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Chapter 1

CIVIL DIPLOMACY: ACTORS, TOOLS, AND SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

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1. Introduction

It can be stated that the traditional discipline of international relations is based on a state- and bureaucrat-centric paradigm for developing diplomacy. According to the traditional approach, diplomacy is a communication process carried out by independent states with strictly defined sovereign borders through appointed official bureaucratic representatives, usually taking place behind closed doors. However, the last quarter of the 20th century, and especially the post-cold war period, initiated a radical change in this structure with globalization and rapid developments in communication technologies. Today, diplomacy is no longer a privilege monopolized solely by official bureaucrats but has transformed into a multi-layered interaction field involving societies and civil actors.

Currently, official inter-state channels (*Track I*) are insufficient for solving complex global problems or experiencing political deadlocks/disputes. At this point, processes carried out by non-state actors, termed *Civil Diplomacy*, stand out as a facilitating complementary element in international relations. Individuals organized through non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, artists, and digital networks form an interaction network that transcends borders, thereby creating an increasingly influential civil initiative. This study aims to move beyond the state-centric official diplomacy understanding and analyze the conceptual boundaries, key actors, and implementation tools of civil diplomacy.

This study also explore the concept of civil diplomacy through a comprehensive literature review, focusing on its definition, actors, and tools, and to compare the findings from this theoretical framework with the Turkish experience. The study's unique value stems from its construction through direct reference to the original sources of leading theorists with high citation rates in the literature. The data obtained from this primary source analysis provides a basis for a comparative analysis of Turkey's civil diplomacy practice and summarizes the position of local/national experience within the global literature. To ensure the text maintains its academic depth while achieving clarity and fluency for the reader, artificial intelligence technologies were utilized as a methodological tool in the editorial process.

2. Conceptual Framework: Civil Diplomacy

In its most general definition, civil diplomacy refers to activities carried out by civil society organizations, individuals, or other non-profit organizations for dialogue, cooperation, or conflict resolution in international relations, independent of the state's official organs. Although this concept is frequently confused in the literature with *Public Diplomacy*, which refers to the state's communication directed at the publics of target countries, it is a distinct concept in terms of actors and methods. In public diplomacy, the

main actor is still the state; in civil diplomacy, the initiative belongs to the civil sphere itself (Melissen 2005).

To understand the theoretical infrastructure of civil diplomacy, it is useful to look at the concept of *Soft Power* introduced to the international relations literature by Joseph Nye. Nye (2004) defines power not only as military and economic coercion (*hard power*) but also as the ability to *get others to want what you want (soft power).* In this respect, civil diplomacy aims to create one of the most important production areas of soft power by making a country's culture, values, and policies the center of attraction.

Joseph S. Nye's concept of soft power emphasizes a country's capacity to influence other actors through its attractive and persuasive features. In this context, civil diplomacy aims to gain the trust of the other side, ensure cooperation in line with common interests, and target voluntary compliance rather than obedience/dependency, primarily through cultural values, ideals, media, education, and citizens, instead of military or coercive tools. Civil diplomacy prepares the infrastructure for peaceful solutions and sustainable interactions by creating an atmosphere of trust based on long-term relationships established with the societies on the other side and mutual interdependence.

From Nye's perspective, civil diplomacy produces constructive persuasive power through information flow, programs, cultural exchange, educational exchange, and citizen-to-citizen communication beyond official state channels. This approach aims to influence norms, expectations, and behaviors through attractive values and positive foreign policy outcomes, rather than applying pressure on the opposing government. However, the effect of soft power tools varies from context to context; civil diplomacy interacts with the internal dynamics, media environment, and digital communication flows of the other side and requires a consistent and long-term effort to build trust (Nye, 2004).

Another fundamental pillar is the concept of *Track II Diplomacy,* developed by Montville (1991). According to Montville, when Track I diplomacy carried out by official state officials freezes due to political constraints and protocols, informal dialogue processes (*Track II*) carried out by civil actors come into play. These processes attempt to break down psychological barriers (prejudice, stubbornness, pride, procedure, lack of empathy/sympathy, ego, arrogance, rude attitude) between parties and build an environment of trust (sincerity, mutual interest, human-focused, justice-based) that prepares the ground for official negotiations to take place.

Track II Diplomacy is an informal dialogue methodology aimed at establishing trust, communication, and contact between non-state actors (academics, NGOs, think tanks, former state officials, and business

representatives) and the opposing side, beyond official state diplomacy. This approach allows for trust-building, reduction of misunderstandings, and development of solutions based on common interests by providing more flexible and rapid communication channels in situations where official mechanisms remain limited and slow during crises or policymaking processes. Track II generally works with confidence-building measures and long-term relationship-building strategies. Discussions requiring confidentiality and secure communication aim to reduce differences between parties and strengthen the ground of mutual interdependence.

Within Montville's framework, Track II Diplomacy argues that non-political actors have the potential to influence policy production based on documents, analyses, and dialogues. This approach also plays an important role in the context of civil diplomacy, conflict resolution, and preventive diplomacy, because talks conducted outside official dialogues create a basis for building trust between parties and developing new norms and practices in line with common interests.

Castells (2008), on the other hand, approaches the subject through network society theory, drawing attention to the rise of Global Civil Society. According to him, thanks to digital communication networks, civil diplomacy has gone beyond hierarchical state structures to form a horizontal and interactive public sphere. In this context, civil diplomacy should be considered not only a foreign policy tool but also a mechanism contributing to the democratization of global governance.

Manuel Castells has penned three fundamental works on Network Society. In his first book (*The Rise of the Network Society*), Castells (2000) analyzes network-based organizations, which are among the fundamental dynamics of the global economy and social structure. The author argues that with the rapid spread of information and communication technologies, the central axis of production, communication, and power relations has become a network. He explains transformations such as the trivialization of geographical borders, the shift of organizations from centralized structures to distributed and flexible network models, and information becoming the most critical factor of production. According to the author, networks (one of the most strategic tools of civil diplomacy) determine how power and authority are produced, distributed, and reshaped, creating new dynamics in the social, economic, and political spheres.

In the *Network Society*, Castells emphasizes that both opportunities and new inequalities arise because of the capacity and flexibility of networks. While global networks tightly interconnect production processes for civil diplomacy, they can also enable the reproduction of power and injustices through the digital divide and differences in information access. Furthermore, he states

that change accelerates with the organization of civil society, movements, and social actors within networks in the cultural and political spheres. In this scope, it can be claimed that power and interactions are distributed over networks in a Network Society. Civil diplomacy establishes a permanent communication and interaction network, strengthening connections between different actors, such as state institutions, universities, NGOs, the business world, and the media. In this context, civil diplomacy ensures that unofficial networks come together around international communication, trust, and common interests. Castells notes that the digital divide and global inequalities also affect diplomacy. Civil diplomacy can aim to reduce this gap through inclusive digital access, skills development, and capacity-building programs. Thus, a fairer and more inclusive dialogue ground is formed in the international arena (Castells 2000).

In summary, civil diplomacy establishes a communication and interaction network structured by non-state actors and citizens around trust and mutual interests, going beyond official diplomacy itself. Within the framework of Nye's soft power concept, it can be said that this approach produces attraction through cultural values, education, media, and value-oriented interactions, attempting to voluntarily guide the behaviors of the other side. When combined with Montville's Track II perspective, these networks establish rapid and flexible dialogues through secret or secure channels to build trust, providing a basis for permanent relationships and common interests for normalization in pre- and post-conflict processes. Castells' network society vision shows that civil diplomacy reshapes power and authority production processes through the horizontal and multi-actor nature of digital communication networks, aiming to create an inclusive world public opinion through global participation and the reduction of the digital divide. The interaction of this civil diplomacy, woven around power, information, and trust, makes it possible for state actors' official channels to act jointly with civil society and private sector actors to achieve common goals. From Castells' network society perspective, this process requires reliability and accountability mechanisms as it multiplies interaction over digital networks; thus, the influence of civil society can act as a tool to support the democratization of global governance.

As can be seen, civil diplomacy can be defined as a strategic communication and action area that balances the state's *hard power,* breaks down prejudices between societies, and humanizes international relations. The table below summarizes the key theorists shaping the concept of civil diplomacy and the academic perspective in Türkiye, serving as a reference for the relevant literature:

Table 1: Theoretical Approaches to Civil Diplomacy and Related Concepts

Author / Theorist	Core Concept Focus	Perspective and Definition of Civil Diplomacy	Key Work
Joseph S. Nye	Soft Power	Diplomacy is defined as attraction and persuasion rather than coercion. Culture and values are the primary sources.	*Soft Power* (2004)
Joseph Montville	Track II Diplomacy	Defines informal interactions carried out by civil actors when official diplomacy is deadlocked.	*Track Two Diplomacy* (1991)
Manuel Castells	Network Society	Views civil diplomacy as a tool for participation and governance via multi-actor and digital networks beyond interstate communication.	*The Rise of the Network Society* (2000)
Jan Melissen	New Public Diplomacy	defines diplomacy as a mutual dialogue established by the state and civil society with foreign publics.	*The New Public Diplomacy* (2005)
Mary Kaldor	Global Civil Society	Civil diplomacy is viewed as a bottom-up norm-building process beyond states.	*Global Civil Society* (2003)
İbrahim Kalın	Soft Power / Historical Depth	Views civil diplomacy in Türkiye as a reflection of historical accumulation in the field via modern tools.	Soft Power in Turkey (2011)
Muharrem Ekşi	Public and Civil Diplomacy	Distinguishes civil diplomacy as voluntary foreign policy participation that develops without state direction.	*Kamu Diplomasisi* (2014)

Source: Author's creation

As seen in the summary information in Table 1, while Western literature (Nye, Montville, Castells) generally addresses civil diplomacy in terms of conflict resolution and security, Turkish literature (Kalın, Ekşi) interprets the concept more through historical mission, humanitarian aid, and soft power capacity. It can be said that academics in Türkiye tend to interpret civil diplomacy not as conflicting with the state's official policies but as a civilization perspective that complements it.

3. Key Actors and Tools of Civil Diplomacy

The operational success of civil diplomacy relies on a flexible and diverse ecosystem of actors capable of acting independently of a state's hierarchical structure.

3.1. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Transnational Advocacy

Transnational Advocacy Networks formed by NGOs are among the most effective civil diplomacy tools. Indeed, Keck and Sikkink (1998), in their work *Activists Beyond Borders*, developed the concept of Transnational Advocacy Networks and stated that when local NGOs are blocked vis-à-vis their own states, they can use their international networks to create an external pressure or support mechanism (boomerang effect).

As a fundamental tool of civil diplomacy, NGOs diversify political discourse as non-state actors, build trust, and establish long-term interactions

with the opposing side. Within Nye's soft power framework, NGOs use cultural values, ideals, and information flow to create a persuasive effect by supporting or challenging states' official propositions. In this context, NGOs act as a bridge capable of implanting foreign policy goals in the social and civil spheres by influencing the internal dynamics of the other side. Thus, civil diplomacy provides a ground for building trust beyond official diplomacy and for developing norms based on common interests (Nye, 2004).

Conversely, NGOs keep dialogue channels open through information sharing, humanitarian aid, educational exchange, and cultural exchange programs during moments of crisis and policy-making processes. These processes allow for discussions requiring confidentiality and secure communication and provide psychological and social preparation for official negotiations to take place. Furthermore, thanks to the inclusive participation of civil society, trust between parties reaches broader social bases, creating a foundation for peaceful solutions and preventive diplomacy (Castells, 2000; Melissen, 2005). The influence of NGOs on civil diplomacy varies according to their expertise. That is, their power of influence in this field can be limited by their institutional capacities, funding sources, and policy area influence. States' security and sovereignty concerns can restrict the movement and, in some cases, weaken information flow. Therefore, for effective civil diplomacy, the capacities of NGOs and the mechanisms of trust, transparency, and accountability between states need to be strengthened, which requires a long-term and pluralistic dialogue (Kaldor, 2003; Kalın, 2011).

3.2. Education, Culture, and Science Diplomacy

Nicholas Cull (2008) emphasizes that education and cultural exchanges create a network of relationships spanning generations. Through exchange programs such as Erasmus+ or Fulbright, an individual educated in a foreign country internalizes that country's language and culture, assuming the role of a voluntary *cultural ambassador* upon returning to their own country. Educational Exchange Programs: Initiatives such as Erasmus+, Fulbright, and the Mevlana Exchange Program are the most concrete examples of civil diplomacy conducted through students and academics. This situation is the transformed state of the power of attraction mentioned by Nye into human resources.

International film festivals, biennials, concerts, and the Olympics are areas where political tensions are suspended. As in the example of *ping-pong diplomacy*, sometimes a sports competition can be the occasion for opening diplomatic doors that have remained closed for years.

Educational diplomacy supports mutual learning processes by focusing on the development of the other side and building long-term trust. Stable relationships are established through joint education programs, student

exchanges, and academic collaborations, which encourage the sharing of values, knowledge, and skills through soft power. Thus, by creating grounds for common interests and mutual interdependence between parties, it contributes to indirect influence in policy-making and faster establishment of trust in times of crisis (Nye, 2004; Melissen, 2005).

Cultural diplomacy enriches international interactions by increasing a country's attractiveness through cultural products, art, media, and people-to-people communication. Cultural events and exchanges reduce tensions between states and strengthen mutual respect by forming a basis of trust based on common values and identities. This approach establishes emotional and symbolic bonds beyond official diplomacy, relying on voluntary compliance and normative pressures rather than extraordinary political pressures (Castells, 2000; Melissen, 2005).

Science diplomacy aims to provide solutions to global problems through research collaborations, joint projects, and technology sharing. Scientific partnerships build trust, facilitate information flow, and strengthen mutual interdependence among parties. Such activities support inter-state communication through third-party actors (academics, research institutions, and the private sector) and contribute to long-term stability and the universalization of common interests (Kaldor, 2003; Castells, 2000).

3.3. Digital Networks and Citizen Diplomacy

Seib (2012) states that diplomacy no longer takes place behind closed doors but instantaneously on social media platforms (Real-Time Diplomacy). Hashtag campaigns initiated by individuals (#HashtagActivism) can mobilize global public opinion and force states to review their foreign policy. However, this area should also be evaluated as the most fragile tool of civil diplomacy, as it carries the risk of disinformation (Seib, 2012).

Digital networks make citizen diplomacy a more horizontal, inclusive, and rapid communication tool than before. Individuals and civil actors interact directly with state actors through social media, blogs, open data platforms, and the digital public sphere, build trust, and develop norms in line with common interests. In this context, citizen diplomacy appears to be a mechanism for strengthening global public diplomacy through community-based participation and information sharing beyond official diplomacy (Castells, 2000; Melissen, 2005).

Civil diplomacy conducted over digital networks is closely tied to the need for accountability and transparency. Multi-actor networks facilitate the joint communication of state, civil society, and private sector actors, offering the opportunity for rapid information flow and coordination in times of crisis. However, it also brings challenges, such as the digital divide, disinformation,

and security risks; therefore, mechanisms for security, ethical rules, and inclusive access need to be strengthened to establish reliable information flow (Castells, 2000; Nye, 2004).

Digital applications of citizen diplomacy enrich international interactions through digital-based cultural exchange programs, online town halls, open-source projects, and citizen-to-citizen mobility. However, the balance between state authority and citizen initiatives is a critical test: if there are concerns regarding state security, information security, and national independence, the impact of citizen diplomacy may remain limited. Nevertheless, digital networks can contribute to long-term global governance through common values and interests (Melissen, 2005; Castells, 2000).

