resulted in a radical change of leadership in the United States and a slowdown in the process of developing a new Afghanistan strategy, further increased intrigue about Washington's further actions.

Thus, the military operations aimed at overthrowing the Taliban regime lasted 20 years and ended with the withdrawal of US military forces from Afghanistan in 2021, and stability was established in relations between the two countries. The US stated that its goal was to fight ISIS and normalize the situation in the country. However, on the contrary, the 15-year military presence of the US and NATO in Afghanistan has failed to strengthen security and establish peace, and has even further deteriorated the situation in the country.

Materials and methods The Afghan problem

Well-organized military operations have become more frequent, including attempts to seize control of a number of strategically important areas of Afghanistan. The militants have intensified their sabotage and terrorist activities in various provinces of the country. The number of high-profile terrorist attacks has increased in major cities, including Kabul.

The zone of influence of the Islamist Taliban movement, a large radical group operating in Afghanistan, has expanded. The biggest victory for the Taliban since 2001 ended with the capture of the provincial capital Kunduz in September 2015. It was only thanks to the support of coalition forces that it was possible to restore control over the city. The events in Kunduz, which shook the US and NATO command, were accompanied by a weakening of restrictions on the participation of American troops in the operations of Afghan security forces (*Donati, J., Totakhil, H., 2015*).

On May 27, 2014, the US President announced a plan of action for Afghanistan. In accordance with Barack Obama's plan, American units ceased to participate in counterinsurgency operations after 2014 and focused their efforts on combating the remnants of al-Qaeda. The plan called for continued international efforts to strengthen the potential of Afghan forces and create favorable conditions for the independent development of the country. This approach assumed the end of the military campaign and the implementation of training and counterterrorism missions as part of the non-combat mission. The Obama administration planned to complete the withdrawal of troops by the end of 2016, leaving personnel to guard the embassy in Kabul and a military adviser of about 1,000 people (*Katzman, K., 2017*).

Washington's plans to reorient the mission were combined with the desire to provide guaranteed access to military facilities in the Emirate. The possibility of using long-term infrastructure to combat terrorism after the official end of the military campaign was one of the Pentagon's priorities. This was primarily due to the need to continue the fight against al-Qaeda, which, according to the Pentagon, would take another 20 years. In this regard, the Americans later developed various configurations for a long-term presence in the Emirate. Thus, proposals were made to maintain at least two to three bases in the southern and eastern regions of the country. The estimated number of US military personnel at each base ranged from 1,000 to 2,000. According to preliminary estimates, annual maintenance costs amounted to 5-10 billion US dollars (*O'Hanlon, M., 2015*). The inclusion of relevant provisions in the bilateral agreement on long-term strategic partnership for 2012, as well as in the agreement on cooperation in the field of security and defense in 2014, was a significant success of American

diplomacy (Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America, 2012).

Changes in the operational situation forced Barack Obama to freeze the process of withdrawing troops from the İRA and expand the functions of the American army. There was a noticeable reduction in decision-making periods in Afghanistan. Previously, decisions were reviewed on average every six months. Barack Obama's actions were accompanied by criticism of his failure to fulfill his promise to "responsibly end the war" in Afghanistan. The decisions of the head of state were interpreted by his opponents as "half-measures", the implementation of which would not lead to a degradation of the conflict. It is noteworthy that Barack Obama's opponents did not offer constructive alternatives to the administration's actions on the Afghan path. Their set of recommendations was mainly reduced to maintaining the contingent at the 2015 level (9,800 troops) or its "reverse buildup" (Jaffe, G., Ryan, M., 2015) . At the same time, they did not take into account the possibility that the increase in foreign military involvement could lead to a new phase of the conflict. In addition, the experience of a large-scale increase in the American contingent, carried out at the beginning of Barack Obama's first presidential term, showed that such actions have only a temporary effect. They allow you to seize the initiative from the enemy, but do not inflict a crushing defeat on him. The stubborn resistance of the military, especially the Taliban, could not be broken.

The escalation of the armed conflict between Afghan forces and the opposition was accompanied by massive population displacement, increasing casualties among non-combatants, and an increase in the number of refugees. The increase in migration flows from Afghanistan has become an acute problem for the European Union, which is experiencing an unprecedented migration crisis. According to the UN, in 2015, Afghanistan ranked second among the main countries of origin of refugees, after Syria.

Against the backdrop of the military escalation, the weakness of the Afghan forces, unable to contain the onslaught of militants, became clear. Chronic problems became acute: a shortage of qualified personnel, primarily command personnel; a high level of desertion; corruption and theft in the Armed Forces; a low level of coordination between law enforcement agencies and local authorities (Campbell, J.F., 2015). Record casualties, logistical problems, and a lack of timely reinforcements have undermined the morale of the Afghan military. Coalition forces, including tactical air support, were sorely needed. It is clear that efforts to increase the strength of the Afghan army and police - the emphasis on the quality of training and logistical support - have not paid off. The United States and NATO have adjusted their approach to the training of Afghan security forces. However, the process of forming an army and police capable of independently ensuring security within the country is far from over.

On August 15, 2021, the capital Kabul was captured by the Taliban and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan collapsed. A transitional government was established by the Taliban. (İsmaylov, V., 2016).

After the formation of a new government based on democratic values in Afghanistan (November-December 2001), relations with regional and world states began to be developed and visits were made at the level of state officials. It should be noted that the main principles of Afghanistan's foreign policy were adjusted towards establishing close relations with the United States and the European Union.

Findings and discussion US strategic strategy in Afghanistan

In 21st century Afghanistan, which has been plagued by ethnic tensions and regional conflicts, the fledgling Taliban movement has established its power in key strategic locations in the country.

In order to retain political power in Afghanistan, the US attacked the country using the pretext that Osama bin Laden, the leader of the Al-Qaeda terrorist group, was hiding there, and did not leave the country until 2014.

The withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan within a specific period of time has always been relevant under President Obama (Democrats). One of the main people responsible for this was Hillary Clinton, who served as US Secretary of State from 2009 to 2013.

The main task of successfully conducting negotiations on the Afghan issue is entrusted to Special Representative Richard Holbrooke and his team, who knows Afghanistan and Pakistan very well, and is also a professional diplomat and author of the "Dayton Agreement" that ended the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Şükürlü, E., 2021).

Holbrooke believed that if the US wanted to protect its interests in Afghanistan, it must strive to bring Pakistan and Afghanistan closer together, and to do this, it must achieve the signing of the transit trade agreement, which had been on the agenda since the 1960s but had not been completed, and this, in turn, should open other doors. It was at his request and with the participation of Hillary Clinton that this important step was taken in Islamabad in July 2010, and the agreement was signed.

After the transfer of control of the country to the local government on December 28, 2014, fighting between the Taliban and the Kabul government intensified, and Afghanistan became a battlefield between the central government, the Taliban group, and ISIS(İŞİD).

The US administration has been working on a new US strategy in Afghanistan. President Donald Trump is unhappy with the US "defeat" in Afghanistan and has demanded that the commander of the American army in the country, General John Nicholson, resign. The White House is considering a plan that proposes handing over most of the US activities in Afghanistan to private contractors, said Erik Prince, owner of the private military company Blackwater (ABŞ Əfqanıstana dair yeni strategiya hazırlayır, 2017).

Speaking at Fort Myer in Arlington on August 21, 2017, US President Donald Trump unveiled a new strategy in Afghanistan and South Asia (Remarks by President Trump on the Strategy in Afghanistan and South Asia, 2017). D. Trump's strategy was based on five main principles.

The first is formed not by the current period, but by the current situation. Its practical application was to suspend the process of withdrawing troops from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, while refusing to rigidly determine the duration of their stay. According to D. Trump, the enemy should not know in advance about the actions of the United States, so you should not publicly announce your plans. Following this logic, the Trump administration did not intend to announce the start and end dates of military operations. Within the framework of this approach, the duration of the stay of the American contingent in the IRI was not indicated. In fact, the Republican leadership satisfied a demand from some segments of the American political elite and the military establishment, which advocated an indefinite presence in Afghanistan.

Secondly, the new strategy implied the use of non-military means in addition to force (electric) instruments. Practical interaction with Kabul was conditional on the presence of progress in the partner state. According to D. Trump, Americans expect to see "real reforms ... and real results". According to them, US patience and support are not limited. The IRI government must bear its share of the military, political and economic burdens.

Third, US policy towards Pakistan was linked to the assessment of the real contribution of America to ensuring its interests in the region. Islamabad's continued support for terrorist groups was unacceptable. The United States intended to influence Islamabad to adapt its behavior to its interests. The set of pressure tools included the deprivation of Pakistan's status as a "major US ally outside of NATO", a further reduction in economic aid, and the inclusion of Pakistan in the list of states that support terrorism. The practical implementation of these measures, with the exception of the reduction in the volume of economic aid, was questionable. On the one hand, Washington had reason to tighten its political course towards Pakistan. On the other hand, there were objective limits to this process. Islamabad understood that the United States did not have an effective tool that would not threaten American interests in the region.

Fourth, building a strategic partnership with India, the leader of the South Asian subsystem of international relations, was one of the priorities of the American administration. The United States recognized India's significant contribution to the stabilization of Afghanistan, but at the same time noted the unrealized potential in this direction, especially in the field of economic assistance.

Fifth, the lifting of restrictions on military operations in the IRA imposed by the previous administration was aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the fight against terrorism. On the one hand, D. Trump continued the line of B. Obama, who gradually weakened the restrictions imposed in 2014-2016. On the other hand, B. Obama kept strict control over the actions of the military (Tillerson, R.W., 2017). D. Trump, on the contrary, expanded freedom of action, arguing that strict control by Washington prevented victory. In this regard, the issue of expanding the limits of the powers of American military forces within the framework of a *de jure* non-combat mission became relevant. The lack of clear parameters for US participation in regional conflicts was becoming an increasingly widespread phenomenon.

The US strategy for Afghanistan since 2001 has consisted of military intervention, state-building, and counterterrorism. It transitioned to a full troop withdrawal with the 2020 Doha Agreement, and currently follows a line of remote terror control and diplomatic isolation without a military presence.

Conclusion and recommendations

Summarizing the above, I must say that the United States is no longer interested in developing a strategy for the Afghan path. The strategy announced by D. Trump is not the embodiment of a more or less unified, consistent path out of Afghanistan. The US's orientation towards an indefinite involvement in the IRI was a matter of concern to the states of the region. The lack of specificity in relation to a number of key provisions of the strategy gives rise to interpretation. Disproportionately little attention has been paid to non-critical military components of the strategy. The peace process, in which "Taliban elements" participate, depends on "effective military efforts". It is not known how, according to the plan of American strategists, the stability and irreversibility of the results achieved will be ensured if, according to the plan, the United States and NATO find themselves in a humiliating situation.

The regional aspect of the strategy has not been developed. Washington's tightening of pressure on Islamabad could further aggravate the situation in the region. In the context of regional cooperation in Afghanistan, the interests of important players such as China, Russia, Iran and Central Asian states have not been taken into account. In the absence of coordinated actions of regional and extra-regional powers, the effectiveness of international efforts to establish stability in Afghanistan will be low.

Like his predecessors, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, D. Trump is motivated by the desire to go down in history as a defeated president in Afghanistan. In this sense, it is natural for him to reject the initial impulse to withdraw troops from the Islamic Republic of Iran and to seek to de-escalate the conflict. At the same time, D. Trump's focus on achieving a "lasting result" implies progressive progress towards a political solution to the Afghan conflict. However, the new Republican leadership has not presented an action plan in this direction. By announcing a radical change in the strategy related to Afghanistan, the current American leadership is in practice changing the approaches of its predecessors and adjusting the ways of their implementation.

As a result, the main reason for the US's failure in Afghanistan can be attributed to its choice of wrong priorities.

Thanks and Information Note

Thank you all for listening.

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**AZƏRBAYCAN QANUNVERCİLİYİNDƏ LOBBİ FƏALİYYƏTİ:
AVROPA TƏCRÜBƏSİ**

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Özet

Bu makale, Azərbaycan'da lobi faaliyetlerinin düzenlenmesinde Avrupa deneyiminden yararlanma olanaklarını incelemektedir. Sadece Avrupa ülkelerinin lobi faaliyetlerine ilişkin mevzuatı ve deneyimleri değil, aynı zamanda Avrupa Birliği ve yapılarındaki lobi faaliyetleri ve yasal düzenlemeler de gözden geçirilmiştir. Azerbaycan'da lobi faaliyetlerinin yasal olarak düzenlenmesi ihtiyacının ortaya çıkması, bu faaliyetlerin gizli doğasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Son zamanlarda, Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nde lobi faaliyetlerinin standartlaştırılması ve şeffaflığının sağlanmasına yönelik fikirlerle sık sık karşılaşırız. Bunun da bir dizi yasal ve sosyal temeli bulunmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, ülkede hızlanan yasal devlet inşası, demokratikleşme, yolsuzluk ve tekellerle mücadele, petrol dışı sektörün, küçük ve orta ölçekli işletmelerin geliştirilmesi, bürokratik engellerin ortadan kaldırılması, "tek pencere" sistemlerinin getirilmesi ve diğer faktörler, "Lobi Faaliyetleri Kanunu"nun kabulü gibi bir kamu düzenini oluşturmaktadır.

Bu kurumun yasallaştırılması, dünya pratiğindeki deneyimlerden de yararlanmayı gerektirir. Bu bağlamda, yasal düzenleme alanındaki mekanizmalar konusunda geniş deneyime sahip Avrupa hukuk geleneklerine yönelmek gereklidir. Ancak, Avrupa devletlerinin demokrasi ve insan hakları alanındaki başarılarına rağmen, lobicilik alanında yasal boşluklar hala mevcuttur. Avusturya, Yunanistan, İtalya, Danimarka, İrlanda, Lüksemburg, İngiltere ve diğer devletlerde bu alanda uzmanlaşmış bir mevzuat olmamasına rağmen, bu ülkelerde lobicilik yazılı olmayan kurallar temelinde işlemektedir.

1986 tarihli Tek Avrupa Yasası ve 1992 tarihli Maastricht Antlaşması'nı takip eden siyasi gelişmeler, karar alma yetkilerinin üye devletlerden AB kurumlarına devredilmesi sonucunda lobiciliği kurumsallaştırdı. Bu durum aynı zamanda Avrupa Birliği yapılarının lobicilik deneyiminden yararlanma fırsatı da yarattı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: lobi faaliyetleri, lobi yapıları, lobi mevzuatı, Avrupa Birliği, Azerbaycan lobisi, lobi mekanizmaları, karar alma süreci, lobi örgütleri.

LOBBYING IN AZERBAIJAN LEGISLATION: EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE

Summary

This article examines the possibilities of drawing on European experience in regulating lobbying activities in Azerbaijan. Not only the legislation and experiences of European countries regarding lobbying activities, but also the lobbying activities and legal regulations within the European Union and its structures have been reviewed. The need for legal regulation of lobbying activities in Azerbaijan arises from the clandestine nature of these activities. Recently, we have frequently encountered ideas for standardizing and ensuring transparency in lobbying activities in the Republic of Azerbaijan. This has a number of legal and social foundations. Thus, the accelerated legal state-building, democratization, fight against corruption and monopolies, development of the non-oil sector, small and medium-sized enterprises, elimination of bureaucratic obstacles, introduction of "single window"

systems, and other factors are creating a public order such as the adoption of a "Law on Lobbying Activities".

Legalizing this institution requires drawing on experiences from global practice. In this context, it is necessary to turn to European legal traditions, which have extensive experience in the field of legal regulation mechanisms. However, despite the successes of European states in the areas of democracy and human rights, legal gaps still exist in the field of lobbying. Although Austria, Greece, Italy, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, and other states do not have specialized legislation in this area, lobbying in these countries operates on the basis of unwritten rules.

Political developments following the Single European Act of 1986 and the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 institutionalized lobbying as a result of the transfer of decision-making powers from member states to EU institutions. This also created an opportunity for European Union structures to benefit from lobbying experience.

Keywords: Lobbying activities, lobbying structures, lobbying legislation, European Union, Azerbaijan lobby, lobbying mechanisms, decision-making process, lobbying organizations.

Giriş

Azərbaycanda siyasi proseslərin elementi olaraq, lobbi institutunun leqallaşdırılması uzun illərdir ki, müzakirə obyektidir. Qloballaşma, integrasiya prosesləri, informasiya mübadiləsinin genişlənməsi, liberal iqtisadi münasibətlər, demokratikləşmə və digər faktorlar bu institutun tətbiqi istiqamətlərini müəyyən edən amillərdən hesab edilir. Bu sahənin hüquqi baxımdan tənzimlənməsi eyni zamanda lobbi fəaliyyətinin həyata keçirilmə arealına aid olan və hal-hazırda qeyri-rəsmi formada həyata keçirilən hərəkətlərin legitimləşdirilməsinə, bir növ faktiki mövcud olan bu sahənin "kölgə iqtisadiyyatından" çıxarılmasına gətirib çıxara bilər. Azad bazar iqtisadiyyatının seçilməsi, demokratikləşmə prosesi, vətəndaş cəmiyyətinin formalaşması, qərar qəbulu prosesində xalq kütlələrinin iştirak etməsi imkanının yaranması və digər faktorlar lobbi fəaliyyəti üçün zəmin yaradır.

Azərbaycanda lobbizmin hüquqi tənzimlənməsi zərurətinin yaranması onun latent xarakter daşması ilə bağlıdır. Son dövrlərdə tez-tez Azərbaycan Respublikasında da lobbi fəaliyyətinin normativləşdirilməsi, aşkarlığının təmin olunması istiqamətində fikirlərə rast gəlirik. Bunun bir sıra hüquqi-sosial əsasları da vardır. Belə ki, ölkədə sürətlənən hüquqi dövlət quruculuğu, demokratikləşmə, korrupsiya və inhisarçılığa qarşı mübarizə, qeyri-neft sektorunun, kiçik və orta sahibkarlığın inkişaf etdirilməsi, bürokratik əngəlliklərin aradan qaldırılması, "vahid pəncərə" sistemlərinin tətbiqi və digər amillər "Lobbi fəaliyyəti haqqında qanunun" qəbulu kimi ictimai sifarişi formalaşdırır.

Avropa dövlətlərinin təcrübəsi

Bu institutun leqallaşdırılması dünya praktikasında təcrübədən yararlanmanı da zəruri edir. Bu baxımdan hüquqi tənzimlənmə sahəsində geniş mexanizmlərin təcrübəsinə malik olan Avropa hüquqi ənənələrinə də müraciət edilməlidir. Məlumdur ki, lobbizm hüquqi baxımdan dünyanın bir neçə ölkələrində leqallaşdırılıb. Bununla belə Qərbi Avropa dövlətlərinin demokratiya və insan hüquqları sahəsində uğurlarına baxmayaraq, lobbizm sahəsində hüquqi boşluqlar hələ də mövcuddur. Avstriya, Yunanıstan, İtaliya, Danimarka, İrlandiya, Lüksemburq, İngiltərə və digər dövlətlərdə bu sahədə ixtisaslaşmış qanunvericiliyin olmamasına baxmayaraq, bu ölkələrdə lobbizm yazılmamış qaydalar əsasında fəaliyyət göstərir. Məsələn, Danimarkada qanunvericiliyin olmaması parlamentdə maraq qruplarının qeydiyyatdan keçməsinə mane olmur.

Lobbizm sahəsində normativ-hüquqi baza Macarıstanda (2006), Litvada (2001), Gürcüstanda (1998), Polşada (2005), o cümlədən Almaniya, həmçinin bir neçə Avropa dövlətlərində yaradılmışdır. Litvada bu sahədə şəffaflığın artırılması məqsədilə 2000-ci ildə "Lobbi fəaliyyəti haqqında" Qanun qəbul olunmuş və 1 yanvar 2001-ci ildə qüvvəyə minmişdir. Parlament və yerli özünüidarəetmə orqanlarının

deputatlarının korrupsiya əməllərinin artması, qanunvericilik prosesinə qanunsuz müdaxilə, siyasi partiyaları qanunsuz maliyyələşdirmə belə bir qanunun qəbulu zərurətini yaratmışdır. (2; 5)

Qanuna görə lobbifəaliyyəti dedikdə, sifarişçinin maraqları çərçivəsində yeni hüquqi aktların qəbul edilməsi və ya edilməməsi, qanuni qüvvəsini itirmiş hüquqi aktlara əlavələrin edilməsi, hüquqi aktların dəyişdirilməsi məqsədilə lobbifəaliyyəti göstərdiyi üçün şəxsin əvəzi ödənilən və ya ödənilməyən fəaliyyəti başa düşülür. Lakin Litvada bu qanunun və müvafiq orqanın passivliyi müşayiət olunur. Orada cəmi 19 lobbist qeydiyyatdan keçmişdir ki, onun da bir neçəsi fəaliyyət göstərmirdi. Ona görə də 2008-ci ildə yeni qanun hazırlansa da, hələ qanuni qüvvəsini almamışdır. (5)

Lobbizm Polşada 7 iyul 2005-ci il tarixli “Qanunvericilik prosesində lobbifəaliyyəti haqqında qanunla” tənzimlənir. Bu qanunda lobbizmin fəaliyyət prinsipləri, qanunvericilik prosesində yeri, qeydiyyat qaydaları, lobbistlər üzərində nəzarət məsələləri, qanun pozuntusuna görə cəzalar sistemi öz əksini tapmışdır. Bu qanuna görə lobbizm hökumət və parlament səviyyəsində dövlət orqanlarında qanunvericilik prosesinə təsir etmək məqsədi daşıyan fəaliyyət növüdür. Peşəkar lobbizm dedikdə isə, qanunvericilik prosesində üçüncü tərəfin ödənişi müqabilində və onun maraqları çərçivəsində lobbifəaliyyətinin həyata keçirilməsidir. Peşəkar lobbizm hüquqi və fiziki şəxs formasında, mülki qanunvericiliyin tələbləri nəzərə alınmaqla müqavilə əsasında həyata keçirilir. (2; 5)

Almaniyada lobbifəaliyyəti üzrə vahid qanunvericilik aktı olmasa da, bir neçə qanun vardır ki, orada lobbizm məsələləri öz əksini tapmışdır. Bunlardan Konstitusiyanın 17-ci maddəsini (“Hər kəsin müstəqil və ya birgə yazılı surətdə müvafiq orqanlara və parlamentə müraciət etmək hüququ var”), “Federal nazirliklər haqqında vahid əsasnamə”, “Bundestaqın fəaliyyətinin rəqlamenti”, “Bundestaq üzvünün fəaliyyət məəcəlləsi”, “Bundestaqda ittifaqların və onların nümayəndələrinin qeydiyyatı haqqında” və digərlərini göstərə bilərik. Məsələn, “Federal nazirliklər haqqında vahid əsasnamədə” nazirliklərdə federal qanunların hazırlanması mərhələsində peşəkar ittifaqların və assosiasiyaların iştirakı icazəsi vardır. “Bundestaqın fəaliyyətinin rəqlamentində” isə analoji subyektlərə parlamentdə müvafiq fəaliyyət göstərmək icazə verilib. “Bundestaq üzvünün fəaliyyət məəcəlləsində” deputatlara müqafat müqabilində parlament komitələrinə çıxarılmış problemlərlə məşğul olmaq icazəsi verilir. Onlar eyni zamanda hansı lobbist təşkilatlarla iş birliyi qurduğu haqqında məlumat verməlidir.

“Bundestaqda ittifaqların və onların nümayəndələrinin qeydiyyatı haqqında” qanunda federal hökumətin bütün idarələrinə və parlamentə çıxışı olan ittifaqların, assosiasiyaların siyahısının aparılması qaydaları göstərilmişdir. Şərtlərə əsasən, alınan və xərclənən vəsaitlərin həcmi göstərilir. Qeydiyyat zamanı, yalnız təşkilatın adı, ünvanı, rəhbərliyi, maraq dairəsi, üzvlərin sayı, Bundestaq və Federal hökumət yanında nümayəndənin adı və ünvanı göstərilməlidir.

Müasir dövrdə leqal əsaslarla Almaniyada Bundestaqda bir neçə yüz lobbist təşkilat fəaliyyət göstərir. Onlar rəsmi məlumatlar alır və açıq surətdə parlamentin profil komitələrinin iclaslarında iştirak edib mövqelərini bildirə bilirlər. Lakin lobbizm sahəsində vahid qanunvericiliyin olmaması, lobbizmin yalnız hüquqi şəxslərə şamil edilməsi, qeydiyyat və vəsaitlərin həcmi ilə bağlı olan məsələlərdə qeyri-dəqiqlik və digər məsələlər Almaniyada lobbizmin hüquqi əsaslarının bir sıra boşluqlarına dəlalət edir.

Fransada uzun müddət lobbizm qeyri-qanuni hesab olunurdu, çünki, hesab olunurdu ki, hökumət yalnız ümumilli maraqları təmin etməlidir. Bu müddəalar isə fransız maarifçilərinin, xüsusilə J.J.Russonun “İctimai müqavilə” konsepsiyasından qaynaqlanır. Lakin 1980-ci ildən başlayaraq, bu sahədə bir sıra addımlar atılmağa başladı. 1984-cü ildə “İttifaqların azad fəaliyyəti haqqında” qanunun qəbul olunması lobbifəaliyyətinə geniş meydan açdı. Burada çoxsaylı ictimaiyyətlə, hökumət və parlamentlə əlaqələr üzrə təşkilatlar fəaliyyət göstərir. Belə ki, Fransada peşəkar səviyyədə öz maraqlarını təmin etməyə çalışan 1500-dən çox təşkilatlar vardır. Eyni zamanda 1958-ci il konstitusiyasına əsasən Fransada çoxsaylı peşəkar təşkilatların üzv olduqları Sosial-İqtisadi Şura vardır ki, o, respublikada hazırlanan bütün sosial və iqtisadi xarakterli qanun layihələrinə şərhlər və əlavələr verir. Qeyd edək ki, belə faktiki lobbifəaliyyəti ilə məşğul olan təşkilatlar Avstriyada, Hollandiyada və digər ölkələrdə də mövcuddur. (3, 40)

Avropa İttifaqı institutlarında lobbizm

Avropada integrasiya proseslərinin dərinləşməsi, qərar qəbulu proseslərinin Avropa İttifaqının strukturlarına transfer etməsi Brüssel lobbizminin mərkəzinə çevrilməsinə gətirib çıxarmışdır. Avropa Komissiyasının (AK) hesabatlarında qeyd olunub ki, Brüsseldə yalnız 7% rəsmən lobbist kimi qeydiyyatdan keçmiş, 2600 ofisi olan 20 mindən çox lobbist fəaliyyət göstərir. Avropa Parlamentində isə 4200 lobbist təşkilatı qeydiyyatdan keçmiş, 2500-dən artıq sahibkarlar təşkilatları, minlərlə QHT, assosiasiyalar və digər müxtəlif təşkilatlar fəaliyyət göstərirlər. Nəzərə alaq ki, Aİ üzv dövlətlərində qüvvədə olan qanunvericilik aktlarının 80% Aİ-nin müvafiq strukturlarından qaynaqlanır. Bu isə təqribən 17,2 trilyon evroluq ÜDM malik məkanın idarəetmə mərkəzi deməkdir. Eyni zamanda qeyd edək ki, 2023-cü ildə Aİ-nin büdcəsi 173 mlrd. Avro olmuşdu. (6)

Aİ strukturlarında lobbist fəaliyyəti göstərən iri şirkətlərdən WeberShandwick, APCO Europe, Hill&Knowlton International Belgium, GPC International, Burson-Marsteller və Blueprint Partners kimilərinə göstərə bilərik. Onların fəaliyyətlərinin 98% iqtisadi, 2% sosial məsələlərlə bağlıdır. Ümumilikdə lobbist fəaliyyətinin göstərilməsinin 35% Avropa ticarət assosiasiyalarının, 15% konsaltinq şirkətlərinin, 13% özəl şirkətlərin, 13% QHT, 8% regional nümayəndəliklərin, 5% beynəlxalq təşkilatların, 1% “beyin mərkəzlərinin” payına düşür. (4; 7)

Qeyd edək ki, Avropa korporasiyalarının maraqlarını təmsil edən lobbist strukturları Avropada integrasiya layihələrinin ilkin generasiyası dövründən başlayaraq fəaliyyət göstərməyə başlamışdır. 1958-ci ildə 2 böyük lobbist fəaliyyəti göstərən təşkilat: Aİ-nin vahid aqrar siyasəti çərçivəsində Avropa fermerlərinin maraqlarını lobbiləşdirən Aqrar Təşkilatlar Komitəsi (COPA-COGECA) və müasir dövrdə Aİ ölkələrinin 39 birləşmiş sahibkarlar təşkilatlarını özündə ehtiva edən Aİ Sahibkarlar Konfederasiyaları İttifaqı (BUSINESSEUROPE) strukturu yaranmışdır. Bütün qərarlar bir mərkəzdə verilir və oradan da idarə olunduğundan Brüssel lobbist karyerası seçmiş şəxslər üçün çox əlverişlidir. Müqayisə üçün qeyd edək ki, Vaşinqtonda 270 min məmur varsa, Brüsseldə onların sayı 23 min nəfərdir. Brüsseldə onların əməkləri daha çox qiymətləndirilir və daha çox gəlir əldə edirlər. Brüsseldə təmsil olunmağı seçən lobbistlərin qarşısında Avropa qruplarına üzv olmaq, birbaşa lobbistlik və peşəkar lobbistlərlə işləmək seçimləri var. 1986-cı ildə qəbul edilən “Vahid Avropa Aktı” və 1992-ci ildə imzalanmış Maastricht müqaviləsindən sonra baş verən siyasi hadisələr nəticəsində qərar qəbul etmə səlahiyyətləri üzv ölkələrdən Aİ qurumlarına verildi və bununla da lobbistlərin Brüsselə maraqları artdı. (8)

Aİ daxilində qərar vermə prosesində bir çox qurumlar, xüsusən Avropa Komissiyası, Avropa Parlamenti və Avropa Şurası iştirak edirlər. Yaradılacaq yeni bir qanunvericilik layihəsi AK tərəfindən təklif olunur və Avropa Şurası ilə Avropa Parlamenti tərəfindən qanunvericilik layihələri təsdiq edilir. Digər struktur və təşkilatların da bu prosesdə müxtəlif rolları vardır. Bütün lobbistlərin yalnız bir hissəsi Strasburqda Avropa Parlamentində fəaliyyət göstərirlər. Bununla belə parlamentdəki fəaliyyətlərinin böyük təsir imkanları vardır. Belə ki, parlament tərəfindən birinci oxunuşda qəbul edilmiş düzəlişlərin 60% AK, 50% Avropa Şurası qəbul edir. İkinci oxunuşda isə bu rəqəmlər müvafiq olaraq 50% və 25% təşkil edir. (1)

Avropa Parlamenti, əsasən, Aİ siyasi nəzarəti həyata keçirir. Lobbist fəaliyyəti yaradılarkən qərar vermə prosesində prosedurlar müqavilələr ilə təyin olunmuşdur. Qərarların qəbulu prosesi AK-nda ilkin qanun layihələrinin hazırlanmasından başlayır. Qərarların qəbuluna demokratik nəzarət funksiyasını həyata keçirmək üçün Parlament məşvərət, əməkdaşlıq, birgə qərar qəbul etmə kimi üç qaydadan istifadə edir. Bir çox sahələr üzrə qərar qəbulu prosesində Aİ-nin Nazirlər Şurası ilə Avropa Parlamentinin səlahiyyət bölgüsü həyata keçirilmişdir. Uzun müddət Parlament təşkilatdaxili qərar qəbulu prosesində yalnız məşvərət səlahiyyətinə malik idi, yalnız məsləhətləşmə proseduru zamanı yalnız rəy bildirməyə bəslənirdi. İmzalanmış müqavilələrdə Parlamentin qanunvericilik prosesində iştirakını təmin edən müxtəlif prosedurlar öz əksini tapmışdır. Bu prosedurlara *birgə qərar qəbul etmə* (Amsterdam müqaviləsi ilə qanunvericilik səlahiyyətləri təşkilatın parlament ilə Nazirlər Şurası arasında bərabər bölüşdürülməsi razılaşdırılması fonunda yaranmışdır), *məşvərət* proseduru (adətən Aİ-nin NŞ, AK tərəfindən qanunvericilik təşəbbüsünün irəli sürülməməsindən öncə Avropa Parlamentinin rəyini almaq üçün tətbiq olunan prosedur qaydasıdır), *əməkdaşlıq* proseduru (Avropa Parlamentinə

təklif edilmiş qanunvericilik aktını təkmilləşdirməsi imkanı), *razılıq* proseduru (yüksək əhəmiyyət kəsb edən məsələlərə dair Avropa Parlamentinin razılığının alınmasıdır) aiddir. (1,12)

Qeyd edək ki, dövlətlərarası münasibətlərdə siyasi lobbi fəaliyyəti mühüm əhəmiyyət daşıyır. Bu fəaliyyət daha çox Avropa Parlamentində partiya daxili və bir neçə eyni ideoloji əsaslara malik partiyalar tərəfindən hər-hansı maraqların həyata keçirilməsi üçün yaradılmış işçi qruplarının fəaliyyətində özünü göstərir və son zamanlarda Avropa Parlamentinin üzvlük prosedurlarının dəyişikliyindən sonra aktivləşib. Əgər əvvəllər Avropa Parlamentinin üzvü olmaq üçün üzv dövlətin parlamentində üzvlük şərti var idisə, artıq bu qayda yoxdur. Odur ki, sahibkarların və parlament üzvlərinin maraqlarının və fəaliyyət arealının genişlənməsi, siyasi lobbi fəaliyyətinin də aktivləşməsinə gətirib çıxarmışdır.

Nəticə olaraq deyə bilərik ki, demokratik siyasi rejimlərdə xalqdan qaynaqlanan qərarlar əsasdır. Xalqın əksəriyyətinin qərarları qəbul edilir. Təzyiq qrupları və lobbilər isə xalqın nüfuzunu qəbul etməyib, qəbul ediləcək qərarlara təsir göstərməyə və ya qarşısını almağa çalışırlar. Bu qruplar həm də Aİ daxilində fəaliyyət göstərir. Lobbiçilərin uğuru qəbul edilən son qərara təsir göstərməklə ölçülür. Lobbi strategiyasının effektivliyi, Aİ-da həyata keçirdikləri funksiyalardan asılı olaraq müxtəlif Avropa təsisatlarının ehtiyac duyduğu informasiya qaynaqlarının mahiyyətini aydın şəkildə anlamaqla müəyyən edilir. Aİ institutları qərar qəbulu prosesində “maraq qrupları” üçün rəsmi giriş nöqtələri təmin edir. AK daxilində giriş nöqtələri açıq onlayn məsləhətləşmələr, ekspert qrupları və sənəd menecerləridir. Aİ Şurasının lobbiçiliyi əsasən milli dövlətlər vasitəsilə həyata keçirilə bilər. Böyük transmilli korporasiyaların və milli kampaniyaların Şuraya təsir etmək üçün böyük potensialı var, öz aralarında razılığa gəldikləri ümumi maraqları razılaşıdırırlar. Avropa Parlamentində Aİ üzv dövlətlərinə mənsubiyyətindən asılı olmayaraq maraqlı şəxslər üçün açıq yer mövcuddur.

Aİ-da lobbi fəaliyyəti göstərən strukturların 1986-cı ildə Vahid Avropa Aktının imzalanmasından sonra sürətlə artmağa başlaması Aİ-nın müvafiq strukturlarına biznesin fəaliyyəti ilə bağlı bir sıra dövləüstü səlahiyyətlər verilməsi ilə bağlı idi. Bu proseslər Maastrixt, Amsterdam, Nitsa, Lissabon müqavilələrindən sonra daha da gücləndi. Həmçinin 23 iyun 2008-ci ildə “Şəffaflığın təmin olunması üzrə Avropa Təşəbbüsü” (European Transparency Initiative) çərçivəsində Aİ strukturlarına, o cümlədən Avropa Komissiyalarına, Avropa Parlamentinə və Aİ Şurasına təsir göstərmək üçün lobbi fəaliyyəti göstərən təşkilatların könüllü qeydiyyatı prosedurları yaradıldı. Eyni zamanda Avropa parlamenti lobbi təşkilatları üçün 1997-ci ildə əlahiddə reestr yaratmışdır. Bu reestrdeki informasiyalar isə 2003-cü ildən Avropa parlamentinin saytında dərc olunur. Həmçinin “Lobbi strukturlarının Etik məəcəlləsi” də qəbul edildi.

Nəticə

Bütün bunlar Azərbaycan lobbisinə də geniş imkanlar yaradır. Düzdür bu strukturlar əsasən iqtisadi məsələlərlə məşğul olurlarsa da, Aİ-nın getdikcə siyasiləşməsi, integrasiyanın dərinləşməsi, siyasi qərar qəbulunda preferensiyaların artması bizim üçün müsbət haldır. Bu baxımdan bir mərkəzdə ölkəmizlə bağlı faktlara siyasi qiymət verilməsi diplomatiyamızın bu istiqamətində uğurlarından birinə çevrilə bilər. Artıq Azərbaycan diplomatiyasının, eyni zamanda sahibkarlıq strukturlarının, ictimai əsaslarla fəaliyyət göstərən təşkilatların lobbi fəaliyyəti üçün daha vacib diqqət cəlb edəcək zəruri mərkəz kimi Aİ-nın mərkəzi strukturları çıxış etməkdədir. Hətta bu mərkəz lobbistlərin paytaxtı hesab edilən Vaşinqtonu da geridə qoymaq potensialına malikdir. Belə ki, artıq 2016-cı ildə Lissabon müqaviləsi ilə yaradılmış Aİ strukturlarının lobbistlərinin vahid reestrində 8300 lobbi təşkilatı qeydiyyatdan keçmişdir. (9)

Eləcə də günümüzdə beynəlxalq təşkilatların beynəlxalq aktorlar kimi rolunun artması ilə müşayiət olunan regional integrasiya prosesləri dövlətlərin bir çox daxili qərar qəbulu səlahiyyətini beynəlxalq təşkilatların mərkəzi strukturlarına ötürülməsini labüd etmişdir. Odur ki, Azərbaycanın beynəlxalq münasibətlərdə çoxtərəfli əməkdaşlığa geniş yer verməsi beynəlxalq təşkilatlarla əlaqələrin intensivləşdirilməsi zərurətini yaratmışdır. Bu baxımdan çox hallarda hüquqi baxımdan leqallaşdırılmasa da

beynəlxalq təşkilatların müvafiq strukturlarında lobbı fəaliyyətinin təşkili Azərbaycan diplomatiyasının əsas məqsədlərindəndir.

Digər bir istiqamət isə Azərbaycan sahibkarlarının Avropa bazarına çıxışının təmin olunması, Avropadan investisiyaların cəlb edilməsi, Azərbaycanın investisiya qabiliyyətli olması haqqında informasiyaların çatdırılmasıdır. Burada təkcə konfrans və sərgilərin təşkil edilməsi, müxtəlif tədbirlərin keçirilməsi kifayət deyil. Digər dövlətlərin təcrübəsi göstərir ki, Brüsseldə bu istiqamətdə daimi fəaliyyət göstərən struktura ehtiyac var.

Bununla əlaqədar bir məqamı qeyd edək. Məlumdur ki, Avropada kənd təsərrüfatı məsələləri tamamilə Aİ-nın mərkəzi strukturlarının səlahiyyətindədir. Azərbaycan isə Aİ-nın Avropaya kənd təsərrüfatı məhsullarının ixracı üzrə xüsusi proqramına daxil edilmişdir. Lakin bir neçə il ərzində Azərbaycana ayrılmış kvotanın cəmi yarısından istifadə edə bilinib. Əsas səbəb isə ixracatçıların lazımi informasiyaya malik olmamalarıdır. Qonşu dövlətlər olan Gürcüstan və Ermənistan isə bu kvotanın 80% istifadə etmişlər. Əgər kənd təsərrüfatının qeyri neft sektorunun əsas seqmenti kimi qəbul olunduğunu, respublikamızda əsasən orqanik məhsulların istehsal olunduğunu nəzərə alsaq, onda bu istiqamətdə xüsusi strategiyanın hazırlanması zərurəti vardır.

Xüsusilə vurğalanmalıdır ki, Vətən müharibəsinin doğurduğu regional geosiyasi dəyişikliklər, o cümlədən Rusiya-Ukrayna müharibəsinin başlanması ilə bağlı Avropa enerji təhlükəsizliyi gündəmi Azərbaycanın lobbı fəaliyyəti qarşısında yeni vəzifələr yaratdı. Azərbaycanın enerji resurslarına olan ehtiyac, tranzit imkanlarımız, 2022-ci ilin iyulunda Enerji Anlaşması Memorandumunun imzalanması, Azərbaycanda yeni generasiya olunacaq yaşıl enerji resurslarından yararlanmaq fürsətləri ilə bərabər, Aİ strukturlarının, bir sıra Avropa dövlətlərinin yeni geosiyasi reallıqlarla barışa bilməməsi, Azərbaycan Prezidentinin beynəlxalq aləmdə nüfuzunu həzm etməməsi, Azərbaycanın beynəlxalq münasibətlər sistemində davranışlarına qısqanclıq göstərməsi, təsir rıçaqlarına malik olmamaları kimi hallarla müşayiət olunur. Bu isə Azərbaycan lobbisinin Avropada mövcud lobbı qanunvericiliyi imkanlarından istifadə edərək, daha aktiv fəaliyyət göstərməsinə səvqət edir.

Beləliklə, nəticə olaraq Azərbaycan hökumətinin, ictimai təşkilatların, sahibkarların qarşısında istifadə edə biləcəkləri böyük potensialın olması qənaətinə gələ bilərik. İlk növbədə onu qeyd edək ki, Azərbaycan global güc mərkəzi kimi iqtisadi-siyasi prioritetlərini taktiki və xüsusilə strateji siyasətində həmişinin Aİ-na istiqamətləndirməkdədir. Baxmayaraq ki, Aİ bəzi strukturlarının qeyri-obyektiv yanaşmaları münasibətlərə mənfi təsir etsə də, ikitərəfli layihələr, xüsusilə, qaz ixracı sahəsində uğurlar Aİ ilə Azərbaycan arasında münasibətləri strateji əməkdaşlıq səviyyəsinə qaldırır. Odur ki, Azərbaycanın bu məkanın qərar qəbul edən strukturu yanında maraqlarını əhatə edən informasiyanın ötürülməsi – lobbı fəaliyyəti göstərən strukturlarının yaradılması ehtiyacının olması ilə bərabər, Avropa dövlətlərinin və dövlətüstü institutlarının lobbizm sahəsində təcrübəsindən yararlanmaq imkanları nəzərdən keçirilməlidir.

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**THE ENERGY AND NUCLEAR RAW MATERIAL FACTOR IN RELATIONS BETWEEN
CENTRAL ASIAN STATES AND THE EU, AND THE TRANSIT ROLE OF THE SOUTH
CAUCASUS**

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Abstract

This article examines the role of the energy and nuclear raw material factor in relations between Turkestan states and the European Union, with particular focus on the transit significance of the South Caucasus. Central Asia possesses substantial hydrocarbon reserves, uranium deposits, and considerable renewable energy potential. The region has become an arena of geopolitical competition among major powers, primarily the European Union, Russia, and China. The Russia-Ukraine war has fundamentally altered existing energy transportation routes, rendering the traditional Central Asia-Russia-Europe corridor unreliable. The Iranian route remains unfavorable due to underdeveloped infrastructure and sanctions related to Tehran's nuclear program. Under these circumstances, the South Caucasus corridor, passing through Azerbaijan and Georgia, has emerged as the most viable and secure route for transporting both hydrocarbon resources and nuclear raw materials to Europe. The article analyzes bilateral agreements between the EU and Central Asian states, including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, in the energy and nuclear sectors. It further evaluates the growing role of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline in transporting Kazakh oil and the Trans-Caspian route in delivering uranium to European markets. The findings demonstrate that as European demand for Central Asian energy resources grows, the strategic importance of Azerbaijan and Georgia increases proportionally. The article also highlights that ongoing cooperation in green energy production and export, reflected in the trilateral memorandum signed by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan in 2024, further consolidates the South Caucasus as an indispensable transit hub. Additionally, the convergence of energy interests is shown to strengthen broader Turkic integration processes among the participating states.

Keywords: Central Asia, South Caucasus, European Union, energy geopolitics, transit corridor, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Trans-Caspian route, uranium transit, nuclear raw materials, green energy, Turkic integration

Introduction

Central Asia, also known by its historical name Turkestan, is one of the regions where competition has intensified due to its natural resources. The countries of the region possess large oil and gas reserves, nuclear raw materials such as uranium, and considerable renewable energy potential including solar and wind power. The geographical conditions of countries like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan also create favorable opportunities for the production of green energy. Unlike the South Caucasus, in the Central Asian subregion the European Union faces competition not only with Russia, but also with China, the world's rising new power. It is well known that as China's economy develops, its demand for energy resources increases. If we look at the essence of the matter through reversal methods, we can conclude that the growth of China's energy resources increases its economic power. In

this regard, European Union countries are working to ensure that Central Asia's energy reserves flow neither north to Russia nor east to China. This is because both are considered forces standing against the European Union in geopolitical competition. This further increases the transit importance of the South Caucasus. Although the South Caucasus and Azerbaijan hold a significant but limited share of Caspian hydrocarbon reserves, their value for Europe's diversification policy is not limited to the role of energy producer. The South Caucasus also plays a transit role for transporting resources extracted from the eastern part of the Caspian basin. Under current conditions, the existing pipelines along the Azerbaijan-Georgia-Türkiye route represent the most favorable route for the flow of energy resources from Central Asia's resource-rich countries to the West and Europe. The achievement of lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan could also allow the South Caucasus route to be diversified through that country as well.

Materials and Methods

This article is based on a combination of primary sources, official documents, and analytical literature relevant to energy geopolitics, transit infrastructure, and EU-Central Asia relations. The primary sources consulted include bilateral and multilateral agreements such as the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Kazakhstan, the Memorandum of Understanding on critical raw materials signed between the EU and Kazakhstan in 2022, and the equivalent memorandum concluded with Uzbekistan in 2024. Official strategies including the EU Strategy for Central Asia (2019) and the Global Gateway Strategy (2021) were also examined. The research conducted by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) between November 2021 and June 2023, commissioned by the European Commission to identify sustainable transport corridors between Europe and Central Asia, served as a key reference point. Statistical data on uranium transportation volumes via the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route and oil transportation figures along the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline were analyzed to assess quantitative trends. Analytical materials from the Caspian Policy Center, including work by researcher A. Atibekova, and commentary by World Nuclear News were referenced for sector-specific insights. The geopolitical analysis draws on the reversal method to assess causal relationships between energy resource control and economic power. The comparative route analysis evaluates the Russia, Iran, and South Caucasus corridors across economic, infrastructural, and geopolitical dimensions. The methodological approach is interdisciplinary, combining elements of geopolitical analysis, energy economics, and international relations theory to provide a comprehensive assessment of the South Caucasus transit corridor's strategic value.

Findings and Discussion

So what is the main advantage of the South Caucasus compared to other transportation routes for energy resources? If we pay attention, we can see that the activity of the traditional Central Asia-Russia-Europe route, through which energy resources have been transported until now, has completely weakened under current conditions due to the Russia-Ukraine war. The European Union is actively applying sanctions against Russia. It has suspended import and export operations with Russia. Russia itself is exporting energy resources to the world market through third countries. Under such circumstances, this route has lost its reliability for transporting the energy resources of Central Asian republics to Europe.

Transporting Central Asia's energy resources to Europe via the southern shores of the Caspian Sea, that is through Iranian territory, is unfavorable both economically and in terms of geopolitical processes. Economically, this is unfavorable because the condition of the energy and transport infrastructure in Iran's northern, northeastern and northwestern regions in particular is not very good. Rebuilding those lines requires significant costs. Compared to the Central Asia-South Caucasus-Europe route, the distance of this route is longer, and therefore its costs are higher.

Another issue is that some European states that produce nuclear energy purchase raw materials from Central Asian countries. It is well known that transporting such raw materials by air is impossible for

security reasons. Iran, however, is precisely in the crosshairs of the United States and the EU due to nuclear enrichment. As far back as 2011, Yaroslav Wisniewski, a researcher at King's College London, wrote that resources in Central Asia could be transported to Europe bypassing Russia only through the South Caucasus. The other alternative is Iran, but under conditions where Tehran continues its nuclear program, EU cooperation with Iran in such a vital area does not appear realistic (Wisniewski, 2011, p. 62).

Therefore, the only safe and favorable route for European Union states to transport nuclear raw materials purchased from Central Asian countries is the South Caucasus line, which in current realities passes through the territory of Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The European Union's own preference for this route is based not on random choices, but on long-term research. It should be noted that the European Commission has conducted research on this topic in order to contribute to the implementation of the Union's Strategy for Central Asia (2019) and the Global Gateway Strategy (2021). Studies related to identifying sustainable transport corridors connecting Europe with Central Asia were financed by the European Commission and were carried out by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) from November 2021 to June 2023 (Study on sustainable transport connections with Central Asia, 2024). The main objective of the research was to identify the most sustainable transport corridors connecting the 5 countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) with the European Union's extended Trans-European Transport Network. During this assessment, the environmental, social, economic, fiscal and debt sustainability, as well as the political viability of the countries through which the transport corridor would pass were taken into consideration.

Geographically, the research covered all potential countries that could provide the most sustainable transport links between all five Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) and the EU's Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). The research team focused primarily on countries located in the Western Balkans region and the Eastern Partnership states (Study on sustainable transport connections with Central Asia, 2024). It should be noted that all three countries located in the South Caucasus are members of the Eastern Partnership. Based on the Eastern Partnership project approved in 2008, the development of the integration process with six states was planned: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Armenia (Hamidova, 2023, s. 699).

Within the framework of the research carried out with the support of the European Commission on identifying sustainable transport corridors connecting Europe with Central Asia, 33 critical infrastructure investment needs were identified for the region. Within this framework, the modernization and reconstruction of existing railway and road infrastructure, the creation of additional railway and road connections, the expansion of shipping capabilities on the Caspian Sea, the increase of port capacity, and the creation of wagons, logistics centers, and warehouses were planned. Alongside this, soft connectivity measures were also identified. These included measures such as trade facilitation, digitalization, tariff harmonization, simplification of customs procedures, border control, and market liberalization (Study on sustainable transport connections with Central Asia, 2024).

In order to assess the role and potential capabilities of Azerbaijan and Georgia in transferring Central Asia's hydrocarbon resources and nuclear energy raw materials to Europe, it is necessary to clarify the level of energy relations between the countries of the region and European countries. In this regard, Kazakhstan is the most important country in Central Asia and the one with the closest ties to the EU. The Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Kazakhstan entered into force on 1 March 2020. That document creates broad opportunities for partnership, strengthened political dialogue, comprehensive sectoral cooperation, and the promotion of mutual trade and investment between Central Asian countries and the European Union. In order to increase the resilience of supply chains of raw materials that are vitally important for the EU, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the European Union and Kazakhstan in November 2022. That memorandum is considered a basis for cooperation in the direction of involving raw materials and renewable hydrogen

resources in production (International Partnerships. Kazakhstan, 2024). The document signed on November 7 between the European Commission and the Government of Kazakhstan on developing the supply of green hydrogen and raw materials for the production of equipment such as wind turbines and batteries for electric vehicles had envisioned the continuation of efforts for the development of the Middle Corridor supply route passing through the Caspian Sea and the South Caucasus, outside of Russian territory. Regarding the significance of the signed document, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stated that raw materials and renewable hydrogen are vital not only for Europe's sustainable future, but also for its prosperity (Rare Earths And Hydrogen At The Core Of New EU-Kazakhstan Trade Deals, 2022).

Following the restoration of state independence in 1991 and the establishment of trade and economic relations with European countries in the energy sector, Kazakh oil was transported to European markets through Russian territory for a long time. In particular, the Druzhba pipeline played a significant role in delivering Kazakh oil to Germany. Even after the start of the war between Russia and Ukraine, Kazakhstan's oil exports in this direction continued (Kızılay, 2023).

At the same time, the Russia-Ukraine war and the EU-Russia tension have turned into reality the issue of transporting Kazakh oil through South Caucasus pipelines, which had been discussed for many years. In 2022, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev gave instructions to increase oil transportation via the Trans-Caspian corridor, and in that same year an agreement was signed between SOCAR and KazMunayGas on the annual transportation of 1 million 500 thousand tons of Kazakh oil through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main export oil pipeline (Abbasova, 2024). 665,000 barrels of oil extracted from Kazakhstan's Tengiz field were brought from Aktau to the Sangachal terminal via the tanker Alatau in March 2023, and from there were dispatched through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. On April 22, 2023, the first batch of Kazakh oil transported via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan main export oil pipeline was dispatched from Türkiye's Ceyhan port (Fərhadoglu, 2023).

In March 2024, following high-level negotiations held in Baku between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan with the participation of the two countries' presidents, 2 important documents were signed between Azerbaijan's SOCAR and Kazakhstan's KazMunayGas companies. One of those documents was the "Memorandum on Strategic Cooperation in the Field of Purchase and Sale of Kazakh Oil between the State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan and KazMunayGas National Company Joint Stock Company", and the other was the "Agreement on the Gradual Increase of Volumes of Kazakh Oil Transited through the Territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan between the State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan and KazMunayGas National Company Joint Stock Company". Based on the second agreement, it was agreed to bring the volume of Kazakh oil transported via the Aktau-BTC route to 2 million 200 thousand tons annually (Abbasova, 2024).

Kazakhstan has long been one of the main players in the global uranium market due to its large reserves and low production costs. The country's main uranium deposits are located in the Turkestan city, Kyzylorda, and Akmola regions. This country provides approximately 40% of the world's uranium supply (Atibekova, 2022). The process of extracting and initially processing natural uranium is under the control of Kazakhstan's National Atomic Company, KazAtomProm. The company oversees sixteen nuclear enterprises engaged in the operation of 20 uranium mines across the country's territory (Geraskin, 2018, p. 1).

Kazakhstan also has relations with the European Union in the field of nuclear raw material and energy production. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States on one side, and the Republic of Kazakhstan on the other, entered into force on July 1, 1999. In June 2003, the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Nuclear Safety between the European Atomic Energy Community and the Republic of Kazakhstan entered into force, and on April 13, 2004, the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Nuclear Safety between the European Atomic Energy Community and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan entered into force. Since 2009, an agreement on cooperation in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy has existed between the European Atomic Energy Community and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Data from 2022 indicated that approximately half of the uranium produced in Kazakhstan was exported to China, and the remainder to Europe, Canada, and the United States. In general, uranium exports from this country to European countries covered approximately 22 percent of those countries' annual demand. Uranium exported from Kazakhstan to Europe and North America was for many years transported primarily via the Black Sea and through Russia (Atibekova, 2022). In this process, uranium is transported from Kazakhstan's Inkai and Central Mynkuduk production sites to the Russian border via the Dostyk-Alashankou railway, and from there is sent to European countries passing through transit hubs such as Chelyabinsk and Moscow.

Another important route is the multimodal Caspian Sea-Black Sea route combining railway, sea, and railway transport. In this process, uranium is transported by railway from production sites to the port of Aktau located on the Caspian Sea coast, crosses the Caspian Sea to Baku, is carried by railway to Georgia and to ports such as Batumi and Poti located on the Black Sea coast (Kazatomprom completes trans-Caspian uranium delivery, 2022), and is then sent to European countries, primarily Romania and Bulgaria. From there it is dispatched to individual European countries.

Since 2018, Kazatomprom has been carrying out the transportation of uranium products using this route. An analysis of statistical data shows that the volume of uranium transportation produced in Kazakhstan via the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route increased by 4.5% in 2023 compared to 2022. Specifically, in 2023, 2,300 tons of uranium were transported through Azerbaijan to France, Canada, Romania, India, and the United States (Omirgazy, 2024).

Furthermore, among the future potential participants of the green energy line from the South Caucasus to Europe, of which Azerbaijan is the main author, are also the Turkestan states. Cooperation between Uzbekistan and the European Union in the energy sector has also been expanding significantly in recent years. In 2022, negotiations on a new enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement between the European Union and Uzbekistan were successfully concluded (Uzbekistan: The European Union and Uzbekistan complete negotiations for a new Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, 2022). In April 2024, Uzbekistan and the European Union signed a Memorandum of Understanding on critical raw materials. The document, signed by Executive Vice President of the European Commission Valdis Dombrovskis and Uzbekistan's Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade Laziz Kudratov, provides for cooperation in the field of security of supply of critical raw materials that are essential for the green and digital transition (Uzbekistan and EU sign Memorandum of Understanding on critical raw materials, 2024).

Uzbekistan possesses important raw material reserves, including uranium. This country is the fifth largest supplier of uranium raw materials in the world. The currently operating mines are located primarily in the central part of the republic. The mines in the eastern part of the country ceased operations until 1995 due to the lack of qualified specialists and necessary experience (Kuldjanov, 2022, s. 1).

Possessing rich uranium reserves causes a number of European countries to show particular interest in Uzbekistan. Unlike Kazakhstan, the fact that Uzbekistan does not share a common border with Russia further increases the transit importance of the Caspian-South Caucasus-Europe route for the country. To access this route, Uzbekistan must use either Kazakh or Turkmen territory. Under current conditions, Kazakhstan's capabilities are broader compared to Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan considers the transportation of Central Asia's energy resources via the route passing through the South Caucasus to be favorable. There are two reasons for this. First, joining the lines passing through Azerbaijan-Georgia-Türkiye reduces Kazakhstan's dependence on its two large neighbors Russia and China, and allows it to act more freely. On the other hand, it increases the need for Kazakh territory for Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and even Tajikistan to export their potential energy resources to Europe.

One of Uzbekistan's goals is to become a green energy exporter by utilizing its geographical potential. The most favorable route for exporting produced green energy to European countries also passes through Azerbaijan and Georgia. In this regard, it is no coincidence that a memorandum of cooperation in the field of integrating the energy systems of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan was signed in

Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, in May 2024. This document is considered one of the most important steps taken by the three countries in the direction of producing green energy and exporting it to Europe. The memorandum expressed intentions to lay high-voltage cable lines along the bottom of the Caspian Sea and through the territories of other countries for transferring green energy produced in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to Azerbaijan. The three countries had prepared the technical specifications of the project for laying a deep-sea cable along the bottom of the Caspian prior to signing the memorandum. The idea of laying an underwater electricity cable became possible after the adoption of the Caspian Sea Convention in 2018. Negotiations were conducted between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, and after the meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council held in Baku in February 2023, information on the export of green energy to Europe by Azerbaijan and its partners was announced. In November 2023, an agreement was reached between Baku, Tashkent, and Astana on the establishment of a joint venture for the export of green energy to Europe. The Tashkent memorandum was another important step taken in this direction.

It is not out of the question that Turkmenistan, which has pursued a policy of neutrality for many years and has also developed its ties with the world economy within a particularly limited framework, will need the South Caucasus route if it develops energy relations with European countries. Turkmenistan ranks fourth in the world in terms of proven natural gas reserves, Kazakhstan ranks nineteenth, and Uzbekistan ranks twenty-first. In terms of production volume, Turkmenistan ranks eleventh, Uzbekistan fifteenth, and Kazakhstan only thirtieth at the global level (Kozma, 2020, p. 9).

There are two main routes for Turkmenistan to export its energy resources, particularly oil and gas, to European markets. One of them is the Turkmenistan-Iran-Azerbaijan-Türkiye route, and the other is the Caspian Sea-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Türkiye line. On August 20, 2023, Turkmenistan signed its first agreement with the European Union on carrying out natural gas supply. The commercial agreement signed between Turkmenistan and Hungary in Budapest provides for Turkmenistan's export of energy resources to a European Union country for the first time. For the transportation of gas, it was initially planned to use the existing pipelines between Turkmenistan and Iran. Hungary's Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto stated that Turkmenistan plans to potentially increase its natural gas exports to Iran via existing pipelines to 1 billion cubic meters annually. From Iran, it is planned to connect natural gas pipelines with the existing infrastructure in the territories of Azerbaijan and Türkiye (Haley, 2023). The development of this route could allow Azerbaijan's Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic to become an energy transit hub in the future.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Thus, assessing the role and potential capabilities of Azerbaijan and Georgia in transferring Central Asia's hydrocarbon resources and nuclear energy raw materials to Europe allows us to reach a number of conclusions. It is clear from the analyses that as the European Union's and other European states' interest in Central Asia's hydrocarbon resources and renewable energy reserves grows, the transit importance of the South Caucasus increases. One of the factors increasing the significance of Azerbaijan and Georgia is the existence of pipeline infrastructure connecting these countries with Türkiye and Europe. As a result, the Azerbaijan-Georgia-Türkiye cooperation model in the energy sector is expanding. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and even Turkmenistan are showing interest in bringing energy resources to European markets through South Caucasus countries. European countries are interested in purchasing natural gas from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and in increasing this volume. The war between Russia and Ukraine has further increased this interest. It is clear that it is not possible to simply compensate for the natural gas that Russia once exported to European countries through the South Caucasus's hydrocarbon resources alone. In this regard, Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have greater potential and capabilities. The uranium reserves of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are also of vital importance for European countries that produce nuclear energy. The shortest and safest route for transporting uranium to Europe passes precisely through Azerbaijan and Georgia. The danger of transporting uranium by air, the tense relations between Russia and European countries,

and sanctions related to Iran's nuclear program make South Caucasus countries the most favorable route. This also reduces the ability of European countries to apply pressure on South Caucasus countries. Because carrying out these transportations without an agreement with the countries of the region, and particularly with Azerbaijan, is not possible. This is one of the reasons why the EU finds itself compelled to make concessions even under circumstances where certain disagreements have arisen between Azerbaijan and the European Union.

The desire to develop Central Asia-Europe relations in the energy sector also strengthens Turkic integration. The ties between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan with Azerbaijan are becoming closer. The Turkic factor forms a natural basis for the development of cooperation between the countries. The convergence of geopolitical, economic, and national interests creates conditions for integration processes to develop on a natural basis.

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**REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY GOVERNANCE AS A PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE
PEACE: FROM NIZAMI GANJAVI AND NORMAN ANGELL TO THE ORGANIZATION
OF TURKIC STATES**

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Abstract

Food insecurity has emerged as one of the most significant structural challenges affecting international peace and security in the twenty-first century. Beyond its humanitarian and developmental dimensions, food security increasingly influences political stability, human security, and regional resilience. Despite the growing literature on food security and peacebuilding, limited attention has been devoted to the role of regional food security governance as an institutional mechanism for promoting sustainable peace, particularly through the integration of ethical philosophy and contemporary international relations theory.

This study develops an integrated analytical framework that examines the relationship between food security and sustainable peace by bringing together the ethical humanism of Nizami Ganjavi, Johan Galtung's concept of positive peace, the Human Security framework, and Norman Angell's theory of economic interdependence. Employing a qualitative research design based on comparative institutional analysis and conceptual inquiry, the article examines existing regional food security mechanisms and applies the findings to the Organization of Turkic States.

The study argues that regional food security governance constitutes an institutional pathway through which the protection of fundamental human needs can strengthen regional cooperation, enhance resilience, and contribute to sustainable peace. Building upon comparative analysis of regional experiences, the article proposes a Regional Food Security Governance Model centered initially on a coordinated Regional Grain Reserve Mechanism while incorporating digital monitoring, early-warning systems, institutional coordination, and distributed reserve management.

The findings demonstrate that effective food security governance extends beyond agricultural policy and should be recognized as a strategic component of contemporary peacebuilding. By integrating Eastern ethical humanism with contemporary international relations theories and proposing an operational governance model for the Organization of Turkic States, this study demonstrates that regional food security governance is not merely an agricultural policy instrument but an institutional pathway through which justice, human security, and regional cooperation collectively contribute to sustainable peace.

Keywords: Regional Food Security Governance (RFSG), Sustainable Peace, Human Security, Organization of Turkic States, Nizami Ganjavi, Norman Angell.

Introduction

Food security has become one of the defining global challenges of the XXI century, extending beyond its traditional agricultural and humanitarian dimensions to become an essential component of international peace and security. Armed conflicts, geopolitical tensions, climate change, economic instability, and disruptions to global supply chains have demonstrated that access to adequate, safe, and nutritious food is closely linked to political stability, social resilience, and sustainable development. Food shortages, price volatility, and supply chain disruptions increase the risk of conflict by exacerbating social unrest, forced migration, and political instability. Consequently, food security has

increasingly been recognized not only as a development objective but also as a strategic element of regional and international security (Barrett, 2013; FAO et al., 2023).

Recent global crises have further reinforced this relationship. The COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts affecting major agricultural regions, and climate-induced disruptions have exposed the vulnerability of global food systems and highlighted the necessity of strengthening regional cooperation to enhance resilience against transboundary food-security risks (FAO et al., 2023; Laborde et al., 2020). As a result, food security has evolved from a predominantly national policy concern into an issue requiring coordinated regional governance and institutional cooperation.

Contemporary international relations scholarship increasingly recognizes that sustainable peace cannot be achieved solely through military deterrence or political agreements. Rather, long-term peace depends upon the ability of societies and institutions to address the structural causes of insecurity, including poverty, inequality, food insecurity, and weak governance. Within this context, the concepts of positive peace and human security provide important analytical foundations for understanding how food security contributes to conflict prevention and sustainable peace (Barrett, 2013; Galtung, 1969; UNDP, 1994).

Despite the growing body of literature on food security and human security, comparatively limited attention has been devoted to examining regional food security governance as an institutional mechanism for peacebuilding (Clapp, 2012; McKeon, 2015). Existing studies primarily focus on agricultural production, humanitarian assistance, or emergency food responses, while relatively few investigate how regional organizations can institutionalize coordinated food-security governance as a long-term strategy for regional resilience and sustainable peace. This gap is particularly evident in relation to the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), where the institutional dimension of regional food security cooperation remains underexplored.

Accordingly, this study addresses this gap by developing the concept of **Regional Food Security Governance** as an integrated analytical framework linking ethical humanism, economic interdependence, positive peace, and human security within a coherent model of regional institutional cooperation.

Although Nizami Ganjavi did not formulate a theory of international relations in the modern academic sense, his ethical philosophy offers an important normative perspective on justice, human dignity, responsible governance, and peaceful coexistence. Ethical humanism, as reflected in the intellectual heritage of Nizami Ganjavi, places justice at the center of legitimate political authority. In “Sirler khezinesi” (“Treasure of Mysteries”), Nizami argues that legitimate governance rests upon justice rather than oppression and that rulers bear a moral responsibility to ensure the welfare of their people (Nizami Gəncəvi, 2004, p. 98). This ethical conception of governance provides the normative basis of the proposed Regional Food Security Governance Framework. In contemporary scholarship, Nizami’s political and philosophical legacy has also been extensively analyzed in the context of ethical governance and the concept of a humanistic state.

Nizami Ganjavi’s ethical philosophy represents a broader tradition of ethical humanism that places justice, wisdom, moral responsibility, and social harmony at the center of governance (de Bruijn, 2008). These principles closely correspond to contemporary discussions of positive peace and human security, where sustainable peace is understood not merely as the absence of armed conflict but as the presence of social justice, human well-being, and effective institutions (Galtung, 1969; UNDP, 1994). Accordingly, this study interprets Nizami Ganjavi not as a classical international relations theorist, but as a normative ethical thinker, whose humanistic philosophy provides a valuable conceptual foundation for contemporary debates on sustainable peace and regional cooperation.

Building upon this normative perspective, the study integrates Nizami Ganjavi’s ethical humanism with Norman Angell’s concept of economic interdependence, Johan Galtung’s theory of positive peace, and the human security paradigm (Angell, 1913; Galtung, 1969; UNDP, 1994) to develop an integrated analytical framework for Regional Food Security Governance. Rather than treating these perspectives as competing approaches, the study demonstrates their complementary contribution to explaining how

regional institutional cooperation in food security may strengthen resilience and reduce structural sources of insecurity.

The primary objective of this study is to examine how Regional Food Security Governance can function as an institutional pathway toward sustainable peace within the Organization of Turkic States. To achieve this objective, the study pursues three interrelated aims. First, it develops an integrated theoretical framework linking ethical humanism with contemporary international relations theories. Second, it comparatively examines selected regional food security mechanisms in order to identify transferable institutional principles. Third, it proposes an operational governance framework for the Organization of Turkic States that may contribute to strengthening regional resilience through coordinated food security policies.

The study therefore contributes to the existing literature in three principal respects. Theoretically, it expands contemporary discussions of peacebuilding by integrating Eastern ethical thought with established international relations theories. Conceptually, it introduces Regional Food Security Governance as a coherent analytical framework connecting food security, institutional cooperation, and sustainable peace. Practically, it proposes a governance architecture that may inform future regional policy initiatives within the Organization of Turkic States.

To clarify the theoretical logic underpinning the study, figure 1 presents the evolution of the integrated analytical framework linking ethical humanism with contemporary international relations theories and illustrates how these perspectives converge in the concept of Regional Food Security Governance.

Figure 1. Evolution of the Integrated Analytical Framework from Ethical Humanism to Regional Food Security Governance for Sustainable Peace (developed by the author).

Ethical Humanism

Nizami Ganjavi (1141-1209)



Normative Foundation of the Analytical Framework

Norman Angell (1913)

Economic Interdependence



Johan Galtung (1969)

Positive Peace



UNDP (1994)

Human Security

Regional Food Security Governance

(Concept Developed in This Study)



Regional Cooperation



Regional Resilience



Sustainable Peace

Accordingly, Regional Food Security Governance is conceptualized not as an isolated policy instrument but as the institutional convergence of ethical principles, cooperative governance, and human-centered security within a regional framework.

Materials and Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design based on comparative institutional analysis and conceptual inquiry to examine the relationship between food security governance and sustainable peace. Rather than testing causal relationships through quantitative methods, the research seeks to develop an integrated analytical framework that explains how regional food security governance may function as an institutional mechanism for strengthening regional resilience and promoting sustainable peace.

The study adopts a comparative institutional approach by examining selected regional food security mechanisms, including the European Union, the ASEAN+3 Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR), and the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve. These cases were selected because they represent established examples of regional cooperation in addressing food-security challenges through coordinated governance arrangements. Their institutional structures, governance mechanisms, decision-making procedures, and emergency response capacities are comparatively analyzed to identify transferable principles applicable to the Organization of Turkic States.

In addition to comparative institutional analysis, the study employs conceptual analysis to integrate ethical humanism, economic interdependence, positive peace, and human security into a coherent analytical framework. This theoretical synthesis provides the conceptual basis for developing the notion of Regional Food Security Governance as an institutional pathway linking food security with sustainable peace (Angell, 1913; de Bruijn, 2008; Galtung, 1969; UNDP, 1994).

The study relies primarily on secondary sources, including academic literature, reports published by international organizations, and official policy documents. Data obtained from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), the European Union, ASEAN, and ECOWAS provide the empirical basis for the comparative assessment.