In summary, NGOs represent organized power, educational institutions represent intellectual depth, and digital networks represent speed and prevalence, forming a multidimensional toolkit for civil diplomacy. The table below summarizes the strategic tools used by these actors and the frequently used methods:

Table 2: Strategic Actors and Tools Used in Civil Diplomacy

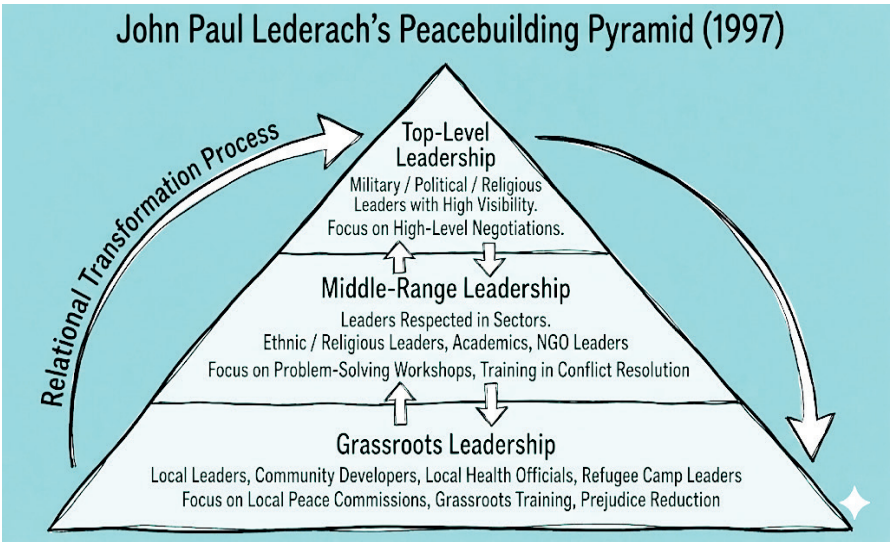
Category	Actors	Tools and Methods	Reference
Transnational Advocacy	International NGOs (Amnesty, etc.)	Boomerang Effect: Carrying local problems to global networks, Naming and Shaming.	Keck & Sikkink (1998)
Cultural Diplomacy	Artists, Universities	Production of Attraction: Student exchange programs, festivals, and academic publications.	Cull (2008)
Digital Diplomacy	Individuals, Bloggers	Real-Time Interaction: Social media campaigns and digital activism.	Seib (2012)
Humanitarian Diplomacy (Türkiye)	Aid Organizations (Red Crescent, IHH)	Winning Hearts and Minds: Disaster relief, health screenings, and water well projects.	Keyman & Sazak (2015)
Commercial Diplomacy	Business World (TÜSİAD, MÜSİAD)	Economic Interdependence: Trade delegations, fairs, and investments.	Kirişci (2009)

Source: Author's creation

According to Table 2, while Western-centric literature focuses on rights advocacy and digital activism, in Türkiye, the locomotive of civil diplomacy is Humanitarian Aid and Trade. Turkish civil society actors generally act as stakeholders expanding the state's soft power capacity in the field rather than as a pressure group conflicting with the state.

4. Areas of Application and Mechanisms of Operation

Civil diplomacy actors step in when the international system is deadlocked and produce alternative solutions. According to John Paul Lederach's (1997) Peacebuilding Pyramid model, civil diplomacy comes into play at the middle and grassroots levels of society. According to Lederach, peace cannot be achieved solely through agreements signed by top-level leaders (Type 1). Civil diplomacy intervenes at the middle (Type 2: Academics and NGO leaders) and grassroots (Type 3: Local community leaders) levels of the pyramid.



With Herbert Kelman's (2005) interactive problem-solving method, civil representatives of conflicting parties come together in informal workshops to break down prejudices and prepare the ground for official negotiations. Civil diplomacy is most intensively applied in the resolution of ethnic or political conflicts. While official interstate negotiations are generally conducted with a *win-lose* logic or rigid protocols, civil initiatives adopt a *win-win* and humanitarian approach.

Mary Kaldor (2003) argues that civil actors change global norms, stating that the Campaign to Ban Landmines succeeded through the pressure of a civil coalition. The mechanism operating here is the *Naming and Shaming* strategy. Accordingly, civil actors report human rights violations, causing states to lose prestige before international public opinion and forcing them to change their policies. Kaldor argues that civil actors not only distribute aid but also change global norms (rules). While states jealously guard their sovereignty rights, she argues that civil diplomacy highlights the concept of *human security* (Kaldor, 2003).

In borderless problems such as the climate crisis, civil diplomacy transforms scientific data into social demand, creating pressure on states. In such cases, civil diplomacy assumes a warning and auditing role. Measures delayed by states due to economic concerns are kept on the agenda by global youth movements, as in the example of Greta Thunberg, or transnational organizations such as Greenpeace. Civil diplomacy in this field can transform scientific data into social demand and create pressure on states at international summits (such as COP meetings).

In summary, functioning as a facilitator in conflict resolution, a norm setter in human rights, and a pressure group in environmental issues, civil diplomacy acts as the conscience and memory of international relations.

5. Limits of Civil Diplomacy and Criticisms

The most fundamental criticism of civil diplomacy is the problem of legitimacy. It is debatable on whose behalf unelected civil actors speak. Furthermore, so-called NGOs established or directed by the state (GONGOs) undermine the independence of the civil sphere (Naim, 2007). Uncoordinated civil initiatives can sometimes disrupt sensitive diplomatic processes, creating double-headedness and incoherence. While state diplomats represent elected governments, the question of who NGOs or civil activists represent is controversial. Critics such as Kenneth Anderson argue that some international NGOs act like unelected global bureaucrats and impose their own (or their funders') agendas, detached from the real demands of the local people.

The greatest power of civil diplomacy is its ability to build *trust* that states cannot obtain through hard power tools. Nye (2004) states that military victories are not permanent, and true sustainability comes from winning the consent of societies (*winning their hearts and minds*). Because civil actors are seen as independent of political agendas, they can establish sincere dialogue without creating a perception of propaganda in the target audience. This situation functions as a safety valve that prevents communication from being completely severed, especially during crisis periods when interstate relations are tense.

Another critical issue is the Government-Organized Non-Governmental Organizations (GONGO) phenomenon. These structures damage the independence claim of civil diplomacy and can hollow out the concept by transforming the civil sphere into a covert foreign policy tool of the state (Naim, 2007). Additionally, well-intentioned but uncoordinated initiatives by civil actors can disrupt sensitive diplomatic processes. Civil outbursts that do not overlap with state strategy can create incoherence, making it difficult for the country to deliver a consistent message in the international arena.

6. Conclusion

The 21st-century system has evolved into a hybrid structure in which power is spread across more complex networks. Civil Diplomacy is not just a backup force filling the areas where states are insufficient but a primary element of global interaction.

Civil diplomacy, grounded in soft power theory and Track II diplomacy practices, creates transformative effects across a wide spectrum, from conflict resolution to environmental problems and education to human rights. However, this effect depends on civil actors' ability to protect their independent identities and establish a healthy relationship of complementarity with state mechanisms.

Successful foreign policy strategies will be models that can synchronize the state's hard power with civil society's soft power, as in Joseph Nye's conceptualization of Smart Power. For countries with strategic depth, such as Türkiye, increasing the diplomatic capacity of the civil sphere (civil society, academia, art, and the business world) is not just a matter of prestige but a national necessity.

The international relations system of the 21st century has evolved from a hierarchical structure in which states are the sole playmakers to a multi-actor and network-based structure. As examined in this study, civil diplomacy is not an alternative to traditional diplomacy but a vital complement that fills the human and social gaps where it falls short.

In conclusion, in a world where conflicts are becoming increasingly complex and borders are losing their meaning, peace cannot be merely a piece of paper signed at a diplomat's table. Peace is a process woven stitch by stitch at the grassroots of societies by students, artists, volunteers, and digital activists. For countries like Türkiye, which possess both geopolitical and cultural depth, increasing civil diplomacy capacity is not just a foreign policy choice but a strategic necessity.

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Chapter 2

FROM TERRITORIAL BORDERS TO DATA BORDERS: HOW BORDER CONTROL BECAME AN INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE

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Introduction

Contemporary border governance is increasingly best conceptualized not as a fixed territorial line but as an information practice: a distributed assemblage of databases, identifiers, interoperability layers, and algorithmically mediated decision processes. In this sense, "border technologies" do more than assist routine checks at border points; they reconfigure the legal and political meaning of mobility by translating passage, status, and suspicion into data relations relations that are recorded, compared, and circulated across institutional contexts.

Critical border studies have long emphasized that borders operate as productive sites in which political categories (traveller/migrant; regular/irregular; safe/risky) are actively constituted through administrative and technological forms of sorting. In the EU context, the consolidation of large-scale information systems (spanning visas, asylum, policing, and external border management) has enabled what can be termed data borders: operational regimes in which access to territory is increasingly mediated by access to datasets. Broeders' account of "new digital borders" remains foundational in this respect, precisely because it frames databases not as neutral repositories but as instruments of internal control that extend enforcement capacity beyond frontier points into societal institutions and administrative infrastructures (Broeders, 2007).

This transformation is also biopolitical. Amoore's formulation of "biometric borders" is instructive insofar as it captures how biometric identification extends the governance of mobility into everyday domains, multiplying "border crossings" into continuous assessments that stabilize categories of legitimacy and risk (Amoore, 2006: 337). From this perspective, the border becomes a mobile evaluative dispositive, it accompanies the subject through identifiers, templates, and logs often well beyond the moment when physical crossing has ended.

Ajana similarly argues that biometric systems should be understood as technical expressions of political logics (security, distrust, suspicion), rather than as merely instrumental devices for accuracy or convenience (Ajana, 2013). These logics carry direct legal consequences. Once border governance is implemented as a data regime, the rule-of-law question no longer concerns only who may enter, but also: (i) what data may be captured; (ii) on what legal basis; (iii) for how long it may be retained; (iv) who may access it; (v) how individuals can contest decisions; and (vi) what remedies exist when harm occurs. At this point, "border technologies" and "rule of law" intersect in three structural tensions.

First, border governance increasingly relies on automation and interoperability, which may dilute the transparency of decision chains. A refusal at a gate, a "hit" in a system, or an instruction to refer a person to secondary screening may result from cross-system matching rather than from a single, identifiable administrative act. Accountability therefore depends on whether legal frameworks impose obligations of traceability, logging, auditability and, critically, whether these obligations can be operationalized and enforced in practice.

Second, the centrality of biometrics raises distinct concerns regarding proportionality and purpose limitation. Biometrics are not analogous to passwords: they are durable identifiers, difficult to replace, and uniquely harmful when compromised. The European Court of Human Rights has repeatedly treated the retention and use of biometric or closely related identifiers as significant interferences with private life under Article 8 ECHR (European Court of Human Rights, 2008; European Court of Human Rights, 2020). While these cases do not address borders directly, they clarify that the architecture of storage and retention may itself be rights-impacting.

Third, securitization framing can press legal systems toward exception-like logics. In EU policy debates, terrorism, irregular migration, and cross-border crime have functioned as "high salience" problem frames that facilitate the expansion of data infrastructures. In Türkiye's scholarship on EU smart borders, the post-2015 security environment is explicitly linked to a renewed emphasis on external border securitization and technology-driven management (Halisoğlu, 2025: 56).

The remainder of this chapter treats EU "smart borders" as a concrete case through which to analyze rule-of-law requirements (legality, proportionality, non-discrimination, due process, oversight, and effective remedy) and then turns to lessons relevant for Türkiye's legal-constitutional environment and data protection practice.

The EU Smart Borders Stack: EES, ETIAS, Interoperability, and the Turn to AI

The EU Entry/Exit System (EES) establishes a common framework for recording the entries, exits, and refusals of entry of third-country nationals admitted for short stays, replacing traditional passport stamping with a structured regime of alphanumeric and biometric data processing (Regulation (EU) 2017/2226, Arts. 1–2).

Operationally, EES functions as more than a technical border-control instrument; it constitutes a governance baseline for the entire Schengen short-stay regime. It reshapes what border authorities "know" (or are positioned to believe they know) at the moment of decision-making. Travel histories are

rendered machine-readable, stay calculations are automated, and the category of the "overstayer" emerges as a derived variable generated through system logic rather than through individualized administrative assessment. The rule-of-law implications of this shift are immediate and substantial: where legal status is increasingly inferred from system-generated data, guarantees concerning system accuracy, timely updating, contestability, and effective error correction become core legal safeguards rather than ancillary technical concerns.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has emphasized that the implementation of EES must remain compliant with fundamental rights at the operational level, drawing attention to dignified information practices, privacy-respecting data processing, sensitivity toward vulnerable persons, and the avoidance of automatic presumptions particularly in the treatment of individuals classified as "overstayers" (FRA, 2025: 5). This emphasis captures a subtle yet critical risk: "smart borders" may gradually displace human discretion with system defaults and automated inferences. FRA's guidance seeks to counterbalance this tendency by reaffirming human-rights-oriented practice as a necessary condition for the lawful operation of technologically mediated border regimes.

ETIAS as pre-travel screening and the governance of permission

The European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) introduces a pre-travel authorisation requirement for visa-exempt third-country nationals. While the formal legal standard remains one of "authorisation," the practical effect is a substantive reconfiguration of permission to travel: mobility becomes conditional upon pre-screening and automated checks conducted across multiple information systems prior to arrival at the external border (Regulation (EU) 2018/1240, Arts. 1–3).

From a rule-of-law perspective, ETIAS raises three interrelated concerns.

- First, opacity of decision-making emerges as a central challenge. Where refusals, alerts, or referrals are generated through database matches, watchlists, or algorithmically supported risk indicators, the individual's capacity to understand the grounds of the decision (and to contest it effectively) becomes a critical legal issue. Absent intelligible reasons and accessible explanations, procedural guarantees risk being reduced to formalities rather than functioning safeguards.

- Second, ETIAS amplifies the risk of error propagation. Insofar as the system relies on upstream data drawn from interconnected databases, inaccuracies or outdated records may be operationalized

and given legal effect before an individual even reaches a physical border. In this sense, pre-travel screening relocates the moment of exclusion temporally and spatially, while simultaneously narrowing opportunities for timely correction.

- Third, ETIAS exemplifies the risk of function creep inherent in authorization systems. Once established, such systems tend to expand in scope and purpose, particularly when they are framed as comprehensive responses to multiple high-salience policy concerns, including migration management, crime prevention, and counter-terrorism. Over time, this expansion can strain purpose-limitation principles and recalibrate the balance between mobility rights and security-oriented data governance.

Interoperability: the "meta-infrastructure" problem

The 2019 interoperability Regulations establish shared services and common identity-matching mechanisms designed to interlink EU information systems operating across the domains of border control, visas, asylum, and policing (Regulations (EU) 2019/817 and 2019/818). Interoperability is frequently justified as a form of technical rationalization, promising efficiency gains, the elimination of duplicate records, and enhanced detection of identity fraud. Yet it is more accurately understood as a constitutional moment in data governance, insofar as it alters the foundational default of information management from system separation toward systematic linkage.

This shift toward linkage carries significant rule-of-law consequences:

- First, interoperability places sustained pressure on the principle of purpose limitation. Even where individual systems retain formally defined purposes, the introduction of shared identity resolution services and expanded access patterns facilitates cross-purpose use, blurring the boundaries that purpose limitation is intended to preserve.

- Second, interoperability contributes to the diffusion of accountability. As an increasing number of authorities rely on a common "shared identity" layer, the attribution of responsibility for errors, misidentifications, or unlawful access becomes more complex. Determining which institution bears legal and administrative responsibility in cases of harm is correspondingly more difficult, particularly in multi-agency operational environments.

- Third, interoperability heightens the risk of discriminatory impacts. Identity matching processes and the generation of "multiple

> identity" flags may disproportionately affect individuals with complex or fragmented documentation histories, including refugees and displaced persons. This elevated risk underscores the necessity of robust procedural safeguards, meaningful human review, and mechanisms capable of identifying and correcting systemic bias.

In this context, scholarship on EU border data infrastructures offers a critical corrective by shifting analytical attention away from narratives of innovation toward questions of maintenance, governance, and legitimacy. Glouftsios demonstrates that large-scale information systems do not operate autonomously; rather, they depend on continuous maintenance labour and sustained institutional coordination, processes that actively shape how such systems function in practice (Glouftsios, 2021). Trauttmansdorff further argues that EU agencies, including eu-LISA, play a central role in constructing sociotechnical imaginaries of "digital transformation" that frame infrastructure expansion as an inevitable form of modernization, thereby normalizing the growth and entrenchment of interoperable data regimes (Trauttmansdorff, 2023).