The methodological objective is not to evaluate the effectiveness of existing regional organizations through quantitative performance indicators, but rather to identify common institutional principles that may inform the development of a governance framework for the Organization of Turkic States.

Accordingly, the study follows an interpretive and theory-building approach, emphasizing conceptual innovation and institutional design rather than statistical generalization.

Findings and Discussion

Food Security as a Strategic Dimension of Sustainable Peace

Food security is increasingly recognized as a multidimensional component of international peace and security rather than merely an agricultural or humanitarian concern. Contemporary global challenges – including armed conflicts, climate change, economic instability, pandemics, and disruptions to international supply chains – have demonstrated that food insecurity can undermine political stability, intensify social inequalities, and increase the risk of both domestic and cross-border conflicts (Barrett,

2013; FAO et al., 2023). This relationship extends beyond the physical availability of food. As Sen (1981) demonstrated through the “entitlement approach”, food insecurity frequently results from failures in access, distribution, and institutional arrangements rather than from an absolute shortage of food, highlighting the central importance of governance in preventing food crises.

Within contemporary peace studies, sustainable peace is understood as requiring not only the absence of direct violence but also the elimination of structural conditions that generate insecurity and social vulnerability. From this perspective, food security constitutes an essential element of Positive Peace because it strengthens social stability, supports human well-being, and enhances institutional capacity to prevent crises before they escalate into conflict (Galtung, 1969).

Similarly, the Human Security paradigm identifies food security as one of the fundamental dimensions of human well-being, emphasizing that individuals cannot achieve sustainable security in the absence of reliable access to adequate food (UNDP, 1994). Consequently, strengthening food security contributes simultaneously to protecting individuals, reinforcing state resilience, and promoting regional stability.

These theoretical perspectives collectively suggest that food security should be understood not simply as an outcome of development policy but as an institutional prerequisite for sustainable peace. This broader understanding provides the conceptual foundation for Regional Food Security Governance, which emphasizes coordinated regional institutions, collective preparedness, and cooperative crisis management as essential mechanisms for strengthening long-term regional resilience.

Comparative Assessment of Regional Food Security Mechanisms

Comparative institutional analysis demonstrates that regional organizations increasingly recognize food security as a strategic governance issue requiring coordinated institutional responses rather than isolated national policies. Although the European Union (EU), the ASEAN+3 Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR), and the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR) operate within different political, economic, and geographical contexts, they share several institutional characteristics that strengthen regional resilience through collective action.

The European Union has developed one of the most comprehensive regional food security governance systems through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP - 1962), complemented by crisis management instruments, market stabilization mechanisms, and coordinated agricultural policies (European Commission, 2022). While the primary objective of the CAP extends beyond emergency food reserves, its institutional design demonstrates how supranational governance structures can enhance long-term food security through policy coordination, financial support, and common regulatory frameworks (European Commission, 2023).

In Asia, the ASEAN+3 Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR), established under the 2011 Agreement on the ASEAN+3 Emergency Rice Reserve, represents a cooperative mechanism specifically designed to respond to food emergencies through coordinated rice reserve management among participating member states (ASEAN Plus Three, 2011). Rather than replacing national food security systems, APTERR complements them by establishing agreed procedures for reserve activation, information sharing, and emergency assistance, thereby strengthening regional preparedness against food crises (APTERR Secretariat, 2022).

Similarly, the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve provides an institutional mechanism through which member states coordinate emergency food assistance during periods of severe food insecurity. Its governance structure combines national reserve systems with regional coordination, emphasizing solidarity, collective responsibility, and rapid humanitarian response while respecting national ownership of food reserves (ECOWAS Commission, 2013).

Despite their institutional differences, these regional mechanisms reveal four common governance principles. First, national ownership of strategic reserves remains compatible with regional

coordination. Second, clearly defined institutional procedures strengthen the effectiveness of collective crisis response. Third, information sharing and early warning systems improve regional preparedness and facilitate timely decision-making. Finally, long-term resilience depends not only on physical food reserves but also on stable governance arrangements, institutional trust, and sustained political cooperation.

These comparative experiences demonstrate that effective regional food security governance depends not on institutional uniformity but on clearly defined rules, coordinated collective action, and adaptive governance arrangements.

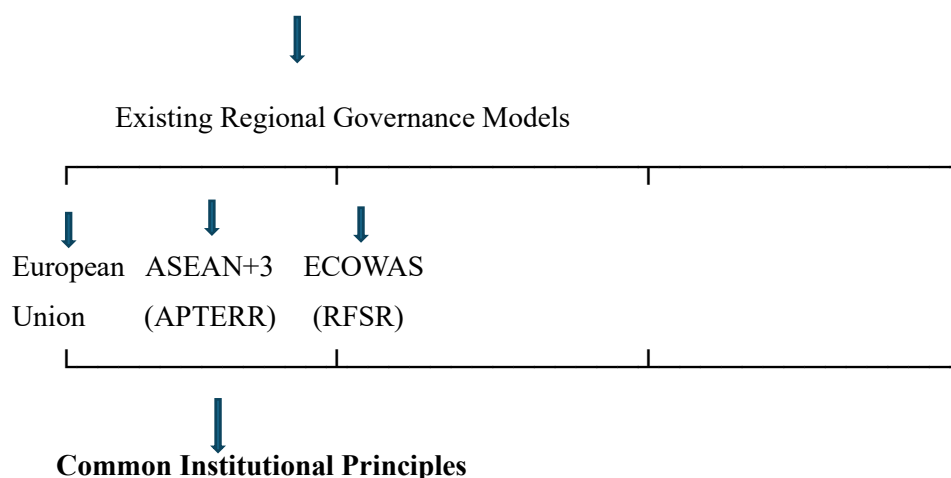
Although these regional mechanisms differ in institutional structure and legal authority, all three demonstrate that effective food security governance depends upon permanent coordination mechanisms, strategic reserve capacity, and institutional information sharing.

These shared institutional principles provide the comparative foundation for developing the proposed Regional Food Security Governance framework for the Organization of Turkic States. Rather than replicating any existing regional model, the proposed framework adapts transferable governance practices to the political and institutional context of the Organization of Turkic States.

The comparative institutional characteristics discussed in this section are synthesized in Figure 2, while their principal governance components are presented in Table 1.

Figure 2. Comparative Regional Food Security Governance Models and the Development of the Proposed OTS Framework (developed by the author).

Regional Governance Architecture of Food Security



- Strategic food reserves
- Regional coordination
- Early warning systems
- Information sharing
- Emergency response



Organization of Turkic States



Regional Food Security Governance
(Developed in This Study)



Regional Grain Reserve Mechanism
(Pilot Application)

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Regional Food Security Governance Mechanisms

Criteria	European Union	ASEAN+3 (APTERR)	ECOWAS (RFSR)	Proposed OTS Model
Primary Objective	Market stability and food security	Emergency rice reserve	Regional food security	Regional food security governance
Strategic Commodity	Multiple agricultural products	Rice	Staple foods	Grain (initial stage)
Governance Structure	Supranational institutions	Intergovernmental	Regional coordination	Distributed governance
Reserve Ownership	Mixed mechanisms	National ownership	National and regional ownership	National ownership
Decision-Making	EU institutions	Joint Committee	Regional Council	OTS Governing Council
Digital Monitoring	Yes	Limited	Developing	Integrated digital platform
Early Warning	Yes	Yes	Yes	AI-assisted early warning
Institutional Innovation	High	Moderate	Moderate	Governance-based model

Integrated Theoretical Model of Regional Food Security Governance

The central argument of this study is that sustainable peace may be more effectively understood through an integrated analytical framework combining complementary theoretical perspectives rather than relying on a single explanatory approach. Accordingly, the proposed concept of Regional Food Security Governance synthesizes ethical humanism, economic interdependence, positive peace, and human security into a coherent framework for analyzing the relationship between regional institutional cooperation and sustainable peace.

The normative foundation of this framework is derived from the ethical philosophy of Nizami Ganjavi, whose humanistic thought emphasizes justice, human dignity, responsible governance, and peaceful coexistence as essential principles of social order (de Bruijn, 2008). Although developed within a medieval intellectual context, these ethical principles remain highly relevant to contemporary debates concerning sustainable development, institutional responsibility, and regional cooperation.

Nizami Ganjavi's metaphor of the "world as a field" in "Iskandarnama" may be interpreted as an early ethical-philosophical expression of the social foundations of interdependence. Nizami writes: "It is not right to sow only for oneself [...] Those who come after have always gathered fruit from the gardens planted by those before them. So much has been planted for us; we, too, must plant for others. If we look carefully at the field of the world, we are all farmers for one another" (Nizami Gəncəvi, 1983, p. 372). Human welfare is thus presented not as the product of isolated individual activity, but as a process in which individuals benefit from the labor of others and previous generations while contributing through their own activity to the welfare of others. The metaphor therefore encompasses both interpersonal and intergenerational interdependence, linking mutual benefit with mutual responsibility.

Centuries later, this ethical-social logic finds a conceptually comparable, though theoretically distinct, expression in Norman Angell's "The Great Illusion". Illustrating the consequences of an increasingly specialized division of labor, Angell considers two communities situated on opposite sides of a political frontier, one producing wheat and the other coal, and emphasizes that the continued existence of each depends upon the ability of the other to continue its productive activity (Angell, 1913, pp. 53-54). The example reflects his broader argument that the division of labor, trade, and credit relations bind developed societies within a system of economic interdependence, thereby challenging the conventional assumption that weakening or conquering another society necessarily translates into economic advantage for the victor.

Although no direct line of theoretical inheritance can be established between Nizami and Angell, an important conceptual parallel can be identified in their understanding of welfare as relational rather than isolated. Nizami expresses this principle at the level of universal ethical and social relations through the metaphor that "we are all farmers for one another," whereas Angell develops the logic of interdependence within the context of modern international political economy. Nizami's metaphor should therefore not be treated anachronistically as an early formulation of modern economic interdependence theory; rather, it may be understood as an ethical-philosophical conception that resonates with its fundamental logic: human welfare depends upon productive contributions extending beyond the individual.

Within the analytical framework of this study, this conceptual convergence provides a normative and theoretical bridge between Nizami's ethical humanism and Angell's economic interdependence, supporting the broader proposition that regional food security can be strengthened through institutions that transform mutual dependence into organized cooperation and shared resilience.

Norman Angell's theory of economic interdependence provides the second analytical pillar by demonstrating that durable peace depends upon mutually beneficial forms of cooperation rather than political confrontation (Angell, 1913). Within the present study, this perspective explains why regional cooperation in food security should be understood not merely as an agricultural policy instrument but as a strategic mechanism for reducing structural vulnerabilities and strengthening mutual resilience.

Rather than representing competing perspectives, these approaches collectively demonstrate that sustainable peace depends upon ethical values, institutional cooperation, and human-centered governance.

The third component of the framework is Johan Galtung's concept of Positive Peace, which emphasizes the removal of structural violence through social justice, inclusive institutions, and equitable access to essential public goods (Galtung, 1969). From this perspective, food security contributes to peace not simply by preventing humanitarian crises but by strengthening the social and institutional conditions necessary for long-term stability.

The Human Security paradigm further expands this analytical perspective by recognizing food security as one of the fundamental dimensions of human well-being and sustainable development (UNDP, 1994). Rather than focusing exclusively on state security, the Human Security approach places individuals and communities at the center of security governance, thereby reinforcing the importance of resilient food systems and coordinated institutional responses to transboundary risks.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives form an integrated conceptual foundation for Regional Food Security Governance. Instead of representing independent theoretical traditions, they complement one another by explaining how ethical principles, institutional cooperation, human-centered security, and positive peace collectively contribute to strengthening regional resilience and promoting sustainable peace.

The evolution and integration of these theoretical perspectives are illustrated in Figure 1, while their principal analytical contributions are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Integrated Theoretical Model of the Study

Theory / Thinker	Core Concept	Contribution to the Study
Nizami Ganjavi	Ethical Humanism and Mutual Responsibility	Justice, human dignity, interdependence, responsibility toward others and future generations
Norman Angell	Economic Interdependence	Mutual economic dependence limits the gains of confrontation and strengthens the rationale for cooperation
Johan Galtung	Positive Peace	Peace through justice and removal of structural sources of insecurity
UNDP	Human Security	Strengthening Human Security through Food Security
This Study	Regional Food Security Governance	Institutionalization of mutual responsibility and interdependence within an ethical framework through regional cooperation as a pathway toward sustainable peace

A Regional Food Security Governance Framework for the Organization of Turkic States

Building upon the comparative institutional analysis and integrated theoretical framework developed in the preceding sections, this study proposes a Regional Food Security Governance Framework specifically designed for the Organization of Turkic States. Rather than replicating existing regional food reserve mechanisms, the proposed framework adapts transferable governance principles to the institutional characteristics, political priorities, and cooperative structure of the Organization of Turkic States. Its primary objective is to strengthen regional resilience through coordinated food security governance while fully respecting national sovereignty over strategic food reserves (ASEAN Plus Three, 2011; ECOWAS Commission, 2013).

The proposed framework is founded upon three mutually reinforcing institutional pillars: National Strategic Grain Reserves, Regional Coordination Mechanisms, and a Governance Support System. Together, these pillars establish an integrated governance architecture that combines national responsibility with regional institutional coordination, enabling member states to respond collectively to food-security challenges while maintaining sovereign control over domestic reserve systems.

The institutional architecture of the proposed Regional Food Security Governance Framework is presented in Figure 3.

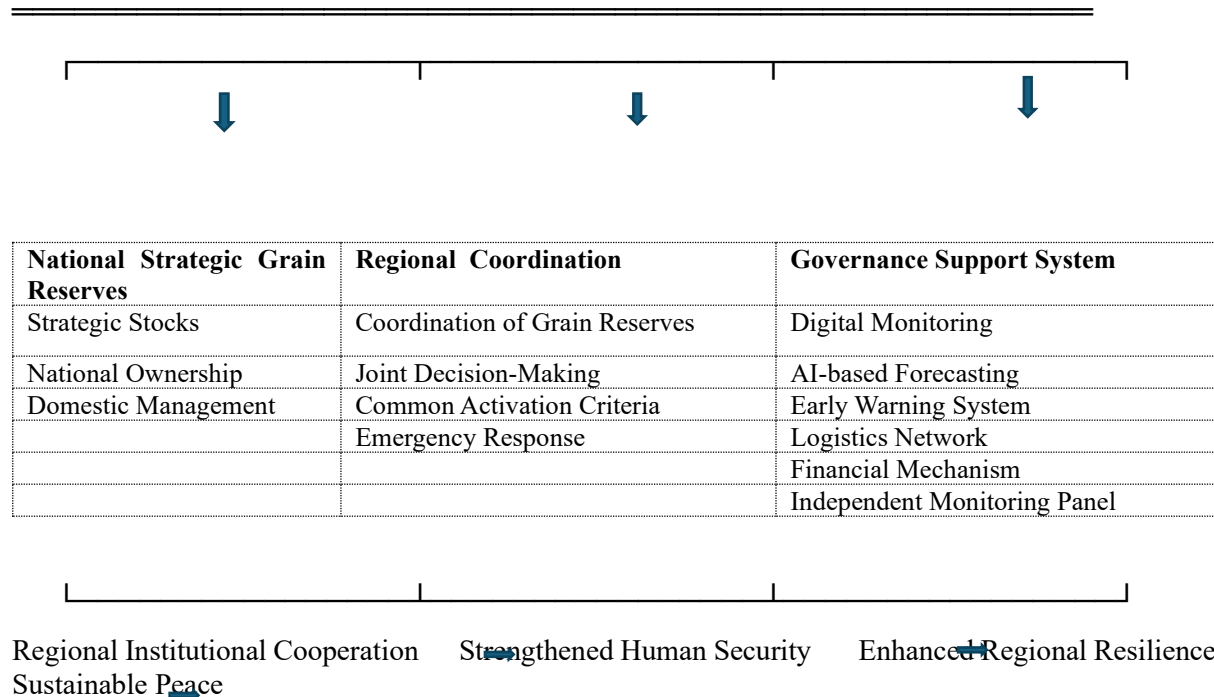
Figure 3. Institutional Architecture of the Proposed Regional Food Security Governance Framework for the Organization of Turkic States (developed by the author)

Organization of Turkic States (OTS)



Regional Food Security Governance Framework

(Proposed in This Study)



The first institutional pillar of the proposed framework consists of National Strategic Grain Reserves, which remain under the ownership and administrative responsibility of individual member states. Rather than transferring reserve ownership to a supranational authority, the framework recognizes that national governments retain primary responsibility for ensuring domestic food security while participating in a coordinated regional governance system. This approach preserves national sovereignty, accommodates differences in agricultural production capacities, and enhances political feasibility within the institutional structure of the Organization of Turkic States.

The principal function of National Strategic Grain Reserves is to provide an immediate national response to temporary supply disruptions while simultaneously serving as the operational foundation of regional emergency cooperation. Member states maintain their respective reserve systems according to nationally determined capacities and domestic policy priorities, while agreeing to common principles governing regional coordination during periods of severe food insecurity. Such an arrangement balances national autonomy with collective preparedness and minimizes the political sensitivities often associated with centralized reserve systems.

Consequently, National Strategic Grain Reserves constitute the institutional basis upon which regional cooperation can be constructed. By maintaining sovereign ownership while participating in coordinated governance arrangements, member states strengthen both national preparedness and regional resilience,

thereby creating the first institutional pillar of the proposed Regional Food Security Governance Framework.

The second institutional pillar consists of Regional Coordination Mechanisms, which transform nationally managed reserve systems into a coordinated regional governance structure (European Commission, 2022; ECOWAS Commission, 2013). Unlike centralized reserve models, the proposed framework emphasizes institutional cooperation rather than institutional centralization. Regional coordination therefore functions as the mechanism through which member states collectively assess emerging risks, exchange strategic information, coordinate emergency responses, and determine the activation of reserve-sharing arrangements according to previously agreed procedures.

This coordination mechanism is expected to operate through a Governing Council supported by a permanent Technical Secretariat, enabling evidence-based decision-making during periods of regional food insecurity. Clearly defined activation criteria, transparent decision-making procedures, and jointly agreed operational protocols enhance institutional predictability while preserving the sovereign decision-making authority of participating states. In this manner, regional coordination strengthens collective action without diminishing national policy autonomy.

Accordingly, Regional Coordination Mechanisms represent the institutional bridge between national reserve systems and regional crisis management, enabling the Organization of Turkic States to respond more rapidly and more coherently to transboundary food-security challenges.

The third institutional pillar of the proposed framework is the Governance Support System, which provides the technical, informational, and administrative capacity necessary for effective regional food security governance. While National Strategic Grain Reserves and Regional Coordination Mechanisms establish the institutional structure of the framework, the Governance Support System ensures its continuous operation through evidence-based decision-making, technological support, and institutional accountability.

A central component of this pillar is an integrated Digital Monitoring Platform that enables the continuous collection, analysis, and exchange of information concerning agricultural production, strategic reserve levels, food prices, trade flows, and potential supply-chain disruptions across member states (ASEAN Plus Three Food Security Information System [APTFSIS], 2026). By improving transparency and facilitating real-time information sharing, the platform strengthens situational awareness and supports coordinated regional responses to emerging food-security risks.

The Governance Support System also incorporates an AI-assisted Early Warning System, designed to identify potential risks before they develop into regional crises (FAO & WFP, 2024; Onyeaka et al., 2023). Through the analysis of agricultural, economic, climatic, and logistical indicators, the system supports evidence-based forecasting and assists decision-makers in activating preventive measures at an early stage. Rather than replacing political decision-making, artificial intelligence functions as a decision-support instrument that enhances the accuracy, speed, and reliability of institutional responses.

Complementing these technological components, the framework includes coordinated Logistics and Transportation Mechanisms to facilitate the rapid movement of strategic food reserves during emergencies, together with a Regional Financial Mechanism designed to support reserve maintenance, emergency operations, digital infrastructure, and institutional capacity-building. To ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous institutional learning, the Governance Support System further incorporates an Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Panel responsible for assessing operational performance, reviewing emergency responses, and recommending policy improvements based on accumulated experience.

Collectively, these governance support instruments transform the proposed framework from a reserve-management mechanism into a comprehensive regional governance system capable of anticipating risks, coordinating institutional responses, and continuously improving its operational effectiveness. Accordingly, the Governance Support System constitutes the enabling pillar that integrates technology,

institutional learning, and evidence-based governance into the Regional Food Security Governance Framework.

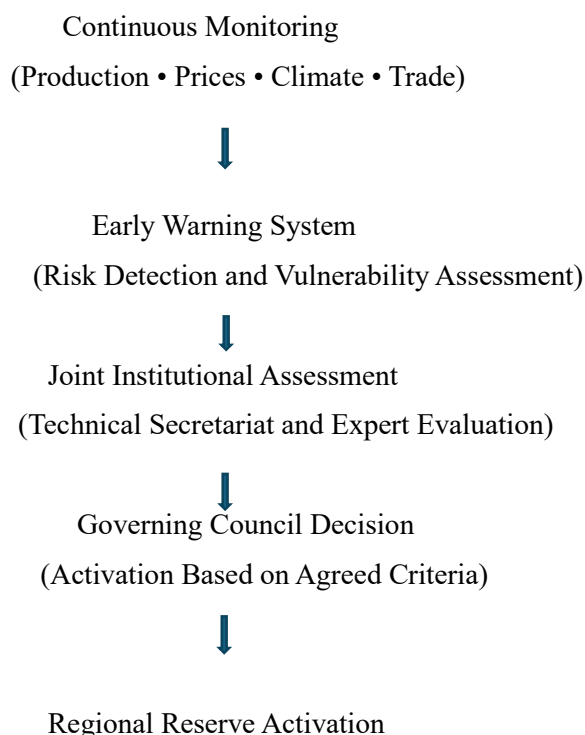
The principal institutional components of the proposed framework and their respective functions are summarized in Table 3.

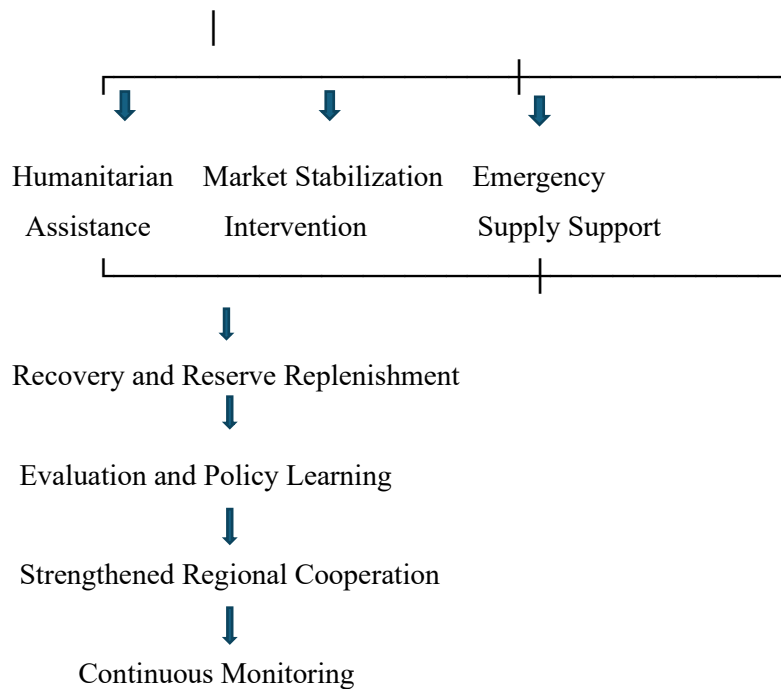
Table 3. Components of the Proposed Regional Food Security Governance Framework

Component	Main Functions	Expected Contribution
National Strategic Reserves	Strategic stock management	National preparedness
Regional Coordination Mechanism	Joint reserve activation	Coordinated crisis response
Governance Support System	Monitoring, forecasting, logistics	Institutional efficiency
Digital Platform	Real-time information sharing	Transparency and early warning
Financial Mechanism	Funding and reserve rotation	Long-term sustainability
Independent Monitoring	Oversight and reporting	Accountability
Governing Council	Strategic decision-making	Regional coordination

While Table 3 summarizes the institutional components of the proposed framework, Figure 4 illustrates how these components interact within a continuous operational governance cycle during periods of regional food insecurity.

Figure 4. Operational Governance Cycle of the Proposed Regional Food Security Governance Framework (developed by the author).





External Strategic Environment

The necessity of a Regional Food Security Governance Framework for the Organization of Turkic States is further reinforced by the increasingly complex external strategic environment affecting global and regional food systems. Contemporary food security challenges are shaped not only by agricultural production but also by geopolitical uncertainty, climate change, disruptions to international trade and transportation networks, energy market volatility, and the growing frequency of transboundary crises. These interconnected risks have demonstrated that national food security can no longer be understood independently of regional and global governance dynamics (IPCC, 2019; Espitia et al., 2022; FAO et al., 2023; FAO et al., 2024; World Bank, 2025).

For the member states of the Organization of Turkic States, these external developments underscore the importance of strengthening institutional resilience through regional cooperation. Although individual countries maintain different agricultural capacities, trade structures, and strategic priorities, they share common vulnerabilities associated with global market instability, supply-chain disruptions, and climate-related risks. Consequently, coordinated regional governance enhances the collective capacity of member states to anticipate, manage, and mitigate food-security challenges that increasingly transcend national borders.

Within this broader strategic environment, the proposed Regional Food Security Governance Framework should not be understood as a response to any single geopolitical event or temporary crisis. Rather, it represents a long-term institutional investment in regional resilience, enabling the Organization of Turkic States to strengthen preparedness, improve policy coordination, and reduce structural vulnerabilities through sustained regional cooperation.

Accordingly, the external strategic environment reinforces the practical relevance of the proposed framework by demonstrating that resilient governance structures are becoming an essential component of contemporary regional security and sustainable peace.

Rather than treating these external pressures as isolated crises, regional governance should address them as interconnected systemic risks requiring coordinated institutional responses.

Synthesis of Findings

The study demonstrates that food security, as a strategic element of regional governance and sustainable peace, can strengthen regional organizations' resilience against transboundary risks through integrated approaches.

The comparative institutional analysis further demonstrates that successful regional food security arrangements share several common governance characteristics despite their institutional diversity. These include the preservation of national ownership over strategic reserves, clearly defined coordination mechanisms, transparent decision-making procedures, effective information-sharing systems, and institutionalized emergency response capacities. Rather than replicating existing regional models, the proposed framework adapts these transferable governance principles to the institutional context of the Organization of Turkic States.

Building upon these comparative findings, the proposed Regional Food Security Governance Framework combines three mutually reinforcing institutional pillars – National Strategic Grain Reserves, Regional Coordination Mechanisms, and the Governance Support System – into an integrated governance architecture. Collectively, these components establish a system capable of strengthening preparedness, facilitating coordinated responses, supporting evidence-based decision-making, and promoting continuous institutional learning through regional cooperation.

Taken together, the theoretical integration, comparative institutional analysis, and governance framework proposed in this study demonstrate that regional food security governance represents a practical mechanism through which justice, institutional cooperation, human security, and strategic resilience can jointly contribute to sustainable peace. In this respect, the study advances both the theoretical understanding of regional peacebuilding and the practical development of institutional governance within the Organization of Turkic States.

The principal theoretical, institutional, and policy contributions of the study are synthesized in Table 4.

Table 4. Principal Contributions of the Study

Dimension	Main Contribution	Practical Significance
Theoretical	Integration of Nizami Ganjavi's ethical humanism with contemporary international relations theories	Broadens the normative foundations of Human Security and Sustainable Peace
Conceptual	Development of the concept of Regional Food Security Governance	Establishes a new analytical framework linking food security with peacebuilding
Methodological	Comparative institutional analysis of regional food security mechanisms	Identifies transferable governance principles for regional organizations
Institutional	Governance framework for the Organization of Turkic States	Provides a feasible model for regional food-security cooperation
Policy	Distributed Regional Grain Reserve Mechanism	Strengthens regional resilience through coordinated emergency response

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study demonstrates that food security should be understood not merely as an agricultural or humanitarian concern but as a strategic dimension of regional governance and sustainable peace. By integrating Ethical Humanism, Economic Interdependence, Positive Peace, and Human Security within a single analytical framework, the study establishes Regional Food Security Governance as an institutional pathway through which regional cooperation can strengthen resilience, reduce structural vulnerabilities, and contribute to sustainable peace.

The study makes three principal contributions to the existing literature. First, it develops an integrated theoretical framework that bridges Eastern ethical thought, represented by Nizami Ganjavi's humanistic philosophy, with contemporary international relations theories. Second, it introduces Regional Food Security Governance as a coherent conceptual framework linking food security, institutional cooperation, and sustainable peace. Third, it proposes an operational governance framework specifically designed for the Organization of Turkic States, demonstrating how comparative institutional experience can be translated into a practical regional governance model.

The proposed framework emphasizes that effective regional food security governance should combine national ownership of strategic grain reserves with coordinated regional institutions, evidence-based decision-making, technological innovation, and continuous institutional learning. Rather than advocating supranational control, the framework promotes cooperative governance that respects national sovereignty while strengthening collective preparedness against transboundary food-security risks.

From a policy perspective, the findings suggest that the Organization of Turkic States may strengthen regional resilience by progressively institutionalizing food security cooperation through coordinated strategic reserve policies, regional early warning mechanisms, digital information-sharing platforms, and permanent technical coordination structures. Such measures would enhance the capacity of member states to anticipate, prevent, and collectively respond to future food-security challenges while supporting broader regional stability.

Although the proposed framework is conceptual in nature, it provides a foundation for future empirical research. Subsequent studies may evaluate its practical applicability through comparative case studies, policy implementation analysis, or quantitative assessments of regional food security governance. Expanding the framework to other regional organizations may also contribute to a broader understanding of the relationship between institutional cooperation, food security, and sustainable peace.

Ultimately, this study argues that sustainable peace is strengthened not only through diplomacy and security arrangements but also through resilient institutions capable of safeguarding human well-being. In this respect, Regional Food Security Governance offers both a conceptual contribution to the academic literature and a practical framework for strengthening regional cooperation in an increasingly interconnected and uncertain world.

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HOBBS, LOCKE AND ROUSSEAU: HOW TO ACHIEVE PEACE

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the relationship between sovereignty, civic agency, and the conditions of civil peace through a comparative analysis of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. It focuses attention on the extent to which the construction of political order requires the suppression, conditioning, or activation of popular participation. The argument advances that differing conceptions of the “people” across these thinkers generate distinct models of peace, respectively grounded in submission, conditional representation, and participatory sovereignty.

The analysis begins with Hobbes’s account of the transition from multitude to political unity. In ‘Leviathan’, civil peace is secured through a “pact of authorisation” that transfers individual sovereignty to an absolute sovereign. This arrangement produces what can be termed ‘civic passivity’: once the sovereign is instituted, political agency is extinguished, and obedience becomes unconditional. While this model resolves the anarchy of the state of nature, it introduces a structural asymmetry—since the sovereign remains outside the contract, the possibility of domination persists, rendering peace contingent rather than guaranteed.

The paper then turns to Locke’s corrective framework in ‘Two Treatises of Government’, where political society is oriented toward the preservation of property broadly understood as life, liberty, and estate. Locke replaces absolute submission with ‘conditioned representation’: governmental authority is fiduciary, constrained by law, and subject to revocation. The separation of powers and the people’s retained right of resistance transform them into an enduring political actor, thereby embedding mechanisms to mitigate abuses of power and stabilise civil peace through institutional accountability.

Finally, the paper examines Rousseau’s reconfiguration of sovereignty in ‘The Social Contract’. Rejecting both absolutism and representational reductionism, Rousseau locates sovereignty in the indivisible ‘general will’, a moral and collective body that cannot be alienated or represented. Civil peace, in this framework, depends not merely on institutional design but on civic virtue, shared identity, and active participation. Peace without liberty is dismissed as illusory; instead, legitimacy derives from the alignment of individual and collective wills.

Methodologically, the paper employs comparative textual analysis to trace how each theory resolves the tension between individual freedom and collective order. It concludes that civil peace is not a singular achievement but a spectrum: from Hobbesian security through depoliticisation, to Lockean stability via constrained governance, to Rousseauian freedom sustained by civic engagement. These models reveal enduring fault lines in modern political thought concerning the role of the people in sustaining legitimate and durable political order.

Keywords: Locke, Rousseau, Hobbes, Peace, Freedom

HOBBS, LOCKE, ROUSSEAU VE BARIŞIN NASIL SAĞLANDIĞI

Özet

Bu araştırma, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke ve Jean-Jacques Rousseau'nun karşılaştırmalı analizi yoluyla egemenlik, sivil eylemlilik ve sivil barışın koşulları arasındaki ilişkiyi sorgulamaktadır. Siyasi düzenin inşasının, halk katılımının bastırılmasını, koşullandırılmasını veya etkinleştirilmesini ne ölçüde gerektirdiğine dikkat çekmektedir. Argüman, bu düşünürlerin "halk" hakkındaki farklı anlayışlarının, sırasıyla boyun eğme, koşullu temsil ve katılımcı egemenliğe dayalı farklı barış modelleri ürettiğini ileri sürmektedir.

Analiz, Hobbes'un kalabalıktan siyasi birliğe geçişine dair açıklamasıyla başlar. 'Leviathan'da, sivil barış, bireysel egemenliği mutlak bir egemene devreden bir "yetkilendirme anlaşması" yoluyla güvence altına alınır. Bu düzenleme, 'sivil pasiflik' olarak adlandırılabilir bir durum yaratır: Egemen kurulduktan sonra, siyasi eylemlilik ortadan kalkar ve itaat koşulsuz hale gelir. Bu model, doğa durumunun anarşisini çözse de, yapısal bir asimetriyi de beraberinde getirir; egemen taraf sözleşmenin dışında kaldığı için, tahakküm olasılığı devam eder ve barışı garanti altına alınmış değil, koşullu hale getirir.

Araştırma daha sonra Locke'un "Hükümet Üzerine İki İnceleme"deki düzeltici çerçevesine yönelir; burada siyasi toplum, yaşam, özgürlük ve mülk olarak geniş anlamda anlaşılan mülkiyetin korunmasına yöneliktir. Locke, mutlak boyun eğmeyi "koşullu temsil" ile değiştirir: hükümet otoritesi güvene dayalıdır, kanunla sınırlıdır ve iptal edilebilir. Güçler ayrılığı ve halkın direniş hakkının korunması, onları kalıcı bir siyasi aktöre dönüştürür ve böylece güç istismarlarını hafifletmek ve kurumsal hesap verebilirlik yoluyla sivil barışı istikrara kavuşturmak için mekanizmalar yerleştirir.

Son olarak, Rousseau'nun "Toplumsal Sözleşme"deki egemenliğin yeniden yapılandırılmasını incelenmekte. Hem mutlakiyetçiliği hem de temsili indirgemeciliği reddeden Rousseau, egemenliği bölünmez "genel irade"de, yabancılaştırılamayan veya temsil edilemeyen ahlaki ve kolektif bir bedende bulur. Bu çerçevede, sivil barış yalnızca kurumsal tasarıma değil, aynı zamanda yurttaşlık erdemine, ortak kimliğe ve aktif katılıma bağlıdır. Özgürlük olmadan barış yanıltıcı olarak reddedilir; bunun yerine meşruiyet, bireysel ve kolektif iradelerin uyumundan kaynaklanır.