The AI turn: risk scoring, automation, and legal constraints

Although the legal frameworks governing EES and ETIAS are not identical to those established by the EU Artificial Intelligence Act, the broader regulatory environment remains highly relevant. The AI Act introduces harmonised rules for the development and use of AI systems and adopts a risk-based regulatory approach that differentiates obligations according to potential impacts (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689). Its rule-of-law significance lies in the fact that AI governance frameworks (where applicable) reassert classical legal requirements, including documentation, traceability, human oversight, and avenues for redress, within a domain otherwise prone to "black box efficiency" narratives.

At the same time, border control systems may generate AI-like effects even in the absence of explicit "AI" classification. Automated decision-support tools, risk indicators, pattern detection mechanisms, and predictive logics can shape outcomes in ways functionally comparable to AI-driven processes. It is in this context that the European Data Protection Supervisor warned, during the smart borders debate, that the envisaged systems would operate on a very large scale, entail extensive processing of personal (particularly biometric) data, and prove potentially intrusive, thereby necessitating robust safeguards and a stringent assessment of necessity and proportionality (EDPS, 2016: 3).

Finally, questions of timing and implementation are legally consequential. "Smart borders" should not be understood solely as legislative constructs;

they are also rollout projects characterized by operational disruptions, training asymmetries, and transitional error profiles. The EU's decision to move toward a staged implementation of EES reflects an explicit recognition that system deployment itself constitutes a rights-relevant moment, during which heightened risks of error and rights interference may arise (European Parliament, 2025).

Rule-of-Law Fault Lines: Legality, Proportionality, Due Process, and Fundamental Rights

The rule of law requires that public power be exercised on the basis of law, under conditions of clarity, foreseeability, and effective constraint. In the context of border technologies, a recurring challenge arises from the fact that "the system" itself increasingly functions as a source of practical normativity. Design choices—such as data fields, default settings, thresholds, and matching rules—may operate as quasi-legal determinations, shaping outcomes in ways comparable to formal administrative decisions. Where legal texts fail to impose sufficiently precise constraints on these choices, discretionary authority tends to migrate from legislatures and courts toward procurement processes, system configuration practices, and technical governance bodies.

For this reason, legality cannot be reduced to the mere existence of a regulatory instrument. Rather, it encompasses a set of substantive requirements. These include the intelligibility of rules to affected persons; effective constraints on administrative discretion, including forms of technical discretion embedded in system design; adequate documentation of decision-making rules and processes; and meaningful oversight exercised by independent supervisory bodies.

In the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, legality is closely associated with safeguards against arbitrariness in regimes of data retention and identification. The Court's reasoning in cases concerning biometric-related retention highlights that the very architecture of data storage and reuse may constitute an interference with fundamental rights, thereby triggering a requirement of strict legal justification (European Court of Human Rights, 2008).

Necessity and proportionality for biometrics: lessons from Turkish data protection practice

Türkiye's data protection practice under the Law on the Protection of Personal Data (KVKK) offers a particularly explicit and operational articulation of proportionality in the context of biometric data processing, making it analytically valuable as a bridge to border governance. The KVKK Biometric Data Guide is structured around an *ilke kararı* logic, requiring

biometric processing to comply with both general data protection principles and the conditions applicable to special categories of personal data. Crucially, it explicitly mandates that biometric processing must not infringe upon the essence of fundamental rights and must satisfy the requirement of proportionality (KVKK, 2021: 9-11).

Notably, the Guide operationalizes proportionality through a set of sub-tests that closely mirror constitutional proportionality reasoning: suitability, necessity, and proportionality *stricto sensu*. Within this framework, data controllers are required to demonstrate why less intrusive alternatives are insufficient to achieve the stated purpose (KVKK, 2021: 10-11). This analytical structure is directly transferable to the assessment of border technologies. In particular, it invites systematic inquiry into whether: (i) an EES or ETIAS function that relies on biometrics could be replaced or complemented by less intrusive alternatives, such as document-based checks, manual verification, or the limited use of biometrics confined to high-risk cases; (ii) the selected biometric modality is strictly necessary for the specific purpose pursued; and (iii) data retention periods and access rights are minimized to the least intrusive configuration compatible with that purpose.

Turkish legal scholarship reinforces this approach by emphasizing that even when biometric methods are deployed for public-interest objectives, their legal justification must remain proportionate and attentive to fundamental rights. Akgül's analysis of biometric techniques and the reasoning of the Council of State (*Danıştay*) highlights the centrality of proportionality and the need for a clear legal basis capable of preventing excessive intrusion, particularly in situations where the same regulatory objective could be achieved through less privacy-invasive means (Akgül, 2015: 211-213). This doctrinal perspective is especially relevant in border contexts, where technological measures are frequently justified through abstract invocations of "security necessity"; proportionality analysis compels such claims to be articulated in concrete, verifiable terms.

Erdinç's work provides a further analytical bridge by demonstrating how both purpose limitation and proportionality may be undermined when data collected for security purposes are shared beyond their authorized channels (precisely the form of secondary) use risk that interoperability architectures tend to intensify (Erdinç, 2020: 12). Within the EU context, this raises a critical legal question: whether interoperability and cross-agency access structures effectively institutionalize secondary-use risks, even in cases where formal purpose-limitation clauses remain nominally intact.

Due process and effective remedy in automated or semi-automated decisions

As border control increasingly relies on cross-system matching and interoperable data infrastructures, the legal order must place heightened emphasis on ensuring contestability. In this context, contestability functions as a core due process guarantee, aimed at preventing automated or semi-automated determinations from becoming effectively unquestionable. At a minimum, meaningful contestability requires:

1-Timely notification of adverse decisions, including refusals of entry, cancellations of authorization, or referrals to enhanced scrutiny,

2-The provision of intelligible reasons, extending beyond formulaic references to a mere "system hit",

3-Access to relevant personal data and decision-related logs, subject to legitimate and proportionate security limitations,

4-The availability of an accessible appeal procedure that incorporates genuine human review,

5-Effective mechanisms for the correction and rectification of inaccurate or incomplete data.

The operational guidance issued by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights implicitly recognizes the risk that frontline border checks may become excessively automated. In particular, it underscores the importance of respectful and dignified communication, as well as the careful handling of determinations concerning individuals classified as "overstayers" (FRA, 2025: 5). From a rule-of-law perspective, this guidance serves as a warning against dynamics of "automatic presumption," whereby a system-generated status is treated as conclusive rather than provisional.

Where the designation of "overstayer" emerges primarily as a system-derived label, administrative law must ensure that individuals retain the ability to challenge not only the outcome but also the underlying computation on which that outcome is based. Absent such guarantees, automated classifications risk displacing procedural safeguards with technical finality, thereby eroding the practical effectiveness of due process and the right to an effective remedy.

Non-discrimination and the politics of risk indicators

Border technologies do not operate uniformly across all subjects. Rather, they apply to legally constructed categories defined by nationality, visa status, prior mobility histories, and relations to watchlists or alert systems. Such

differentiation is not inherently unlawful; border regimes are discriminatory by design in the limited sense that they necessarily classify and categorize. The rule-of-law concern arises, however, when differential treatment produces discriminatory effects that are unjustified, opaque, or amplified through technical systems.

Risk-scoring mechanisms and watchlist architectures can reproduce and entrench bias through multiple pathways:

1- First, data bias may arise where certain populations are more frequently recorded, checked, or flagged, generating feedback loops in which heightened scrutiny becomes self-reinforcing.

2- Second, proxy bias may occur when variables such as nationality, travel routes, or mobility patterns function as indirect proxies for protected characteristics, including ethnicity or religion.

3- Third, system bias can be introduced through matching thresholds, identity-resolution rules, or data-quality assumptions that disproportionately generate errors for specific populations, particularly those affected by transliteration inconsistencies or fragmented documentation histories.

4- Fourth, institutional bias may be intensified through interoperability, as the expansion of data sharing enlarges the audience and downstream consequences of any initial bias embedded within a single system.

It is in this context that biopolitical critiques retain particular relevance. Scholars have shown that biometric identification and large-scale data infrastructures can normalize suspicion as a background condition for specific populations, embedding differential treatment into the routine operation of governance rather than confining it to exceptional measures (Ajana, 2013; Amoore, 2006: 337). The appropriate legal response, however, is not to reject technological instruments as such, but to insist that their deployment be constrained by rights-embedded design principles, enforceable legal standards, and effective remedies capable of identifying, correcting, and redressing discriminatory outcomes.

Regulatory Design and Accountability Pathways: Institutional Oversight, Auditability, and Lessons for Türkiye

Rule-of-law compliance in the deployment of border technologies is fundamentally shaped by institutional design. Within the European Union, oversight is exercised through multiple, partially overlapping channels, including national data protection authorities, the European Data

Protection Supervisor (EDPS) in relation to EU institutions, fundamental rights monitoring mechanisms, judicial review, and internal accountability structures. The intervention of the EDPS in the smart borders legislative package is particularly significant, as it conceptualizes privacy risk not as an isolated or incidental concern, but as a systemic issue. From this perspective, the EDPS emphasizes the need for robust safeguards precisely because scale, interoperability, and intrusiveness magnify the potential harms associated with large-scale border data infrastructures (EDPS, 2016: 3).

At the same time, multi-layered oversight arrangements generate a structural paradox. While the involvement of numerous supervisory bodies may appear to strengthen accountability, it can also diffuse responsibility across institutional boundaries. In such environments, determining who is accountable for errors, unlawful access, or discriminatory outcomes becomes increasingly complex. This is why auditability and comprehensive logging requirements are not merely technical features but foundational rule-of-law safeguards. Absent reliable and accessible logs documenting data access, matching processes, decision outcomes, and subsequent data modifications, oversight bodies are effectively deprived of the tools necessary to detect misuse, identify systemic errors, and assess patterns of discrimination.

Operational ethics and the "street-level" rule of law

The guidance issued by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights for border guards is of particular significance because it explicitly acknowledges that the protection of fundamental rights is not located solely "in the regulation," but is also enacted through frontline practice. Developed through empirical research and consultation with practitioners, the guidance focuses on four key operational domains: the provision of information, data processing practices, attention to specific needs, and the treatment of individuals identified as "overstayers" (FRA, 2025: 5).

From a governance perspective, this recognition carries important implications. Training, staffing, and operational procedures should be understood as components of legal infrastructure rather than as merely administrative or managerial concerns. A technologically advanced border system that is not supported by adequately resourced, rights-based frontline practice risks producing routinized rights frictions. Such outcomes need not result from intentional misconduct; they may instead emerge from structural conditions, including time pressure, workflow constraints, and the design of technical interfaces that shape how discretion is exercised in everyday decision-making.

Türkiye: Constitutional proportionality, KVKK principles, and border governance implications

Türkiye's data protection regime and administrative jurisprudence provide a set of concrete and operational tools for scrutinizing biometric border technologies through a rule-of-law lens. Rather than offering abstract principles alone, this framework combines normative baselines, doctrinal reinforcement, and practice-oriented sensitivity that together enable a structured assessment of legality, necessity, and proportionality in technologically mediated border governance.

At the normative level, the KVKK Biometric Data Guide explicitly anchors biometric processing to the protection of the "essence" of fundamental rights and to the proportionality test. It places a clear burden on data controllers to justify the necessity of biometric measures and to demonstrate that less intrusive alternatives are inadequate for achieving the stated objective (KVKK, 2021: 9-11). This approach establishes proportionality not as a rhetorical requirement but as an operational standard capable of constraining technological choice.

Doctrinal reinforcement is provided by Akgül's analysis of the Council of State's (*Danıştay*) approach to biometric methods. This line of reasoning underscores that legality and proportionality assessments may effectively limit the adoption of biometric technologies even where compelling public interests (such as security or administrative efficiency) are invoked (Akgül, 2015: 211–213). In this respect, proportionality functions as a substantive check on expansive security rationales rather than as a deferential balancing exercise.

From a practice-oriented perspective, Erdinç demonstrates how both purpose limitation and proportionality can erode when data collected for security purposes are subsequently shared beyond authorized channels. This risk becomes particularly acute in institutional environments characterized by system integration and the routinization of data reuse dynamics that closely resemble those generated by interoperability architectures in border governance (Erdinç, 2020: 12).

Translating these insights into the border context yields a set of governance-oriented recommendations.

1- Purpose specification must be coupled with interoperability constraints. Interoperability should not operate as a blanket justification for cross-domain access; rather, access should remain role-limited, purpose-bound, and subject to effective audit mechanisms.

2- Biometric deployment should be conditioned on a demonstrable proof of necessity. For each biometric modality and specific use case, controllers should document why less intrusive alternatives fail to achieve the relevant objective, drawing on the KVKK's proportionality logic as a practicable model.

3- Contestability pathways must be institutionally embedded. Individuals should have accessible and effective mechanisms to challenge data records, identity matches, and adverse mobility outcomes, particularly where such outcomes are derived from computed or automated status determinations.

4- Robust error governance frameworks are required. Border systems should incorporate formal procedures for addressing misidentification, missing exit records, incorrect stay calculations, and false "hits," supported by rapid correction workflows and clearly defined accountability metrics.

5- Finally, independent review and transparency must be strengthened. Oversight bodies require access to meaningful technical documentation (including matching rules, decision thresholds, and update logs) in order to assess legality, proportionality, and the risk of discriminatory effects.

A concluding synthesis: the rule of law at the border is now a data-governance project

Border technologies sharpen a foundational insight: the rule of law is not sustained solely through statutes and institutional arrangements, but through the concrete ways in which power is exercised via technical systems. In datafied border regimes, systems themselves perform governance functions by classifying individuals, matching identities, retaining records, and generating decision cues that structure administrative action. Where such systems increasingly mediate access to territory and legal status, the credibility of the rule of law depends on the extent to which legal frameworks effectively discipline their design, deployment, and use.

In this context, maintaining the rule of law requires that border data infrastructures satisfy a set of cumulative conditions. They must remain legible, such that affected individuals can understand the grounds of adverse decisions; constrained, in the sense that purpose limitation operates as an enforceable boundary rather than a rhetorical commitment; proportionate, ensuring that biometric identification and data retention practices are strictly necessary for clearly specified objectives; contestable, so that errors, misidentifications, and adverse inferences can be challenged and corrected; auditable, through

comprehensive logging that renders access and decision-making processes reviewable; and accountable, such that institutional responsibility remains identifiable even within highly interoperable governance architectures.

The EU smart borders framework illustrates both the promise and the peril of contemporary border governance. On the one hand, it holds out the prospect of more consistent enforcement and administratively efficient processing. On the other hand, it risks transforming mobility into a continuous data trial, in which the evidentiary burden subtly shifts toward the individual to rebut system-generated outputs. In this respect, Türkiye's KVKK practice (particularly its explicit and operationalized proportionality logic for biometric processing) provides a valuable doctrinal lens for resisting this shift. It demonstrates how technological modernization can be subjected to constitutional constraints, ensuring that advances in border management remain subordinate to fundamental rights, legality, and the availability of effective remedies.

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Chapter 3

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE OTHER: XENOPHOBIA AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

The other has been one of the fundamental elements of social identity construction throughout history and has paved the way for the exclusion and discrimination of certain groups. Targeting various groups in different periods and contexts, this process has created sharp distinctions between individuals and communities as "us" and "them". Marginalized groups have generally been marginalized and subjected to political, economic and social exclusion. In this context, xenophobia and Islamophobia are considered as two important and interrelated forms of marginalization.

Xenophobia is essentially an exclusion mechanism shaped on the axis of economic, cultural and political concerns. Especially during periods of intensified migration movements, the perception that the economic and social rights of local people are under threat is strengthened and this situation causes foreigners to be seen as a potential risk factor. Historically, anti-immigrant policies and discourses have reinforced social prejudices by institutionalizing xenophobia. Islamophobia, on the other hand, is a form of religion-based marginalization and has turned into an increasingly prominent discrimination practice in the modern world (Stolz, 2005: 548). Especially global security crises such as the 11 September attacks and the 2005 London bombings have reinforced the perception of Islam and Muslim identity as a threat. Islamophobic attitudes have become widespread, supported by the approaches of politics and the media (Ramadhan et al., 2025: 2). In this context, Muslim individuals and communities in the Western world have been subjected to discrimination in a broad framework ranging from immigration policies to security practices.