Metodolojik olarak, bu çalışma, her bir teorinin bireysel özgürlük ve kolektif düzen arasındaki gerilimi nasıl çözdüğünü izlemek için karşılaştırmalı metin analizini kullanır. Sivil barışın tek bir başarı değil, bir spektrum olduğu sonucuna varır: Hobbes'un depolitizasyon yoluyla sağladığı güvenlik, Locke'un kısıtlı yönetim yoluyla sağladığı istikrara, Rousseau'nun yurttaşlık katılımıyla sürdürülen özgürlüğe kadar. Bu modeller, meşru ve kalıcı siyasi düzeni sürdürmede halkın rolüyle ilgili modern siyasi düşüncede kalıcı fay hatlarını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Locke, Rousseau, Hobbes, Barış, Özgürlük

I. Hobbes and Civic Passivity

Governance has always been an important issue for human societies. This was the case during the first human settlements and remains so today. There have been various ideas about how this should take place. Thomas Hobbes put forth a seminal one in the seventeenth century. Taking the people as his starting point, Hobbes compared the Kingdom and the civil war that endured in England, where he lived, to an imagined state of nature, a time when there was no organised government.

For him, the will of individuals to leave the state of nature does not in itself constitute a people. Pre-contractual individuals enjoy freedom and sovereignty, but at this stage, they are still merely a

multitude. As a multitude, no peace is possible because natural freedom and sovereignty are the source of a war of all against all.²⁴

According to Hobbes, however numerous a multitude of individuals may be, if their actions are directed by their particular judgments and instincts, they cannot, by their sheer number, hope for either defence or protection, whether against a common enemy or against the harm they do to themselves one another. Indeed, their opinions divide them concerning the best use of their strength, and its application; they no longer help one another, but hinder one another; Their mutual opposition reduces their strength to nothing: in this way, they are easily subdued by a very small number who agree, but even then, when there is no common enemy, they fight among themselves in the name of their personal interests. Supposing that a great multitude of individuals agree to follow justice and the other laws of nature, without a common power keeping them all in check, one could just as easily suppose that humankind would do the same; thus, there would be neither any civil government nor any state, and there would be no need for one, because there would be peace without subjection. For individuals to then live in peace, they must consent to the subjection of all to a single sovereign. This consent is given by an act of transferring authority from the multitude to a sovereign who alone will be able to impose the force of law on all, and thus guarantee peace. The person of the sovereign in Leviathan originates from a “pact of authorisation” by which each individual appoints the one who, whether king or assembly, will end the war of all against all and impose peace by whatever means they deem necessary.²⁵ He is not the delegate of a sovereign body of the people, but rather the product of pre-political wills that share only their consensus regarding the necessity of such an institution. Political order thus begins, for Hobbes, with the establishment of sovereignty.²⁶ A leader is authorised to speak and act on behalf of all (in the person of). It must therefore be distinguished from individuals and above them to command obedience and maintain political order.

It is through laws and their capacity to impose public order that the sovereign, in turn, establishes the person of the people. It is therefore not the people who establish sovereignty, but rather the reverse.

Civil peace is thus obtained for Hobbes at the price of individuals relinquishing their liberties and individual sovereignties. Since the sovereign is not a party to the original contract, he is under no obligation to those who brought him to power; nothing compels him to respect the will of the people. For once, "authorised," there can no longer be any control that the people can exercise over the sovereign, and to depose him would amount to the people condemning themselves to return to the state of nature. Everyone is thus compelled to submit their will to his will, and their judgments to his judgment. On the other hand, in the name of the security of all, he is capable of subjugating the people and, to that end, of disposing of each individual.

The formation of the union, according to Hobbes, consists in each man, by agreement, binding himself to the same man or to the same council, named and designated by all, to do the actions that the said man or council commands them to do, and not to do any action that this man or council forbids them to do.²⁷ Therefore, he who commands can, through the use of all their means and all their strength, be capable, by virtue of the terror that such use can inspire, of shaping the will of all toward unity and concord among them. If individual freedom and will are alienated in the action and will of the sovereign, what place remains for the people on the political chessboard? Once the sovereign is established, the People must leave matters of government to the sovereign's judgment and care.

What now falls to the people is to pledge unconditional obedience to the sovereign. Then, to quietly go about, one may call “civic passivity,” that is to say, a private life, a sphere where the law has silenced

²⁴ Kavka, G. S. (1983). Hobbes's war of all against all. *Ethics*, 93(2), 291-310.

²⁵ Green, M. J. (2015). Authorization and political authority in Hobbes. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 53(1), 25-47.

²⁶ Yiğit, S. (2020). HOBbesian UNDERSTANDING OF WAR AND PEACE, STATE AND SOCIETY. *Bandırma Onyedü Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 3(2), 141-149.

²⁷ Field, S. (2014). Hobbes and the Question of Power. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 52(1), 61-85.

the private thoughts and actions of individuals.²⁸ In other words, apart from the active role of each person in the founding act of the Republic (namely, the act of authorising the sovereign), the people must be apolitical because, even if they are free to think and act privately, publicly expressing their thoughts or taking actions that would contradict the will of the sovereign would be an act of sedition and, as such, punishable by law enacted by the sovereign by virtue of the pact of authorisation and in the name of the security of all.

An individual, or a segment of the population, may therefore judge that the sovereign's will does not correspond to the peace to which they aspire; however, they will be prohibited by law from publicly opposing the sovereign's will. But can the people then assume the moral responsibility for every decision of the sovereign under the pretext that the act of authorisation implies absolute obedience to the latter's supreme power?

The extreme case, about which Hobbes says nothing, but which nevertheless seems possible in the republican conception of a people politically placed under the veil of civil passivity, is the case where the sovereign decides, domestically, to return to a state of war because the people have no recourse to oppose the reason of state. Civil peace would then be constantly undermined by the sovereign's potential recourse to mass repression in the name of the security of all. Furthermore, since the sovereign would be exempt from the common obligations arising from the contract and would hold all the powers, there is nothing to guarantee that he will not use this privilege to remain in a state of nature vis-à-vis the people: Hobbes's civil state is therefore not complete, since there remains at least one person who can remain in a state of nature in relation to the rest of the contracting parties.²⁹ The Civil peace is therefore not perfectly guaranteed as long as the people are confined solely to a position of unconditional obedience to the sovereign, because the problem of the state of nature is not completely resolved.

II. Locke and Conditioned Representation

It is this incompleteness of the solution in the state of nature that intrigues Locke, which he seeks to eliminate in *The Second Treatise of Government* of 1689. Unlike Hobbes, Locke rejects the solution in which the absolute power of the sovereign ties the people's hands.³⁰ This viewpoint stems from the difference between these two contemporary thinkers regarding the purpose of the project to found a society. As demonstrated, for Hobbes, the objective of a republic is primarily security-related. The established sovereign must monopolise all power over his subjects to inspire enough fear to discourage anyone seeking to harm the general stability. Locke, on the other hand, places more emphasis on the organisational aspect of the objective of those who choose to unite in society. According to him, the greatest and principal end that men propose for themselves when they unite in a community and submit to a government is to preserve their property, for the preservation of which many things are lacking in the state of nature. The state of nature hinders the security of people's property (their lives, their liberties, and their goods) because it lacks common laws established to serve as a common standard of judgment, an impartial judge with the authority to settle disputes in accordance with the established laws, and a power to support and uphold a given sentence and to execute it.³¹ Rather than discouraging fundamentally belligerent individuals by forcibly imposing the power of a common sovereign upon them, Locke sees in civil government a desire to organise the preservation and prosperity of the contracting parties' property. While the security aspect requires individuals to relinquish their freedoms and rights, the organisational aspect aims to organise individual freedoms and rights for the peace, safety, and well-being of all. Individuals, therefore, do not renounce their freedoms or their property; they coordinate to achieve their goals without resorting to violence. And to this end, they mutually

²⁸ Dalgarno, M. T. (1975, January). Analysing Hobbes's Contract. In *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (pp. 209-226). Compton Russell Ltd..

²⁹ Forsyth, M. (1981). Thomas Hobbes and the constituent power of the people. *Political Studies*, 29(2), 191-203.

³⁰ Locke, J. (2021). *Second treatise of government*. Phoenix Classics Ebooks.

³¹ Davis, M. (2013). Locke (and Hobbes) on "Property" in the State of Nature. *International philosophical quarterly*, 53(3), 271-287.

agree: firstly, not to judge—each unilaterally—the means necessary for self-preservation, but to subject them to the limitations of the laws that will be established communally, as well as relinquishing the power to punish crimes committed by others against the laws of nature, but transferring this power to society.

Secondly, establishing public authorities to ensure this agreement, namely the legislative, judicial, and executive powers.³² The established government is therefore ordered, according to Locke, to the best satisfaction of the freedoms and rights already existing in the state of nature, but coordinated this time at the level of society. Its *raison d'être* is contingent upon the improvement of the coexistence of liberties because, according to Locke, if it is true that, in entering into society, men relinquish the equality, liberty, and executive power they possessed in the state of nature, and place them in the hands of society for the legislative branch to dispose of as the good of that same society requires, it remains, however, that each does so only with the intention of preserving his person, his liberty, and his property all the better (for it cannot be supposed that a rational creature would change his situation with the intention of making it worse). The power of society, or of the legislative branch it establishes, can never be assumed to extend beyond what the common good requires. Civil peace in the republic, according to Locke, is made possible by the purpose and the methods of government that the acts of government must reflect.³³ These latter governments must have no other aim than the peace, security, and public good of the people, and, for the people to recognise themselves in this government, they must adhere to the transparency of the laws, to confidence in impartiality in judgments in accordance with the laws, and to the controlled use of public force over members of the community. Locke asserts that whoever holds the legislative or supreme power of the republic is bound to govern according to fixed and established laws, promulgated and known to the people, and not by improvised decrees; to govern by means of impartial and upright judges, called upon to decide all disputes according to these laws; and finally, to employ the force of the community internally only for the execution of these laws. All this must be directed toward no other end than the peace, security, and public good of the people.

How then can the proper functioning of this system be guaranteed once the exit from the state of nature has been achieved? What mechanism must be respected so that the legislative, judicial, and executive powers effectively fulfil their purpose, which is the peace, security, and public good of the people? Locke sees the first mechanism in the separation and hierarchy of powers. Chapter XIII of the *Second Treatise of Government* is devoted to this, as for him, the supreme power must be that of making laws, a power whose scope and limits Locke defines in Chapter XI of the same work. The legislative power is the most immediately linked to the will of the people to form a society, because the establishment of common laws accepted by all is the act that puts an end to the state of nature. But since the people themselves cannot directly draft the laws, they confer this power upon a man or an assembly. The other powers will have to execute and enforce the laws established in the name of the people by the legislators elected for this purpose.

However, and this is the safeguard mechanism that, according to Locke, serves to counter any abuse of power, all powers remain subject to the approval of the people, who retain the sovereign power to remove their representatives - even their legislators - if they consider that their acts of government betray the trust placed in them by electing them and that they act in a manner contrary to the purpose for which they were vested with authority. This sovereign power of removal makes the people, in Locke's republic and, unlike Hobbes, a fully-fledged political actor for the purpose of preserving the formation of a society.³⁴ Locke admits that this power can even extend to the use of force in the form of revolution, which others – notably Hobbes and Kant – do not admit because it would mean reverting society to a state of nature, for the former, or going against the purity of legality, for the latter. Moreover,

³² Ratnapala, S. (1993). John Locke's doctrine of the separation of powers: A re-evaluation. *Am. J. Juris.*, 38, 189.

³³ Bou-Habib, P. (2017). Locke, natural law and civil peace: Reply to Tate. *European Journal of Political Theory*, 16(1), 122-127.

³⁴ Gencer, B. (2010). Sovereignty and the separation of powers in John Locke. *European Legacy*, 15(3), 323-339.

this power of the people to remove their Representatives has the advantage of preventing rebellions within a state.

Due to the absence or ineffectiveness of legal remedies for individuals who have something to reproach the people's representatives for. While Hobbes is therefore more concerned with ensuring the public force of the rulers to effectively repress any individual who would act against the sovereign's law, we find in Locke a clear concern for protecting the people from the potential abuse of power that their representatives might commit.³⁵ This difference in the view reflects, as we indicated earlier, their divergent views on the purpose. that motivates individuals to leave the state of nature and form a political community. Locke's refusal to recognise the unconditional submission of the people's representatives stems from the fact that the danger to peace, security, and the common good does not arise solely from the tendency of individuals to exempt themselves from the law or from external invasion; it can also arise from the temptation to which the people's representatives are susceptible, namely, that of using the law and the powers it confers upon them for their own interests and to the detriment of the people's good. He had undoubtedly understood that the concentration of absolute power in the hands of one person or a group of people without any other control from the rest of the people could lead to the abuse of that power, as Lord Acton would say two centuries later: Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Locke's republic gives the people a leading role on the political stage: it is the people who sovereignly establish the laws, ensure that government acts in accordance with established public laws, and remove their representatives when necessary.³⁶

III. Rousseau and Popular Sovereignty

With Hobbes and Locke, we have thus far proceeded on the presupposition that the state of nature is a state in which the peace of individuals is constantly threatened by the absence of a common criterion for judgment capable of arbitrating divergent interests. The establishment of a political community made it possible to resolve this problem by creating a common dependence on a public force (Hobbes) or by establishing common legislation that defines the criterion for judging what should be common, with private interests protected so long as they do not contradict the general law (Locke). The problem to be solved is that of reconciling particular interests through the establishment of a general interest. In Hobbes's case, because individuals trade their liberty for security, particular interests submit to the general interest, which is embodied by the (particular) will of the Sovereign (a man or an assembly): peace is offered to the people by the Sovereign in exchange for absolute obedience - renunciation of liberty and even of one's person if the Sovereign demands it.

In Locke's case, individuals agree on the organisation of their communal life. They do not relinquish their liberty or their property: they define common laws and delegate representatives to enforce them. Particular interests are not sacrificed to the general interest; on the contrary, the general interest only fulfils its purpose if it promotes the tranquillity and prosperity of particular interests. Peace, in this case, is a project of free individuals united as a people who ensure that the public sphere is oriented towards this end.

With Rousseau, on the other hand, one enters a scenario in which the political community does not aim to bring about the exit from the state of nature, but rather to correct the perversion introduced by humankind's social condition in the normally peaceful state of nature.³⁷ For Rousseau, indeed, the state of nature is peaceful. The complexity of the social state, confronted with the particular interests of each individual, destroys peace, and the civil state then arises to try to restore it. The watchword for the

³⁵ Neacșu, A. (2021). John Locke—Theorist of Limiting and Supervising Political Power by Citizens. *Dialogue and Universalism*, (2), 49-65.

³⁶ Clark, J. C. D. (2023). "Lockean liberalism" and "classical republicanism": the formation, function and failure of the categories. *Intellectual History Review*, 33(1), 11-31.

³⁷ Watkin, C. (2023). Sites of modernity: Rousseau and the state of nature. *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 60(2), 185-197.

creation of a republic is therefore to find a form of association which will defend and protect with all the common force the person and property of each associate, and by which each, uniting with all, will nevertheless obey only himself and remain as free as before.

Rousseau, like Locke, maintains that the republic is not built on the graveyard of individual liberties. It must result from a free association for a common project of security and prosperity, this project being governed by laws enacted and accepted by all. But while for Locke the people are conceived as a sum of the individuals composing them, Rousseau, for his part, makes them an ideal universality which he calls the general will. The social contract tacitly concluded by all produces a public personality distinct from individual persons. According to him, if one removes from the social contract what is not of its essence, one will find that it is reduced to the following terms: Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will; and we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole. Instantly, in place of the person of each contracting party, this act of association produces a moral and collective body composed of as many members as the assembly has votes, which receives from this same act its unity, its common self, its life, and its will. This public person, which is thus formed by the union of all the others, formerly took the name of City, and now takes that of Republic or body politic, which is called by its members the State when it is passive, the Sovereign when it is active, and the Power when compared to its peers. About its members, they collectively take the name of the people. They are called, in particular, Citizens as participants in the sovereign authority, and Subjects as subject to the laws of the State. Thus Rousseau conceives of the origin and *raison d'être* of a republic. It is an association of individual persons in a public person having the characteristics of a real body: unity, identity, life, and will. The general will moves this "moral and collective" body, which is therefore not the work of one man or a few men.³⁸ Hobbes's Sovereign "incorporates" the contracting parties. This means that it has a body and a will quite distinct from and external to those of the contracting parties, but that, once designated as guarantor of public order by them, it nourishes its legitimacy and power through the incorporation of its subjects.³⁹

Symbolically represented by the Leviathan and politically by the person (or persons) who holds power, it is a real being. With Rousseau, the general will performs an opposite movement: the common self, arising from the social contract, is unrepresentable in both the literal and figurative senses. It is a will. And as a will, its sovereignty can be neither ceded nor represented by anyone other than itself. But, on the other hand, the general will is not reducible to the sum of the particular wills that compose the social body. People are not the sum of individuals, as in Locke's case. Citizens are, of course, asked to express their will through suffrage, but it is not the aggregation of votes taken one by one that constitutes the general will.

Everyone participates in sovereign authority, but this authority transcends each individual. For, as Rousseau asserts, what generalises the general will is less the number of votes than the common interest.⁴⁰ that unites them: for in this institution, everyone necessarily submits to the conditions that it imposes on others. With Rousseau, then, the people become an ideal personification of the social whole, a moral body, a collective self. This gives the social bond and civil peace a character that is both detached from the prince's goodwill and patriotic in the citizen.

Indeed, for Rousseau, it is not because there is internal security that one should speak of peace. If the sovereignty of the body politic cannot be ceded or represented by anyone other than itself, civil peace depends on the absolute independence of the general will from any alienation, whether that of the liberty of each citizen or that of the entire body politic. The social contract is precisely, in Rousseau's thought, a corrective to a false peace that would conclude with the alienation of liberty. In the opening chapters

³⁸ Filho, Orlando Villas Boas. (2008). Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Supremacy of the General Will, the Unit of the Moral and Collective Body and the Ethical Overload of the Citizen. *Prisma Juridico*, 7, 93.

³⁹ Steinberger, P. J. (2008). Hobbes, Rousseau and the modern conception of the state. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(3), 595-611.

⁴⁰ Bertram, C. (2012). Rousseau's legacy in two conceptions of the general will: democratic and transcendent. *The Review of Politics*, 74(3), 403-419.

of The Social Contract, Rousseau engages in a critique targeting false conceptions of peace.⁴¹ He rails against learned investigations into public law, which are often nothing more than the history of past abuses and which seek to establish law through deeds. He specifically targets Grotius and Hobbes, criticising their conception of power for employing a method more favourable to tyrants and detrimental to those governed. He rejects the notion that civil peace results from the right of the strongest or from the state of slavery in which a people governed by a despot find themselves.

He underlines that the despot ensures civil tranquillity for his subjects. So be it; But what do they gain from it, if the wars his ambition attracts, his insatiable greed, and the vexations of his ministry distress them more than their internal conflicts would? What do they gain from it, if this very tranquillity is one of their miseries? One lives peacefully even in dungeons; is that enough to feel comfortable there? A conception of civil peace that would be satisfied with the absence of war is, therefore, for Rousseau, a false peace as long as the holder of public power does not respect the freedom of each individual and their property.⁴² This is why the contract that establishes a republic must ensure that the sovereign body is detached from any particular individual while guaranteeing the protection of each person and their property. Rousseau thus prefers to entrust the fate of citizens to a moral and political community rather than to an individual, regardless of their competence or social rank, to guarantee that the people obey only themselves because, according to Rousseau, if the people promise to obey, they dissolve themselves by this act, they lose their status as a people; the moment there is a master there is no longer a sovereign, and from then on the body politic is destroyed. Rousseau seems rightly convinced that the lack of peace in a given society results not from the people's indiscipline but from leaders' tendency to usurp the popular will. Therefore, civil peace requires of citizens a civic and patriotic spirit that safeguards the integrity of the general will. First, against despotism, they must defend their liberty, preferring a free life to a miserable peace, namely, peace without justice.⁴³ For Rousseau, the defence of political liberty takes precedence over security: A citizen must arm himself with strength and constancy, and maintain this every day of his life in the depths of his heart.

Second, patriotism requires citizens to cultivate the “bond” that unites the people into a body. Rousseau insists on the importance of the affective element in a political body. The general will becomes mute when the social “knot” or “bond” is broken in the hearts of citizens; it remains vigorous as long as all consider themselves as one body, and that they have only one will.⁴⁴ This requires citizens to adopt a culture of transparency between private interests and the general interest because peace, unity, and equality are enemies of political subtleties. Rousseau thus bases the republic not only on laws, but also on virtue. Without virtue, in fact, the necessary conditions for true peace could not exist, because luxury and corruption soften citizens. By advocating enslaving them to one another, and all to public opinion, for Rousseau, therefore, true peace is the fruit of an inseparably politico-legal, moral, and emotional system: by this word of peace, he writes, one must understand not only the security that makes peace abroad, the morals that make peace at home, but also liberty without which there is no true peace.

IV. Conclusion

In examining the political philosophies of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, one finds both fundamental contrasts and points of convergence regarding the nature of the social contract, the source of legitimate authority, and the role of individual liberty within society. Hobbes, viewing human nature as inherently conflictual, argued that civil peace can be secured only when individuals relinquish their natural freedoms to an absolute sovereign whose authority stands above the collective will of the people. For

⁴¹ Dagger, R. (1981). Understanding the general will. *Western Political Quarterly*, 34(3), 359-371.

⁴² Pierson, C. (2013). Rousseau and the Paradoxes of Property. *European Journal of Political Theory*, 12(4), 409-424.

⁴³ Barnard, F. M. (1984). Patriotism and Citizenship in Rousseau: A Dual Theory of Public Willing?. *The Review of Politics*, 46(2), 244-265.

⁴⁴ Kawade, Y. (2025). Navigating Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Four Types of French Cosmopolitan Ideals in the Eighteenth Century. *History of European Ideas*, 1-20.

Hobbes, the state is established through a pact of authorisation, leading to a form of civic passivity in which public participation is limited to the initial act of submission. In sharp contrast, Locke envisioned government as a conditional trust, established to safeguard life, liberty, and property. Rather than surrendering rights, individuals in Locke's model coordinate and mutually limit their powers, retaining the ultimate authority to depose representatives who betray the public good. This view positions the people not as passive subjects, but as active participants and overseers of governance, with the right—even the duty—to resist or remove rulers who violate the social contract.

Rousseau, while sharing Locke's emphasis on liberty, diverged from both predecessors by conceiving the social contract not as a surrender to a sovereign or a delegation to representatives, but as the creation of a collective general will. For Rousseau, true civil peace is not simply the absence of conflict under centralized rule, as Hobbes contends, nor merely the orderly protection of property as in Locke's system. Instead, peace is achieved only when each citizen, while uniting with others, remains as free as before, obeying only laws that they have prescribed for themselves through the general will. Rousseau's conception transforms the people from a mere aggregation of individuals or subjects into a moral and collective body whose sovereignty cannot be alienated or represented. Thus, while Hobbes prioritizes order and security even at the cost of liberty, and Locke seeks a balance between public order and individual rights, Rousseau situates liberty, equality, and collective participation at the heart of the social order, defining true peace as inseparable from the active civic virtue and engagement of the citizenry.

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**THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS OF THE WORLD'S
LEADING COUNTRIES AND THEIR POLITICAL ROLE**

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ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of the electoral systems existing in leading countries worldwide (such as Norway, Thailand, Libya, and Mexico), focusing on their structure, legal, and institutional foundations. The study seeks to identify both the distinct and shared characteristics of these systems and to explore how these electoral processes influence the domestic and international political roles of the respective countries.

This research represents the first comprehensive and systematic comparative analysis of the electoral systems of Norway, Thailand, Libya, Mexico, and other prominent states. The paper examines the practical implications of different electoral frameworks with regard to political stability and citizen participation. While prior studies have predominantly concentrated on domestic political outcomes, the present work uniquely addresses the impact of electoral systems on a country's international reputation and its positioning within global politics.

In the contemporary era, the electoral process, as a fundamental pillar of democratic governance, holds critical significance not only for ensuring domestic political stability but also for the legitimacy and influence of states in the international arena. In this context, the electoral models of leading countries provide valuable case studies from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Recent shifts in the international relations landscape, including the rise of authoritarian tendencies and populist movements, have underscored the renewed importance of democratic processes-particularly free and fair elections. The quality of electoral mechanisms plays a pivotal role in maintaining political stability, ensuring representation of diverse political forces, and fostering public trust in governance. Consequently, the examination and analysis of the successful electoral practices of leading nations may offer instructive insights for other states. Furthermore, the electoral systems of these countries function not only as mechanisms of internal governance but also as integral components of their international prestige and soft power. These nations are frequently cited as exemplars in the promotion of democracy and the rule of law. This subject holds particular relevance for Azerbaijan, as the adaptation of electoral reforms and the strengthening of democratic institutions may benefit from the experiences and best practices of leading states.

Keywords: Electoral process, electoral system, governance, characteristic features, comparative politics, leading countries, electoral reforms.

**DÜNYANIN LİDER ÜLKELERİNİN SEÇİM SÜRECİNİN ÖZELLİKLERİ VE SİYASİ
ROLLERİ**

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, dünyadaki lider ülkelerde (Norveç, Tayland, Libya ve Meksika gibi) mevcut seçim sistemlerinin yapısal, hukuki ve kurumsal temellerine odaklanarak karşılaştırmalı bir analizini yapmaktır. Çalışma, bu sistemlerin hem farklı hem de ortak özelliklerini tespit etmeyi ve söz konusu seçim süreçlerinin ilgili ülkelerin iç ve uluslararası siyasi rollerini nasıl etkilediğini incelemeyi hedeflemektedir.

Bu araştırma; Norveç, Tayland, Libya, Meksika ve diğer öne çıkan devletlerin seçim sistemlerinin ilk kapsamlı ve sistematik karşılaştırmalı analizini sunmaktadır. Makalede, farklı seçim çerçevelerinin siyasi istikrar ve vatandaş katılımı açısından pratik sonuçları ele alınmaktadır. Önceki çalışmalar ağırlıklı olarak iç siyasi sonuçlara odaklanmışken, bu çalışma seçim sistemlerinin bir ülkenin uluslararası itibarı ve küresel siyasetteki konumu üzerindeki etkisini benzersiz bir şekilde ele almaktadır.

Günümüz çağında, demokratik yönetimin temel bir unsuru olan seçim süreci, yalnızca iç siyasi istikrarı sağlamak açısından değil, aynı zamanda devletlerin uluslararası arenadaki meşruiyeti ve nüfuzu açısından da kritik bir öneme sahiptir. Bu bağlamda, lider ülkelerin seçim modelleri hem teorik hem de pratik açıdan değerli vaka incelemeleri sunmaktadır. Otoriter eğilimlerin ve popülist hareketlerin yükselişi de dahil olmak üzere uluslararası ilişkiler alanındaki son gelişmeler, demokratik süreçlerin — özellikle özgür ve adil seçimlerin yenilenen önemini bir kez daha ortaya koymuştur. Seçim mekanizmalarının niteliği; siyasi istikrarın korunmasında, farklı siyasi güçlerin temsil edilmesinin sağlanmasında ve yönetime olan kamu güveninin artırılmasında kilit bir rol oynamaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, lider ülkelerin başarılı seçim uygulamalarının incelenmesi ve analizi, diğer devletler için yol gösterici nitelikte olabilir. Ayrıca, bu ülkelerin seçim sistemleri yalnızca dahili bir yönetim mekanizması olarak değil, aynı zamanda uluslararası prestijlerinin ve yumuşak güçlerinin (soft power) ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak işlev görmektedir. Bu ülkeler, demokrasi ve hukukun üstünlüğünün teşvik edilmesinde sıklıkla örnek gösterilmektedir. Seçim reformlarının uyarlanması ve demokratik kurumların güçlendirilmesi lider devletlerin deneyimlerinden ve en iyi uygulamalarından faydalanabileceği için bu konu Azerbaycan için de özel bir önem taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Seçim süreci, seçim sistemi, yönetim, karakteristik özellikler, karşılaştırmalı siyaset, lider ülkeler, seçim reformları.

Introduction

The main purpose of this article is to examine the specific features of the electoral process in a number of world countries. This analysis sheds light on the political role of the electoral process in general. The main purpose of the article is to analyze the advantages of the electoral process and discuss their main essence.

The study is based on a comprehensive study of the works of local and foreign authors, legal and normative documents on the mechanism of the electoral process in countries around the world, and scientific research in this field. These sources provide detailed information about the electoral system, its essence and political role. This study will help to better analyze the specific features of the electoral process and their political role not only in our country, but also in general, by examining its current state and future prospects.

Elections are a cornerstone of modern democracy, serving as the primary mechanism through which citizens express their political will and hold leaders accountable. Across the globe, leading countries—such as the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Japan, and others—have developed distinct electoral systems shaped by their unique historical, cultural, and constitutional contexts. These systems not only determine how leaders are chosen but also influence the nature of governance, political stability, and public trust in institutions.

While these nations uphold democratic values such as regular, free, and fair elections, the specific features of their electoral processes—ranging from voting methods to the structure of political competition—vary considerably. This diversity reflects differing approaches to balancing representation, efficiency, and accountability. Moreover, the outcomes of these electoral processes play a significant role in shaping both domestic policies and international relations, reinforcing the political influence of these countries on the global stage. This report examines the key characteristics of the electoral systems in some of the world's most influential democracies and explores how these systems impact their political

dynamics and global roles.

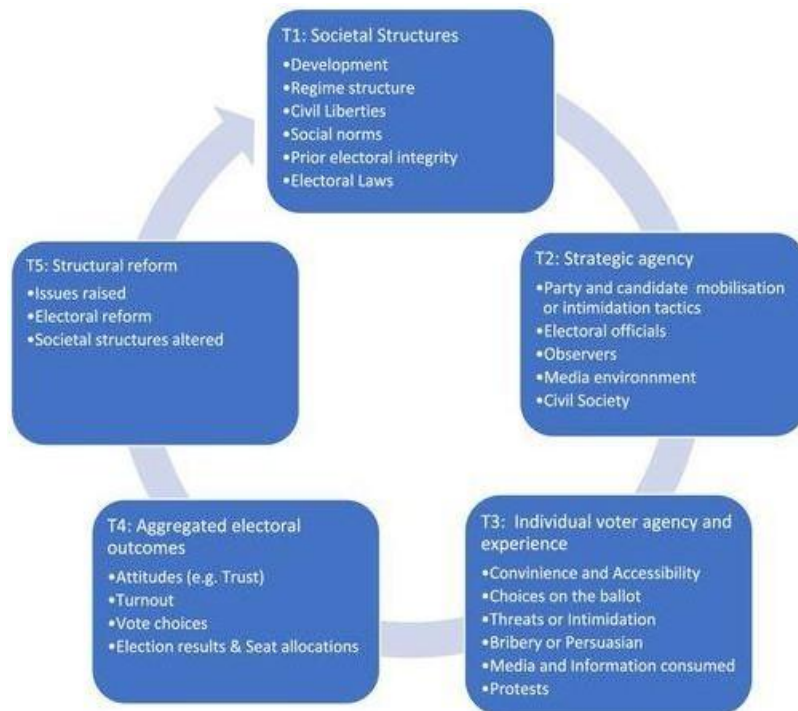


Figure 1.

In the first stage (T1) of the voter experience cycle, there is structural conditioning. There is an existing societal context which has the capability of shaping individuals through emergence. Citizens may have had some prior influence over this through earlier iterations of the cycle (e.g., through voting in earlier elections). However, at the start of the voter experience cycle these structural influences are conceived as existing analytically prior to the forthcoming voter experience. In the context developed at T1, a variety of actors undertake strategic actions to influence the electoral environment at T2. At this stage, we therefore see the first moment of social interaction between structure and agency. Key actors include incumbents, candidates and parties, electoral officials plus a wider range of stakeholders.

Their strategic activities become apparent to the voter in the voter experience, at moment T3. This experience involves much more than a rational calculation about whether to vote or not. It may involve feelings of fear, intimidation, perceived or actual racism, anger, rejoice or safety. Their actions will involve (not) casting a vote for a specific party or candidate – but also sharing their views and experience with others. All of these activities have already been shaped by societal structures and strategic agency at T1 and T2. They will therefore be shaped by logics of both calculus and culture. However, we emphasise that voters will not all experience this election environment in the same way. The strategic and structural characterises of the context will affect individuals differently. Depending on a host of past individual and group experiences, each voter may interpret the competitive environment, fairness of the competition and other facets of electoral integrity differently.

There is a second moment of social interaction at moment T3 wherein the voter experiences the various stimuli of electoral activities. They exercise reflexive agency by interpreting the information gathered and making decisions to (not) act. These experiences are aggregated at moment T4.

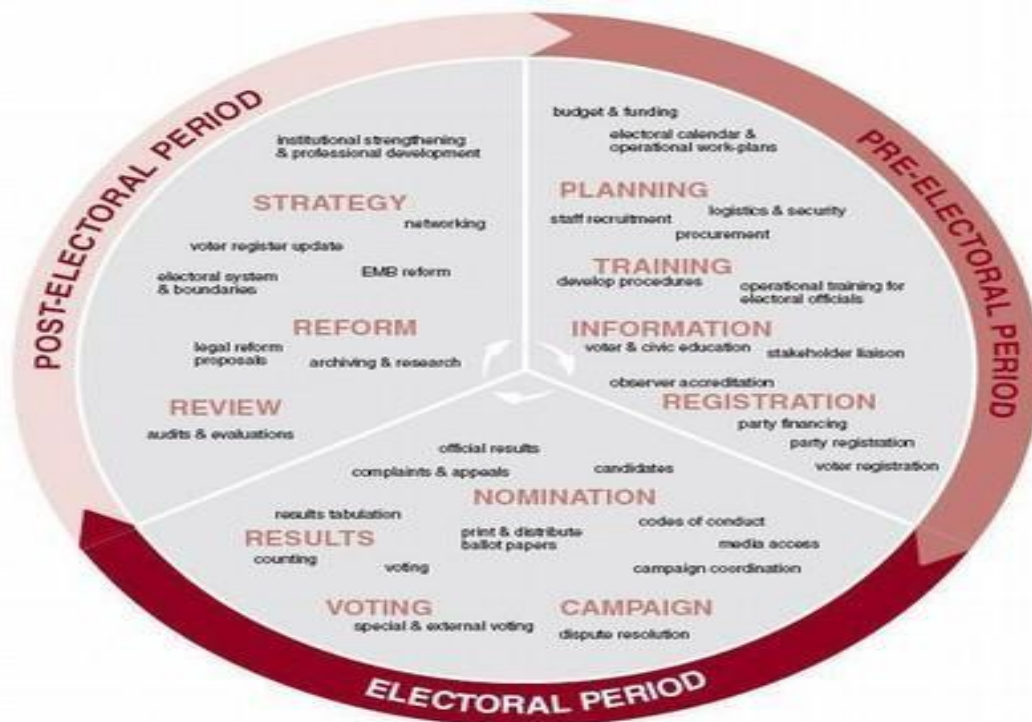


Figure 2.

There are many phases to the electoral process: in an election, for example, these include the design and drafting of legislation, the recruitment and training of electoral staff, electoral planning, voter registration, the registration of political parties, the nomination of parties and candidates, the electoral campaign, polling, counting, the tabulation of results, the declaration of results, the resolution of electoral disputes, reporting, auditing and archiving. After the end of one electoral process, it is desirable for work on the next to begin: the whole process can be described as the electoral cycle.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Within the framework of the literature review, the existing research on the theoretical foundations and practical application of electoral systems in the leading countries of the world is reviewed. The assessment of electoral systems in terms of political stability, legitimacy and participation is the main object of the literature.

The article uses the scientific works “Political systems of Azerbaijan and foreign countries” compiled by A.M. Hasanov and A.I. Valiyev, “Modern political systems of the countries of the world”, “Election law” compiled by A. Mustafazadeh, Z. Aslanov, “Modern international relations and foreign policy of Azerbaijan” compiled by A.M. Hasanov, “Constitutional law” compiled by Z.A. Asgarov and other fundamental scientific works, and makes suggestions and recommendations on the subject.

Constitutional system of government

In a constitutional system of government, the monarch forms and leads the executive branch. The interests of society are represented by an elected parliament, which completely removes the legislative branch from the monarch's subordination and creates a certain balance of interests in the state. This type of government existed in some European states in the 17th-19th centuries. With the development of capitalism, the most widespread monarchical regime in Europe and the world is the Parliamentary Monarchy. Currently, the Parliamentary Monarchy structure prevails in the leading countries of Europe, such as Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, etc. The main feature characterizing a

parliamentary monarchy is the sufficient limitation of the monarch's power. In this regime, the legislative branch belongs to an elected body - Parliament. The party or parties that won the parliamentary elections form the government and lead it. The leader of the party that received the most votes also heads the country (Həsənov, Ə. M., & Vəliyev, A. İ., 2013, s.23). Researchers A. Mustafazade and Z. Aslanov note that the main structural elements of the electoral process are the stages of the electoral process. That is, the electoral process is implemented from the set of stages of the electoral process. As for the structural elements of the electoral stage itself, electoral actions and electoral procedures are implemented. That is, the stage of the electoral process is implemented from the set of electoral actions and electoral procedures. These actions and procedures are carried out by a special circle of subjects of the electoral process in a sequential manner and within the time limits established by the electoral legislation. Naturally, the implementation of the above-mentioned actions and procedures in terms of their functional purpose is aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of the elections, namely the election of deputies or elected officials. The election procedure is a specific procedure for the implementation of procedural actions stipulated by the election legislation, as well as the adoption of decisions aimed at ensuring the rights of participants in the election process at a certain stage of the election process by the relevant election commissions. Electoral movements are actions aimed at the step-by-step implementation of the rights and powers of the subjects of the electoral process within the framework of a specific electoral procedure (Mustafazadə & Aslanov, 2022, s.22).

The electoral process of the world's leading countries-such as the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Japan, and others-reflects a combination of democratic values, institutional frameworks, and historical developments. Below is a comparative overview of the characteristics of electoral processes in these countries and their political roles both domestically and globally.

Electoral system in Azerbaijan

As we know, the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan consists of 125 deputies. Let us note that in world practice, the most widespread method of organizing a parliament and the main sign of its representative body are national elections. In this regard, deputies of the Milli Majlis are elected to the parliament by a majoritarian electoral system, by free, personal and secret ballot on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage. The term of office of deputies is limited by the term of office of the convocation of the Milli Majlis. According to the Constitution, the term of office of each convocation of the Milli Majlis is 5 years. Every citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan who is not less than 25 years old may be elected as a deputy of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan in accordance with the procedure established by law. According to the legislation, persons with dual citizenship and obligations to other states, serving in the executive or judicial systems, religious figures, citizens whose incapacity has been confirmed by a court, convicted of serious crimes, and serving sentences in places of deprivation of liberty by a court verdict that has entered into permanent force cannot be elected as deputies of the Milli Majlis. The results of the elections to the Milli Majlis are verified and approved by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan in accordance with the procedure established by law. The powers of the deputies expire on the first day of the new convocation of the parliament. The Milli Majlis is considered authorized when the powers of 83 deputies are approved. The Milli Majlis convenes for two regular spring and autumn sessions every year. Extraordinary sessions of the Milli Majlis are convened by the Chairman of the Parliament upon the request of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan or 42 deputies of the Milli Majlis. According to Article 89 of the Constitution, a deputy of the Milli Majlis is deprived of his mandate if it is discovered that the votes were not counted correctly during the elections, if he renounces the citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan or accepts the citizenship of another state, if he commits a crime and there is a legally effective court verdict, if he holds a position in state bodies, if he is a religious figure, if he is engaged in entrepreneurial, commercial and other paid activities (except for scientific, pedagogical and creative activities) and if he himself refuses. Deputies of the Milli Majlis lose their powers if they cannot permanently exercise their powers and in other cases stipulated by law (Həsənov, & Vəliyev, 2013, s. 62-63)

Foreign country experience - Norway

The Norwegian state system is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government. The national holiday, Constitution Day (1814), is celebrated on May 17. The constitution of the Kingdom of Norway has been in force since that day with numerous amendments.

Here, the legislative power is unicameral, with 169 seats in the Parliament (Storting), where deputies are elected for a 4-year term by universal, equal, direct and secret ballot, using a proportional electoral system. The Storting is responsible for publishing laws, adopting the annual state budget, exercising control over the activities of the Government, and other important issues. Norway, as one of the most developed and democratic countries in the world, pays special attention to transparency and fairness in the electoral system. The electoral process in Norway is based on a legal and organizational framework that ensures the holding of independent and free elections. Elections in this country have many features to ensure the participation of citizens with universal suffrage. Elections in Norway are based on the proportional representation system, which is the most commonly used system. In this system, parties and voters are represented according to the number of seats to be represented and the size of the population of the polling stations. This allows for representation of minorities and small parties in parliament. The electoral system encourages the existence of a political multi-party system in the country and the development of political opposition.

Norway is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government, known for its strong democratic institutions and high levels of political transparency. The electoral process in Norway is based on universal suffrage, meaning all citizens aged 18 and over have the right to vote. Elections are held regularly and are conducted freely and fairly, overseen by an independent electoral administration to ensure democratic standards are maintained.

The Storting, Norway's unicameral national parliament, is the primary legislative body, consisting of 169 members who are elected every four years. Norway uses a proportional representation system based on multi-member constituencies corresponding to the country's 19 counties. Voters cast their ballots for political parties rather than individual candidates. The number of seats a party wins in each constituency is proportional to the number of votes it receives, allowing for a broad spectrum of political views to be represented in parliament.

A distinctive feature of Norway's electoral system is the use of leveling seats (or adjustment seats), which are allocated to ensure that the overall distribution of seats in parliament reflects the national vote as closely as possible. To qualify for leveling seats, a party must receive at least 4% of the national vote, which helps smaller parties gain representation while maintaining political stability.

Local democracy is also strong in Norway. In addition to parliamentary elections, municipal and county elections are held every four years, but staggered two years apart from national elections. This allows citizens to have a direct say in both national and local governance.

Elections in Norway are known for high voter turnout, strong public trust in the process, and minimal corruption. The electoral process plays a key political role in ensuring representative governance, encouraging coalition-building, and fostering political dialogue across party lines. The proportional system also promotes inclusivity by enabling a wide range of political parties to participate in decision-making, making Norway a model of stable and effective democratic governance.

Thailand

During historical research, we have established that the first states in Thailand emerged in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The first major state dominated by Thais (Sukhothai) emerged in the late 12th - early 13th centuries, and after the middle of the 13th century, the Siamese state was formed in Thailand. It is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government. Constitution Day (1932), which is a national holiday, is celebrated on December 10. The country's Constitution has been in force since

November 2007. Although Thailand is a democratic country located in Southeast Asia and has a long history, its political life and electoral process have a number of special features. The electoral process in Thailand, in accordance with the country's legal and political framework, has been affected by military interventions, political instability and the influence of the monarchy from time to time. Nevertheless, the electoral process maintains a certain level of freedom and transparency. Elections in Thailand are conducted by an independent Election Commission. The Election Commission is responsible for ensuring that elections are held fairly and transparently. The Commission also monitors the behavior of political parties and individuals participating in the elections and prevents violations. In addition, serious measures are taken against electoral inequality and electoral fraud during elections.

Thailand operates as a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy. Its legislative branch, known as the National Assembly, consists of two chambers: the House of Representatives and the Senate. The House of Representatives has 500 members, with 400 elected through a first-past-the-post system in single-member constituencies and 100 elected via a party-list proportional representation system. Members serve four-year terms unless the House is dissolved earlier. In contrast, the Senate is composed of 250 members who are not elected by the public but are instead appointed by a military-selected committee. Senators serve five-year terms and hold significant power, particularly in the selection of the Prime Minister—a role that underscores the military's enduring influence in Thai politics.

Thailand uses a mixed-member electoral system in which voters cast two ballots: one for an individual constituency candidate and another for a political party. The Election Commission of Thailand (ECT), an independent body, oversees the organization and integrity of elections, ensuring compliance with electoral laws. Despite formal democratic structures, the political environment in Thailand is marked by ongoing tension between democratic movements and military or royalist influence. The country has experienced numerous military coups, and its 2017 Constitution, drafted under military rule, institutionalized the Senate's power in government formation, thereby weakening the influence of elected representatives.

Elections in Thailand play a complex political role. On one hand, they provide a platform for public expression and engagement, particularly among younger generations pushing for reform and greater democratic freedoms. On the other hand, institutional constraints—such as the appointed Senate and limitations on opposition movements—undermine the democratic process. Recent elections have highlighted the growing demand for change, especially through the rise of reformist parties like Move Forward, signaling a shift in public sentiment. Nevertheless, Thailand's electoral system continues to reflect the broader struggle between popular democratic aspirations and entrenched authoritarian control.

Liviya

In ancient times, Libya was under the rule of the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Romans and Byzantines, but was occupied by Arab tribes in the 7th century. In the 16th-early 20th centuries, the country became part of the Ottoman Empire, was considered a colony of Italy from 1911, and was occupied by England and France from 1943. The Libyan National Congress, as the main structural element of the state, exercises legislative power in the country, and is at the forefront of political governance in modern Libya and has exclusive rights during the current transitional period. Thus, first of all, the Libyan National Congress is authorized to approve the composition of the Cabinet, to which it bears political and collective responsibility, and to express no confidence in it if necessary. 80 deputies to the 200-seat Parliament (Libyan National Congress) are elected from the determined constituencies through a proportional representation system with party lists, and the other 120 members are elected as independent candidates.

Libya has been gradually establishing an electoral system, aiming for democratic development since 2011. However, the multi-party system in the country has not yet been fully consolidated, and electoral laws have been amended several times. The Libyan electoral system is mainly based on proportional representation and a multi-party system, but this causes serious difficulties in holding elections. The

main organization for Libyan elections is the Electoral Commission. The Commission aims to ensure the holding of elections and create an independent, transparent electoral process. However, the political and security situation in the country weakens the activities of this organization and creates various obstacles to holding elections.

The Libyan parliamentary elections, according to Law No. 2 of 2021, are designed to elect 200 members of the House of Representatives using a mixed electoral system. Voters cast their ballots for individual candidates rather than party lists, and a portion of seats (16%) is reserved for women to promote gender representation. While a presidential election law also exists, it has faced delays and controversy due to disagreements over who can run-particularly figures affiliated with the military or former regimes. Municipal elections, however, continue to be held more regularly, using a list-based or independent candidate system, with 59 municipalities participating in the January 2025 round of voting.

The High National Elections Commission (HNEC) is the official body responsible for organizing and supervising elections, with support from the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). However, the presence of competing electoral authorities, ongoing violence, and lack of a national consensus continue to hinder progress. Elections in Libya are crucial for restoring legitimacy to state institutions, resolving the political deadlock, and moving toward national reconciliation. Despite significant challenges, including security risks and institutional fragmentation, elections are viewed by both Libyans and the international community as essential steps toward long-term peace and democratic governance.

Mexico

In the present territory of Mexico, highly developed Indian tribes (Aztecs, Mayas, Toltecs, Olmecs, etc.) settled in ancient times. Before the discovery of America by the Spaniards, the Mayan and Aztec states existed on the lands of Mexico. After the first arrival of the Spaniards to these lands in 1518, Mexico became a colony of Spain from the 16th to the beginning of the 19th century and only gained state independence in 1821. According to the Constitution, the boundaries of the powers of the executive and legislative branches of government in Mexico are clearly defined. In this regard, the supreme legislative body - the National Congress - carries out its activities completely independently.

Mexico, as a democratic state in the Latin American region, has a history of about 200 years with its electoral process and legal framework. The electoral process in this country is of great importance for the development of democracy, ensuring political pluralism and citizen participation. Mexico's electoral system includes both parliamentary and presidential elections, but the specifics of this process are influenced by various political, social, and legal factors.

Researchers also note some characteristic features of the electoral system. In their opinion, unlike other areas of research, international relations are characterized by anarchism, which is very difficult to regulate, that is, the absence of a universally accepted regulatory higher authority and a mechanism for mandatory enforcement of decisions. Therefore, international relations are sometimes characterized as a “pluralism of sovereignty”, a risky area of decision-making where each participant makes decisions according to his own thinking, strength and resources. They also include several important aspects among the characteristic features of international relations: - the increasing influence of behavioral and legal norms formed over the centuries as a result of the state, structure and configurations of international relations on the institutionalization of interstate relations and the behavior of its participants; - having contradictory characteristics (the simultaneous observation of processes such as completeness and fragmentation, historical succession and randomness, cooperation and conflict, integration and centrifugal tendencies, etc.) (Həsənov, 2005, s.16).

The importance of elections for society is quite large. Here we are talking about the interests of the whole society, not specific individuals. Therefore, the electoral system is an institution of general legal spheres. Since the organization and implementation of power, the most basic relations between it and society, individuals and various types of collectives are regulated by constitutional law, this institution

is also regulated by constitutional law. Any legal issue to one degree or another touches on the problems of normativity (Əsgərov, 2011, s.310).

There are several approaches to the concept and content of the electoral process in legal literature. Thus, some authors (S.D. Knyazev, V.I. Lysenko) define the electoral process as a set of electoral stages, electoral actions and electoral procedures. According to this approach, the electoral process reflects the stages established by law, and the stages, in turn, reflect electoral actions and electoral procedures. Other authors (Y.N. Khrustalov, D.B. Katkov) characterize the electoral process as a special type of activity of the participants of this process, accompanied by stages. Within this approach, the electoral process is defined as the activity of the participants of this process, which is regulated by normative legal acts and other social norms, consists of interconnected and logically sequential stages, is based on the democratic principles of electoral law and is aimed at giving legitimacy to elections. The third group of authors (A.V. Ivanchenko, R.T. Biktagirov) consider the electoral process simply as a form of implementation of citizens' active and passive electoral rights. According to the approach advanced by another group of authors (S.D. Knyazev et al.), the electoral process is a system of organizationally interconnected and sequentially realized relations related to the organization and conduct of elections (Mustafazadə & Aslanov, 2022, s.20)

In the experience of foreign countries, one can find certain approaches to collective bodies organizing elections: a) government approach; b) judicial approach;

c) multi-party approach; d) expert approach. Government approach. In a number of countries (for example, in Germany, Italy), the internal affairs bodies of the country are responsible for holding elections. Officials responsible for organizing the work of polling stations are appointed from among civil servants. This approach has many advantages, provided that civil servants act as independent professionals. If their independence is in question, then problems may arise. Judicial approach. In Pakistan, the Central Election Commission consists of three judges. They are appointed by the President from among the judges of the country and other courts. In Romania, five members of the Supreme Court are selected by lot to serve on the Central Election Commission. The success of this approach also depends on the independence of the judiciary. Multi-party approach. This approach assumes that all interested political parties appoint their representatives to the Central Election Commission. There are a number of problems with this model. One of them is that during periods of transition, there are a large number of parties. If all parties are given the right to appoint their own representative to the commission, then the numerical composition of the commission may become excessively large. This may lead to a decrease in the efficiency of its work, as well as the inclusion of people in the commission who do not have sufficient experience in organizing its work. Expert approach. This approach involves the appointment of experts with relevant experience and recognized independence, with the consent of all political parties (Veshnyakov, 200, s. 152-153).

Mexico's electoral process is one of the most institutionalized and regulated in Latin America, reflecting its democratic evolution and efforts to ensure fair competition. With independent electoral authorities and an active civil society, Mexico has become a reference point for democratic development in the region. Politically, it serves as a bridge between North and South America, and its elections have important implications not only for domestic governance but also for international relations, particularly in trade, migration, and regional diplomacy.

DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis of the electoral systems and processes across the studied nations demonstrates that the concept of a "leading country" or "established democratic model" in contemporary political science is determined not merely by voting procedures, but by institutional stability, democratic legitimacy, and the dual political roles—both domestic and international—that elections perform. The findings indicate that the electoral process has transcended its traditional role as a internal power-allocation mechanism, evolving into a critical determinant of a nation's soft power, international prestige,

and geopolitical positioning.

1. The Impact of Proportional vs. Mixed Systems on Political Stability and Inclusivity.

The examination of Norway illustrates how a proportional representation system—enhanced by leveling (adjustment) seats and universal transparency—effectively reflects the full political spectrum and minority interests within the national parliament (*Storting*). This structural framework fosters political dialogue, encourages coalition-building, and consolidates high public trust in state institutions. Conversely, the cases of Thailand and Libya demonstrate that even where proportional or mixed electoral frameworks exist on paper, persistent external variables—such as military interventions and appointed upper houses (as seen in Thailand's 2017 Constitution) or severe security deficits and institutional fragmentation (as observed with Libya's HNEC)—can compromise the legitimacy and stabilizing function of the electoral process.

2. Institutional Frameworks and Electoral Management Bodies

Comparing the different institutional models for organizing elections—governmental, judicial, multi-party, and expert-based—reveals that the ultimate integrity of an electoral process depends heavily on the structural independence of the electoral management body. As highlighted in the classification by A. A. Veshnyakov, non-partisan, highly institutionalized bodies (such as Mexico's independent electoral authorities) play a pivotal role in restoring public confidence and guaranteeing fair competition, particularly in nations undergoing political transitions or facing authoritarian pressures.

3. Electoral Cycles, Reform Dynamics, and Global Soft Power

As conceptualized in the voter experience and electoral cycle frameworks (Figures 1 and 2), individual voter agency at stage T3 and the aggregation of electoral outcomes at T4 continuously feed into structural reforms (T5), thereby conditioning the societal context (T1) for subsequent electoral iterations. While consolidated democracies like Norway continuously refine this cycle to enhance civic engagement, post-conflict contexts like Libya struggle with cycle interruptions due to a lack of legal and constitutional consensus.

In the context of the Republic of Azerbaijan, where the 125-seat Milli Majlis is elected via a majoritarian system with constitutional oversight, the primary objective remains ensuring internal legal and political stability. However, amid global shifts marked by populist movements and democratic backsliding, adapting best practices—such as transparency mechanisms, proportional adjustment techniques, and comprehensive electoral cycle management from leading states—presents significant opportunities for strengthening domestic democratic institutions and enhancing the country's international standing.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of electoral processes in the world's leading states highlights the core principles and dynamic nature of modern democratic systems. Ultimately, this study confirms that there is no singular, universal electoral formula; every system is a product of a state's unique historical, cultural, and constitutional evolution. For instance, while the United States utilizes the Electoral College system for presidential elections, France employs direct multi-round voting. Despite these structural variations, universal benchmarks—namely integrity, transparency, inclusivity, and the accurate reflection of popular will—remain indispensable for preventing electoral distortion and protecting democratic representation.

Beyond serving as mechanisms for choosing leaders and allocating domestic power, electoral processes facilitate ideological engagement, foster citizen participation, and balance the interests of diverse political forces. Crucially, modern elections extend their impact far beyond domestic politics. As key indicators of a state's democratic health, the quality and transparency of electoral systems directly shape a nation's internal political cohesion, democratic reputation, diplomatic influence, and broader political role on the global stage.

Furthermore, the electoral outcomes of major political and economic powers carry significant global implications, directly influencing international relations, global markets, climate policies, and security

alliances. The manner in which these states manage their elections-balancing stability with democratic freedoms-serves both as a model and an instructive reference for emerging democracies worldwide. In essence, the electoral systems of leading nations function not only as foundational pillars of internal governance and political culture, but also as vital instruments of soft power and strategic influence within the international arena.

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CYBERSECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF CURRENT CHALLENGES AND INCREASING UNCERTAINTY

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Abstract

Cyber risks are now a serious concern for all organisations, public and private, due to the rise in the number and severity of assaults, the appearance of numerous malevolent actors, and the increasing engagement of company boards of directors. The stakes have been increasing since the pandemic began. Attackers can take advantage of the many vulnerabilities that have been generated by rapid but unchecked digitalisation. However, other advancements are transforming the face of cybersecurity. The geopolitical aspect of cybersecurity is more important than ever. State-sponsored actors are anticipated to worsen the spread of cyberthreats as worries about the extremely sophisticated nature of many attacks grow. In this context, cyber professionals should also develop their expertise and adopt new approaches, whilst maintaining their methodological and technical knowledge, in order to support organisations in securing sensitive activities. In particular, this will require the ability to adopt automation-based services in order, on the one hand, to speed up response times and increase the scope of processing and, on the other hand, to devote more staff time to in-depth cyber analysis of systems and the interpretation of the data collected. This also holds true for comprehending industrial systems and the problems that surround them. Finally, compliance with data protection regulations has encouraged the development of cyber skills relating to regulatory requirements and with the implementation of new rules, these abilities are probably going to keep improving.

Keywords: Cyber risks- Cybersecurity- Organisation- Expert- Regulation

Introduction

Digital transformation now plays a central role in the operations of organisations, businesses and institutions. However, this growing reliance on digital technologies is accompanied by a proliferation of cybersecurity risks. Consequently, the evolving nature of these risks means that stakeholders must regularly adapt. Indeed, the digital transformation of society has broadened the threat landscape and is creating new challenges that require tailored and innovative responses. The number of cyber-attacks continues to rise, with increasingly sophisticated attacks originating from a wide range of sources, both nationally and internationally.

According to the World Economic Forum, nearly 72 per cent of organisations report having seen an increase in their cyber risks over the past twelve months (World Economic Forum, 2025). Meanwhile, nearly 63 percent regard the growing complexity of the threat landscape as their main obstacle to cyber resilience (World Economic Forum, 2025). Geopolitical tensions are also playing an increasingly significant role, with nearly 60 percent of organisations reporting that they have influenced their cybersecurity strategy. At the same time, the rise of artificial intelligence is further complicating the threat: 47 percent of organisations regard the advances made by adversaries using generative AI as a major concern (World Economic Forum, 2025). This trend is accompanied by a skills shortage, with two in three organisations reporting a moderate to critical shortage of cybersecurity skills. Against this backdrop, cybersecurity is evolving in an environment characterised by geopolitical uncertainty, rapid technological change, increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks and growing digital dependencies.

The term ‘cybersecurity’ derives from ‘cyber’, which comes from ‘cybernetics’, a word itself derived from the Greek *kubernêtikê* and *kubernân*, meaning ‘to govern’ (Larousse, n.d.). Cybernetics is associated with Norbert Wiener, who, in a work dating from 1948, used the term to refer to the ‘science concerned with the study of control and communication processes in living beings, machines, and sociological and economic systems’ (Wiener, 1948). Subsequently, the use of the prefix ‘cyber’ has shifted to apply to the IT environment and to activities made possible by the development of new technologies. Thus, we speak of cyberspace, cybercrime, cyberattacks, cyberbullying and cybersecurity.

Cybersecurity is understood as the state in which the security of networks and information systems is ensured. It is defined as ‘the ability of networks and information systems to resist, at a given level of confidence, actions that compromise the availability, authenticity, integrity or confidentiality of data stored, transmitted or being processed, and of the related services that these networks and information systems provide or make available’ (Directive (EU) 2016/1148, 2016).

According to the definition of the concept of cybersecurity, the measures taken must enable these networks and information systems to ensure the availability, authenticity, integrity and confidentiality of resources. In addition to this, those wishing to ensure a high level of security for their networks and information systems must seek to implement further functions. Among these, accountability makes it possible to identify the individual responsible for an action. It is linked to non-repudiation, which prevents anyone from denying that an action has been carried out. These functions have as their corollary the possibility of holding the offending user liable. Furthermore, traceability – which involves recording and thus being able to analyse the actions taken – can prove vital for reconstructing and understanding a situation such as a system breach and, consequently, for improving the security of the system as a whole.

It must be acknowledged that cybersecurity involves taking measures to ensure the protection of resources and activities related to the digital environment, primarily cyberspace. However, the evolution of cyber threats is a cause for concern, as organisations must contend with an environment characterised by growing uncertainty. It is therefore easy to see why particular attention must be paid to the security of information systems used by businesses, public authorities or any entity that operates such a system (Eynard, 2021).

Cyber threats are evolving rapidly and involve an increasingly diverse range of actors, which reduces the time available to identify, prevent and respond to attacks. At the same time, the adoption of new technologies can be both a source of efficiency and an additional factor contributing to vulnerability. In light of this situation, understanding and anticipating threats, developing skills, cooperation between the various stakeholders and adapting legal frameworks appear to be essential elements of an effective cybersecurity strategy.

I. Cybersecurity in the face of evolving cyberattacks.

I.1. The acceleration and diversification of cyberattacks.

Cyberattacks pose a significant and growing threat to businesses, government institutions and individuals around the world. Such attacks have been part of the cybersecurity and technology landscape since 1989. However, they have increased in number, scale and cost in recent years, and even the best-protected organisations remain vulnerable to attackers who are becoming ever faster and more industrialised (Peliks & Ayadi, 2024).

One of the most striking figures mentioned during the discussion relates to the dramatic acceleration in the pace of attacks. The Global Incident Response Report 2026 shows that some attacks are now able to exfiltrate data in as little as 72 minutes (Palo Alto Networks Unit 42, 2026).

This acceleration can be attributed to the professionalisation and industrialisation of attacks, with complete value chains and ‘as-a-service’ offerings, as well as the hybridisation of techniques and the exploitation of new vulnerabilities – including those linked to quantum computing – and offensive

automation enabled by AI. In practical terms, this means that a human analyst who takes an hour to identify an alert would already be too late: the data would have been exfiltrated before they had even opened their dashboard. It is precisely for this reason that automated detection is no longer a luxury, but an operational necessity. For businesses, this completely changes the approach to defence: it is no longer enough simply to prevent attacks; organisations must now be able to detect and respond almost instantly.

Time is a luxury that organisations can no longer afford. In the past, organisations would ask cyber security experts to assess their infrastructure and provide advice on the necessary corrective measures. Afterwards, it might take varying amounts of time to make decisions and implement action plans. Today, the assessment and remediation of vulnerabilities must take place simultaneously. There is simply no time to waste when it comes to tackling vulnerabilities.

It is no longer enough to limit cyber security monitoring to an organisation's internal boundaries. In a threat landscape where attackers are becoming ever faster and more agile, cyber threat intelligence is invaluable. The more an organisation is aware of emerging dangers and new types of threats, the better equipped it is to prepare for them.

Cyber Threat Intelligence has become a strategic asset for organisations, as it enables them to move from reactive security to an informed and proactive defence. Cyber threat intelligence provides the context needed to understand who might be targeting the organisation, what tactics are being used, why the organisation might be at risk, and what measures need to be taken to mitigate those risks.

Cyber threat intelligence involves collecting, analysing and utilising information on current and emerging cyber threats. It transforms raw data into actionable insights that help organisations understand their threat landscape and take concrete steps to strengthen their cyber resilience.

It is against this backdrop that it becomes necessary to establish, within the organisation or through outsourcing, centres for assessing external cyber threats, in line with the organisation's exposure. This approach must, in particular, take into account the growing use of new technologies, which, whilst enhancing organisations' capabilities and performance, can also increase their exposure and create new vulnerabilities.

I.2. New technologies and new vulnerabilities.

Cybercriminals now use tools powered by AI that are capable of operating 24 hours a day, non-stop.

Technological innovations, particularly artificial intelligence, are transforming both defensive and offensive tools, whilst new vulnerabilities are emerging, highlighting the need to rethink traditional approaches to digital security. New technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, also represent a key driver for strengthening cybersecurity. They enable the automation of system monitoring, the rapid analysis of large volumes of data, the detection of abnormal behaviour and the faster identification of signs of a cyberattack. Integrating these technologies into security systems thus enables organisations to improve their ability to detect, respond to and anticipate threats, complementing traditional cybersecurity mechanisms.

Whilst businesses are adopting AI on a massive scale to optimise their performance, they are exposing themselves to increased risks, particularly through the proliferation of machine identities and the exploitation of vulnerabilities by malicious actors. This situation raises complex challenges, particularly in the face of critical events such as the US presidential elections, which have brought cyber threats into sharp focus (Roques-Bonnet, 2024).

In cybersecurity, generative AI represents a major breakthrough. Whilst human expertise remains central, the skills gap in this field could be partly bridged by this technology. It enables the automation of repetitive tasks, freeing up experts to focus on strategic activities that address ever more complex threats. For example, in security operations centres, generative AI transforms time-consuming and labour-intensive threat triage tasks into tasks that take just a few minutes, thereby giving teams more time for higher-value-added work.

Furthermore, unlike traditional AI systems, generative AI offers adaptive learning speeds, contextual understanding and the ability to process multimodal data, thereby significantly enhancing security. It is proving to be a key element in the fight against cybercrime and constitutes a strategic pillar for anticipating and countering cyber threats.

Nevertheless, traditional methods of compromise – such as phishing, spear-phishing and identity theft – when enhanced by AI, increase the risks faced by developers and other high-risk targets such as cloud architects and IT teams. This highlights the urgent need for organisations to rethink the identity security of their staff in order to minimise the potential impact of such compromises.

Previously less visible to the general public, it now seems certain that cyberattacks are one of the weapons governments use against their enemies. Since the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, cyberattacks have become a tool used alongside military operations. In particular, groups have targeted government institutions, critical infrastructure and businesses in order to disrupt their activities and communication capabilities. This example shows that cyberspace can be used by a state as a weapon against a country regarded as an enemy, in addition to traditional military means.

Against a backdrop of economic warfare, the compromise of sensitive data through cyber-attacks has become yet another tool in the espionage arsenal that certain governments may deploy against public organisations and industrial groups. In 2025, the ‘Salt Typhoon’ incident illustrated the scale of the cyber-attacks attributed to actors linked to the Chinese state. This cyber-espionage campaign targeted telecommunications networks in over 80 countries and at least 600 organisations, with the aim, in particular, of gaining access to communications and sensitive information (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI] et al., 2025). Several Western cybersecurity agencies regarded this operation as a major threat to national security. Paralysing entire sectors of a country’s activity (such as the food or energy supply chain, hospital services, air traffic or motorway control, etc.) could be the objective of large-scale cyberattacks as part of a strategy of total war.

II. Strengthening cybersecurity in the face of new challenges.

II.1. Human and organisational challenges in cybersecurity.

In this new world, given the shortage of personnel with the right cybersecurity expertise and the challenges organisations face in retaining such staff, the responsibility for risk is shifting. Organisations now need strong partners who will actively support them or accept responsibility for their cyber risks. These are deeper and more meaningful relationships of trust, based on ongoing dialogue, rather than simply the provision of technical products or services.

Furthermore, no single cyber security professional can provide all the necessary support on their own. This is why experts integrate or develop technologies into their services, offering clients access to best-in-class solutions from partnerships with third-party suppliers. To illustrate this, car manufacturers rely on a range of original equipment manufacturers, and drivers trust them to select the right components. Similarly, cybersecurity professionals must establish a supply chain of product and service providers offering the solutions that organisations currently require.

An increasing number of stakeholders are called upon to play a role in cybersecurity. These stakeholders can broadly be classified into two categories: those who can be described as institutional stakeholders, and those involved in the practical implementation of protective measures on networks and information systems. In this context, human expertise is essential to ensuring the implementation and adaptation of cybersecurity measures in the face of constantly evolving threats; one example is the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) (Peliks & Ayadi, 2024).

The role of the Chief Information Security Officer has also evolved considerably in this new economic and geopolitical environment. CISOs must manage complexity by ensuring effective interaction between all parts of the organisation. This will require them to work more closely with all stakeholders in a holistic manner. As organisations continue their digital transformation, the CISO will need to

develop a transparent cybersecurity risk management strategy that allows scope for innovation without compromising security.

New investments, new areas of focus to manage, the fragmentation of regulatory compliance and the increasing automation of operations are the most significant cybersecurity management challenges that CISO's will have to face.

Departments and their senior leaders will need to look beyond IT or risk management and focus on strategic enablement, as well as on protecting the organisation. In this sense, the role of the CISO is shifting away from technical tasks to focus on a broader set of responsibilities; inevitably, CISOs will need more support to operate on many different fronts. Internal resources may be stretched to the limit, particularly due to the talent shortage across much of the cybersecurity sector. It will be essential to engage the entire organisation at the highest level, with appropriate resources and a strategic cybersecurity plan shared by all stakeholders (Peliks & Ayadi, 2024).

Cybersecurity can no longer rely solely on internal technical and organisational capabilities. It also requires a legal and regulatory framework to define responsibilities, establish common requirements and provide a framework for the measures necessary to ensure the protection and continuity of operations.

II.2. Strengthening the legal framework for cybersecurity.

The strengthening of cybersecurity measures is gradually becoming part of a broader approach to cyber-resilience. Cyber-resilience describes an organisation's ability to anticipate, protect against, detect, respond to and recover quickly from a major IT security incident. With the increasing digitalisation of business activities and the accompanying rise in cyber-attacks, cyber-resilience has become a key strategic issue for all organisations.

This need is confirmed by several indicators at both international and national levels. Globally, the average cost of a data breach stood at \$4.4 million in 2025, according to the IBM Cost of a Data Breach 2025 report, illustrating the considerable financial impact of cyber incidents on organisations (IBM, 2025). In Morocco, 73 percent of Moroccan businesses now regard cyber risks as a priority (PwC Morocco & AUSIM, 2025).

The consequences of a security breach can be disastrous, ranging from the loss of sensitive data to a loss of customer trust and the destruction of an organisation's reputation; in the most extreme cases, it can even lead to a company being placed into administration. This affects everyone, from the smallest business to those operating on a global scale. Consequently, adopting an effective, multi-layered active defence strategy has become vital in the face of the inevitable cyber-attack.

It is against this backdrop that Morocco has taken several measures and adopted Law No. 05-20 on cybersecurity, adopted in 2020, which constitutes one of the main pillars of the national legal framework for cybersecurity. This law aims, in particular, to strengthen the security and resilience of the information systems of public administrations, public bodies and enterprises, as well as critical infrastructure. In particular, it requires the implementation of technical and organisational security measures, the identification and management of risks, the conduct of security audits, the reporting of incidents, and the preparation of business continuity and disaster recovery plans. This legislative framework should help to strengthen cyber resilience at national level by not confining measures to the organisational level, but by setting a clear direction and specific requirements for the entire ecosystem. In addition, the National Directive on Information Systems Security (DNSSI) establishes a national framework of rules and minimum security measures applicable to the entities concerned and to critical infrastructure, thereby enabling regulatory requirements to be translated into concrete measures for protection and resilience, whilst bearing in mind that, according to the General Directorate for Information Systems Security (DGSSI, 2024), Morocco's National Cybersecurity Strategy sets out the strategic directions for strengthening the security and resilience of the national cyberspace by 2030.

This approach is evident at both European Union and US level. On the one hand, the European Union has adopted the NIS 2 Directive for information and communication systems, as well as the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Directive (CIRD), the Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA) for the financial sector, and the Cyber Resilience Act (CRA) for products containing digital components. This regulatory framework should help to strengthen cyber resilience across Europe by not limiting measures to the organisational level, but by setting a clear direction and specific requirements for the entire ecosystem. On the other hand, whilst the United States favours market self-regulation and is keen to avoid intervening at company level, the Department of Defence (DoD) has established a cybersecurity certification programme (Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification, CMMC 2.0) with which its contractors must comply.

These new regulations and standards required of organisations will demand a significant effort on their part to ensure compliance.