Throughout history, societies, civilizations, and cultures have consistently defined and conceptualized themselves in relation to the "other." The notion of "not being like the other" -for instance, not being barbaric, warlike, or uncivilized as the other- has become a central ideological mechanism through which communities have imagined themselves as more legitimate, superior, and civilized. This process has played a pivotal role not only in interpersonal relations but also in the construction of collective identities and state ideologies.

In Ancient Greece, Persians and Medes were characterized as "wild" and "barbaric," while the Persians and Medes perceived the Greeks as a civilization lacking understanding of art and science, in need of development and advancement. This mutual othering was fuelled not only by military or political competition but also by claims of cultural superiority. Accordingly, the distinction between "self" and "other" functioned as a legitimizing framework and a comparative measure in inter-civilizational interactions (Kalın, 2016).

Throughout world history, the "self" versus "other" dichotomy has operated as a structural cultural and social mechanism in relations between societies and states. Statesmen, politicians, and ruling elites have strategically employed this distinction not only for identity construction but also to generate political legitimacy and mobilize society. By portraying the "other" as dangerous, barbaric, or hostile, they have reinforced narratives of national unity domestically and justified conflicts in foreign policy. Thus, defining the self in opposition to the other has not only been a cultural reflex but has also transformed into a form of political capital that sustains and legitimizes authority.

The concepts of belonging and identity are among the determining factors in shaping social structures. However, this belonging is often constructed based on the distinction between "us" and "them" and feeds processes of marginalization. Throughout history, discrimination against different cultural, ethnic and religious groups has been reinforced by social fears and political discourses, paving the way for the exclusion of certain groups. Globalization, the spread of armed conflicts and the climate created by economic inequalities have significantly increased migration movements between states in the 21st century. With the reshaping of socio-economic, cultural and political dynamics in the receiving countries, social polarization has deepened. Throughout human history, societies, states, and empires have constructed their identities on the concept of the "Other," portraying the Other as belonging to an inferior class, as barbaric, while presenting themselves as civilized and advanced in contrast. Based on this perception and conceptualization, they have shaped their own identities and imagined themselves as the exact opposite of, and fundamentally different from, the Other. However, with globalization and modernization, societies have grown somewhat closer to one another and have begun to develop more positive perceptions of each other. Nevertheless, as a result of economic crises, civil wars, and acts of terrorism, millions of migrants and refugees have been displaced from their homes and homelands, migrating primarily to the United States and Europe. Consequently, those who had historically been conceptualized as the "Other" and "barbarian" have now entered a new stage in which they are subjected to discrimination on the basis of their religion and ethnicity. In today's global context, the dominant discourse of exclusion and othering no longer primarily targets the "Other" and the "barbarian" in general terms, but rather focuses on those who are Muslim, Asian, or Eastern.

In a significant part of Western society, immigrants and Muslims are increasingly targeted and xenophobia (especially Islamophobia) has become widespread. Particularly when analyzing the West, it is noteworthy that Islamophobia is used and popularized by dominant groups aiming to construct, expand, and stabilize their sphere of power by designating a (real or

fabricated) scapegoat (Bayraklı & Güngörmez, 2014: 127). It is observed that Islam in the West has increasingly been transformed into an instrumental tool through which politicians can conceptualize an "Other," formulate policies, and, by doing so, mobilize a constituency and sustain their political agendas. In the context of far-right nationalist parties and their political strategies, public sentiment has been tested and shaped through hostility toward Islam and Muslims, while efforts have simultaneously been made to construct a theoretical framework to legitimize this perspective.

The term Islamophobia (or Islamophobie) first appeared in print in France in the early twentieth century (Ramadhan et al., 2025: 2). Although its conceptual roots may be traced to this period, the term in its contemporary usage has more recent origins. It was initially popularized in the 1970s and subsequently gained traction among European anti-racist movements during the 1980s and 1990s. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, constituted a critical juncture in the diffusion and widespread adoption of the term, particularly within European and American public and scholarly discourse. It emerged from an increasing need to address the status of Muslim migrants in Northern countries, and the perceived divide between the Western and Islamic worlds (Rana, 2017: 148). The discourse of Islamophobia, or opposition to Islam, can be traced back to the emergence of Islam in the seventh century. According to both the Old and New Testaments, Islam was perceived as a heretical sect of Christianity, with its prophet Muhammad viewed as the Anti-Christ, and its holy book, the Qur'an, regarded as a compilation of fabricated and concocted texts. However, the concept of Islamophobia, or the fear of Islam, is a much more recent development (Doğan, 2021).

However, despite the recent rise in the popularity of hostility toward Islam and Muslims, this attitude is not a new phenomenon; rather, it has a deep-rooted historical background. If, however, we approach the issue through the lens of a "clash of civilizations", our focus would shift to the longstanding history of confrontation between Christianity and Islam spanning roughly 1,400 years. In this context, anti-Muslim attitudes would appear as a deeply rooted phenomenon, far older than the relatively recent term "Islamophobia," which refers to the fear of Islam as a religion. Such a perspective would uncover profound historical tensions and expose underlying divisions and sources of conflict (Taras, 2024: 3). At the same time, the current rise in Islamophobia and xenophobia is not solely rooted in historical background, it is also closely linked to current phenomena such as terrorism and migration. It can be stated that Islamophobic discourses are mainly fueled by terrorist attacks and the recent influx of refugees. With the rise of parties with far-right orientations, it is observed that the dose of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim discourse has gradually increased. Hate speech appears in the ugliest forms where

ethnic, religious and racial minorities are physically attacked and killed. Far-right parties and populist politicians use this situation as an opportunity to create a perception of threat between immigrants and the local population and harshen their discourse accordingly. The support gained by right-wing politicians in European countries is also seen as an increase in acts of violence against refugees and migrants (Nwabuzo & Schaeder, 2017).

This study aims to analyze the relationship between these two forms of discrimination by addressing the concepts of xenophobia and Islamophobia. The historical origins, socio-economic causes and social effects of xenophobia will be analyzed, and it will be revealed how Islamophobia has gained legitimacy in the Western world, especially after 9/11. In this context, the article aims to reveal how xenophobia and Islamophobia reinforce each other and how they are rooted in modern societies. At the end of the study, it is concluded that the terrorist acts committed on 9/11, and its aftermath have been largely conducted through Muslim groups.

2. XENOPHOBIA: OTHERIZATION SHAPED BY SOCIAL FEARS

The term *xenophobia*, which is of Greek origin, is a combination of the words *phobia*, which means "fear", and *xenos*, which means both "foreigner" and "guest" (Özmete et al., 2018: 193). There is no single internationally recognized definition of xenophobia (UNCHR, 2020). Although xenophobia often stems from fear, it is not only a phenomenon based on fear; hate speech and prejudices also play a significant role in the formation of this phenomenon. According to Nel (2005: 241), xenophobia should be classified as a hate crime. He defines the concept as a form of behavior involving acts of violence against oneself, one's property or the group to which one belongs because of the group to which one belongs, or to which one feels one belongs. The word "guest" in the concept is important in terms of understanding the perception towards individuals with different cultural, ethnic, national and racial identities. Since guests are generally used to referring to people who come as guests for a temporary period, foreign individuals are often not recognized as permanent by society.

Xenophobia, which possesses a profound historical background, can be defined as a multidimensional socio-psychological phenomenon rooted in "fear and distrust toward foreigners" as well as the tendency to "other" them and harbor hostility against them. The origins of this phenomenon lie in the historical tendency of human communities to categorize themselves in terms of "us" and "the other." Historical processes show that the construction of legitimacy is often carried out through the deliberate fabrication of a dangerous "other" (İşler & Savaş, 2018: 768-769). In Ancient Greek society, peoples outside their own cultural sphere -particularly the Persians and the

Medes- were referred to as "barbarians," a term that not only denoted cultural difference but also carried derogatory and exclusionary connotations. Similarly, in Medieval Europe, various nations and communities were often imagined as "barbaric" or "enemy," an image that played a significant role in legitimizing political, religious, and cultural conflicts (Salter, 1999).

Although xenophobia has become a highly visible and widely debated phenomenon in the 21st century, this development is far from new. On the contrary, xenophobia has been reproduced throughout history in various social, cultural, and political contexts, sustained by the collective memory of history, society, and culture. Today, globalization, mass migration movements, economic inequalities, and identity politics stand out as the primary dynamics shaping the contemporary manifestations of this historically rooted phenomenon.

Xenophobia is not only limited to physical violence but also includes psychological violence. In this context, exclusion of individuals through "othering" causes xenophobia to take root. In addition, this approach may also pose a problem for marginalization. This is because it radicalizes those outside their own identity by accepting them as a threat (Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey, 2023: 18). Marginalization is reinforced by stereotypes and belief systems formed over time, leading to the isolation of individuals from social life. The basis of xenophobia is that the individual is seen as a foreigner to the society in which he/she lives and accordingly excluded. Therefore, it is quite possible to be exposed to xenophobia in social life and to feel this situation constantly. For example, evaluating an individual only according to his/her country of birth and limiting his/her abilities and achievements within this framework can be considered as a form of xenophobia that can be handled in the context of psychological violence, but not physical violence.

In recent years, xenophobia has increased on a global scale. This trend can be directly associated with the acceleration of international migration movements and global terrorist incidents. Nell (2009: 34) argues that there are three main reasons for xenophobia. The first is related to the duration of exposure of the natives of the host country to the "foreign" population. Second, it is related to cultural factors that harbor the identity and nationalist sentiments of the host society. The third is economic concerns related to the sharing of limited economic resources (employment, social assistance, etc.). Anti-immigrant attitudes affect social life, cultural structures and economic balances at both national and global levels (Özmete et al., 2018). In this framework, *Competition Theory* and *Social Identity Theory* provide an important framework for understanding the economic and social dimensions of xenophobia. While Competition Theory is associated with xenophobia in

the context of economic competition caused by sharing available resources with immigrants (Bobo and Hutchins, 1996: 953); Social Identity Theory contributes to the formation process of xenophobia by subjecting individuals to social and cultural classifications in line with their group belonging (Tajfel, 1982: 2). How the migration process is perceived in the host society and the complex consequences of this process further deepen xenophobia by creating a sharp distinction between natives and immigrants (Crush and Ramachandran, 2010: 53).

The triggering of xenophobia for economic reasons emerged with the impact of the Economic Crisis in 2008 (Öner, 2014: 165). However, terrorism-related reinforcement of prejudices against immigrants (especially those with Muslim identity) has become quite widespread. The 9/11 attacks on the USA caused Islam to be remembered together with terrorist elements. After 9/11, it is observed that prejudices against Muslim immigrants have increased in the USA and the Western world. The fear against Muslim immigrant groups is also recognized as "Islamophobia" (Canatan, 2007: 26). The War on Terror launched by the United States has increased the society's violent approach towards Muslims and people with Muslim appearance (Aziz et al., 2022: 146). With the outbreak of the Arab Spring, it is seen that the population remaining in conflict zones and worried about their safety of life migrated to safe regions. The terrorist acts carried out in European capitals by some radical terrorist groups that stand out with their Islamic identity have led to an increase in psychological and physical violence against migrants (Bekar, 2018: 112). Furthermore, it is evident that European understanding of the Islamic "other" originated from a drive to support colonial rule and, more broadly, from the post-Enlightenment state's ambition to classify, survey, and exert control (Burke, 1998: 14).

The rise of right-wing populist parties and ultra-nationalist discourses in Europe has caused xenophobia to gain strength in the political arena. One of the common characteristics of far-right parties operating in European Union member states is that they place nationalism at the center of their political discourse. These parties are increasingly trying to legitimize xenophobia through the discourse of "European identity" and spreading the discourses that foreigners threaten the cultural homogeneity of Europe and will assimilate European values (Öner, 2014: 165-166). Such discourses appear as one of the main elements that feed xenophobia. Simultaneously, far-right extremism threatens social unity through its polarizing rhetoric, endorsement of anti-democratic and violent tactics, and even through physical assaults and terrorist acts. This environment inflicts considerable damage on marginalized, discriminated, and underrepresented communities that are targeted by the far-right, such as Muslims (Vidgen, Yasseri & Margetts, 2022: 1). As a matter

of fact, xenophobia has not only been limited to prejudices at the individual level but has been adopted as a state policy in many countries throughout history and has turned into acts of physical violence as well as psychological violence in the name of national interests. In Afghanistan, Iraq and some Muslim-majority countries, it has been deliberately constructed to legitimize some war series (Aziz et al., 2022: 146).

3. ISLAMOPHOBIA: A GROWING OTHERIZATION BASED ON RELIGION

The term Islamophobia is a combination of the Arabic word "Islam" from the root "seleme" (submission) and the Greek word "phobos" (fear) (Kedikli and Akça, 2017: 68-69). The earliest Islamophobic discourse -in the sense of opposition to Islam- dates to the birth of Islam in 7th century. According to the Old and New Testaments, Islam was perceived as a heretical sect of Christianity; Muhammet (peace be upon him) was portrayed as the Anti-Christ, and its holy book, the Qur'an, was regarded as a fabricated and compiled text (Doğan, 2021: 304). On the other hand, in the broadest sense, Islamophobia can be defined as fear, prejudice, discrimination and hatred against Islam and Muslims (Özipek, 2014: 89). In this context, Islamophobia, which has political motives behind it, not only presents Islam as a threat to be feared, but also otherizes and demonizes it (İşler, 2021: 181). This process produces a systematic form of discrimination and exclusion shaped by prejudices against Muslims and against Islam and values associated with Islam. Islamophobia deepens the processes of exclusion and marginalization that especially immigrant Muslims are exposed to in the societies they live in and feeds a different dimension of xenophobia. As a matter of fact, Islamophobia, like xenophobia, is rooted in stereotypes and prejudices formed over time. The term "Islamophobia in its original, normative sense, reflecting Europeans' negative judgments, is just over a hundred years old. Edward Said (1985) likened Islamophobia to a form of pathology, similar to anti-Semitism. His indirect approach to "stigmatizing" Islamophobia involved taking advantage of the rhetorical force and accusatory power of Western commentators, who had long used these tools to criticize the perceived wickedness and moral corruption of the religion (Taras, 2024: 3).

Terrorism and violence on a global scale have a significant impact on the rise of Islamophobia (Aziz et al., 2022: 145). The aftermath of 9/11 has obscured the boundaries between national and international politics in relation to Islam. The alignment of European and American political rhetoric is significant, particularly due to the automatic link made between the war on terrorism, domestic security policies, and immigration laws, often with a consistent emphasis on individuals of Muslim descent (Cesari, 2010: 82). In this period, an understanding of hostility towards Islam and Muslims reached its peak. Following the events, Islam and Muslims were virtually conceived

as concepts equivalent to terrorism, and a distorted image of Muslims was portrayed. With the hate-filled and exclusionary rhetoric of politicians, supported by the media, Muslims -especially in Europe and America- were practically branded as terrorists and faced serious problems in both social and public life.

In this context, the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in the USA have been a critical turning point in the acceleration of Islamophobia. These attacks on the USA have increased mistrust towards Islam and Muslims not only in the American society but also in Europe, and further reinforced xenophobia (Kedikli & Akça, 2017). As of this date, security concerns have become one of the main issues on the global agenda, leading the US to reshape its security strategies.