Cybersecurity is no longer solely the responsibility of individual organisations ; it is gradually becoming part of national and international regulatory frameworks that impose resilience requirements on the entire ecosystem.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The changing cyber landscape demonstrates that cybersecurity can no longer be viewed as merely a technical issue. The increasing sophistication of attacks, geopolitical tensions, the acceleration of digital transformation and the emergence of new technologies such as artificial intelligence are forcing organisations to fundamentally rethink their approach to security. In this context, strengthening cyber resilience relies on a combination of appropriate technical measures, an increasingly stringent regulatory framework and, above all, the continuous development of human skills. Cybersecurity professionals are therefore called upon to play an increasingly strategic role, combining technical expertise, analytical skills, an understanding of new technologies and a command of regulatory requirements. The challenge is therefore no longer simply to prevent cyber-attacks, but to be able to anticipate them, detect them, respond to them effectively and maintain business continuity in a digital environment that has become increasingly complex, interconnected and uncertain.

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**SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING AND THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT AUDITING IN
ENHANCING CORPORATE DISCLOSURE: AN ALBANIAN PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

Sustainability reporting has become an essential component of modern corporate reporting, reflecting growing stakeholder demand for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) information. An increasing number of stakeholders believe that environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors have an impact on company value, risk management, and long-term success. With an emphasis on the Albanian context, this study seeks to examine the function of sustainability reporting and the significance of independent auditing in guaranteeing the accuracy and dependability of non-financial data. The study adopts a qualitative documentary analysis of academic literature, international sustainability standards, and Albanian institutional documents. The findings indicate that sustainability reporting in Albania remains at an early stage due to limited standardization, insufficient professional capacity, and implementation costs, while independent auditing can enhance the credibility and transparency of ESG disclosures. In this context, independent auditing can help to boost information users' confidence and improve Albanian companies' transparency. The study contributes by providing a structured assessment of Albania's preparedness for sustainability reporting and highlighting the evolving role of independent auditors in supporting ESG assurance.

Keywords: Financial Reporting, ESG, Sustainability Reporting, Auditing, Corporate Transparency.

Introduction

In today's environment, financial information is no longer regarded sufficient to evaluate an organization's performance and long-term viability. Global developments in climate, social responsibility, corporate governance, and increased investor demand have prompted the development of a broader reporting model that includes not only financial performance but also a company's economic, social, and environmental effect. In this setting, sustainability reporting has become an important part of modern corporate reporting (Eccles & Krzus, 2018).

ESG-related non-financial reporting seeks to give information on an organization's environmental practices, relationships with employees and the community, and internal governance frameworks. This knowledge allows investors, creditors, and other stakeholders to make better judgments about a company's long-term risks and opportunities (Freeman, 1984). According to Stakeholder Theory, organizations should not focus solely on maximizing value for shareholders but should consider the interests of all groups affected by their economic activity (Freeman, 1984).

The development of new reporting standards has greatly increased the importance of sustainability reporting on a global scale. The International Sustainability Guidelines Board guidelines aim to establish a global baseline for reporting financial information on sustainability and climate risks (IFRS Foundation, 2023). Furthermore, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards have helped to shape norms for reporting on organizations' economic, environmental, and social impacts (Global Reporting Initiative, 2021).

ESG data represents a key component of the process of ensuring business sustainability. Financial reporting must adhere to traditional auditing standards, ensuring historical accuracy and consistency. The role of auditors is to provide assurance over financial reporting, enhance transparency, and strengthen the credibility of corporate disclosures (International Federation of Accountants [IFAC], 2024).

In Albania, sustainability reporting is still in its early stages when compared to more mature European economies. The legislative framework for financial reporting is principally based on Law No. 25/2018, "On Accounting and Financial Statements" (as modified), which establishes the standards for economic enterprises to prepare, present, and publish financial information. Although this framework aims to correspond with international accounting and financial reporting standards, it presently does not require all reporting organizations to report on sustainability using ESG criteria. However, recent legal developments in the European Union, particularly the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), are increasing pressure for Albania to align its reporting practices with European requirements. This process is expected to accelerate as Albania advances towards EU integration. In this environment, while sustainability reporting is still a relatively new practice in Albania, its importance is likely to expand dramatically for businesses exposed to international markets, foreign investors, and global supply networks. The European integration process, as well as the progressive alignment of Albania's legislative framework with international standards, necessitates the development of more advanced financial and non-financial reporting procedures. According to INSTAT (2025), the Albanian economy is dominated by micro, small, and medium-sized firms, which account for the vast bulk of the country's corporate structure. This structure poses obstacles for implementing new reporting standards, since many of these companies may lack the financial resources, professional experience, and information systems required for sustainability reporting (INSTAT, 2025).

Albanian enterprises active in industries with a substantial environmental impact, as well as those participating in foreign markets, will confront increased demand for transparency and sustainability reporting. Implementing ESG principles can help increase business transparency, competitiveness, access to funding, and organizational reputation.

Although the international literature has extensively addressed the impact of sustainability reporting on corporate transparency, investor decision-making, and the role of independent auditing in ensuring the reliability of ESG information, empirical evidence from developing economies, including Albania, is limited. There is a particular shortage of research that examines the relationship between the Albanian legislative environment, local companies' readiness for sustainability reporting, and the role that audit professionals might play in this process. This research gap highlights the need for a more in-depth examination of the challenges and opportunities associated with the transition from a traditional financial reporting model to a more comprehensive one, in which both financial and non-financial information contribute to increased organizational transparency and accountability.

In this regard, accounting and auditing experts in Albania play an important role in facilitating the shift to a more integrated reporting framework. Auditors, with their competence in information system control and evidence evaluation, can help improve the quality and reliability of sustainability reporting information.

The purpose of this study is to examine sustainability reporting and the role of independent auditing in enhancing corporate transparency and the credibility of ESG information in Albania.

The main objectives of the study are:

- ✚ To analyze the theoretical and practical development of sustainability reporting at the international level;
- ✚ To evaluate the role of independent auditing in enhancing the credibility of sustainability information;
- ✚ To identify the key challenges faced by Albanian companies in implementing ESG practices;
- ✚ To propose recommendations for strengthening sustainability reporting and the role of accounting and auditing professionals in Albania.

To achieve this objective, the study is organized into several main sections. It begins by addressing the conceptual and regulatory development of sustainability reporting, analyzing international standards and current trends in the field. Subsequently, it examines the role of independent auditing in ensuring the quality and reliability of non-financial information, as well as the professional challenges associated with this process. The final section analyzes the situation in Albania, focusing on the legal framework, current reporting practices, and prospects for the further development of sustainability reporting and assurance services provided by independent auditors.

Literature Review

The concept of sustainability reporting and its development in academic literature

Sustainability reporting expands on the traditional concept of corporate reporting by including information on an organization's environmental and social implications, as well as its governance processes. Unlike traditional financial reporting, which focuses primarily on past economic results, sustainability reporting seeks to provide a more comprehensive view of a company's ability to create long-term value, manage risks, and address the social and environmental impacts of its economic activity (Eccles & Krzus, 2018).

The concept of corporate sustainability is strongly related to Elkington's (1997) "triple bottom line" approach, which states that an organization's success should be evaluated not just on financial results, but also on its social and environmental impact. This concept has significantly influenced the evolution of corporate reporting by encouraging organizations to communicate not only their financial performance but also their social and environmental impacts.

According to Stakeholder Theory, corporations are responsible not only to shareholders but also to employees, customers, suppliers, the community, governmental institutions, and the environment in which they operate (Freeman 1984). This theory describes the growing importance of ESG information, which requires businesses to demonstrate that their economic activity fits with the expectations and interests of the many populations touched by their activities.

In addition to Stakeholder Theory, Legitimacy Theory explains how sustainability reporting evolved. According to this approach, firms publish social and environmental information to maintain or reinforce the notion that their actions are consistent with societal norms, values, and expectations (Suchman, 1995). From this perspective, ESG reporting serves not only as an information tool for investors but also as a mechanism for enhancing organizational legitimacy and stakeholder trust.

Empirical research has increasingly examined the relationship between ESG practices and corporate financial success. Friede, Busch, and Bassen (2015) discovered that the majority of studies show a positive or neutral relationship between ESG performance and financial outcomes. These findings imply that sustainability reporting should be seen not only as a transparency requirement, but also as a strategic tool capable of affecting risk management, reputation, and organizational competitiveness.

International sustainability reporting standards

The growth of sustainability reporting has coincided with the establishment of various international frameworks and standards aimed at increasing the quality, comparability, and trustworthiness of information disclosed by enterprises.

One of the most widely recognized initiatives in this field is the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which establishes standards for reporting on enterprises' economic, environmental, and social consequences. GRI standards are widely utilized worldwide and have helped to build a consistent framework for communicating sustainability performance (Global Reporting Initiative, 2021).

The IFRS Foundation's establishment of the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) is a significant milestone in this field. The standards IFRS S1 "General Requirements for Disclosure of Sustainability-related Financial Information" and IFRS S2 "Climate-related Disclosures" seek to establish a global standard for reporting sustainability information relevant to investors' financial decisions, with a focus on risks and opportunities that affect a company's economic value (IFRS Foundation, 2023).

In the European Union, the most notable regulatory development is the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), which dramatically expands sustainability reporting obligations and seeks to include ESG information into formal corporate reporting. These improvements are also important for EU candidate countries, including Albania, because the process of harmonizing with the **acquis communautaire** requires a gradual alignment of national practices with European norms (European Commission, 2022).

Together, these frameworks contribute to greater consistency, comparability, and credibility of sustainability disclosures across jurisdictions.

The role of independent audit in ensuring the quality of ESG information

Ensuring the quality and reliability of ESG information has become one of the major challenges in sustainability reporting. ESG data has generally been less regulated and less subject to required independent verification methods than traditional financial statements, which are subject to standardized external audit procedures.

DeFond and Zhang (2014) believe that the ability of the auditor to find serious misstatements and offer a fair degree of assurance regarding reported information is a key component of audit quality. In the area of sustainability reporting, where information consumers look for guarantees that non-financial statistics are precise, comprehensive, quantifiable, and backed by verifiable proof, this idea is also expanding.

The need to reduce "greenwashing," a situation in which companies report environmental or social performance that is more favorable than the reality of their operations, is closely connected to the growing need for assurance services related ESG information. In this regard, the participation of independent auditors in the sustainability information verification process helps to increase the trust of creditors, investors, and other stakeholders (IFAC, 2024).

Recent studies suggest that the auditor's role is expanding beyond the verification of financial statements to include assurance over sustainability information. As a result, audit professionals must acquire new skills in areas including assessing internal control systems for ESG data, estimating environmental consequences, and applying assurance standards to non-financial data.

Sustainability reporting and the challenges facing Albanian companies

Sustainability reporting in Albania remains at an early stage of development, with limited empirical evidence and reporting practices. However, changing economic conditions, increasing expectations

from foreign investors, and Albania's European integration process are creating growing pressure for greater corporate transparency and alignment with international reporting standards.

According to the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT, 2025), Albania's economic structure is dominated by micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), which account for the vast majority of businesses operating in the country. Despite their significant contribution to economic development, these enterprises often face considerable challenges in complying with emerging sustainability reporting requirements due to limited financial resources, insufficient professional expertise, inadequate technological infrastructure, and underdeveloped information management systems.

Another significant challenge is the shortage of specialised expertise in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting. Accounting and auditing professionals in Albania have traditionally focused on financial reporting, regulatory compliance, and the verification of financial statements. In contrast, sustainability reporting requires additional competencies, including knowledge of climate-related risks, social impact assessment, corporate governance, stakeholder engagement, and ESG performance measurement.

The legal framework governing financial reporting in Albania is primarily based on Law No. 25/2018 "On Accounting and Financial Statements" (as amended), which establishes the principles for the preparation, presentation, and publication of financial information by economic entities. Although this legislation has contributed to aligning Albanian financial reporting practices with international accounting standards, it does not currently require all reporting entities to prepare sustainability reports based on ESG principles. Consequently, ESG reporting in Albania remains largely voluntary and is mainly driven by the expectations of international investors, financial institutions, multinational business partners, and global market requirements.

Nevertheless, as Albania continues to harmonise its legislation with that of the European Union, it is expected that recent EU regulatory developments—particularly the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)—will increasingly influence domestic reporting practices. Albanian companies that operate within European markets or participate in international supply chains are likely to face growing pressure to disclose transparent, reliable, and comparable information regarding their environmental, social, and governance performance.

In this context, strengthening professional capacity represents a significant opportunity for the Albanian auditing profession. Auditors can assume a more strategic role by providing assurance over sustainability information, thereby enhancing the credibility, reliability, and transparency of ESG disclosures, in addition to performing their traditional function of verifying financial statements.

In conclusion, existing research demonstrates that sustainability reporting has evolved from a largely voluntary corporate communication practice into a fundamental component of modern corporate governance and organisational transparency. International reporting frameworks, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards and the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) Standards, have contributed to improving the consistency and comparability of sustainability disclosures, while independent assurance is becoming increasingly important in enhancing the credibility of ESG information. However, relatively little research has examined organisational preparedness, institutional challenges, and the evolving role of auditors in supporting sustainability reporting within developing economies such as Albania. This gap in the literature highlights the need for further research into how sustainability reporting can be progressively integrated into Albanian business practices and how it may contribute to improving the transparency, reliability, and quality of corporate disclosures.

Materials and Methods

The methodological approach of the study

The development of sustainability reporting (Environmental, Social, and Governance, or ESG), the function of independent auditing in guaranteeing the accuracy of non-financial data, and the difficulties in putting sustainability reporting practices into practice in the Albanian context are all examined in this qualitative and exploratory study.

Since sustainability reporting is still a relatively new and developing field in Albania, the choice of a qualitative technique is related to the nature of the phenomenon being studied. In order to identify the major trends, obstacles, and possibilities related to incorporating ESG into corporate reporting procedures, the study necessitates a thorough examination of the theoretical, institutional, and legal frameworks. Qualitative research is appropriate for studies that seek to comprehend intricate social or economic processes, practices, and phenomena through the interpretation of available data and the examination of documented sources, claim Creswell and Creswell (2023).

Using a review of academic literature, worldwide sustainability reporting standards, institutional publications, and the Albanian legal framework, the study uses the documentary analysis approach in this context. This approach highlights the current status of ESG reporting and identifies opportunities for future improvement by allowing an examination of global developments and a comparison with the Albanian situation.

The absence of a comprehensive empirical dataset on ESG reporting by Albanian businesses now justifies the use of this strategy. In these situations, secondary source analysis offers an appropriate foundation for comprehending the current framework and determining future paths for the advancement of sustainability reporting and its audit. In this case, the study's objective is to interpret and critically analyze the available data rather than test statistical assumptions.

Data sources

This study relied heavily on secondary sources of information, which were chosen based on their relevance to the research topic as well as their institutional authority.

The sources consulted are:

- Review scholarly literature on sustainable reporting, ESG, audits, business transparency, and stakeholder relations.
- International sustainability reporting standards and guidelines include:
- The International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) produced sustainability reporting standards under the IFRS Foundation.
- Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards;
- IFAC publications and guidance on the auditing profession's role in ensuring ESG information.

Albanian institutional and regulatory documents include statistical publications from the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), the Albanian accounting and financial reporting framework published by the National Accounting Council (NAC), Law No. 25/2018 "On Accounting and Financial Statements," as amended, and other documents and developments related to the Albanian framework's alignment with international and European standards.

The analysis of the Albanian legal framework aims to analyze the existing level of absorption of non-financial reporting and sustainability obligations into national legislation, as well as the potential for future development.

Statistical data from INSTAT have been used to analyze the structure of Albanian businesses, enterprise size, and economic characteristics that may influence companies' ability to adopt sustainability reporting practices.

Research objectives and questions

In accordance with the main aim of the study, the following research objectives have been defined.

Main objective:

To analyze the role and potential impact of sustainability reporting on the development of corporate reporting, and to evaluate the role of independent auditing in enhancing the transparency and reliability of information published by companies in Albania.

Specific objectives:

- To analyze the theoretical and practical development of ESG reporting at the international level;
- To identify the role of international standards in harmonizing sustainability reporting;
- To evaluate the role of independent auditing in ensuring the quality and reliability of ESG information;
- To analyze the key challenges faced by Albanian companies in adopting sustainability reporting practices;
- To highlight opportunities for the development of the accounting and auditing profession in light of new reporting requirements.

Based on these objectives, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent have sustainability reporting practices developed in Albania?

RQ2: What is the role of independent auditing in enhancing the credibility of sustainability information?

RQ3: What are the main barriers affecting the implementation of ESG reporting by Albanian companies?

RQ4: What measures can be taken to strengthen sustainability reporting and develop professional capacities in the fields of accounting and auditing?

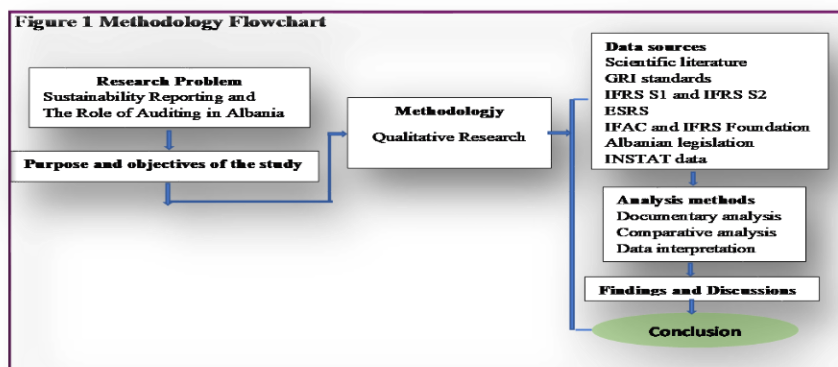
Analysis method

The data analysis was conducted through a systematic review and comparison of theoretical, institutional, and regulatory sources. Specifically, the analysis focused on:

- international developments in the field of sustainability reporting;
- requirements of new ESG reporting standards;
- the role of independent audit in providing assurance on non-financial information;
- the Albanian institutional and legal framework;
- characteristics of the Albanian business structure and their impact on the adoption of ESG practices.

Furthermore, a comparison was made between international sustainability reporting criteria and present trends in Albania. This enabled the identification of existing discrepancies, implementation issues, and potential to gradually align Albanian practices with international and European norms.

This analytical method provides an integrated framework for understanding the interaction between ESG reporting, corporate transparency, and independent audits in a transitioning economy. The research methodology flowchart is presented below.



Source: Authors

Study limitations

This study has limitations that should be considered when evaluating the findings.

First, sustainability reporting in Albania is still in its early stages, and there is a dearth of thorough empirical data on Albanian companies' ESG activities. The small number of published sustainability reports limits the opportunity for in-depth comparative study across enterprises and economic sectors.

Second, the study focuses on secondary source analysis rather than direct data collection via questionnaires or interviews with auditors, accountants, or firm representatives. As a result, the findings should be taken as an exploratory investigation of current events rather than a statistical assessment of ESG adoption.

Third, worldwide sustainability reporting standards, notably the IFRS Sustainability Standards and the European ESRS, are currently being developed and implemented, which may have an impact on regulatory requirements and future corporate practices.

Despite these limitations, the study provides a solid foundation for analyzing the evolution of sustainability reporting in Albania and identifying factors that may impact its incorporation into corporate and professional practices.

Discussion

The development of sustainability reporting in the Albanian context

Sustainability reporting in Albania is gradually evolving, with the traditional financial reporting model being supplemented by standards for transparency about environmental and social implications, as well as organizational governance procedures. In contrast to more developed economies, where ESG information is integrated into business strategy and decision-making processes, Albania is still in the early stages of implementing these practices.

The structure of the Albanian economy, with its dominance of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, is a defining feature in this process. According to INSTAT (2025), the bulk of active economic entities in the country are businesses with low organizational and financial resources. This structure complicates the implementation of new reporting requirements because ESG reporting requires dedicated data collection systems, specialised human resources, and multidisciplinary expertise.

However, sustainability reporting should not be considered solely as a legislative necessity, but also as a tool for improving organizations' strategic management. Integrating ESG considerations can help organisations identify long-term risks, enhance their reputation, and strengthen relationships with investors and international business partners. (Eccles and Krzus, 2018).

In this context, the growth of sustainability reporting in Albania is linked not just to alignment with international standards, but also to a progressive shift in how businesses view long-term value creation.

The institutional and regulatory framework in Albania

The Albanian financial reporting structure has traditionally been based on legal requirements for accounting and financial statements, as well as the use of national and international financial reporting standards. However, sustainability reporting adds a new dimension that necessitates broadening existing methods to include non-financial data.

Professional and public entities play important roles in this process. The National Accounting Council (NAC) works to strengthen the financial reporting system and align Albanian practices with international norms. Further development of this framework could pave the way for the progressive inclusion of ESG criteria into the national reporting system.

Furthermore, Albania's European integration process puts pressure on the country to comply with regulatory advances in the EU. The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) signify a substantial shift in corporate reporting standards, particularly for businesses with trade or financial linkages to the European market.

As a result, while the majority of Albanian enterprises are not yet fully compliant with ESG regulations, international developments will require institutional and professional preparedness.

The role of independent audit in ensuring the reliability of ESG information

One of the most difficult aspects of sustainability reporting is ensuring the credibility of ESG data. While financial information is routinely subject to independent audit, non-financial information includes more complicated variables like as environmental effect, social policy, and governance procedures.

In this environment, independent audits and assurance services are very important. The verification of ESG information by independent professionals improves report credibility and decreases the risk of presenting incomplete or incorrect information.

Another major consideration is the tendency of "greenwashing," in which firms present their environmental or social performance in a more positive light than it is. The involvement of independent auditors in providing assurance over ESG information can enhance transparency and stakeholder confidence.

This presents a chance for professional advancement in Albania's auditing profession. Auditors will be responsible for more than just validating financial accounts; they will also review control systems, ESG data collection methods, and the quality of sustainability reporting.

Key challenges of ESG implementation in Albanian companies

An examination of the literature and the features of the Albanian market reveals many major challenges:

a) Lack of professional expertise.

One of the major impediments is a lack of specialized expertise on ESG. Accounting and auditing professionals have typically concentrated on financial reporting, but sustainability reporting necessitates additional knowledge of environmental, social, and governance issues.

b) Financial and technological obstacles.

Small and medium-sized businesses may face significant expenditures involved with implementing ESG reporting systems, educating employees, and gathering non-financial data.

c) Limited market pressure.

In Albania, investor and financial market demand for ESG information remains low when compared to wealthy economies. This influences the level of motivation for businesses to invest in sustainable reporting.

d) Need for human capacity building.

ESG needs coordination among auditors, accountants, managers, and professionals in other sectors. As a result, universities and professional organizations play a critical role in developing new skills.

Table 1. Comparison of key sustainability reporting standards and their impact on the Albanian perspective.

Element	GRI Standards	IFRS Sustainability Standards (ISSB – IFRS S1/S2)	ESRS (European Sustainability Reporting Standards)	Prospects for implementation in Albania
Main objective	Reporting on the organization's impact on the economy, the environment, and society	Providing sustainability-related financial information to investors and financial markets	Establishing a detailed sustainability reporting framework for companies in the European Union	Albania is expected to gradually align its reporting practices with international standards due to European integration.
The main focus	The company's impact on stakeholders and society	The impact of ESG issues on a company's financial value and investor decision-making.	The company's material impacts and sustainability-related financial risks	Albanian companies need to shift from purely financial reporting to a more integrated model.
Covered fields	Environment, employees, human rights, community, governance	Financial risks and opportunities related to sustainability and climate	Environmental, social, and governance issues; climate change; supply chain	There is a need to develop systems for collecting ESG data in Albanian companies.
Primary users of information	Stakeholders: the community, employees, customers, investors	Primarily investors and providers of financial capital.	Investors, regulatory authorities, clients, and stakeholders	Banks, foreign investors, and international partners may increase the demand for ESG information.
Nature of reporting	Primarily reporting on impact and social responsibility.	Directly linked to financial reporting and economic decision-making.	Mandatory reporting for entities meeting CSRD criteria	Sustainability reporting in Albania is currently largely voluntary, although regulatory requirements are expected to increase over time.
The role of auditing	External assurance enhances the reliability of	Requires information assurance processes for ESG risks.	Includes requirements for the verification and assurance of	Albanian auditors need to develop new competencies in ESG auditing.

	reported information.		sustainability information.	
Key challenges	Data standardization and comparability	Measuring the financial impacts of ESG factors	Complexity of requirements and implementation costs	Lack of ESG expertise, costs for businesses, and lack of data systems.
Advantages for companies	Increased transparency and reputation	Improved access to capital and better risk management	Alignment with the European market and increased investor confidence	Opportunities for Albanian companies to increase competitiveness and international integration.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Global Reporting Initiative (2021), IFRS Foundation (2023), and European Commission (2022).

Table 1 demonstrates how ESG standards use distinct approaches while complementing one another in the process of upgrading corporate reporting. While GRI focuses on an organization's social and environmental effect, ISSB guidelines are primarily concerned with the financial implications of sustainability challenges. Meanwhile, ESRS represents a more thorough and uniform approach in the European Union. Albania sees gradual alignment with these standards as an opportunity to improve corporate transparency and boost the role of accounting and auditing professionals.

Despite the present hurdles, sustainability reporting provides substantial opportunity for Albanian businesses. Implementing ESG practices can help with:

- Increasing business transparency;
- Improving investor relations;
- Increasing access to funding;
- Improving risk management;
- Aligning with European standards.

In this sense, ESG is more than just a reporting requirement; it is a mechanism that assists Albanian companies in increasing their competitiveness and integration into international markets.

Analysis of the structural capacities of Albanian businesses for sustainability reporting: Evidence from INSTAT data

The size and organizational capability of businesses are directly related to the adoption of sustainability reporting. According to INSTAT data, the Albanian economy is characterized by a large number of active businesses, with micro and small businesses dominating the structure.

The analysis of capability for implementing sustainability reporting has been done using structural business variables, such as firm size, number of employees, and economic weight, because there is still a lack of public data indicating the actual degree of ESG reporting by Albanian enterprises. These measurements are used to evaluate an organization's potential and its capacity to progressively implement new ESG reporting regulations.

There were 119,870 active businesses in Albania in 2024, employing 551,189 people and producing 3,533 billion ALL in net sales, according to INSTAT (2025) (see Table 2). These figures show the private sector's economic significance while also emphasizing the necessity of supportive measures to help companies adjust to increased reporting obligations.

Table 2: Albania's key enterprise metrics and how they affect sustainability reporting (2024)

The indicator	Value	Implications for ESG
Total number of active enterprises	119.870	It illustrates the broad range of economic entities that may be affected by ESG requirements.
Total number of employees	551.189 employees	It relates to the social dimension of ESG (employment, working conditions, human development).
Total net sales	3.533 billion ALL	It demonstrates the economic weight of the private sector and the importance of corporate transparency.
Increase in the number of enterprises compared to 2023	+2,2%	It indicates an expansion of economic activity and a need for better reporting systems.
Change in the number of employed persons compared to 2023	-1,6%	Highlights the importance of social reporting and human capital analysis.
Increase in net sales compared to 2023	+4,5%	It indicates economic expansion and an increasing need for transparency towards investors.

Source: INSTAT (2025), Structural Business Survey 2024.

Table 3. Enterprise structure by size and readiness for ESG reporting.

Enterprise category	Employment-based criterion	ESG reporting capacity	Key challenges
Microenterprise	1–9 employees	Low	Lack of specialized staff, high reporting costs
Small enterprises	10–49 employees	Moderate	Need for training and foundational ESG systems
Medium-sized enterprises	50–249 employees	High	Need to integrate ESG into management and control
Large enterprises	250+ employees	High	Compliance with IFRS S1/S2, ESRS, and international requirements

Source: Author's elaboration based on INSTAT's classification of enterprise size and theoretical analysis of organizational capacities for ESG reporting.

The structure of the Albanian business sector suggests that larger enterprises possess greater capacity to implement ESG standards, whereas micro and small enterprises require simplified guidance, targeted training, and professional support.

From an auditing standpoint, this situation presents a new opportunity for specialists in the industry. Auditors can not only provide assurance over ESG information but also support the development of internal control systems and improve sustainability reporting processes.

Thus, a review of the structural data of Albanian firms demonstrates that readiness for sustainability reporting varies with entity size and organizational capacity. Large firms are better positioned to meet worldwide ESG standards, whereas tiny and micro-enterprises require institutional support, targeted direction, and professional capacity building.

Finally, the analysis concludes that the growth of sustainability reporting in Albania necessitates a progressive approach, with alignment with international standards followed by the development of professional and institutional capacities.

The above analysis supports the study's goal of evaluating Albanian companies' readiness to meet new sustainability reporting requirements. The findings indicate that the successful adoption of ESG reporting depends not only on the existence of international standards but also on the organisational, professional, and institutional capacities of the domestic business environment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusions

Sustainability (ESG) reporting is one of the most significant advances in accounting, corporate reporting, and organizational governance. The transition from a traditional reporting model centered on financial performance to an integrated approach that includes environmental, social, and governance considerations reflects shifting expectations among investors, financial institutions, regulators, and society as a whole. This study sought to examine the significance of sustainability reporting and the role of independent audits in assuring the transparency and trustworthiness of ESG data, with a special emphasis on the Albanian setting. Through an analysis of academic literature, international standards, and institutional data, this study addressed the research questions concerning the evolution of ESG reporting, the challenges of its implementation in Albania, and the role of independent auditors in this process.

Regarding the first research question concerning the importance of sustainability reporting for businesses, the analysis revealed that ESG should be considered a strategic instrument for risk management, transparency, and long-term value creation. International standards such as the GRI Standards, IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards, and ESRS have provided a more formal framework for communicating non-financial information, thereby increasing its relevance in economic decision-making processes.

Regarding the research question concerning the impact of international developments on Albania, the study concluded that the European integration process and commercial linkages with international markets require Albanian enterprises to gradually prepare for emerging sustainability reporting requirements. Although most Albanian companies do not yet report on ESG issues, regulatory developments in the European Union, particularly the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), are expected to influence Albanian enterprises operating in European markets, either directly or indirectly.

An analysis of the Albanian context found that the key challenge is not only the establishment of regulatory standards but also the development of the professional capacity required to implement them. The structure of the Albanian economy, which is dominated by micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, makes it difficult for many businesses to invest in modern reporting systems, technology, human resources, and ESG-related expertise. Therefore, the implementation of sustainability reporting requires a gradual approach tailored to the specific characteristics of the local economy.

The study indicated that independent auditors could play an important role in enhancing the credibility of ESG information. Their involvement in assurance services can contribute to improving data quality, reducing the risk of inaccurate information, and preventing potential greenwashing practices. This suggests that the role of auditors is evolving beyond the traditional verification of financial information towards a broader responsibility for supporting corporate transparency and accountability.

Finally, the study concludes that sustainability reporting represents an important development for the future of accounting and auditing in Albania. Although Albanian enterprises face significant challenges in adopting ESG practices, the gradual alignment with international and European standards provides opportunities to enhance transparency, competitiveness, and confidence among investors and economic partners.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis results and the findings of this study, the following measures are recommended:

Improving professional education and training in the ESG field

Professional accounting and auditing bodies, as well as higher education institutions, should expand their programmes and modules on sustainability reporting, ESG standards, and non-financial information assurance methods. Developing new professional competencies is essential for preparing experts who can support Albanian businesses throughout this transformation.

Raising ESG awareness among Albanian companies

Companies should consider ESG reporting not merely as a future regulatory obligation, but also as an opportunity to improve strategic management, identify risks, enhance their reputation, and strengthen relationships with investors and international partners.

Gradual development of the national sustainability reporting framework

Albanian institutions should follow international and European developments in this area by adopting a tailored approach based on the size and capabilities of the Albanian economy. A phased framework would enable the gradual inclusion of enterprises while avoiding excessive administrative burdens.

Strengthening the role of independent auditors

Audit firms should develop the necessary competencies to provide assurance services for ESG information. This includes investing in professional training, becoming familiar with international standards, and adopting appropriate methodologies for verifying non-financial information.

Enhancing ESG data collection and reporting systems

Companies and public institutions should establish more effective processes for collecting, documenting, and disclosing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) data. The availability of reliable and comparable data directly influences the quality and credibility of sustainability reporting.

Overall, the successful implementation of sustainability reporting in Albania requires collaborative efforts from public institutions, professional organisations, universities, and the corporate sector. Only through strengthening professional competencies and fostering a culture of greater transparency can ESG evolve from a basic reporting requirement into a meaningful driver of sustainable development and competitiveness for Albanian businesses.

Research Limitations and Future Research

Although this study examines the evolution of sustainability (ESG) reporting and the role of independent auditing in ensuring the reliability of non-financial information within the Albanian context, several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings.

First, a significant limitation relates to the current stage of development of sustainability reporting in Albania. Given that ESG practices are still in the early stages of adoption, there is limited availability of comprehensive and consistent data regarding sustainability reports published by Albanian enterprises. The relatively small number of firms that systematically disclose ESG information restricts the possibility of conducting in-depth empirical assessments of the impact of sustainability reporting on financial performance, corporate reputation, and organisational value.

Second, this study relies primarily on a qualitative methodology, involving the analysis of academic literature, international sustainability reporting standards, and institutional documents. This approach is appropriate for an emerging research area, as it enables a deeper understanding of key concepts, trends, and challenges; however, it does not involve the collection of primary data from companies, auditors, or accounting professionals. Consequently, the study cannot directly assess the perceptions, levels of preparedness, and practical approaches of Albanian market participants.

Third, the analysis focuses mainly on sustainability reporting and the role of independent auditing. Other important dimensions, such as the impact of public policies, macroeconomic factors, sector-specific characteristics, investor behaviour, and the influence of financial institutions, have not been examined in detail and may represent valuable areas for future research.

Finally, as international sustainability reporting standards, particularly the IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards (ISSB) and the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), continue to develop and be implemented gradually, the international regulatory environment may undergo further

changes. These developments may influence how Albanian businesses respond to future ESG reporting requirements.

Directions for future research

Based on the limitations identified, future research could follow several important directions.

First, empirical studies should be conducted using questionnaires and interviews with business leaders, accounting professionals, independent auditors, and ESG experts. Such research would provide a more comprehensive assessment of Albanian companies' knowledge, organisational readiness, and practical challenges related to the implementation of sustainability reporting.

Second, future research could examine the relationship between the extent of ESG reporting and the financial performance of Albanian companies. Such studies could investigate whether companies with higher levels of sustainability transparency benefit from improved access to financing, stronger investor relations, enhanced reputation, and better economic outcomes.

Third, further analysis of the role of Albanian auditors in providing assurance over ESG information is highly relevant. Future studies could explore auditors' professional preparedness, training needs, methodological challenges, and opportunities for developing assurance services for sustainability reports.

Fourth, comparative studies between Albania and other Western Balkan countries could help identify best practices, successful implementation approaches, and institutional factors influencing the development of ESG reporting in transition economies.

In conclusion, sustainability reporting represents an important area for future research in Albania, as it is closely linked to the modernisation of the accounting and auditing profession, increased transparency in the private sector, and the alignment of national practices with European and international standards.

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**DIGITAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION: ASSESSING THE ROLE OF
FINTECH IN ENHANCING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA'S LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIONS**

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Abstract

The integration of digital governance and financial technology (Fintech) into local government operations has the potential to enhance financial inclusion and improve public service delivery in Nigeria. This study examines how Fintech adoption influences access to financial services, efficiency, transparency, and accountability in local government administrations. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected from 50 respondents, comprising local government staff and citizens, through structured surveys and semi-structured interviews. The results indicate that Fintech adoption moderately improves financial inclusion and service delivery outcomes, though challenges such as infrastructural deficiencies, digital literacy gaps, and regulatory constraints limit its full potential. The study contributes to public administration literature by highlighting the role of technology-driven governance in promoting citizen-centric and accountable local government operations. Policy recommendations include investments in infrastructure, capacity-building, regulatory frameworks, and citizen engagement initiatives.