The representation of Islam in the media and politics has also been effective in the rise of Islamophobia. Since 9/11, the portrayal of the Muslim community and their religion in a negative light has been unyielding in certain media outlets and across nearly all political parties. Many politicians, media figures, and writers have been highly focused in their efforts to vilify Islam as a religion and Muslims as a community (Awan, 2010: 525). Following the 9/11 attacks, the tendency to associate Islam with violence has strengthened in the Western world, leading to the institutionalization of negative perceptions towards Muslims. However, not only the 9/11 attacks but also other terrorist acts that followed this event were effective in the spread of Islamophobia. Especially the bomb attacks in Madrid in 2004 and London in July 2005 are among the factors that increased anti-Muslim sentiment. These attacks, which were claimed by Al-Qaeda, further strengthened the discourse of "Islamic terrorism" and paved the way for Islam to be perceived as an ideology of violence (Kedikli & Akça, 2017: 76). Kirman (2010: 23) states that even though Islamophobic discourses and actions have increased with the 9/11 attack, Islam has created fear in the Western world for many centuries. In the post-9/11 era, Islamophobia has evolved into a globalized buzzword, frequently used in both media narratives and public discourse. As a result, a vast array of publications has contributed to the spread of clichés, stereotypes, and cultural myths surrounding the supposedly deviant Muslim "other," often involving the racialization and vilification of Muslim identities. This renewed wave of Islamophobia has triggered hate crimes targeting Muslims, as well as Arabs, Afghans, and South Asians throughout North America and Europe (Acim, 2019: 28).

One of the most prominent events in the spread of Islamophobia to wider masses and its transformation from fear to hatred and hatred has been the terrorist acts carried out by ISIS (Ayhan & Çiftçi, 2018). The visibility of ISIS in international public opinion has increased especially with the Syrian Civil

War (2011), and the organization's brutal acts have become a priority issue among global security threats. In 2014, ISIS captured Raqqa and declared it as the "capital of the caliphate", which led to a deepening of Islamophobic reactions in the Western world. Despite the fact that ISIS directly associated itself with Islam, the fact that some European and US citizen fighters joined the organization increased distrust towards Muslim communities in the West (Holman, 2015: 616) and fuelled xenophobia. Indeed, the major terrorist attack in Paris in 2015, which was claimed by ISIS, paved the way for the rise of anti-immigrant discourses and security-based policies in Europe.

During this period, Western media, in reporting terrorist incidents, frequently placed Islam alongside terrorism, thereby reinforcing a negative perception. The language used in headlines and visuals created a framework that identified Muslim identity with violence and radicalism. Furthermore, the tightening of security policies led to Muslim individuals being routinely subjected to discriminatory treatment, especially in airports, border crossings, and public spaces. In the West, Islam began to be imagined, in the literal sense, as something to be feared (Vidino, 2017). The 2016 Brussels and Nice attacks, followed by the terrorist incidents in London and Manchester in 2017, further deepened the perception of a "Muslim threat" in Western public opinion. This perception not only related to the actions of radical organizations but also intensified reactions towards the religious symbols and cultural practices of Muslims in daily life. Religious symbols such as the headscarf, beards, or mosque construction became central to debates on security and social cohesion in the West, and in many countries, legal restrictions were introduced. In the West, fear and hatred emerged even towards certain Islamic symbols.

In this period, Islamophobia was not limited to individual prejudices but was also reflected in state policies. The media's frequent pairing of the concepts of terrorism and Islam caused the concept of terrorism to be automatically associated with Islam in people's minds (Ramadhan et al., 2025: 12-13). The tightening of immigration laws, the restriction of refugee admissions, and the increased police surveillance in areas with dense Muslim populations turned into a form of structural discrimination. Thus, under the pretext of terrorist incidents, the discourse of distrust built upon Muslim identity deepened at both societal and institutional levels.

Another important factor leading to the strengthening of Islamophobia is demographic and socio-political dynamics. The high rate of population growth in Muslim countries, the fact that many Muslim countries are considered inferior to Western democracies in terms of human rights and freedoms, and the prevalence of authoritarian regimes are considered as factors that reinforce prejudices against Muslims in Western societies. In this context, Islamophobia has not only remained at the individual or social level but has

also become a factor affecting the shaping of political and economic policies in Western countries. The perception that Muslim immigrants threaten the cultural and social structure of the native population, which has become widespread in European and US societies in the face of immigration waves, feeds Islamophobic and xenophobic tendencies (Yılmaz & Geylani, 2022). At the same time, numerous reports have drawn attention to the marginalized status of Muslim minorities, pointing to a growing number of Islamophobic incidents and raising concerns about social exclusion and radicalization. These developments have sparked a broader discussion within the EU on the need to reassess strategies for social cohesion, intercommunity relations, and integration. Muslim immigrants across Europe continue to experience prejudice and intolerance rooted in their religious and cultural identities (Senocak, 2022: 6).

Table 1 *Relationship Between Xenophobia and Islamophobia*

Aspect	Xenophobia	Islamophobia	Overlap
Definition	Anxiety or animosity toward outsiders or individuals from distinct cultural backgrounds.	Fear, prejudice, or discrimination against Islam and Muslims.	Both involve fear, suspicion, and exclusion of "the other."
Main Cause	Cultural, economic, and nationalistic concerns (e.g., job competition, national identity).	Religious and ideological concerns (e.g., fear of extremism, stereotypes about Islam).	Perceived cultural incompatibility and8 societal anxieties.
Target Groups	Immigrants, refugees, ethnic minorities.	Muslims, Islamic communities, people perceived as Muslim.	Muslim immigrants and refugees are often targeted by both.
Historical Context	Intensifies during economic crises, wars, and migration waves.	Increased after 9/11, terrorist attacks, and global conflicts.	Often used politically to justify exclusionary policies.
Manifestations	Nationalist movements, anti-immigration policies, racial profiling.	Hate crimes, mosque attacks, headscarf bans, discrimination in jobs.	Political rhetoric, media framing, discriminatory laws.
Impact on Society	Social division, marginalization of ethnic groups, rise of nationalism.	Religious intolerance, restrictions on Muslim practices, marginalization of Muslim communities.	Reinforces social polarization and strengthens far-right movements.

Source: *The table was created by the authors primarily based on studies conducted by Senocak (2022), Rana (2007), and Taras (2024).*

As can be seen in the table, xenophobia and Islamophobia are deeply interconnected forms of discrimination based on fear of and rejection of the "other". While xenophobia is defined as hostility towards foreigners in general, Islamophobia specifically targets Muslims and portrays them as a cultural and ideological threat. Despite their different characteristics, these two prejudices often overlap, especially in societies where Muslim migrants and refugees are perceived as incompatible with the dominant group, both religiously and

culturally. Negative attitudes toward immigrants are widespread in many nations struggling to integrate culturally diverse communities. However, in European countries, this often escalates into what is more precisely called "Islamophobia," since immigration brings a significant number of Muslims into Europe. As a result, the anti-immigrant discourse of far-right parties has increasingly taken on a distinctly anti-Muslim character (Cesari, 2009:4). In today's racial landscape, Islam and Muslims have come to embody a complex and contradictory identity, frequently invoked in discussions of war, conquest, terror, fear, and the so-called new crusades. The racial portrayal of the Muslim spans a wide geographical spectrum, often encompassing populations from the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia (Rana, 2007: 159).

Historically, xenophobia has been fueled by economic concerns and fear of cultural displacement of the native population. Islamophobia has increased in response to geopolitical events such as the 11 September attacks and ongoing global conflicts. It has also strengthened attitudes that associate Islam with extremism. Both forms of discrimination are manifested through exclusionary policies, racial and religious profiling and public hostility towards marginalized groups.

4. CONCLUSION

Islamophobia and xenophobia have become one of the most important social problems of contemporary societies as two phenomena intertwined with globalization, migration movements and international security policies, feeding each other. While economic competition, cultural differences and national identity concerns have fueled xenophobia in the historical process, the 11 September attacks and the increasing security concerns afterwards have paved the way for the institutionalization of Islamophobia. Especially in the Western world, the rise of anti-immigrant policies, media representations and right-wing populist discourses have led to the deepening of these two forms of discrimination at the social and political level. Islamophobia and xenophobia are both present in the political response to Islam and Muslims, with each reinforcing the other, regardless of the legal, national, or social standing of the individuals involved. In other words, xenophobia has not vanished; rather, it is exacerbated by the religious and cultural integration of Muslims, further solidifying the view of Islam as foreign (Cesari, 2021: 896). In this context, Islamophobia and xenophobia, while rooted in deep historical foundations, emerge in the contemporary era as complex socio-political phenomena that are not confined to individual prejudices and attitudes but are continuously reproduced through structural and institutional mechanisms. From educational curricula to media discourses, from immigration and citizenship legislation to security policies, traces of these two forms of discrimination can be observed across a wide spectrum. The media, in particular, functions

as a critical instrument in shaping public perception; through deliberate or subliminal messaging, it fosters anxiety, fear, and even hostility toward the "foreigner" or the "Muslim." This process not only reinforces existing prejudices at the individual level but also contributes to the deepening of polarization at the societal level.

On the political plane, Islamophobia and xenophobia have become functional tools for political actors seeking to consolidate electoral support in domestic politics, as well as for states aiming to construct "the other" as part of identity politics in the realm of international relations. By positioning the "other" as an enemy or an object of fear, ruling powers seek to strengthen the foundations of their own legitimacy -an approach that has been instrumental in redefining the societal perception of security-. Right-wing populist movements have merged Islamophobia and xenophobia at both the discursive and policy levels, legitimizing anti-immigrant agendas and further exacerbating social division and polarization.

Therefore, the relationship between Islamophobia and xenophobia should be examined not only within the framework of social perception, prejudice, and cultural conflict, but also from the perspectives of global politics, economic inequalities, security paradigms, and international law. The mutually reinforcing nature of these two phenomena transforms them from mere sociological issues into structural political problems that directly affect the functioning of democratic systems, the safeguarding of human rights norms, and the preservation of social cohesion.

The overlap between Islamophobia and xenophobia has led to the positioning of Muslim migrants as the "other" in both religious and cultural terms. Discriminatory policies against Muslim communities in receiving countries limit their presence in the public sphere and reinforce social exclusion. The process of marginalization not only affects individual and social relations, but also directly shapes states' security policies, citizenship practices and integration policies.

In this context, it is of great importance to adopt inclusive policies in combating Islamophobia and xenophobia and to critically examine the structures and ideologies that encourage discriminatory discourses. Strengthening multicultural dialogue mechanisms to reduce social polarization, disseminating prejudice-reducing content in education systems and developing policies that facilitate the integration of immigrants into social life are among the basic strategies that can be effective in this struggle. Otherwise, security-oriented and exclusionary approaches will inevitably damage social cohesion in the long run and deepen social and political instability at the global level.

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Chapter 4

THE VIRTUOUS CITY REVISITED: FROM TRADITIONAL URBAN STEWARDSHIP TO R&D-DRIVEN TECHNOGOVERNANCE AND BACK TO SYNTHESIS

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Introduction

To speak of the virtuous city is to speak simultaneously of administration and morality, of infrastructure and imagination, and of the long historical continuities through which urban life has been governed, repaired, disciplined, celebrated, and at misunderstood. Cities do not simply grow; they are actively made and continuously maintained. For this reason, the central question is never limited to how to build the city, but extends to how to govern, coordinate, allocate, persuade, and sustain a public realm that remains intelligible to those who inhabit it. Within the classical tradition, the city was not conceived as an accidental agglomeration of people and functions, but as a political form, a school of civic character, and a practical workshop of institutions (Aristotle, 1998). Similarly, in the philosophical tradition associated with al-Fārābī, the virtuous city appears as a disciplined unity in which knowledge, ethical purpose, and leadership converge. Crucially, this ideal does not operate as a utopian ornament; rather, it represents an attempt to specify the conditions under which collective life can be ordered without collapsing into either coercion or disorder (Al-Fārābī, 1985; Demirel, 2014; Çetinkaya, 2008).

The modern city, however (larger in scale, more functionally differentiated, and increasingly mediated by technology) compels a rethinking of virtue not as a moral sermon but as an administrative problem. Contemporary urban governance must address how trust, service quality, and institutional coherence can be sustained when the city functions as a system of systems, and when administrative routines are progressively shaped by data infrastructures, platform logics, sensor networks, and innovation agendas (Meijer & Rodríguez Bolívar, 2016; Kitchin, 2014). It is within this context that a new vocabulary has emerged (smart city, digital government, real-time city) promising coordination, optimization, and efficiency. Yet these promises simultaneously to provoke a more sober and critical question: does the technologization of urban governance render the city more virtuous, or merely more instrumented (Hollands, 2008; Townsend, 2013)?

This chapter advances a simple yet demanding proposition; if the idea of the virtuous city is to retain analytical and practical relevance, it must be reformulated as a synthesis between two distinct administrative rationalities. The first is traditional urban stewardship, grounded in institutional memory, craft-based knowledge, incremental repair, and the gradual accumulation of norms and routines. The second is R&D-driven technogovernance, rooted in experimentation, measurement, digital infrastructures, and the ambition to manage urban complexity through scientific and technological capabilities. The issue, therefore, is not whether one rationality should displace the other, but how their respective strengths may be combined without importing their respective weaknesses. Public administration (particularly in urban settings)

rarely succeeds through purity or unilateralism; rather, it succeeds through balance, discipline, and continuity (Ostrom, 1990; Tomor, Meijer, Michels, & Geertman, 2019).

To ground this argument, the chapter draws on multiple bodies of literature and policy material. It engages with international scholarship on smart cities and smart governance (Caragliu, Del Bo, & Nijkamp, 2011; Ruhlandt, 2018), with critical reflections on smart urbanism and data-driven governance (Hollands, 2008; Kitchin, 2014), and with classic urban thought emphasizing the city's lived, street-level intelligence (Jacobs, 1961). In addition, it examines policy documents, strategic frameworks, and analytical studies from Türkiye that articulate an explicit national trajectory toward smart cities, R&D capacity-building, and urban maturity assessment (T.C. Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2019; T.C. Çevre, Şehircilik ve İklim Değişikliği Bakanlığı, 2021; İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2021; Türkiye Belediyeler Birliği, Ernst & Young Türkiye, & WWF-Türkiye, 2021; Laleoğlu, 2021; Sezgin, 2025; Alan, 2025). The objective is neither to celebrate technology as destiny nor to sanctify tradition as refuge, but to reconceptualize virtue as a form of administrative quality exercised under conditions of urban complexity.

The Virtuous City as an Administrative Ideal: From Classical Politics to al-Fārābī's Civic Philosophy

The proposition that a city may be virtuous is, at its core, a proposition about governance. In *Politics*, Aristotle does not conceptualize the city merely as a physical aggregation of buildings or populations; rather, he understands the *polis* as an association oriented toward the good life, and therefore as a political form in which institutions and civic dispositions are mutually constitutive (Aristotle, 1998). The administrative implications of this perspective remain highly salient. When governance is detached from any conception of collective flourishing, administrative performance risks devolving into a narrow calculus of outputs and efficiencies. Conversely, when virtue is severed from institutional capacity, moral aspirations are reduced to rhetoric lacking operational substance. Long before contemporary debates on smart governance, classical political thought thus articulated an enduring administrative insight: cities require both ethical orientation and organizational technique.

Writing within a distinct historical and intellectual tradition, al-Fārābī advances the ideal of the virtuous city as a condition of structured harmony, in which leadership, knowledge, and moral purpose are aligned, and the constituent parts of the city are coordinated toward a shared end (Al-Fārābī, 1985). Turkish scholarship has emphasized that al-Fārābī's conception should not be read merely as an ideal constitutional blueprint, but as a

normative model of governance and social organization (Çetinkaya, 2008; Demirel, 2014). Under this reading, the virtuous city functions as a theory of coordination: urban failure arises not only from material scarcity, but also from the absence of an ordering principle capable of reconciling difference, allocating responsibility, and sustaining direction over time.

At the same time, caution is required when translating this ideal into the conditions of contemporary urban management. The modern city is defined by scale, heterogeneity, and functional differentiation, and is therefore governed not through a singular will, but through complex arrangements of institutions, networks, and layered authorities. It is precisely under these conditions that the question of virtue re-emerges in the managerial language of governance: how can coordination among multiple actors and systems be achieved, and how can such coordination be oriented toward the production of public value rather than the mere accumulation of technical sophistication (Meijer & Rodríguez Bolívar, 2016; Tomor et al., 2019)?

In this regard, Jane Jacobs offers an indispensable corrective. Her critique of modernist planning underscores the forms of intelligence embedded in everyday urban life and cautions administrators against assuming that urban order is produced exclusively through centralized design. Jacobs reminds us that cities often function through emergent, situated, and informal social mechanisms that sustain order beyond the reach of formal planning instruments (Jacobs, 1961). This perspective does not reject administration; rather, it warns against administrative overconfidence. Virtue, on this account, is not solely a top-down attribute of institutions, but also a bottom-up capacity sustained through civic practices, neighborhood vitality, and the fine-grained ecology of streets. Any contemporary form of technogovernance must therefore be evaluated according to whether it strengthens or erodes this urban ecology.