Keywords: Digital Governance, Fintech, Financial Inclusion, Public Service Delivery

1. Introduction

The digital transformation of public administration has emerged as a critical pathway to improving service delivery, accountability, and citizen engagement globally. In developing countries such as Nigeria, digital governance initiatives, including e-government platforms, mobile applications, and digital payment systems have increasingly been deployed to enhance transparency, reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks, and foster financial inclusion (Muhammadu & Abdullahi, 2025); (Omotayo et al., 2025). Central to this transformation is the rise of financial technology (Fintech), which leverages digital tools; such as mobile money, blockchain, and AI-powered payment systems; to broaden access to financial services for underserved populations and improve the efficiency of public service delivery (Ajiga et al., 2025).

Theoretically, the adoption of digital governance in local government administrations can be conceptualized through frameworks that integrate New Public Management (NPM) principles and digital inclusion paradigms. NPM emphasizes efficiency, performance measurement, and citizen-centric service delivery, while digital inclusion highlights the role of technological access and financial participation in reducing socio-economic disparities (Lawal, 2017). Empirical evidence suggests that Fintech adoption enhances public financial management and strengthens grassroots service provision by improving transaction efficiency, reducing leakages, and expanding financial access to marginalized groups (Ibukuoluwa et al., 2025); (Abadom, 2025).

Despite these advancements, significant gaps remain in understanding the role of digital governance and Fintech in Nigeria's local government administrations. Challenges such as inadequate ICT infrastructure, low digital literacy, regulatory constraints, and algorithmic biases in digital financial systems have limited the effectiveness and inclusiveness of digital service delivery (Obi, 2025); (Inakefe et al., 2024). Furthermore, while studies highlight Fintech's potential in financial inclusion, empirical analyses focusing specifically on local government-level service delivery remain scarce

(Danladi et al., 2023). This gap underscores the need for research that bridges digital governance, Fintech adoption, and inclusive public service delivery in Nigeria's decentralized administrative structures.

In response to this gap, the present study examines the role of Fintech in enhancing financial inclusion and improving public service delivery in Nigeria's local government administrations. Specifically, the research seeks to answer the question: How does the adoption of Fintech-based digital governance influence financial inclusion and the efficiency of public service delivery at the local government level in Nigeria? The study aims to provide empirical insights that can guide policymakers, ICT planners, and local government administrators in designing interventions that maximize the benefits of digital finance for grassroots communities.

Methodologically, the study employs a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative survey data from local government staff and citizens with qualitative insights from key informant interviews. This approach allows for a comprehensive assessment of both adoption patterns and service delivery outcomes. The paper is structured as follows: Section Two reviews relevant literature and theoretical frameworks; Section Three presents the methodology; Section Four analyzes and discusses the findings; and Section Five concludes with policy recommendations and future research directions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualizing Digital Governance in the Public Sector

Digital governance refers to the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of government operations (Muhammadu & Abdullahi, 2025). In Nigeria, digital governance initiatives have included e-government platforms, Treasury Single Account (TSA), Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), and other ICT-based interventions aimed at streamlining financial management and public service delivery (Omotayo et al., 2025). Empirical evidence suggests that digital governance can enhance citizen engagement, reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks, and improve accountability in public administration (Ekeh & Molomo, 2025).

2.2 Fintech and Financial Inclusion

Financial technology (Fintech) has emerged as a powerful driver of financial inclusion by providing accessible, low-cost, and innovative financial services to populations previously excluded from the formal financial system (Ajiga et al., 2025). Mobile money services, AI-powered credit scoring, and digital payment platforms have been instrumental in extending financial access to underserved and rural populations (Abadom, 2025); (Lawal, 2017). These innovations enhance operational efficiency, reduce transaction costs, and improve transparency in public financial management (Ibukuoluwa et al., 2025).

2.3 Digital Governance and Public Service Delivery

Studies have demonstrated that digital governance and Fintech adoption can significantly improve service delivery outcomes. For instance, e-governance initiatives in Nigeria have positively influenced the efficiency of payments, the distribution of social benefits, and access to local government services (Muhammadu & Abdullahi, 2025); (Oyewo, 2023). However, challenges persist, including inadequate ICT infrastructure, low digital literacy among citizens and public servants, network unreliability, and limited regulatory frameworks for Fintech adoption (Obi, 2025); (Inakefe et al., 2024).

2.4 Fintech Adoption in Local Government Administrations

While the impact of Fintech on national-level financial management is well-documented, there is limited research on its role in local government administrations, where service delivery challenges are

often more acute (Danladi et al., 2023). Local governments in Nigeria are constitutionally responsible for grassroots service provision, yet their capacity is undermined by revenue constraints, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and weak institutional oversight (Oyewo, 2023). Digital governance, paired with Fintech adoption, offers an opportunity to modernize financial operations at the local level, improve resource allocation, and enhance citizen access to essential services (Temitope et al., 2023).

2.5 Gaps in the Literature

Despite growing scholarship on Fintech and digital governance, empirical studies focusing specifically on local government service delivery in Nigeria remain sparse. Most studies examine either national-level reforms or urban contexts, with limited attention to rural or marginalized communities where the need for financial inclusion is greatest (Popoola et al., 2022). Moreover, research exploring the combined effect of digital governance strategies and Fintech adoption on public service delivery is largely absent, highlighting a significant knowledge gap.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the New Public Management (NPM) theory and Digital Inclusion frameworks, which posit that efficiency, citizen-centric governance, and technological accessibility are key drivers of improved public sector performance (Muhammadu & Abdullahi, 2025). NPM emphasizes accountability and results-based management, while digital inclusion emphasizes equitable access to technology and financial services; together providing a comprehensive lens to assess the role of Fintech in enhancing local government service delivery.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine patterns of Fintech adoption and its perceived implications for financial inclusion and public service delivery at the local government level. The quantitative component provides descriptive and exploratory insights into adoption trends and associations, while the qualitative component offers contextual understanding of implementation experiences, institutional constraints, and stakeholder perceptions. This design is appropriate for capturing both measurable outcomes and explanatory insights within resource-constrained research settings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.2 Population and Sampling

The study population comprises local government staff, administrators, and citizens in selected Nigerian local government areas. To ensure diversity in administrative and technological contexts, a multi-stage sampling strategy was employed. First, states with observable Fintech-related initiatives in local government operations were purposively selected. Second, local government councils within these states were randomly chosen. Third, respondents within the councils were selected using stratified sampling to include both administrators and service users.

The quantitative survey included 50 respondents, reflecting the exploratory nature of the study and constraints related to access and field conditions. While the sample size limits statistical generalizability, it is sufficient for identifying patterns, generating hypotheses, and supporting exploratory regression analysis. For the qualitative component, 10 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with senior administrators, IT personnel, and Fintech service providers to capture in-depth operational perspectives.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to capture respondents' experiences with Fintech-enabled services, perceived financial inclusion outcomes, and service delivery efficiency. The instrument included Likert-scale items, multiple-choice questions, and basic demographic variables.

Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews, allowing flexibility to probe issues such as implementation challenges, perceived benefits, institutional readiness, and barriers to Fintech integration. This approach enabled respondents to elaborate on contextual factors influencing digital governance practices at the local government level.

3.4 Measurement of Variables

The independent variable, Digital Governance and Fintech Adoption, was operationalized using indicators such as the use of digital payment platforms, mobile money integration, electronic financial reporting, and administrative automation.

The dependent variables were measured as follows:

- **Financial Inclusion:** Assessed through self-reported access to bank accounts or mobile money services, frequency of digital financial transactions, and participation in digitally enabled local government programs.
- **Public Service Delivery:** Measured using respondents' perceptions of efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of local government services.

Control variables included demographic characteristics (age, gender, education), self-reported digital literacy, and council size, to account for contextual differences that may influence adoption and outcomes.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) to summarize respondent characteristics and adoption patterns. Exploratory multiple regression analysis was employed to examine associations between Fintech adoption indicators and perceived financial inclusion and service delivery outcomes. Given the sample size, regression results are interpreted cautiously as indicative rather than causal.

Scale reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, while content validity was supported through expert review and pre-testing of the survey instrument.

Qualitative data from interviews are analyzed using thematic content analysis, identifying patterns, recurring themes, and contextual factors influencing the adoption and effectiveness of Fintech in local governance.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional authority. All participants provided informed consent, and confidentiality was ensured by anonymizing responses. Data were securely stored and used exclusively for academic research purposes.

3.7 Limitations

Despite the strengths of the mixed-methods approach, the study has limitations. The relatively small sample size and reliance on self-reported data may affect the robustness and generalizability of the

findings. Variations in digital literacy and Fintech penetration across local governments may also influence responses. These limitations are acknowledged, and findings are interpreted as context-specific and exploratory, providing a foundation for future large-scale studies.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Respondent Demographics

The study surveyed 50 respondents comprising 30 citizens and 20 local government staff/administrators across selected Nigerian local governments. Key demographic characteristics are as follows:

Gender: 56% male, 44% female.

Age: 62% aged 25–40 years, 30% aged 41–55 years, 8% above 55.

Education: 70% have tertiary education, 24% secondary education, 6% vocational/other.

Digital Literacy: 68% reported moderate to high familiarity with mobile and digital payment platforms, while 32% reported low digital literacy.

These demographics indicate a relatively young and moderately tech-literate study sample, broadly consistent with patterns reported in prior research on Fintech use in Nigeria (Lawal, 2017).

4.2 Extent of Fintech Adoption in Local Governments

Survey results indicate that Fintech adoption is moderate among local governments:

Mobile payments for services: 60% of respondents reported that local councils accept digital payments for local taxes, utilities, or service fees.

Electronic financial reporting: 52% of staff confirmed that council finances are periodically updated on digital platforms.

Integration with national digital systems (e.g., TSA, IPPIS): 46% of local government administrators reported active integration.

Analysis of survey responses indicates a positive association between reported Fintech use and self-reported financial inclusion outcomes among respondents.

4.3 Financial Inclusion Outcomes

Analysis of survey responses reveals a positive association between Fintech adoption and financial inclusion:

Access to financial services: 58% of citizens reported using mobile money accounts or digital wallets for council-related transactions.

Ease of payments: 64% indicated that digital payment systems reduced travel and waiting time to access services.

Participation in local financial programs: 42% of respondents reported increased participation in social welfare or subsidy programs due to digital payment options.

Analysis of survey responses indicates a positive association between reported Fintech use and self-reported financial inclusion outcomes among respondents.

4.4 Public Service Delivery Improvements

Survey and interview data indicate improvements in service delivery linked to Fintech adoption:

Efficiency of transactions: 62% of respondents agreed that service delivery is faster with digital payments.

Transparency: 56% reported improved visibility into council finances and transactions.

Accountability: KIIs highlighted that digital platforms reduce opportunities for informal payments or revenue leakages.

However, challenges persist. Respondents noted:

Network issues: 38% experienced frequent transaction failures due to unreliable internet.

Digital literacy gaps: 32% of citizens and 25% of staff faced difficulties navigating digital platforms.

Regulatory constraints: Some councils lacked clear policies on Fintech integration, limiting uniform adoption (Inakefe et al., 2024).

Survey and interview data indicate perceived improvements in service delivery associated with Fintech adoption, particularly in transaction speed, transparency, and accountability.

5. Discussion

The results demonstrate that Fintech-enabled digital governance significantly enhances both financial inclusion and service delivery at the local government level, albeit unevenly. Citizens benefit from easier access to digital financial services, faster transactions, and increased participation in local programs, while administrators gain improved oversight and reduced leakages. Yet, adoption is constrained by infrastructural deficiencies, digital literacy gaps, and inconsistent policy implementation.

These findings reinforce the New Public Management (NPM) and Digital Inclusion frameworks, suggesting that technology-driven reforms can improve efficiency and equity in public services, but success depends on both organizational capacity and citizen readiness (Lawal, 2017); (Muhammadu & Abdullahi, 2025).

6. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This study examined the role of digital governance and Fintech adoption in enhancing financial inclusion and public service delivery within Nigeria's local government administrations. The findings indicate that Fintech adoption moderately improves citizens' access to financial services, facilitates participation in local financial programs, and enhances the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of service delivery. However, infrastructural limitations, gaps in digital literacy, and inconsistent regulatory frameworks constrain the full potential of these digital interventions.

The results align with the New Public Management (NPM) framework, which emphasizes efficiency, accountability, and citizen-centric service delivery, as well as the Digital Inclusion paradigm, which stresses equitable access to technological and financial resources. By integrating Fintech solutions into local government operations, public administrators can streamline transactions, reduce revenue leakages, and increase participation in financial and service delivery processes, confirming theoretical predictions on technology-driven governance improvements (Lawal, 2017); (Muhammadu & Abdullahi, 2025).

The study also highlights the nuanced reality of digital governance in resource-constrained settings: adoption alone is insufficient. Effective outcomes require complementary investments in infrastructure,

capacity-building, and regulatory oversight to ensure that technology translates into meaningful improvements in financial inclusion and public service delivery.

6.3 Policy Recommendations

1. Invest in Digital Infrastructure:

Local governments should prioritize reliable internet connectivity, digital payment platforms, and electronic reporting systems to enable seamless Fintech integration.

2. Enhance Digital Literacy and Training:

Both public servants and citizens should be trained in the use of digital financial tools to reduce barriers to adoption and improve service utilization.

3. Develop Regulatory and Institutional Frameworks:

Clear policies should govern the use of Fintech in local governance, including data security, transparency, and equitable access provisions to prevent exclusion and fraud (Obi, 2025).

4. Promote Public Awareness and Engagement:

Local governments should implement awareness campaigns and community outreach programs to inform citizens of available digital services, fostering adoption and trust in public financial systems.

5. Monitor and Evaluate Digital Initiatives:

Continuous assessment of Fintech-enabled service delivery should be institutionalized to identify challenges, measure outcomes, and ensure improvements align with policy objectives and citizen needs.

7. Future Research Directions

1. Expanded Sample and Comparative Analysis:

Future studies could use larger samples across multiple states or regions to validate findings and examine inter-governmental variations in digital governance outcomes.

2. Longitudinal Studies:

Investigating the long-term impact of Fintech adoption on financial inclusion and service delivery would provide deeper insights into sustainability and institutional learning.

3. Integration of Advanced Analytics:

Subsequent research could explore the use of predictive analytics, AI, and blockchain in local government Fintech systems to optimize efficiency and transparency.

4. Equity and Inclusion Focus:

Research could examine how Fintech adoption impacts marginalized populations, ensuring that digital governance interventions do not exacerbate existing social or economic inequalities (Ajiga et al., 2025).

Overall, this study demonstrates that digital governance and Fintech adoption offer promising pathways to enhance financial inclusion and service delivery in Nigerian local governments, but the realization of these benefits depends on robust infrastructure, policy support, and capacity-building. Implementing

the above recommendations can ensure that technology-driven reforms contribute meaningfully to citizen-centric and accountable local governance.

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**THE ECONOMIC POLICY OF INDOCHINA GOVERNOR - GENERAL
ALBERT SARRAUT IN VIETNAM (1911 - 1914, 1917 - 1919)**

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Abstract

This paper examines the economic policy that Albert Sarraut implemented in Vietnam during his two terms as Governor-General of French Indochina, grounded in his doctrine of colonial “development” (*mise en valeur*) and the accompanying policy of “Franco - Vietnamese collaboration”. By analyzing the main policy pillars applied across Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina infrastructure investment in railways, roads, and ports; the expansion of rubber plantations and agriculture; mining development (the Hòn Gai and Đông Triều coal mines); fiscal and budgetary reform; and a Franco-Vietnamese education system geared toward producing the required labor force the paper clarifies the relationship between economic objectives and the broader political goal of maintaining colonial stability in Vietnam. It further identifies the limits of implementation, arising from tensions between the interests of local French settlers and Sarraut's reformist intentions, as well as the resulting economic and social consequences for Vietnam, which laid the groundwork for the “second colonial exploitation” of the 1920s. Drawing on French colonial archival sources and Vietnamese historiography, the study aims to situate Sarraut's economic program within the broader trajectory of French colonial rule, offering a clearer understanding of how economic exploitation and political governance were intertwined in early twentieth-century colonial Vietnam.

Keywords: Albert Sarraut; Governor-General of Indochina; colonial exploitation; Franco-Vietnamese collaboration; colonial economy; French colonial Vietnam

I. Introduction

By the early twentieth century, having largely completed the military pacification of Vietnam, French colonial authorities entered a phase of more systematic and large-scale colonial exploitation, a period historians commonly refer to as the “first colonial exploitation” (Đinh Xuân Lâm, 2007). Within this context, Albert Sarraut who served two terms as Governor-General of French Indochina (1911 - 1914 and 1917 - 1919) emerged as one of the figures with the most profound influence on shaping French colonial policy in Vietnam. Unlike his predecessors, who favored a harsher style of governance, Sarraut advocated combining economic exploitation with a policy of “Franco-Vietnamese collaboration” which he systematized into the doctrine of colonial “development” (*mise en valeur des colonies*) (Sarraut, 1923). Under this doctrine, the development of the colonial economy was framed not merely as serving the interests of the metropole, but as part of a broader “civilizing mission”, thereby providing political grounds for maintaining the stability and legitimacy of colonial rule (Sarraut, 1931).

Studying Sarraut's economic policy in Vietnam is significant on two levels. Theoretically, it helps clarify the relationship between economic and political objectives within the broader French colonial governing mindset a key theme for understanding the nature of French colonialism in Indochina as a whole. Practically, analyzing the specific pillars of this policy (transportation infrastructure, agriculture and plantations, mining, fiscal and budgetary matters, and education geared toward labor-force

development) helps explain the profound economic and social transformations that took place in Vietnam during this period transformations that laid the groundwork for class differentiation, the emergence of new social forces, and, further down the line, the national contradictions that gave rise to later movements for national liberation.

The existing body of research related to this topic is fairly diverse but not tightly focused. The most important primary source consists of Sarraut's own writings, most notably *La mise en valeur des colonies françaises* (1923), in which he systematically laid out his ideology and policy objectives a source that must be approached critically given its inherently self-justifying nature as an apologia for colonization. On the Western scholarly side, Brocheux and Hémery's *Indochine: la colonisation ambiguë, 1858–1954* (2009) is a crucial reference, demonstrating the "ambiguity" between the rhetoric of civilization and the reality of exploitation running through the whole of French colonial policy, with Sarraut identified as the figure who systematized the theoretical justification for this ambiguity. The "association" doctrine he pursued should also be situated in relation to other contemporaneous strands of French colonial thought (Thomas, 2011). On the Vietnamese scholarly side, works such as *Đại cương lịch sử Việt Nam* (Đình Xuân Lâm, 2007), the *Lịch sử Việt Nam* series compiled by the Institute of History (Tạ Thị Thủy, 2013–2017), and *Cơ cấu kinh tế – xã hội Việt Nam thời thuộc địa* (Nguyễn Văn Khánh, 2004) provide useful data and analytical frameworks, though they generally situate Sarraut within the broader periodization of the "first colonial exploitation" rather than offering a focused, in-depth analysis of the economic dimension of his two terms specifically. Notably, existing scholarship dealing specifically with Sarraut in Vietnam tends to concentrate on the educational and political dimensions of his tenure (the reform of quốc ngữ writing and the Franco-Vietnamese education system) rather than on the purely economic dimension. This is the gap the present paper seeks to address.

On this basis, the paper aims to systematically analyze the economic policy that Albert Sarraut implemented in Vietnam during his two terms as Governor-General of Indochina, to clarify the relationship between economic and political objectives, and to assess the results, limitations, and consequences of this policy. To this end, the paper addresses the following specific tasks: (i) clarifying the content and characteristics of Sarraut's economic policy in the fields of infrastructure, agriculture and plantations, mining, fiscal and budgetary affairs, and education for economic labor needs; (ii) analyzing the implementation process and the limitations of the policy, arising from tensions between the interests of local French settlers and Sarraut's reformist intentions; and (iii) assessing the economic and social impact of this policy on Vietnam, situated within the broader trajectory of colonial history.

The object of study is the economic policy of Indochina Governor-General Albert Sarraut; the spatial scope is limited to Vietnamese territory (Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina) within the Indochinese Union; and the temporal scope covers Sarraut's two terms as Governor-General, 1911 - 1914 and 1917 - 1919. Methodologically, the paper combines historical and logical methods to reconstruct and analyze events and policies in chronological and causal sequence; employs analysis and synthesis of both primary and secondary sources; and applies a comparative method, contrasting Sarraut's policy with the periods immediately preceding and following it (the Doumer era and the subsequent "second colonial exploitation") in order to highlight the distinctive features of the period under study.

II. Research and Findings

2.1. Context and Ideological Foundations of Sarraut's Economic Policy

Albert Sarraut was appointed Governor-General of Indochina by decree on 1 June 1911, inheriting an administrative and economic apparatus that had already been shaped by Paul Doumer in the late nineteenth century through key fiscal instruments such as the state monopolies on opium, alcohol, and salt. Doumer had initiated major projects such as the Trans-Indochina railway and the Long Biên (Paul Doumer) Bridge, financed through revenue generated by these three monopolies. Sarraut inherited this legacy but placed it within a new theoretical framework: rather than pursuing exploitation through pure administrative coercion, he sought to combine economic investment with a policy of "Franco-

Vietnamese collaboration”, premised on the belief that political stability and the loyalty of the native population could only be secured by sharing a measure of economic benefit and expanding access to education and administrative positions for capable Vietnamese. This ideology was later systematized in *La mise en valeur des colonies françaises* (Sarraut, 1923), but it had already been put into practice on the ground from the very first year of his first term in Vietnam.

2.2. Investment in Transportation Infrastructure

Transportation infrastructure is the field that most clearly demonstrates both the continuity between Doumer's and Sarraut's approaches to “exploitation” and the distinctive personal imprint Sarraut left on colonial development. In his very first year in office, in 1912, Sarraut signed a decision to construct a road network across the whole of Indochina, including Colonial Route No. 1 (the Mandarin Road) a decision regarded at the time as remarkably ambitious. This route later became the backbone artery of transportation running the length of Vietnam, serving both economic purposes (the circulation of goods, transport of agricultural products and minerals) and political-military purposes (territorial control).

At the same time, in 1912, under Sarraut's administration, construction began on the Tháp Chàm–Đà Lạt rack railway, with a total cost exceeding 200 million francs, although the full line would not be completed until 1932. This was a technically complex infrastructure project given the mountainous terrain, it required adopting Swiss rack-railway technology and it reflects both the scale and ambition of the public investment program under Sarraut, while also illustrating a broader pattern common to colonial infrastructure projects: large capital outlays, construction timelines spanning multiple administrations, and original objectives (serving plantation exploitation, developing resort centers such as Đà Lạt) that remained inseparable from the interests of colonial capital.

The expansion of the road, rail, and port network during this period relied mainly on public loans (emprunts) issued by the Indochinese colonial government and backed by the metropolitan budget (Tạ Thị Thúy, 2013–2017; Brocheux & Hémery, 2009) a financing mechanism that permitted the mobilization of substantial capital but simultaneously placed a long-term debt burden on the colonial budget, which was largely offset by taxes levied on the native population.

2.3. Agriculture and the Plantation Economy

Land and plantation policy under Sarraut continued a trend established since the late nineteenth century (Nguyễn Văn Khánh, 2004; Phan Khoang, 1971), whereby the colonial government granted large tracts of uncultivated land to French capitalists for the establishment of plantations particularly rubber plantations, a high-value export crop well suited to the climate of Cochinchina and the southeastern region. As Governor-General, Sarraut held direct authority over the approval of large-scale land concessions (plantations ranging from 1,000 to 4,000 hectares fell under his direct approval authority), making land policy a direct instrument through which he promoted the flow of French capital into colonial agriculture.

This policy, however, generated an inherent contradiction: while Sarraut proclaimed a policy of “collaboration” and professed concern for the welfare of native farmers, the expansion of plantations in practice meant shrinking traditional cultivated land, pushing a segment of the peasantry into landlessness and forcing them to become tenant farmers or wage laborers on French-owned plantations. This is one of the clearest illustrations of the gap between the rhetoric and the practical implementation of policy under Sarraut.

2.4. Mining and Fiscal and Budgetary Affairs

Alongside agriculture, mineral extraction particularly coal mining in the Hòn Gai and Đông Triều areas of Tonkin (Đinh Xuân Lâm, 2007) continued to be intensified under Sarraut as part of a strategy of

resource extraction for export and to supply fuel for the expanding transportation system (locomotives, steamships). As in the plantation sector, mining operations relied heavily on cheap native labor working under harsh conditions a reality that Sarraut's "collaboration" policy did little to substantively change.

Financially, the Governor-General of Indochina served as the chief accounting authority for the Indochinese budget, holding substantial power over the allocation of revenue (derived mainly from the head tax and the salt, alcohol, and opium taxes a legacy of the Doumer era) toward public investment programs. A notable feature of the colonial budget structure during this period was that expenditure on the administrative and security apparatus continued to account for the largest share, compared to spending on economic and social development (Nguyễn Thế Anh, 1970) revealing the practical limits of the "mise en valeur" slogan when measured against the actual expenditure structure.

Notably, the Bank of Indochina (Banque de l'Indochine), established in 1875, continued to play a central role in financing the major infrastructure and plantation projects undertaken during Sarraut's tenure (Brocheux & Hémery, 2009), reinforcing its position as an indispensable link between political power (the Governor-General's office) and French financial capital interests in Indochina.

2.5. Education and the Development of an Economic Labor Force

A notable point of difference between Sarraut and his predecessors was the degree of investment in education, which he regarded as a component intrinsically linked to long-term economic objectives: training a cadre of skilled native personnel (civil servants, teachers, technicians) to staff an increasingly complex colonial apparatus, while reducing the cost of employing French personnel brought over from the metropole. This is most clearly reflected in the establishment of the École Supérieure de Pédagogie (Higher Teacher Training College) under a decree signed by Sarraut on 15 October 1917, intended to train teaching staff for primary normal schools and higher elementary schools. This was accompanied by reforms to the examination system and to general education policy aimed at promoting the wider use of quốc ngữ script and the Franco-Vietnamese education model.

The link between educational reform and economic objectives is made especially clear against the backdrop of the post-World War I period, when owing to heavy losses in manpower and material the colonial government needed to prepare a native labor force, particularly technical workers and professionally trained staff, for the impending "second colonial exploitation" and the policy of "collaboration with the natives" was regarded as vital to sustaining both the colonial regime and its exploitation policy (Trần Xuân Hiệp & Nguyễn Hữu Phúc, 2020). Educational investment under Sarraut was thus not purely a matter of "civilizing" rhetoric, as officially proclaimed, but also a calculated investment in the human capital that would be needed for the colonial economy in the near future. This reform program also formally renamed "Franco-Vietnamese schools" (trường Pháp – Việt) as "Franco-native schools" (trường Pháp Bản xứ), and while it expanded instruction in quốc ngữ at the elementary level, it simultaneously privileged French as the compulsory language of instruction from the third grade onward, treating quốc ngữ chiefly as a transitional medium toward French rather than as a language to be promoted for its own sake (Trần Xuân Hiệp & Nguyễn Hữu Phúc, 2020).

2.6. Implementation and Policy Limitations

Despite being grounded in a relatively well-developed theoretical framework, the implementation of Sarraut's economic policy in Vietnam encountered several structural limitations.

First, there was tension between Sarraut's reformist intentions and the interests of local French settlers (colons) and long-established French capital enterprises in Indochina. This group tended to resist any concession to the native population whether economic or political out of concern for its own privileges and existing profits, a pattern of conflict that would recur even more sharply under Varenne (1925–1928) (Brocheux & Hémery, 2009; Thomas, 2011).

Second, there were limitations in financial resources: the bulk of the colonial budget continued to be allocated to the administrative and security apparatus, leaving long-term economic and social investment programs (education, health care, farmer support) without resources commensurate with official policy pronouncements.

Third, the “collaboration” policy was inherently two-sided: while it expanded limited opportunities for the native intellectual and civil-servant class, the overall economic policy (regarding land, taxation, and trade monopolies) fundamentally left the pre-existing structure of exploitation intact, meaning the majority of Vietnamese farmers and laborers did not benefit proportionately from the process of colonial “development”.

These limitations explain why, although regarded as a relatively “progressive” Governor-General compared to his predecessors, the concrete economic legacy Sarraut left behind remained firmly within the framework of the colonial exploitative economic model and directly paved the way for the much larger-scale “second colonial exploitation” of the 1920s.

III. Conclusion

The foregoing analysis confirms that Albert Sarraut's economic policy in Vietnam during his two terms as Governor-General of Indochina (1911 - 1914, 1917 - 1919) was clearly built upon the model of colonial exploitation established by Paul Doumer in the late nineteenth century (Đình Xuân Lâm, 2007; Phan Khoang, 1971), while simultaneously being overlaid with a new theoretical layer bearing Sarraut's personal imprint the doctrine of colonial “development” (Sarraut, 1923, 1931). Across the five pillars examined, transportation infrastructure, agriculture and plantations, mining, fiscal and budgetary affairs, and education for labor-force development, it is evident that Sarraut's policy was not simply resource extraction and labor exploitation carried out through the harsh methods of the Doumer era, but was instead wrapped in an additional layer of “civilizing” discourse intended to lend political legitimacy to the colonization project.

However, the findings also reveal a clear gap between policy rhetoric and practical implementation. The large scale infrastructure programs (the road network, the Tháp Chàm - Đà Lạt rack railway) reflected genuine developmental ambition, yet primarily served the exploitative interests of French capital, while the financial burden fell upon the colonial budget. Plantation and mining policy continued to sustain the pre-existing structure of land and labor exploitation of the native population. Even the field considered most progressive, education was in fact closely tied to calculated preparation of the labor force needed for the impending “second colonial exploitation” rather than being a purely altruistic “civilizing” policy for the benefit of the native population. These limitations stemmed from a structural contradiction between Sarraut's individual reformist intentions and the entrenched interests of local French settlers and capital enterprises a contradiction that the authority of a single Governor-General, however well-intentioned, could not fully resolve.

Viewed within the longer historical trajectory, Sarraut's economic policy functioned as a hinge period: it both completed and expanded upon the infrastructural, financial, and human resource foundations laid down during the Doumer era, and directly created the ideological and material preconditions for the much larger “second colonial exploitation” of the 1920s, associated with subsequent Governors-General such as Maurice Long, Alexandre Varenne, and Pierre Pasquier (Tạ Thị Thúy, 2013 - 2017). At the same time, the social consequences of this process rural class differentiation, the emergence of a plantation and mining labor force, and the rise of a Western-educated intellectual class trained within the very education system Sarraut built became important social preconditions for the patriotic and revolutionary national-liberation movements that emerged in Vietnam over the following decades.

Thus, studying Albert Sarraut's economic policy is significant not only for clarifying the characteristics of a specific historical period, but also for illuminating the “ambiguous” nature simultaneously exploitative and civilizing, repressive and reformist — that runs throughout the whole of French colonialism in Indochina (Brocheux & Hémery, 2009). Within the scope and source material available,

this paper has provided an initial systematization of the pillars of Sarraut's economic policy in Vietnam; future research could further explore detailed annual budgetary and tax data drawn from the ANOM archives, as well as offer a more precise quantitative comparison between his two terms and the periods immediately preceding and following them.

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**DRONES, MISSILES, AND THE WEAPONIZATION OF INSECURITY: HOW WEAPONS
RESHAPE POLITICAL POWER IN UKRAINE AND IRAN**

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Abstract

The growing use of drones, missiles, and precision-strike technologies is transforming contemporary warfare and challenging conventional understandings of military and political power. This paper examines how weapons reshape political power and security relationships through a comparative analysis of Ukraine and Iran. It asks how changing weapons technologies generate coercive and strategic leverage and how their development produces cycles of adaptation and counter-adaptation between adversaries. The paper argues that weapons should be understood not simply as instruments of destruction but as political technologies whose significance depends on their integration into military strategy, technological innovation, defence production, and broader security relationships. Ukraine demonstrates how rapid technological adaptation and the use of drones and precision systems can generate asymmetric leverage, while Iran illustrates how missile and drone capabilities can support deterrence, retaliation, and strategic power projection. The paper further argues that weaponization is inherently interactive: the acquisition and deployment of new capabilities encourage countermeasures, technological adaptation, and renewed forms of coercion. Operation Epic Fury provides a contemporary illustration of this dynamic through efforts to degrade Iran's missile and drone capabilities. The paper contributes to debates on contemporary warfare by showing that the political significance of weapons lies not only in their destructive capacity but also in their capacity to reshape coercion, vulnerability, adaptation, and strategic leverage.

Keywords: Weaponization of Insecurity, Drones, Missiles, Military Technology, Ukraine and Iran

Introduction

Weapons are commonly understood as instruments of military power because they enable actors to destroy targets, threaten adversaries, and influence the conduct of conflict. Yet possession alone does not explain why some weapons become politically consequential while others lose much of their strategic significance. A military capability may initially generate a substantial advantage, only for that advantage to decline once an adversary develops effective means of detecting, intercepting, disrupting, or otherwise neutralizing it. The political significance of weapons therefore depends not only on their range, destructive capacity, technological sophistication, or numerical availability, but also on whether the effects they produce can survive adversarial responses (Schelling, 1966; Rosen, 1991; Murray, 2011).

Contemporary conflict has made this problem increasingly visible through the rapid **weaponization of insecurity** a process wherein state and non-state actors deploy emerging precision-strike and autonomous capabilities to exploit system vulnerabilities, generate coercive leverage, and reshape political power relationships. The war in Ukraine demonstrates how rapidly military technologies move from initial deployment to countermeasure, transforming modern combat into a software-defined, machine-speed adaptation loop (Kasapoglu, 2026). Unmanned systems that provide crucial advantages in reconnaissance, targeting, and strike operations are continually subjected to electronic warfare, spectrum jamming, interception, and algorithmic modification (Watling and Reynolds, 2025).

Consequently, the military value of particular systems shifts rapidly as both sides learn from operational employment and deploy continuous counter-adaptation measures (DeVore, 2023).

Iran presents a comparable underlying dynamic within a markedly different strategic environment. Facing long-term conventional disadvantages, sanctions, technological restrictions, and sustained competition with militarily superior adversaries, Iran has developed missiles and asymmetric capabilities as alternative means of deterrence, retaliation, and long-range cost-imposition (Cordesman, 2014; Eisenstadt, 2016). However, their strategic significance remains inextricably tied to ongoing adversarial efforts to intercept platforms through integrated air defense networks, restrict technological development, target infrastructure, and mitigate the political effects associated with their employment. Contemporary campaigns such as Operation Epic Fury vividly illustrate this dynamic through intensive, targeted attempts by militarily superior adversaries to degrade and dismantle Iran's long-range strike capabilities, launch networks, and production infrastructure.

Ukraine and Iran are not equivalent cases. They differ substantially in their conflict dynamics, organizational structures, strategic environments, and geopolitical conditions. Ukraine represents an active, large-scale interstate war where adaptation unfolds through immediate, bottom-up battlefield interaction. Iran represents a long-term posture of asymmetric deterrence, regional competition, and force development tested under acute operational disruption. The analytical bridge connecting them lies in a shared question: *How do changing weapons technologies generate coercive and strategic leverage, and how do military capabilities remain strategically consequential after opponents identify the vulnerabilities they exploit and deploy measures to neutralize them?*

This question directly challenges static assessments of military power. While traditional metrics inventory counts, range, accuracy, payload, survivability, and technological sophistication remain important, they provide only a partial explanation of political effect. A weapon may possess considerable destructive potential yet generate limited strategic leverage if easily neutralized. Conversely, a relatively inexpensive capability can acquire significant political weight when it exposes an opponent to new risks, forces changes in military behavior, or imposes severe defensive and economic costs (Schelling, 1966; Pape, 1996; Plichta and Rossiter, 2024).