Taken together, the classical Aristotelian tradition, al-Fārābī's civic philosophy, and Jacobsian realism converge on a central lesson: administrative legitimacy rests on the combination of orientation and competence. Orientation without competence collapses into sermonizing; competence without orientation devolves into technocracy. This dual requirement becomes decisive when assessing the relationship between traditional urban stewardship and R&D-driven technogovernance a comparison that frames the analytical core of the chapter.

Traditional Urban Stewardship: Institutional Memory, Incrementalism, and the Craft of Governing

Traditional urban stewardship is frequently caricatured as antiquated, slow-moving, and resistant to innovation. Such portrayals, however, obscure

a set of administrative virtues that contemporary governance systems often undervalue. In practice, stewardship operates through institutional memory embedded in archives, routines, tacit knowledge, and the long continuity of municipal service provision. It is fundamentally incremental, prioritizing maintenance, repair, and the prevention of failure over spectacular or disruptive projects. It is also craft based, relying on the competence of engineers, inspectors, sanitation workers, transport planners, and clerical staff whose expertise encompasses not only formal rules but also the local conditions and practical contingencies that those rules cannot fully anticipate.

If Jane Jacobs' insights are taken seriously, urban stewardship can be understood as the administrative analogue of "eyes on the street": a form of situated intelligence that emerges from proximity, familiarity, and repeated interaction with the urban environment (Jacobs, 1961). From the perspective of the virtuous city tradition, stewardship functions as the practical mechanism through which a city sustains its moral economy, ensuring that everyday services remain reliable and that the public realm does not become arbitrary or capricious (Aristotle, 1998; al-Fārābī, 1985). Viewed through a governance lens, the core strengths of stewardship may be grouped into three interrelated dimensions.

First, stewardship is context-sensitive. It recognizes (often implicitly) that the city is not a laboratory experiment but a lived and contested environment. Accordingly, it privileges workable compromises and navigates constraints ranging from budgetary cycles to political negotiation with a pragmatic realism that more abstract technocratic models may lack.

Second, stewardship is resilient under conditions of uncertainty. Because it is grounded in routines, redundancies, and accumulated experience, it possesses a capacity to absorb shocks. When systems fail (as they inevitably do) the value of stewardship lies in its ability to improvise, reroute operations, and restore functionality. This form of competence may lack visibility or prestige, yet it constitutes the everyday substance of urban resilience.

Third, stewardship is legitimacy-producing. Citizens may not grasp the technical intricacies of municipal administration, but they readily perceive reliability, fairness, and responsiveness. Where these qualities are consistently present, trust accumulates; where they are absent, trust dissipates rapidly.

At the same time, stewardship exhibits limitations that become increasingly salient in contemporary urban contexts. It may be path-dependent and slow to adapt, particularly where new infrastructures demand novel skill sets and modes of coordination. It may become siloed, insofar as institutional memory is often confined within departmental boundaries, while contemporary urban

challenges routinely cut across organizational divisions. It may also become opaque, as routinized practices harden into taken-for-granted procedures that resist scrutiny and evaluation.

Within the language of smart governance, these limitations are often described as the problem of "legacy systems," not only in technological terms but also in organizational ones: fragmented, weakly documented, and difficult to integrate (Meijer & Rodríguez Bolívar, 2016). For this reason, while traditional stewardship constitutes a foundational pillar of urban virtue, it is insufficient on its own in an operational environment that is increasingly digital, data-intensive, and interdependent.

From Smart City to Technogovernance: The Promise of Measurement, Integration, and Real-Time Coordination

The smart city discourse emerged, in part, as a response to the undeniable complexity of contemporary urban systems. As urban service provision increasingly relies on interdependent infrastructures (transportation, energy, water, waste management, and digital communications) administrators are naturally drawn toward tools capable of monitoring, optimizing, and coordinating these interconnected domains. Within the European smart city literature, emphasis is placed on competitiveness, innovation, and the integration of technological, human, and institutional dimensions of urban development (Caragliu et al., 2011). Nam and Pardo's influential framework conceptualizes the smart city through the interaction of technology, people, and institutions, thereby rejecting the reduction of "smartness" to the mere deployment of devices (Nam & Pardo, 2011). From an administrative perspective, this distinction is critical: A city becomes smart not through instrumentation alone, but through the enhancement of its governance capacity.

Within governance scholarship, attention shifts from "smartness" as a technological attribute to "smart governance" as an institutional arrangement. Meijer and Rodríguez Bolívar's review of smart urban governance literature underscores that governing a smart city entails reconfiguring relationships among public authorities, private providers, and citizens, as well as developing new modes of coordination, accountability, and policy design (Meijer & Rodríguez Bolívar, 2016). Similarly, Tomor and colleagues conceptualize smart governance as a field centrally concerned with sustainability and the institutional conditions necessary for effective urban management (Tomor et al., 2019). Ruhlandt's systematic review further reinforces this position, demonstrating that smart city initiatives succeed or fail primarily according to the design of governance mechanisms and the alignment of strategic objectives, rather than the sophistication of technologies deployed (Ruhlandt,

2018). Viewed through the lens of technogovernance, these insights point to a set of distinct administrative advantages.

First, technogovernance promises integration. Digital platforms facilitate the connection of heterogeneous data sources, the standardization of processes, and the creation of cross-departmental visibility. Such integration is particularly valuable in administrative environments characterized by siloed organizational structures inherited from traditional stewardship.

Second, technogovernance promises enhanced capacity for measurement and learning. Through performance indicators, dashboards, and feedback loops, it enables evidence-informed adjustment and, crucially, the possibility of organizational learning over time (Meijer & Rodríguez Bolívar, 2016).

Third, technogovernance promises innovation capacity. By aligning urban management with research-and-development practices (such as piloting, prototyping, experimentation, and iterative improvement) it offers a rational response to rapidly evolving technologies and changing citizen expectations (Townsend, 2013).

At the same time, the smart city paradigm has attracted sustained and justified skepticism. Hollands famously questions whether the "real smart city" exists at all, or whether the discourse functions primarily as a branding strategy that advances corporate interests rather than public value (Hollands, 2008). Townsend's account of smart cities captures both their utopian aspirations and their political-economic realities, highlighting how digital infrastructures may empower civic actors while simultaneously consolidating power in new configurations (Townsend, 2013). Kitchin further cautions that the "real-time city" and big-data urbanism risk producing an illusion of comprehensive knowledge, even as data remain partial, biased, and embedded within prior governance choices (Kitchin, 2014). From this perspective, the central danger of technogovernance lies in conflating instrumentation with intelligence, and optimization with virtue.

Moreover, technogovernance may inadvertently erode the strengths of traditional stewardship. Reliance on dashboards can distance administrators from street-level realities; algorithmic decision-support may displace discretion and professional judgment; and procurement-driven innovation strategies can entrench vendor dependencies that diminish institutional autonomy and long-term flexibility.

The smart city debate therefore crystallizes a fundamental administrative challenge: how can the advantages of technogovernance integration, measurement, and innovation (be harnessed without sacrificing the virtues of stewardship) context sensitivity, robustness, and legitimacy? This tension

defines the core analytical problem to which contemporary urban governance must respond.

R&D-Driven Urban Management: Innovation Systems, Maturity Models, and the Administrative Politics of Capacity

The notion of "R&D-driven technogovernance" denotes more than the adoption of advanced technologies; it reflects a managerial commitment to organize the city as a learning institution. Under this model, the municipality is no longer positioned solely as a service operator, but also as a system designer, a steward of data, and a coordinator of innovation networks that extend across institutional and sectoral boundaries.

International research on smart governance consistently suggests that effective smart city governance depends on a combination of managerial, technical, and institutional capacities (Meijer & Rodríguez Bolívar, 2016; Ruhlandt, 2018). In practice, however, cities require concrete instruments through which such capacities can be operationalized. One increasingly prominent instrument is the maturity model: a structured assessment framework that situates an organization along a developmental continuum with respect to processes, governance arrangements, and systems integration, while simultaneously outlining pathways for progression.

Türkiye has institutionalized this logic in a particularly explicit and systematic manner. The 2020-2023 National Smart Cities Strategy and Action Plan articulates a national agenda for smart city development and, importantly, frames smartness as a process of institutional transformation rather than as a collection of isolated technological projects (T.C. Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2019). Complementing this strategic orientation, the Smart Cities Maturity Assessment Model provides a technical mechanism for evaluating municipal readiness and guiding organizational improvement (T.C. Çevre, Şehircilik ve İklim Değişikliği Bakanlığı, 2021). From an administrative perspective, such maturity models function not merely as diagnostic tools, but as governance devices: they define what constitutes "progress," specify valued competencies, and thereby shape organizational priorities.

At the metropolitan scale, İstanbul's 2030 Smart City Strategic Plan illustrates how a large municipality translates digital transformation ambitions into objectives related to service integration, coordination, and long-term planning horizons (İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2021). Similarly, the report *Smart Cities to Create Value: Examples from Turkey and the World*, produced by the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye in collaboration with major partners, frames smart city practices explicitly as strategies of public value creation, linking technological investment to broader governance

narratives (Türkiye Belediyeler Birliği et al., 2021). Additional Turkish policy analyses and scholarly contributions further enrich this managerial understanding of smart city governance and its institutional implications (Laleoğlu, 2021; Sezgin, 2025; Alan, 2025). Viewed through a governance lens, the R&D-driven model offers a set of tangible administrative advantages.

First, it institutionalizes learning. R&D-driven urban management establishes routines of experimentation, evaluation, and iteration. Rather than deploying large-scale systems in a single step, it encourages piloting and incremental adjustment, thereby reducing implementation risk and improving contextual fit.

Second, it facilitates cross-sectoral coordination. Innovation ecosystems encompassing universities, private firms, and civic technology actors can be mobilized as partners in problem-solving processes. Such arrangements diversify expertise and may accelerate adaptive responses to complex urban challenges.

Third, it enhances strategic coherence. Long-term strategies and maturity frameworks help mitigate the fragmentation often associated with project-based digitalization, particularly in large and administratively complex municipalities (T.C. Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2019; İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2021).

At the same time, the R&D-driven model exhibits identifiable limitations. One risk is the emergence of "innovation theater," in which smart city initiatives prioritize visibility and demonstration over substantive systemic improvement, echoing Hollands's critique of performative smartness (Hollands, 2008). A second limitation concerns capacity inequality. Not all municipalities possess equivalent financial, technical, or human resources; without sustained capacity-building mechanisms, national strategies may inadvertently widen existing disparities (T.C. Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2019; T.C. Çevre, Şehircilik ve İklim Değişikliği Bakanlığı, 2021). A third limitation lies in data-centric blind spots. As Kitchin cautions, data-driven governance may privilege what is measurable while neglecting qualitative, relational, and distributive dimensions of public value that resist easy quantification (Kitchin, 2014).

Taken together, these considerations suggest that R&D-driven technogovernance holds significant administrative promise. Yet its effectiveness depends on being disciplined by the virtues of stewardship and by a thicker conception of virtue one that integrates learning and innovation with legitimacy, judgment, and institutional continuity.

The Critique of the Instrumented City: When Optimization Substitutes for Judgment

The city, as practitioners of public administration readily recognize, is not merely a technical system to be optimized, but a complex social field shaped by human behavior, institutional history, and normative expectations. Efforts to govern the city primarily through optimization logics therefore risk colliding, sooner or later, with the irreducible complexity of urban life. Within the smart city literature, this tension manifests as an ongoing (sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit) debate over the form of rationality that ought to guide urban governance.

On one side of this debate, managerial and policy-oriented approaches emphasize efficiency, integration, and data-driven decision-making as central virtues of contemporary urban administration (Caragliu et al., 2011; Meijer & Rodríguez Bolívar, 2016). On the other side, critical scholarship cautions that smart urbanism may reconfigure governance in ways that privilege technological control, corporate interests, and narrow performance indicators at the expense of democratic accountability and public value (Hollands, 2008; Kitchin, 2014).

Kitchin's analysis of the "real-time city" is particularly instructive in this regard, as it foregrounds an epistemological concern often obscured by technical enthusiasm. Urban data are not neutral or transparent representations of reality; they are generated through sensors, platforms, classification schemes, and administrative choices, each of which embeds assumptions about what is relevant, what is measurable, and what may be disregarded (Kitchin, 2014). When governance prioritizes what can be readily quantified, it risks marginalizing dimensions of urban life that are socially essential yet operationally complex, including trust, fairness, inclusion, and the informal infrastructures that sustain civic interaction.

The rise of the instrumented city also poses risks to institutional memory. Rapid system turnover can disrupt the transmission of archives, routines, and tacit knowledge; expertise may become embedded in proprietary platforms; and the city may gradually lose the craft-based competencies that underpin resilience in moments of failure or crisis. From this perspective, traditional stewardship should not be dismissed as anachronistic. Rather, it constitutes a repository of practices that have endured precisely because they enabled problem-solving under conditions of constraint and uncertainty.

Hollands's critique should therefore be understood not as a rejection of technology, but as a rejection of naïveté. His analysis suggests that the smart city discourse can operate as a rhetorical device that legitimizes intervention

without confronting deeper structural issues, and that it may generate new forms of exclusion by privileging particular actors and forms of expertise (Hollands, 2008). Townsend offers a similarly ambivalent assessment: while civic hacking and participatory innovation can revitalize governance, the same digital infrastructures may be appropriated by corporate platforms or securitizing logics, thereby reshaping power relations in less visible ways (Townsend, 2013). The central normative question thus re-emerges: does technogovernance genuinely serve the public interest, or does it merely modernize administrative power?

Addressing this question requires a governance framework capable of accommodating complexity without collapsing into either centralized technocracy or romanticized localism. Ostrom's work on polycentric governance and the evolution of institutions for collective action offers such a framework. Although her empirical research often focuses on common-pool resources, Ostrom's theoretical contribution is broader: effective governance frequently arises from layered, overlapping, and mutually monitoring institutional arrangements rather than from a singular hierarchical authority (Ostrom, 1990). Applied to the urban context, this insight suggests that virtue is most likely to emerge from a balanced governance architecture one in which local knowledge and distributed accountability coexist with strategic coordination and shared standards.

The Synthesis: Hybrid Virtuous City Governance as Stewardship + Science + R&D

The chapter's sustained comparison between "the old" and "the new" reflects a core analytical claim: the virtuous city can neither be preserved as a nostalgic museum of inherited practices nor presented as a technological showroom of innovation. Rather, it must function as a working system credible in its operations, legitimate in its authority, and capable in its response to complexity. Any viable synthesis must therefore rest on a set of governing principles that structure how stewardship, technogovernance, and R&D capacity interact in practice.

First, stewardship must be treated as the ethical operational baseline of urban governance: Stewardship should not be understood as a legacy constraint to be overcome, but as the foundational condition of administrative virtue. Reliability, continuity, and context sensitivity constitute non-negotiable requirements for legitimate urban governance. Jacobs's emphasis on street-level complexity should be read not as a cultural preference, but as a binding governance constraint: technological systems that erode the city's social ecology are administratively deficient, regardless of their innovative appeal (Jacobs, 1961). In parallel, Aristotle's orientation toward collective flourishing

serves as a reminder that urban governance cannot be reduced to service provision alone; it concerns the coordination and maintenance of a shared civic life (Aristotle, 1998).

Second, technogovernance should function as a mechanism of integration rather than domination: Smart governance is normatively defensible insofar as it reduces fragmentation, enhances coordination, and supports institutional learning (Meijer & Rodríguez Bolívar, 2016; Tomor et al., 2019). It becomes problematic when it substitutes judgment with dashboards or treats optimization as a sufficient proxy for governance. Kitchin's critique implies a concrete administrative implication: data infrastructures must be embedded within institutional review arrangements capable of identifying bias, blind spots, and unintended distributive effects, rather than operating as self-justifying technical systems (Kitchin, 2014).

Third, R&D capacity should be institutionalized as a disciplined learning system: R&D-driven governance must be distinguished from perpetual disruption. Its value lies not in constant novelty, but in structured learning over time. Türkiye's national strategies and maturity assessment models illustrate a viable pathway: articulating long-term objectives, defining staged maturity criteria, and embedding iterative improvement cycles that connect individual projects to organizational development (T.C. Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2019; T.C. Çevre, Şehircilik ve İklim Değişikliği Bakanlığı, 2021). At the municipal level, strategic plans can then translate these objectives into coherent service portfolios and institutional reforms, rather than isolated technological interventions (İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2021).

Fourth, the synthesis requires a polycentric governance architecture grounded in shared standards: Drawing on Ostrom's conception of polycentric governance, the virtuous city must combine distributed responsibility with common rules, monitoring mechanisms, and mutual accountability (Ostrom, 1990). This is the institutional space in which "traditional" and "new" modes of governance can be reconciled: stewardship contributes local knowledge, legitimacy, and operational resilience, while technogovernance contributes visibility, interoperability, and coordination across systems. The synthesis is achieved when both are embedded within institutions capable of learning, correcting errors, and recalibrating authority over time.

Taken together, these principles define hybrid virtuous city governance not as a compromise between past and future, but as an administrative architecture that aligns ethical orientation, technical capacity, and institutional learning under conditions of complexity.

A practical synthesis framework: The Stewardship–R&D Loop

The proposed synthesis may be operationalized as an iterative governance loop that connects stewardship, data infrastructures, and R&D capacity into a continuous cycle of diagnosis, intervention, and institutional learning. Rather than treating innovation as an episodic or externally driven activity, this framework situates it within the everyday practice of urban administration.

1- Stewardship-based diagnosis: The cycle begins with a diagnosis grounded in stewardship. Attention is directed to service failures, citizen complaints, maintenance backlogs, and operational vulnerabilities that is, to the lived city rather than the "brochure city" (Jacobs, 1961). This stage ensures that problem definition emerges from operational realities and social experience, rather than from technological availability or branding considerations.

2- Data-infrastructure support: Data systems are then designed to illuminate the diagnosed problems. Measurement and integration are treated as supportive instruments, not as ends in themselves. Crucially, this stage requires explicit documentation of assumptions, data gaps, and methodological limitations, reflecting Kitchin's warning that urban data are partial, situated, and shaped by governance choices (Kitchin, 2014).

3- R&D-driven iteration: On this basis, pilot interventions are implemented and evaluated. Evaluation criteria should encompass not only performance metrics but also legitimacy, fairness, and administrative feasibility. This corresponds to the smart governance literature's emphasis on institutional capacity, reflexivity, and learning, rather than on technological novelty alone (Meijer & Rodríguez Bolívar, 2016; Ruhlandt, 2018).

4- Institutionalization and memory: Successful pilots are subsequently translated into stable routines, shared standards, and formal procedures. Training programs are updated, and institutional knowledge is preserved to prevent dependency on temporary project teams or external consultants. This step aligns with Türkiye's emphasis on institutional maturity and sustainability in smart city governance (T.C. Çevre, Şehircilik ve İklim Değişikliği Bakanlığı, 2021).

Within this loop, innovation is not positioned as the adversary of tradition. Rather, innovation functions as a method for strengthening stewardship, while stewardship provides the moral and operational discipline that prevents innovation from degenerating into spectacle or "innovation theater."

Türkiye as a Contemporary Laboratory: Strategic Ambition, Institutional Tools, and the Risk of Fragmentation

Türkiye's smart city agenda offers a particularly instructive empirical setting for the synthesis proposed in this chapter, insofar as it combines national-level strategic ambition with the practical pressures of municipal implementation. The National Smart Cities Strategy and Action Plan (2020-2023) reflects a state-level recognition that smart city development cannot be reduced to isolated technological initiatives, but instead requires coordination, shared standards, and an action-oriented roadmap (T.C. Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2019). Its analytical significance lies not only in its thematic priorities, but in its explicit administrative claim: smart city governance depends on systematic capacity-building, institutional alignment, and common frameworks that structure local action. The subsequent Smart Cities Maturity Assessment Model reinforces this claim by providing a structured instrument through which municipal readiness can be evaluated and incremental improvement guided (T.C. Çevre, Şehircilik ve İklim Değişikliği Bakanlığı, 2021). In this sense, Türkiye has sought to translate smart city discourse into managerial instrumentation.

At the metropolitan scale, İstanbul's 2030 Smart City Strategic Plan illustrates the governance challenges associated with steering a complex megacity through long-term digital transformation objectives. The plan highlights the necessity of integrating service delivery, spatial planning, and technological infrastructures into a coherent strategic trajectory (İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2021). At the same time, the very existence of such a plan underscores a central governance dilemma: in large urban systems, projects tend to proliferate rapidly, while coherence is difficult to sustain. A virtuous approach to smart city governance therefore requires robust institutional mechanisms capable of prioritizing initiatives, integrating systems, and evaluating outcomes over time.

The report produced by the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye, in collaboration with major partners, frames smart city initiatives primarily through the lens of value creation and presents illustrative examples from both Türkiye and international practice (Türkiye Belediyeler Birliği et al., 2021). Such reports can perform a constructive role by diffusing knowledge and highlighting promising practices. Yet, as Hollands's critique would suggest, they also carry the risk of reinforcing success narratives that obscure institutional constraints, implementation failures, and uneven capacities (Hollands, 2008). From an administrative perspective, these documents should therefore be treated as learning instruments rather than as promotional artefacts.

Complementary analyses within Türkiye further reflect an effort to interpret smart city transformation through governance and management

perspectives. Laleoğlu examines the changing nature of urban management under smart city conditions, emphasizing shifts in coordination and administrative roles (Laleoğlu, 2021). Sezgin's policy-oriented analysis focuses on smart city applications in local governments and highlights practical challenges of implementation and coordination (Sezgin, 2025). Alan's more recent contribution emphasizes the national strategic orientation of Türkiye's smart city agenda and its forward-looking ambitions (Alan, 2025). Taken together, these texts point to a growing managerial consensus: the smart city is no longer an optional embellishment, but an emerging policy and administrative field. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain.

Challenge 1: Capacity divergence among municipalities.

A maturity model can diagnose gaps, and a national strategy can define goals, but without sustained investment in human capital and institutional support, capacity divergence may persist or widen (T.C. Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2019; T.C. Çevre, Şehircilik ve İklim Değişikliği Bakanlığı, 2021).

Challenge 2: Fragmentation through vendor-driven projects.

Smart city projects can proliferate as disconnected procurements. This produces data islands and weakens integration, thereby undermining the promise of technogovernance (Meijer & Rodríguez Bolívar, 2016).

Challenge 3: The tension between demonstration and durability.

Cities may prioritize visible, demonstrable projects rather than durable improvements in maintenance, interoperability, and institutional learning. Jacobs would recognize this as a classic mistake: the city's health is often determined by the ordinary, not the spectacular (Jacobs, 1961).

Hence, Türkiye's case underlines the need for synthesis. The virtuous city, in contemporary terms, is a city that can modernize without losing its memory, and that can innovate without losing its judgment. It is a city that treats R&D as a method for improving stewardship rather than escaping it.

Conclusion

The tension between traditional urban stewardship and R&D-driven technogovernance is, at its core, a debate about administrative rationality. Stewardship offers context sensitivity, resilience grounded in routine, and legitimacy sustained through continuity. Yet it also carries risks of path dependence, organizational silos, and opacity. Technogovernance, by contrast, promises integration, measurement, and innovation capacity, while simultaneously risking superficial smartness, data-centric blind spots, and the replacement of judgment with optimization logics (Hollands, 2008; Kitchin, 2014; Meijer & Rodríguez Bolívar, 2016).

Revisiting the idea of the virtuous city clarifies what is ultimately at stake in this debate. A city is not virtuous because it is ancient, nor because it is technologically advanced. It is virtuous because it is well governed. And well-governed, in administrative terms, means that moral orientation is institutionally embedded and that competence is sustained through disciplined capacity. Aristotle's conception of the city as oriented toward the good life and al-Fārābī's vision of the virtuous city as ordered by knowledge and ethical purpose both converge on a common insight: governance is an art of alignment between ends and means, leadership and institutions, and social life and administrative technique (Aristotle, 1998; al-Fārābī, 1985; Demirel, 2014). Jane Jacobs complements this tradition by reminding us that urban intelligence is partly local, emergent, and embedded in everyday life, and that governance must therefore preserve the city's social ecology rather than override it (Jacobs, 1961). At the same time, the smart governance literature underscores that contemporary urban complexity necessitates new institutional mechanisms for coordination, learning, and sustainability (Meijer & Rodríguez Bolívar, 2016; Tomor et al., 2019; Ruhlandt, 2018).

The chapter's central contribution is thus a defense of synthesis. The virtuous city, reinterpreted for contemporary conditions, is a hybrid governance model: stewardship as the ethical and operational baseline; technogovernance as an integrative support for coordination and learning; R&D capacity as a disciplined system of institutional improvement; and polycentric arrangements as the architecture of accountability and shared authority (Ostrom, 1990). Türkiye's evolving smart city strategy and maturity instruments illustrate both the promise and the risk of this model. The promise lies in the articulation of tools for institutional learning and coordination; the risk lies in the possibility that strategy, if not matched by durable administrative capacity, may produce fragmentation, inequality, and performative forms of smartness (T.C. Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, 2019; T.C. Çevre, Şehircilik ve İklim Değişikliği Bakanlığı, 2021; İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2021).

Ultimately, the most realistic (and therefore most administrative) lesson is straightforward. Cities do not become virtuous through slogans, nor do they become capable through gadgets alone. They become virtuous when their institutions can preserve continuity while absorbing innovation; when services remain reliable as reforms proceed; and when technological ambition serves the lived order of the city rather than displacing it. This conclusion is neither nostalgic nor technocratic. It is institutional and it is precisely what the virtuous city tradition, once translated into the language of contemporary governance, demands.

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Chapter 5

TO BE OR NOT TO BE...EXCEPTIONAL: AN ANALYSIS ON DONALD TRUMP'S MIDDLE EAST POLICIES

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1. Introduction

The construction of an identity is a tale old as time. The need to define the "self" and the "other" through the dichotomisation of the world can be traced back to the development of first human communities. This attempt later took on a macro form as communities evolved from small groups to large political entities. Such process necessitated the generation of the systematic establishment of all-encompassing identities. However, it is crucial to note that this advancement was the outcome of a construction, and the most comprehensive way to understand this process would be to reference a particular theory: social constructivism. The theory of constructivism differs from the mainstream theories as it opens a new horizon in understanding state behaviour, international relations, and foreign policy. It is the theory of ideas and claims that the physical world is shaped by normative interpretations in which individuals attach meaning to certain concepts and events (Adler, 1997, p. 322). Therefore, the world becomes "our making" and how one comes to perceive it is left to the power of one's perception.

To construct something insinuates the act of producing an object "that otherwise would not exist" (Dunne et al., 2013, p. 188). Once formed, these objects will endorse a specific meaning and utility within a certain context, and they will be imbued with ideas, beliefs, and norms. It becomes possible to view the world as a state of becoming, something that is always under construction, rather than simply being (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012, p. 279). This construction process is a social one; thus, it requires a collective consciousness behind the act itself. Hence, it cannot be done by the individual alone but stands in need of the engagement of others (Steans et al., 2010, p. 183). For a phenomenon to come into being it must undergo a triangulation of procedure that would ultimately result in its social construction: collectively shared belief, the rhetoric to support such belief, and actions that displayed it. With respect to this, the collection of ideas, interpretations, perceptions come to form social facts that are the outcome of human agreement/belief. History can also be viewed as an intersubjective evolving process in which the people "make their own history".

Furthermore, human communities can also be regarded as the main perpetuators behind the formation of states as these political entities are historical constructs. Therefore, it becomes natural to view states as artificial creations in which people come to make it and can develop or modify it in different ways (Jackson & Sorensen, 2013, p. 211). States embody specific identities and if states are social constructs, then it would not be erroneous to claim that identities too become socially constructed through collectively shared beliefs about the world. Identities, particularly national identities, prove to be the most appropriate case for constructivist theory due to the fact that they are constructed through the help of historical events, socially shared

ideas, and language. For instance, language is truly pivotal. This is because speaking is in fact doing; thus, identities are constructed out of "practical linguistic rules" (Kowert, 2015, p. 104). Therefore, language is constructed to promote national identity. All of these are used in a way to construct a "self", a "national identity" that is unique or exceptional when compared with "others". This understanding, inevitably, opened the way of adopting an "exceptional" identity. Exceptionalism is the general belief that a state, society or individual is "exceptional". The term indicates that the entity that is mentioned is superior (politically, economically, historically, etc.) to its competitors.

With regards to what has been put forward thus far, the aim of this research is to shed light on the idea of exceptionalism, particularly American exceptionalism, and its impact on the making of US Middle East foreign policy. It will try to answer the question of to what extent and in what form does the idea of American exceptionalism provide a basis for president Donald Trump's Middle East policy. The study has utilised the application of an International Relations theory: social constructivism. Therefore, the ontological position of it has leaned towards the adoption of a constructivist approach. It is a single case study in which the objective is to conduct an in-depth one-case analysis. The collection of data is based on a literature review and takes Trump's discourses and policy actions as a point of reference. Its scope is limited to the period of Trump's presidency (2017-2021) and the Middle East foreign policy formulated by the Trump Administration. The policy towards Israel has not been included in the scope due to the role of the Lobby which would require an analysis on its own.

There have been many claims regarding the myth of American exceptionalism and the end of it during the Presidency of Donald Trump (e.g. Oglesby, 2020; Restad, 2020; Smith 2016; Wertheim, 2018); however, this article will aim to contradict these arguments. While such arguments mainly revolve around the innenpolitik level, there have been studies with similar claims concerning US foreign policy. Therefore, in line with the research question and objective, the article is organised as follows. The first section will expand upon the conceptualisation of the notion of American exceptionalism by explaining its constituents. It will endeavour to expose the factors that had contributed to the formation of such notion by giving reference to its intellectual heritage and specific historical events. The second part will try to unearth the correlation between the Trump Administration's Middle East policy and the impact of American exceptionalism. Findings obtained from this section will show whether this phenomenon serves as a premise for the making of US Middle East foreign policy.

2. The creation of a Myth: Understanding the concept of "American Exceptionalism"

Exceptionalism, occasionally, can be used as a tool to justify the acts and policies that are carried out by states (Brummet, 2007, p. 302). To exemplify, American exceptionalism focuses on "uniqueness", "being above" and an "exception" to certain laws and treaties. The government often views itself as supercilious enough to not to be a part of treaties and immune to International Law. With respect to this, it can be said that exceptionalism may create the belief that states can be a "special case outside the norms" (Tyrrell, 1991, p. 1031). The United States of America (USA) has come to be regarded as one of the many states that has successfully constructed and then adopted a certain sense of exceptionalism which provided a basis for its national identity.

The USA tends to perceive itself unique and exceptional just like every other nation. This belief in the notion of "American exceptionalism" refers to the idiosyncratic character of the superiority of the US and its chosen stature by God for a holy mission (Ereli, 2018). The creed regarding the premise in which the country has reached the pinnacle of the evolution of western modernity and human progress is quite prevalent in the concept itself (Saito, 2009, s. 43). Representing a free nation based on democratic values, and personal rights and liberties has been equated with its position as the highest stage of civilisation. Its unwavering acceptance of being the epitome of a unique and, in the words of John Winthrop, shining "city upon a hill" forms a significant part of the concept (Ceaser, 2012). Such notion can be simply put as the idea that Americans have a divine and special history, destiny, and mission (Madsen, 1998). Of course, all these ideas can be traced back to certain events and thus be categorised under three classifications as the notion derives its foundation from these taxonomies: religious, philosophical, and political.