The political value of weapons consequently derives in part from the vulnerabilities they generate. A missile can force an adversary to reconsider the security of critical infrastructure; a drone can heighten the vulnerability of forces previously operating with relative freedom; and the credible threat of retaliation can alter calculations regarding escalation even if a weapon is never fired. Military capabilities thus influence political behavior by shaping expectations surrounding future costs, risks, and strategic options (Schelling, 1966; Morgan, 2003).

These vulnerabilities, however, are rarely permanent. Once a capability creates an effective vulnerability, adversaries have strong incentives to develop technological, organizational, and operational countermeasures. Electronic warfare can disrupt unmanned systems; integrated air and missile defense can diminish long-range strike effectiveness; and tactical adjustments in dispersion and concealment can restrict operational opportunities. The political effects produced by weapons are therefore subject to continuous contestation.

This dynamic places adaptation at the center of the relationship between military capability and political power. The initial effectiveness of a weapon does not guarantee its long-term strategic significance. What matters is whether the employing actor can adapt once an opponent begins neutralizing the initial advantage. This response may involve modifying technology, altering operational employment, reorganizing supporting institutional systems, or substituting alternative capabilities that perform a similar strategic function (Grissom, 2007; Murray, 2011).

Existing scholarship provides important insights into this problem but rarely connects its distinct dimensions. Studies of military innovation and adaptation explain how defense organizations change under pressure (Posen, 1984; Rosen, 1991; Murray, 2011), while research on coercion and deterrence addresses how threats shape political calculations (Schelling, 1966; Morgan, 2003). Less attention has

been directed toward the relationship between adversarial adaptation and the durability of strategic leverage. A capability may initially generate political influence by exposing an opponent to vulnerability, but that influence erodes as the vulnerability is mitigated. Actors must then modify the capability, adapt the broader military apparatus, or preserve the strategic function through alternative means.

This article introduces the concept of **adaptive power** to capture this dynamic process. Adaptive power refers to the capacity through which actors maintain, regenerate, or transform the strategic effects of military capabilities under sustained adversarial pressure. The concept shifts analytical focus away from weapons as isolated assets and toward the broader technological, organizational, and strategic systems through which they generate political outcomes.

A qualitative comparison of Ukraine and Iran reveals two distinct operational pathways of adaptive power:

- **Generative Adaptation (demonstrated by Ukraine):** wherein battlefield pressure, rapid experimentation, and organizational learning continuously produce new operational possibilities (Bondar, 2025; Watling and Reynolds, 2025).
- **Functional Resilience (demonstrated by Iran):** wherein diversification, substitution, and overlapping strike vectors preserve overarching deterrence and retaliatory functions despite severe capability degradation and kinetic targeting (Cordesman, 2014; Eisenstadt, 2016).

Ultimately, weapons do not generate durable political power simply through inherent destructive capacity. Their political significance hinges on whether actors can preserve or transform the strategic effects of those capabilities as opponents adapt. The durability of political leverage depends not merely on what weapons an actor possesses, but on its institutional capacity to keep those weapons strategically consequential after the initial conditions of their success have changed.

The remainder of this article proceeds as follows: Section 2 (Literature Review) synthesizes existing research on military innovation, adaptation, deterrence, and strategic leverage. Section 3 (Theoretical Framework) outlines the conceptual architecture of adaptive power. Section 4 (Methodology and Case Selection) details the comparative design and rationale. Section 5 (Generative Adaptation in Ukraine) and Section 6 (Functional Resilience in Iran) analyze the empirical cases. Section 7 (Comparative Discussion) synthesizes how these distinct adaptive pathways sustain or transform political leverage under adversarial pressure, followed by concluding remarks and policy implications in Section 8 (Conclusion and Strategic Implications).

Literature Review

Military Innovation and Adaptation

Scholarship on military innovation has long demonstrated that military effectiveness depends on far more than the mere acquisition of advanced hardware. Novel technologies must be systematically integrated into doctrine, institutional structures, training regimes, and operational concepts. Early foundational studies by Posen (1984) and Rosen (1991) established that shifts in military capability are intrinsically bound to organizational processes. A new weapon system does not generate an automatic strategic advantage; its political and operational utility depends on how effectively it is embedded within a broader military ecosystem.

The literature on military adaptation expanded this premise by shifting analytical focus from peacetime force development to wartime learning under operational pressure. Authors such as Grissom (2007) and Murray (2011) emphasize that armed forces must continuously learn from combat outcomes, modifying their tactics, technologies, and institutional procedures in response to evolving battlefield conditions. Farrell (2010) similarly demonstrates that adaptation often manifests not as grand structural transformations, but through incremental adjustments in tactics, techniques, and off-the-shelf technologies. Yet, these micro-adjustments can yield disproportionate operational effects.

Consequently, military power is defined not merely by initial innovation, but by an organization's capacity for continuous learning and adaptation during active conflict.

This institutional capacity is vital in modern, software-defined warfare, where capabilities are exposed to immediate and relentless adversarial responses. A technological breakthrough may yield a temporary tactical advantage, but that advantage rapidly degrades as an adversary develops countermeasures. Military power is therefore generated through continuous interaction and operational feedback loops rather than static, isolated technological superiority.

Adaptation and Counter-Adaptation

Military adaptation is an inherently interactive and competitive phenomenon. When one actor fields a capability that generates a significant operational advantage, the adversary possesses strong incentives to identify its technical or tactical vulnerabilities and develop neutralizing countermeasures. This dynamic initiates continuous cycles of adaptation and counter-adaptation. A tactical or technological breakthrough may secure a temporary margin of superiority, but that margin remains fragile if an opponent can jam, intercept, evade, or otherwise neutralize the platform.

The proliferation of uncrewed aerial systems (UAS), electronic warfare (EW), precision-guided munitions, and digital command networks has drastically accelerated these adaptation cycles. The war in Ukraine exemplifies this compressed timeline, illustrating how rapidly battlefield employment exposes technical vulnerabilities that are subsequently countered by technological modifications. Unmanned systems deployed for reconnaissance, targeting, and strike are constantly forced to adapt as adversaries deploy spectrum jamming, kinetic interception, operational camouflage, and algorithmic counter-measures (Watling and Reynolds, 2025; AARC, 2026).

The central analytical challenge, therefore, is not simply whether a state can innovate at the onset of conflict, but whether it can sustain meaningful operational effects once an opponent deploys countermeasures. Strategic advantage is not fixed at the moment a weapon is fielded; it depends on an organization's ability to iteratively adapt as the operational environment shifts.

Weapons, Vulnerability, and Strategic Effects

Weapons acquire political significance when they create strategic vulnerabilities that an opponent is forced to address. These vulnerabilities extend beyond physical destruction to include imposing severe defensive costs, restricting operational freedom of action, heightening uncertainty, and altering calculations regarding escalation. A capability can thus produce strategic leverage prior to, or completely independent of its kinetic employment.

Schelling's (1966) foundational work on strategic coercion illustrates how military capabilities influence political behavior by shaping expectations regarding future costs and risks. Pape (1996) similarly posits that the political efficacy of military force hinges on how physical pressure impairs an adversary's capacity to achieve its overarching strategic objectives. Consequently, the value of a weapon system cannot be measured strictly by its explosive yield or platform count. Missiles, drones, and asymmetric strike systems derive political leverage by exposing critical infrastructure to risk, altering an adversary's operational calculus, or forcing unsustainable investments in defensive architecture (Plichta and Rossiter, 2024).

Strategic vulnerabilities, however, are rarely static. Once identified, they become targets of adversarial adaptation. Opponents routinely deploy integrated air and missile defense, electronic warfare, deep surveillance, or operational dispersion to mitigate their exposure. As these countermeasures take effect, the political leverage generated by a capability can deteriorate even if the physical stock of weapons remains fully intact.

Coercion, Deterrence, and Strategic Leverage

The literature on coercion and deterrence details how military capabilities condition the choices of foreign actors. Coercive diplomacy relies on the capacity to impose or credibly threaten costs, whereas deterrence seeks to prevent specific actions by shaping expectations regarding their potential consequences (Schelling, 1966). Military capabilities can therefore achieve strategic objectives without achieving total battlefield destruction.

Morgan (2003) underscores that deterrence relies on broader strategic relationships rather than raw material capabilities alone. The political weight of weapons lies in their capacity to manipulate an opponent's perception of risk, cost, and retaliatory severity. This dynamic explains how conventionally weaker actors can generate strategic overmatch. Iranian missile and drone capabilities, for example, have acquired political leverage by providing alternative pathways for deterrence and cost-imposition under conditions of severe conventional disadvantage (Eisenstadt, 2016; Cordesman, 2014).

Nevertheless, coercive and deterrent effects are not permanent. A threat loses credibility and efficacy when an adversary develops the means to intercept, disrupt, or neutralize the underlying delivery vectors. This reality raises a fundamental question within coercion theory: *How can strategic leverage be preserved when the military capabilities that initially produced it become vulnerable to adversarial countermeasures?*

The Gap in the Literature

While existing scholarship provides vital insights into these individual dynamics, it leaves a critical gap at the intersection of military adaptation and strategic coercion. Research on military innovation and adaptation thoroughly explains how defense organizations change under operational pressure (Posen, 1984; Rosen, 1991; Grissom, 2007; Murray, 2011). Concurrently, research on coercion and deterrence explains how military threats manipulate political calculations (Schelling, 1966; Pape, 1996; Morgan, 2003). However, these two literatures are rarely synthesized.

The unaddressed connection lies in the strategic aftermath: *what occurs after a weapon exploits a vulnerability and the adversary responds with effective countermeasures?* A capability may initially generate substantial political leverage, but that leverage erodes as countermeasures take hold. To prevent strategic marginalization, the employing actor must adapt the technology, alter its operational employment, reorganize supporting institutional structures, or deploy alternative capabilities capable of achieving the same strategic function.

This theoretical disconnect is acute in contemporary conflicts characterized by compressed adaptation cycles and software-defined warfare. A weapon system does not possess a fixed political value. Its strategic efficacy is defined by a dynamic interaction between the capability, the vulnerability it exploits, the adversary's countermeasures, and the employing actor's capacity for continuous adaptation.

This article directly bridges this literature gap by introducing the concept of **adaptive power**. By synthesizing military adaptation theory with strategic coercion, adaptive power demonstrates how the political significance of weapons is maintained, regenerated, or transformed under sustained adversarial pressure.

Conceptual Framework: Adaptive Power and the Political Effects of Weapons

Military capabilities are typically evaluated by material metrics: range, yield, speed, survivability, and fleet size. Yet material characteristics alone cannot explain the political effects of weapons. A technologically advanced platform loses strategic value if an adversary rapidly develops effective countermeasures. Conversely, a relatively modest capability can yield significant strategic leverage if it creates operational vulnerabilities that impose costs or alter an opponent's behavior.

The political significance of weapons is therefore relational rather than fixed. Capabilities acquire strategic value through dynamic interactions with adversaries, defensive architectures, and the operational ecosystem. Adaptation sits at the center of this relationship. Building on military innovation literature, effectiveness depends not merely on fielding hardware, but on integrating systems into doctrine, organization, and training (Posen, 1984; Rosen, 1991). Military adaptation extends this by demonstrating how organizations learn under fire, continuously updating technologies and operational practices (Grissom, 2007; Murray, 2011).

Because advantages are fleeting, adversaries face strong incentives to neutralize exploitable vulnerabilities. They intercept delivery vectors, jam frequencies, target command nodes, or alter operational profiles. The enduring value of a weapon system consequently depends on whether the employing actor can adapt in response.

The Concept of Adaptive Power

This dynamic is captured through the concept of **adaptive power**: the institutional and technical capacity through which an actor maintains, regenerates, or transforms the strategic effects of military capabilities under sustained adversarial pressure. Adaptive power shifts analytical focus away from weapons as isolated assets toward the broader systems through which military force achieves political outcomes.

Adaptive power is distinct from technical innovation alone. The introduction of a novel weapon does not guarantee durable political influence. Its value hinges on how effectively the surrounding ecosystem intelligence, command networks, logistics, training, and operational feedback loops modifies and sustains the capability after its initial vulnerabilities are exposed.

Capability, Vulnerability, and Strategic Leverage

Weapons generate political leverage by exposing an adversary to risks that demand a response. Beyond physical destruction, capabilities force opponents to invest in costly defenses, disperse forces, or reassess escalation risks (Schelling, 1966; Pape, 1996). Vulnerability is thus the operational bridge converting military force into political effect.

Because vulnerabilities are targeted by countermeasures, adaptive power manifests through two distinct pathways:

- **Generative Adaptation:** Occurs when operational pressure produces entirely new capabilities or tactical applications. Rapid feedback loops connect battlefield experiences with technological modifications, generating novel options and expanding strategic choices (e.g., Ukraine's rapid iteration of uncrewed systems and spectrum warfare).
- **Functional Resilience:** Focuses on preserving a vital strategic outcome despite the degradation of specific platforms. Through diversification, substitution, and operational dispersion, an actor preserves functions like deterrence or long-range strike even when primary weapons are neutralized (e.g., Iran's multi-layered missile and drone doctrine).

Strategic Implications

Both pathways fuel strategic leverage, the capacity to alter an opponent's calculations, available choices, or perceptions of risk (Schelling, 1966; Morgan, 2003). Adaptive power explains why material superiority does not guarantee permanent leverage; materially stronger actors can see their advantages decline if they fail to counter rapid adversarial learning. Conversely, weaker actors can generate outsized political effects by continually adapting available technologies to exploit vulnerabilities.

In sum, military power is a continuous feedback process: Capability → Vulnerability → Countermeasure → Adaptation → Strategic Effect. Weapons matter because they create vulnerabilities,

but those effects are perpetually contested. Adaptive power defines an actor's ability to preserve or reshape strategic outcomes in an environment of constant adversarial adaptation.

Methodology and Comparative Case Selection

This study employs a qualitative comparative case-study design to analyze how military capabilities generate, preserve, or transform strategic leverage under conditions of continuous adversarial adaptation. A comparative methodology is appropriate because the interactive sequence connecting capability, vulnerability, countermeasure, and strategic effect can only be understood within specific operational and geopolitical environments (George and Bennett, 2005; Yin, 2018). Comparative case studies are particularly effective for isolating common theoretical mechanisms across contrasting structural contexts and tracing how similar causal processes unfold along distinct empirical pathways (George and Bennett, 2005).

Ukraine and Iran are selected not as equivalent empirical cases, but as contrasting operational environments that highlight a shared analytical problem. Ukraine represents an active, large-scale interstate war characterized by real-time battlefield feedback, rapid technological iteration, and software-defined adaptation cycles. In contrast, Iran operates within a long-term posture of asymmetric deterrence, regional rivalry, trade sanctions, and structural conventional disadvantages (Eisenstadt, 2016). The cases differ substantially in their conflict dynamics, military-organizational architectures, and industrial-technological bases.

This structural variation is analytically advantageous. Comparative research does not require case homogeneity; rather, contextual variation allows researchers to evaluate whether a core explanatory mechanism here, *adaptive power* operates robustly across different strategic conditions (George and Bennett, 2005). Both Ukraine and Iran face intense military pressure and persistent adversarial efforts to neutralize their primary strike vectors. However, their operational expressions diverge: Ukraine demonstrates rapid, decentralized technological and organizational adaptation under acute battlefield pressure, whereas Iran emphasizes structural diversification, platform substitution, and functional preservation under long-term capability constraints (Cordesman, 2014).

The comparative analysis is organized around process-tracing rather than descriptive equivalence (George and Bennett, 2005). The study systematically traces how specific military capabilities create operational vulnerabilities, how opponents deploy countermeasures to mitigate those vulnerabilities, and how employing actors subsequently modify, reorganize, or substitute capabilities to preserve political leverage. This process-oriented approach evaluates strategic effectiveness as an ongoing sequence of interaction rather than a static material attribute.

Primary and secondary evidence is drawn from peer-reviewed security studies, official doctrine and defense policy statements, technical evaluations from established military research institutions (e.g., RUSI, CSIS, AARC), and credible open-source intelligence. Given the contested nature of active conflicts, source triangulation is systematically applied to mitigate bias, correct for strategic inflation or operational secrecy, and ensure analytical credibility (Yin, 2018). Tactical or technological developments are classified as analytically relevant only when explicitly tied to an identifiable vulnerability, adversarial countermeasure, or shift in strategic leverage.

Methodologically, the analysis distinguishes between the *physical survival* of a weapon platform and the *functional survival* of its strategic effect. A platform's tactical degradation does not equal strategic failure if organizational adjustments, spectrum modifications, or alternative capabilities sustain the overarching strategic outcome. Conversely, physical inventory counts remain analytically irrelevant if the command, targeting, or operational networks required for effective employment are neutralized.

To ensure comparative rigor, both empirical cases are evaluated through five standardized analytical questions:

1. What operational vulnerability or strategic opportunity does the capability initially exploit?

2. What technical, operational, or doctrinal countermeasures does the adversary deploy?
3. To what extent do these countermeasures erode the capability's initial strategic effect?
4. How does the employing actor modify technology, alter tactics, reorganize structures, or substitute capabilities in response?
5. Does this adaptive cycle successfully regenerate strategic leverage or alter political calculations?

Applying these questions isolates the distinct pathways of adaptive power in each case. In Ukraine, the analysis examines **Generative Adaptation**, the rapid creation of novel operational capabilities under battlefield pressure. In Iran, it examines **Functional Resilience** the preservation of long-range deterrence and cost-imposition through structural redundancy and substitution. Ultimately, the objective is not to weigh relative military strength, but to explain how distinct adaptive pathways shape the political durability of modern weapons.

Ukraine: Generative Adaptation under Material Constraint

Ukraine's operational experience since the 2022 full-scale Russian invasion illustrates how rapid military adaptation generates strategic leverage under severe material asymmetry. Facing an adversary with vast conventional reserves, Ukraine's defense ecosystem has sustained high-tempo cycles of technological experimentation, organizational learning, and battlefield feedback. The political and operational significance of this process stems not merely from acquiring hardware, such as uncrewed aerial systems (UAS), but from maintaining institutional structures that rapidly translate operational problems into technical solutions (Bondar, 2025; Watling and Reynolds, 2025).

Uncrewed platforms clearly demonstrate this dynamic. Drones serve vital roles in reconnaissance, target acquisition, kinetic strike, and battle damage assessment. However, their military utility is non-static; it relies entirely on a complex ecosystem comprising radio-frequency management, software, satellite communications, targeting algorithms, and operator tactics. Ukrainian adaptation has thus centered on continuously modifying this wider operational ecosystem rather than relying on fixed platform capabilities (Bondar, 2025).

This rapid responsiveness has been enabled by systemic institutional reforms within Ukraine's defense procurement framework. The war compressed traditional acquisition pipelines, directly integrating commercial tech firms, civilian engineers, front-line units, and tactical commanders into iterative feedback loops (Bondar, 2025). By bypassing centralized, slow-moving bureaucratic procurement, military users communicate operational friction, such as new electronic warfare (EW) jamming frequencies, directly to software developers and hardware builders, yielding ultra-short adaptation cycles.

Adaptation has consequently evolved into a continuous, interactive process. The deployment of a capability exposes a tactical vulnerability; adversaries deploy countermeasures; operational units and commercial developers modify the technology or doctrine; and updated systems are redeployed to the front line. This interaction is acutely visible in spectrum warfare. When Russian forces deploy dense electronic suppression to disrupt satellite control and GPS navigation, Ukrainian units counter not by abandoning uncrewed systems, but by altering flight profiles, incorporating multi-frequency software-defined radios, or deploying machine-vision terminal guidance (Watling and Reynolds, 2025).

The strategic consequences extend far beyond the physical destruction of enemy targets. Persistent aerial surveillance and loitering munitions have fundamentally altered force posture on both sides. The threat of instant detection and strike forces Russian command structures to disperse armor and relocate command posts. Also forced to implement costly counter-UAS protection and ration heavy maneuver operations (Bronk, 2025). By forcing an adversary to divert vast resources toward defensive countermeasures, electronic jamming, and force protection, Ukraine imposes asymmetric strategic costs (Schelling, 1966; Pape, 1996).

Ukraine's operational trajectory exemplifies **Generative Adaptation**. Rather than merely preserving existing systems, battlefield pressure serves as an engine for creating novel operational concepts, hybrid technologies, and tactical practices. Generative adaptation does not eradicate underlying material asymmetries, nor does it yield permanent battlefield dominance. Because Russian forces continuously field counter-adaptation measures, technological advantages are inherently fleeting (Watling and Reynolds, 2025).

Ultimately, Ukraine's strategic leverage resides not in any single platform or static technological edge, but in the institutional capacity to sustain rapid operational learning. Under conditions of material asymmetry and adversarial pressure, this generative capacity repeatedly converts existing resources into renewed strategic possibilities.

Iran: Functional Resilience under Capability Disruption

Iran's strategic environment presents a distinct operational model from Ukraine, yet it underscores the same fundamental dynamic: military capabilities generate political power only insofar as their strategic effects survive adversarial counter-adaptation. Confronted by long-term trade sanctions, technological embargoes, and acute conventional air superiority by its rivals, Tehran has systematically developed asymmetric strike architectures, comprising ballistic missiles, land-attack cruise missiles (LACM), and uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) designed to impose costs, reshape regional insecurity, and sustain deterrence (Cordesman, 2014; Eisenstadt, 2016).

The political significance of this asymmetric arsenal does not rely on the physical survival or tactical perfection of individual platforms. Rather, Iran's missile and drone architecture serves broader overarching functions: long-range deterrence, regional cost-imposition, escalation management, and strategic signaling. These strategic functions can remain potent even when specific missile variants or launch sites face high interception rates or kinetic destruction.

Central to this strategy is structural **diversification**. Recognizing that a conventionally superior adversary can develop effective countermeasures against a single vector, Iran spreads its long-range strike function across layered, technologically distinct systems. Ballistic missiles offer high velocity and heavy payload capacity; cruise missiles provide low-altitude radar evasion; and low-cost delta-wing loitering munitions impose severe air-defense saturation (Eisenstadt, 2016). An opponent capable of intercepting ballistic trajectories must simultaneously strain defensive resources against low-altitude drone swarms and terrain-following cruise missiles (Cordesman, 2014).

This architecture illustrates the core theoretical mechanism of **Functional Resilience**: *preserving a vital strategic outcome despite the physical degradation of specific weapon platforms*. When an adversary upgrades ballistic missile defenses, expands electronic warfare, or targets launch infrastructure, the strategic effect is not automatically eliminated. Through substitution, dispersion, and subterranean basing, Tehran replaces or complements degraded platforms with alternative vectors. A low-cost loitering munition may possess inferior speed and warhead yield compared to a ballistic missile, yet it sustains the overarching function of imposing risk, forcing defensive expenditure, and shaping enemy calculations (Schelling, 1966; Morgan, 2003).

This dynamic of adversarial pressure and systemic resilience is vividly illustrated by **Operation Epic Fury**, a concentrated military campaign specifically designed to degrade, neutralize, and disrupt Iran's missile, drone, and proxy strike networks. Operation Epic Fury demonstrates how adversaries attempt to dismantle asymmetric threat vectors through targeted strikes on production facilities, subterranean depots, and command infrastructure.

Far from invalidating the utility of Iranian weaponry, Operation Epic Fury highlights the precise interactive cycle of adaptation and counter-adaptation analyzed in this study:

1. **Adversarial Interruption:** Operation Epic Fury targets the physical hardware, supply chains, and launch infrastructure required for sustained long-range strikes.

2. **Functional Survival Testing:** Highly coordinated air-and-missile strikes increase platform attrition, challenging the survivability of single systems.

3. **Adaptive Response & Substitution:** In response, the employing actor relies on force dispersion, mobile launchers, underground launch complexes ("missile cities"), and vector substitution (deploying low-cost loitering drones alongside maneuvering ballistic vectors) to ensure that the core strategic function, the capacity for cost-imposition and retaliatory deterrence, remains active despite operational losses.

This logic highlights the crucial analytical distinction between *platform survival* and *functional survival*:

- **Platform Survival:** The physical preservation of hardware. A weapon may remain physically intact but become strategically irrelevant if its targeting networks, spectrum links, or delivery corridors are blocked.
- **Functional Survival:** The continuity of the political or operational effect. As demonstrated during complex campaigns like Operation Epic Fury, even if individual strike vectors suffer high attrition or launch sites are targeted, the capability to threaten retaliatory cost-imposition persists.

While Ukraine demonstrates **Generative Adaptation**, creating novel technological and tactical options through rapid operational feedback loops, Iran exemplifies **Functional Resilience**. Tehran prevents platform-level degradation from triggering overall strategic irrelevance by embedding redundancy, platform substitution, and force dispersion directly into its force structure (Eisenstadt, 2016).

Ultimately, functional resilience demonstrates that adaptive power does not always require high-tempo software iterations or technological breakthroughs. By preserving the core functions of deterrence and retaliation under long-term capability disruption and direct operational targeting, Iran demonstrates how asymmetric actors convert structurally vulnerable systems into durable strategic leverage.

Comparative Synthesis: Generative Adaptation, Functional Resilience, and the Politics of Weapons

The comparison between Ukraine and Iran demonstrates that the political significance of weapons cannot be understood solely through their quantity, technological sophistication, or destructive capacity. The two cases operate in different strategic environments and face different forms of military pressure, yet both show that the effects produced by weapons depend on the interaction between capability, vulnerability, adaptation, and adversarial response. Weapons may create opportunities for strategic leverage, but whether these effects can be sustained depends on the ability of actors to preserve, modify, or transform them as opponents develop countermeasures.

This relationship is visible in both cases. Ukraine's use of drones and other unmanned systems has generated important operational effects, but these effects have depended on the ability of Ukrainian forces to respond to Russian electronic warfare, surveillance, air defences, and attacks on the wider drone ecosystem. Similarly, the strategic value of Iranian missiles and unmanned systems depends on their ability to sustain functions associated with deterrence, retaliation, long-range strike, and strategic signalling despite sanctions, technological restrictions, defensive measures, and efforts to degrade their effectiveness (Bondar, 2025; Eisenstadt, 2016; Watling and Reynolds, 2025).

Weapons become politically consequential when they create vulnerabilities that alter an opponent's calculations or impose new military, economic, or political costs. These effects extend beyond physical destruction. The possibility of attack may force an adversary to disperse forces, strengthen defences, alter logistical arrangements, reconsider escalation, or devote additional resources to countering a threat. The strategic value of a weapon therefore derives partly from the costs generated by the possibility of its use rather than from destruction alone (Schelling, 1966; Pape, 1996).

Ukraine and Iran reveal two different pathways through which adaptation shapes strategic leverage. In Ukraine, material and operational constraints have encouraged rapid experimentation with commercially available and domestically produced technologies. The interaction between frontline users, private developers, procurement structures, and battlefield feedback has enabled military problems to be translated into technological and organizational modifications, creating new possibilities for reconnaissance, targeting, and strike operations (Bondar, 2025). Adaptation therefore expands the range of strategic options available to a materially constrained actor without eliminating the underlying asymmetry of power.

Iran has followed a different path. Long-term conventional disadvantages, sanctions, and technological restrictions have encouraged the development of missiles and other asymmetric capabilities as alternative means of deterrence and strategic influence. Diversification and overlapping capabilities allow Iran to preserve broader functions such as retaliation and long-range strike even when particular systems become vulnerable (Cordesman, 2014; Eisenstadt, 2016).

The difference between the cases can therefore be understood as a distinction between **generating new options** and **preserving strategic functions**. Ukraine's adaptation produces new operational possibilities through experimentation, modification, and organizational learning. Iran's approach relies more heavily on diversification, substitution, and overlapping capabilities to prevent the degradation of particular systems from eliminating broader strategic functions. Their effectiveness depends on their strategic environments rather than one pathway being inherently superior to the other.

In both cases, adaptation becomes strategically meaningful only in relation to counter-adaptation. Ukrainian technological modifications have repeatedly generated Russian responses, including changes in electronic warfare, reconnaissance, unmanned systems, and fires (Watling and Reynolds, 2025). Iran faces a similar interactive problem at a different tempo, as missile defence, surveillance, sanctions, technological restrictions, intelligence operations, and attacks on military infrastructure can reduce the effectiveness of particular capabilities. Under such conditions, the central question is whether actors can respond after their initial advantages have been challenged.

This makes it necessary to distinguish between **adaptive capacity** and **adaptive advantage**. An actor may possess the ability to modify technology, tactics, or organizational practices without maintaining a lasting advantage over an opponent. Adaptive advantage exists only when these modifications continue to generate effects that cannot be immediately neutralized. Because adversaries also learn and adapt, such advantages are inherently unstable and must be continually reproduced.

Material constraints nevertheless remain important. Ukraine's adaptation does not eliminate Russia's larger resource base, while Iranian missiles and unmanned systems do not remove the broader conventional advantages of militarily stronger adversaries. Adaptation instead changes how available resources are converted into strategic effects. Ukraine has developed alternative pathways through which relatively inexpensive technologies can generate significant operational consequences, while Iran has sought to maintain credible options for deterrence and retaliation despite limitations in conventional power (Bondar, 2025; Eisenstadt, 2016).

The comparison therefore challenges a simple relationship between material strength and political power. Greater military resources remain important, but their political effects depend partly on how effectively capabilities are organized, integrated, and adapted. A technologically advanced system can lose value when its vulnerabilities are exposed and its user cannot respond quickly enough. Conversely, a less sophisticated capability can acquire strategic importance when it is embedded within effective systems of learning, experimentation, and adaptation.

The distinction between **capability survival** and **functional survival** is particularly important in the Iranian case. A military system may lose particular weapons, platforms, or technical characteristics while preserving the broader function that made those capabilities politically significant. If one system becomes vulnerable, another may assume part of its role in maintaining deterrence, retaliation, or long-

range strike. The replacement may involve trade-offs in accuracy, range, survivability, or destructive power, but strategic relevance can persist if the underlying function remains credible (Eisenstadt, 2016).

Ukraine presents a related but different process. When Russian countermeasures reduce the effectiveness of particular technologies or operational practices, Ukraine may modify the original system, change its method of employment, or develop an alternative means of achieving a similar effect. Resilience is therefore produced primarily through continuous generation and modification rather than through substitution alone. The difference between Ukraine and Iran is consequently not between adaptation and non-adaptation, but between two ways in which adaptation maintains the political relevance of military capability.

The comparison also broadens the meaning of military power. The political effects of weapons cannot be located exclusively in the weapon itself. Missiles, drones, and other systems acquire strategic significance through the wider structures that enable them to identify targets, communicate, survive, adapt, and impose costs. Technology, organization, learning, procurement, deployment, and operational practice are therefore inseparable from the political power that weapons can generate.

Military capability should consequently be understood as a continuing strategic process. A weapon creates or exploits a vulnerability; that vulnerability produces a military or political effect; the opponent develops countermeasures; and the original actor must modify the capability, reorganize the supporting system, or find an alternative means of preserving the desired function. Strategic leverage emerges when this process enables an actor to continue shaping an opponent's calculations despite efforts to neutralize the original capability.

Ukraine and Iran represent two expressions of this broader process. Ukraine's wartime adaptation generates new operational possibilities by connecting technological modification to immediate battlefield experience. Iran relies more heavily on diversification and substitution to prevent the degradation of particular systems from eliminating broader functions of deterrence and strategic influence. In both cases, the political consequences of weapons depend less on their initial possession than on the ability to maintain, regenerate, or transform the effects they produce under adversarial pressure.

The core comparative finding is therefore that weapons do not generate durable political power simply because they can destroy. Their political significance depends on whether the actors and systems that employ them can preserve or transform strategic effects when adversaries respond. **Adaptive power** lies in this capacity to ensure that military capabilities remain strategically consequential under continuing adversarial pressure. In Ukraine, this occurs primarily through the generation of new options through experimentation and modification. In Iran, it occurs through the preservation of strategically important functions through diversification, redundancy, and substitution.

Conclusion

This article has examined how weapons generate and sustain political power under conditions of adversarial adaptation. It has argued that the political significance of weapons cannot be understood solely through their destructive capacity, technological sophistication, or numerical quantity. Weapons become strategically consequential when they create vulnerabilities that impose costs, alter operational behavior, constrain available options, or influence an opponent's calculations. Yet these effects are rarely permanent. Once vulnerabilities become visible, adversaries seek to neutralize them through technological, organizational, and operational countermeasures.

The concept of **adaptive power** developed in this article explains the capacity to maintain, regenerate, or transform the strategic effects of military capabilities under continuing adversarial pressure. This shifts analytical attention from weapons as isolated objects to the wider systems through which technology, organizational learning, operational practice, intelligence, communications, and adaptation are converted into political and strategic effects.

The comparison between Ukraine and Iran demonstrates two different pathways through which adaptive power operates:

- **Ukraine** illustrates **generative adaptation**, in which battlefield pressure, technological experimentation, organizational learning, and direct feedback from operational experience create new military possibilities. This process has not eliminated Ukraine's material disadvantage or produced permanent superiority, but it has enabled the country to repeatedly generate new operational effects after earlier advantages were challenged by Russian countermeasures.
- **Iran** illustrates **functional resilience**, in which diversification, substitution, redundancy, and overlapping capabilities help preserve broader functions of deterrence, retaliation, long-range strike, and strategic signaling despite sustained pressure on particular systems.

The comparison shows that material weakness does not automatically prevent actors from generating strategic leverage. At the same time, adaptive capacity does not guarantee permanent advantage, because adversaries also learn and develop countermeasures. Strategic advantage therefore remains relational, contested, and temporary.

More broadly, the findings suggest that military power should be understood as a continuing process rather than a fixed possession. A capability creates or exploits a vulnerability; that vulnerability produces a military or political effect; the opponent responds; and the original actor must modify the capability, reorganize the wider system, or substitute alternative means of preserving the desired effect.

Weapons do not generate durable political power simply because they can destroy. Their political significance depends on whether the actors and systems that employ them can continue to produce strategically meaningful effects after opponents attempt to neutralize the vulnerabilities those weapons create. In Ukraine, this occurs primarily through the generation of new possibilities from battlefield learning and technological modification. In Iran, it occurs through the preservation of strategic functions despite the disruption of particular capabilities. Together, the two cases show that the relationship between weapons and political power depends not only on material capability, but also on the capacity to adapt when the strategic effects of weapons become contested.

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İlgili makama;

8. Uluslararası Küreselleşme ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Kongresi 24 Ağustos 2026 tarihinde İstanbul'da Marmara Üniversitesi'nde 9 farklı ülkenin akademisyen/araştırmacılarının katılımıyla gerçekleşmiştir. Kongre kapsamında sunumu yapılan 29 bildirinin 11 adeti Türkiye'den katılımcılar tarafından; 18 bildiri ise 8 ülkeden katılımcılar tarafından sunulmuştur. Kongre 16 Ocak 2020 Akademik Teşvik Ödeneği Yönetmeliğine getirilen "Tebliğlerin sunulduğu yurt içinde veya yurt dışındaki etkinliğin uluslararası olarak nitelendirilebilmesi için Türkiye dışında en az beş farklı ülkeden sözlü tebliğ sunan konuşmacının katılım sağlaması ve tebliğlerin yarıdan fazlasının Türkiye dışından katılımcılar tarafından sunulması esastır." değişikliğine uygun düzenlenmiştir.

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