2.1. Religious foundation

From its national anthem to presidents swearing on the Bible, religion has come to be regarded as a crucial aspect of both American history and the notion of American exceptionalism. The belief in superiority, being chosen by God himself, and burdened with a divine mission can be attributed to the religious ideas that were prevalent in the early colonial history of the country (Ereli, 2018). The influx of migrants has often been seen as the reason behind the prevalence of religious ideas in which these migrants were usually those who were migrating from Europe in fear of religious and political persecution. There was not only diversity in religious thought but also a heterogeneity in the political beliefs that came with these thoughts. Thus, the North American continent was brimming with a variety of ideas and belief systems which made it, many believed, a fertile ground for "the freedom of religion" (Seiple, 2012). There is no doubt that this wide spectrum of beliefs contributed much to the

composition of the US; however, it would not be wrong to deem that none had the impact of the Puritans.

Puritanism was a sect under Protestantism and had been born in England in the 16th century with the aim to purify the Church of England (Kessler, 1992). The believers of this sect had become discontented with the religious repression in England and hence started the journey to the New World for religious freedom. During these "pilgrimages" John Winthrop gave a sermon that blatantly expressed the belief that the Puritans were directly chosen by God himself to pursue their divine mission in the promised land that they were heading to (Ereli, 2018). The idea that the Puritans would be the ones to build a shining city upon the hill in these new lands denoted the emphasis on their superiority and divine mission. Furthermore, Tocqueville believed that the Puritans were essentially the founders of the US because their actions, beliefs, and practices contributed to the genesis of US "nationalism" (Kessler, 1992). Their "exceptionalist" claim would not only influence the national character of America but would also imbue that character with an exceptionalist vision during the making of policies.

2.2. Philosophical foundation

The Enlightenment has had a significant impact in the trajectory of the development of ideas and schools of thought. While there have been many interpretations of the Enlightenment; such as, the French Enlightenment, German Enlightenment, Scottish Enlightenment, and English Enlightenment, it would be best to expand upon the notion of American Enlightenment for it not only has traces of other enlightenments but also has come to form the basis of American exceptionalism's intellectual foundation. The reason why such a separate categorisation for American Enlightenment exists is due to its prevailing differences from the others; for instance, the lack of a feudal system and inquisitions. America was considered as a utopia in itself; thus, its birth was a direct product of the intellectuals themselves (Köktaş, 2014, p. 113). According to Commager (1977), the Enlightenment had been imagined and formulated by the Old World, but it had been actualised by the New World.

Moreover, Calvinism, the Scientific Revolution, and the ideas of John Locke have had an impact on American Enlightenment and hence contributed to the philosophical foundation of American exceptionalism (Goetzmann, 2009). Calvinism provided the ground for capitalist mode of production to bloom and blossom whereas the Scientific Revolution provided the appropriate tools for rationalisation and humanism. John Locke's ideas concerning man's inalienable rights, his nature, and the type of government needed for him to flourish provided the basis for the American political system. With regards to this, it would not be wrong to claim that the US was practically the political

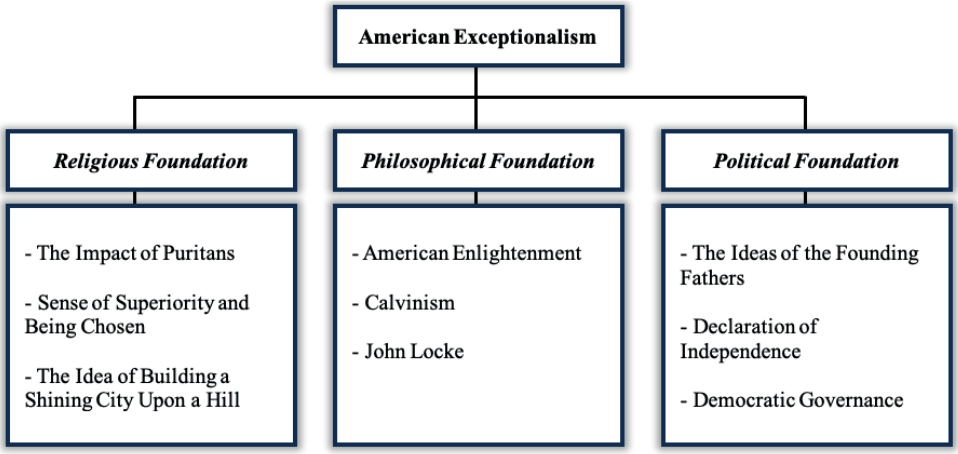
and ideational manifestation or the embodiment of the practices of the Enlightenment. This philosophical aspect paved the way for the emergence of an idiosyncratic political structure in which the US would position itself as a "model" or the "pinnacle of modernity".

2.3. Political foundation

This foundation has much in common with the previous one; however, it will be explained as a distinct dimension with a special emphasis on the US political culture. In order to understand this culture, it would be appropriate to look at the Founding Fathers and the making of the Declaration of Independence. The ideas that emanated from the Fathers and the founding documents would come to maintain the notion of a new nation that would be the envy of all other nations. This was seen as an opportunity to rid the new emerging nation of the corruption prevalent in Europe by restoring a good government, safeguarding private property, ensuring equality before law, and protecting man's rights and liberties (Madsen, 1998). In addition, the establishment of separation of powers, the adoption of a limited government based on constitutionalism, and the maintenance of self-government were thus to be embedded in the national identity and political culture of the US (Ereli, 2018). America, unburdened by the complications in Europe, would gain the opportunity to become the epitome of a democratic society.

This political culture paved the way for the belief that the USA represented the greater good, was the salvation of mankind and "to be American was to be exceptional". Thus, it was destined to be a model to other nations and the guardian of democracy and freedom. In time, America would come to promote the idea of human improvement through free trade, human rights, and decolonisation. It would assume the role of a civilising hand towards other states which would be come to known as "progressive imperialism" (Sümer, 2008). The institutions and values of the US would be protected and projected in which this projection would be reflected during the making of its foreign policies (Hoffmann, 2005, p. 225). Furthermore, such ideas had consolidated themselves to the extent that in the 20th century numerous presidents had praised the political and economic strength of the US and proclaimed that it had become a beacon of hope for other nations and hence had to bring the hope of democracy, freedom, and free markets to the world (Saito, 2009, p. 44).

Figure 1: the sum of American exceptionalism



With respect to this, the material aspect that was needed for constructing an identity (the founding documents) was achieved, and three things that were needed to be fulfilled – collectively shared belief, rhetoric to support it, and actions that displayed it – had been achieved through the harmonisation and amalgamation of the tripartite foundational bases. In sum, all three foundations contributed to the construction of the notion of American exceptionalism (figure 1). After this construction process the notion began to reflect itself in both the *innenpolitik* of the state and in the making of foreign policy. Of course, there have been differences amongst US presidents concerning the path that America ought to take in order to enact this exceptionalist character (Edwards, 2018, p. 178). Such differences have manifested themselves into two distinct methodologies: isolationism and interventionism. Whereas the former refers to the US "standing apart from the world and serving merely as a model of social and political possibility" (McCartney, 2004), the latter indicates active engagement and leadership.

While many believe this belief to sustain itself throughout the course of American history, there have been questions regarding whether president Donald Trump had severed a crucial vine for the sustainability of exceptionalism. There is a considerable amount of literature with the claim that Trump had brought the end of American exceptionalism; however, this study advocates that the stance of the president was simply another form of the notion rather than a rejection of it. The reason why there have been many views concerning his approach can be attributed to the fact that it has been nearly impossible to situate him in either methodological position (as mentioned above); thus, I claim that he is both. The following section will endeavour to analyse Trump's Middle East policies and put forward the extent of the construction of an American exceptionalist policy framework.

3. A brief look into Trump's foreign policy stance

Before diving into Trump's stance on the Middle East, it would be best to briefly explain his general foreign policy outlook. President Trump was a candidate from the Republican Party, and it is crucial to note that the Republicans have seen themselves as the sole champion of American exceptionalism and even have gone far enough to accuse the Democrats as non-believers of this notion (Gilmore et al., 2020, p. 541). During the campaign of 2016 presidential elections, the official party platform's statement was "we believe in American exceptionalism" (RNC, 2016). Though Trump had not expressed this belief in similar wording, he used the slogan "Make America Great Again" (McMillan, 2017). Perhaps, the reason why many claim that Trump rejected the exceptionalist discourse may be attributed to his rhetoric in which he stated that America had lost its exceptional character (Trump, 2015) and thus he needed to put America first. Hence, the foreign policy of Trump mainly revolved around the condemnation of both US globalism and nation-building efforts (Edwards, 2018).

Putting America first was a pivotal factor in the making of foreign policies in which such a mind-set led Trump to step away from multilateralism in the global scene and implement tariffs (Garrett, 2018). According to Frantzman (2019), the main objective was to reduce the external footprint of America and demand that other countries deal with their own wars and burdens. Because Trump perceived US foreign policy as a mess and such mess emanated from its globalist ideology. Thus, he put forward statements such as how the US would "get out of the nation-building business and instead focus on creating stability in the world" or would focus on "reinvigorating western values and institutions instead of trying to spread universal values that not everybody shares or wants" (Trump, 2016; Edwards, 2018, p. 182). In addition, his desire to withdraw from the global scene can be seen from his claims concerning the military and their retrenchment, "…rebuild our badly depleted military… greatest people on Earth in our military but its badly depleted…" (Trump, 2016a).

By withdrawing from the international scene, Trump aimed to make America gain its exceptional character once again. His lack of enthusiasm for meddling in other nations' affairs and for getting involved in other countries' nation-building process, and his scepticism and distrust towards international organisations, international agreements and trade agreements all signified the turn to the prioritisation of the US. Trump's endeavour to "make America great again" entailed the pursuit of strengthening the institutions of the US, increasing economic prosperity for the working and middle classes, and improving and safeguarding the rights and liberties of the American people. Thus, Trump had a distaste for getting involved in the affairs of others as he

believed such interference could harm the democratic soul of the US. According to Edwards (2018, p. 182), "Trump would return 'stability' to the United States to champion its own interests, control its own fate, and return it to being a beacon for others to emulate". With regards to these, it can be observed that Trump reflected the isolationist stance of American exceptionalism.

4. Consistencies and Contradictions Under the Banner of "America First"

When Donald Trump came to office there were many questions regarding his foreign policy stance towards the Middle East. This may be attributed to the fact that during his campaign he had not articulated a set of coherent policies on how he would deal with the issues prevalent in the region. Nonetheless, the speeches he had conducted before his election and during his presidency coupled with his policy actions have displayed his foreign policy stance. Trump's distain for international commitments and his desire to avoid direct involvement were the bases of his isolationist foreign policy outlook. In line with this perspective, he had formulated policies that focused on the situations in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, and the alliance between the Gulf and the US. While some of these policies had been consistent with his isolationist position under the banner of American exceptionalism, there had also been instances in which he had contradicted his own foreign policy framework and thus displayed the characteristics of an interventionist understanding of American exceptionalism.

4.1. Consistent with isolationism

Trump's criticisms concerning the globalist ideology that the US was trapped in reflects itself well in his approach to the allies of the US in the Middle East. He had encouraged allies to take more of burden on regional security. His claim on how countries must pay for their own burdens resonates with his certain statements, such as, "…we are not being reimbursed for our protection of many of the countries that you'll be talking about, that, including Saudi Arabia…we protect countries, and take tremendous monetary hits on protecting countries…we lose, everywhere…" (Trump, 2016; Özdamar et al., 2023, p. 13) and "Saudi Arabia should be paying the United States many billions of dollars for our defence of them" (Trump, 2015; Macdonald, 2018, p. 418). True to his words, as soon as he became president, Trump signed an arms deal worth $110 billion with Saudi Arabia (Macdonald, 2018). His minimal interventionist stance resulted in him turning a blind eye to the actions of the Kingdom so long as the resources of the US were not overstretched and over exhausted.

For instance, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates' intervention in Yemen against Iran backed Houthi rebels had largely been ignored by President

Trump during his visit to the Kingdom (Thompson, 2018). The attempts made by the Saudi and Emirati governments to contain and isolate Qatar had not been met with resistance or dissent by the Trump administration. Moreover, when Trump ordered a military withdrawal from the eastern part of Syria in 2018, he explicitly stated that regional allies should "assume the costs of reconstructing the parts of the country that have been liberated from the Islamic State" (Thompson, 2018). Saudi Arabia and other regional allies no longer had the privilege to free ride on the back of the US but had to take responsibility. This not only displayed his reluctance to engage in nation-building but also his lack of desire to be embroiled in wars or conflicts that depleted American resources and instead wanted to use such resources for the improvement of the US so that it could continue to be a strong and exceptional nation both the envy and fear of other countries.

With respect to Trump's 2018 military withdrawal decision, it would not be wrong to deem this act as consistent with his isolationist perspective. He was particularly critical of the previous administrations' involvement in Iraq and Syria as he claimed, "all we got…was death, destruction and tremendous financial loss" (Trump, 2016b). Trump believed the decision to intervene to these countries (especially Iraq) was an irrevocable mistake. Hence, he enunciated that he would refrain from making a similar mistake to not "destabilise the region and increase the burden on the US budget" (Özdamar et al., 2023, p. 14). His decision to decrease the number of troops in both Syria and Iraq can be considered as a coherent reflection of his general foreign policy outlook in which he had claimed the need to rejuvenate the US army and "bring them home". The endeavour to strengthen the American military at home also had the potential to bolster the image and credibility of the US in the eyes of both the enemy and those who wanted to emulate its path for development.

4.2. Inconsistent with isolationism…Was he also an interventionist?

The unpredictable nature of President Trump and his ad hoc pursuit of foreign policy actions, however, led to contradicting policy choices as well. Though he had not, in contrast to his predecessor, adopted the slogan of "bringing democracy" for certain operations, there had been instances of interventionism. While it may be wrong to evaluate the whole of his interventionist actions in accordance with the notion of American exceptionalism, a certain extent of it would still be an attestation of it; due to the fact that, the roots of this methodology can be found in this notion. Firstly, returning to the issue of Syria, Trump had made numerous claims on how the US would not intervene in Syria, organise military offensives on behalf of Syrian rebels, and would let the Syrian people decide on their future (Lynch, 2016, p. 140). However, his decision to perpetrate an attack had negated his original stance. This change in attitude signified a clear divergence from his

isolationist position.

The turning point in Syria was perhaps Assad's use of chemical weapons in Idlib. Just the day before the attack the Trump administration had stated that the situation in Syria would not be a priority of US foreign policy and thus would not interfere in any manner. However, the response of Trump was not consistent with these statements as he had ordered an attack and "shot the Shayrat military base" (Arı, 2020). This initiative was of unilateral character. Secondly, regarding the situation in Afghanistan, Trump had stated that "… we made a terrible mistake getting involved there in the first place…" (Kheel, 2016). In contrast to his campaign pledges and general foreign policy outlook, he made "the decision to escalate troop levels in Afghanistan" by adding 5000 troops, increasing the number of missions, and maintaining flexibility concerning the rules for airstrike (Macdonald, 2018). Such decisions and actions were bound to further trap the US in the conflict-ridden region.

Thirdly, the tensions between Iran and the US had also reached different heights with Trump's decision to confront Hezbollah Brigades in Hashdi al-Shaabi by bombing their military bases and, later on, killing Qasım Suleimani (Arı, 2020). Such developments had increased the tensions between Iran-US-Iraq, and further sucked America into sectarian conflicts and the issue of direct confrontation. Fourthly, during and after his presidency, there had been reports on the increased number of military operations under the Trump administration. In order to conduct raids in Yemen in an easier manner, Trump had given more authority to commanders so that they would not need to seek the approval of the White House (Macdonald, 2018). The Bureau of Investigative Journalism claimed that Trump had carried out military operations "more than triple the number carried out the year before" (Purkiss, 2018). This was rather at odds with Trump's claim to stay out of wars in order to ease the financial burden of the US.

Lastly, the increased attacks in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan had their roots in Trump's claim to fight against radical Islam. Despite his general foreign policy outlook, such claim was bound to dramatically "expand US military and political activities around the world" (Lynch, 2016). Trump had made contradicting statements concerning Jihadist terrorism, "We will reinforce old alliances and form new ones, and unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the Earth" (Trump, 2017; Kontos, 2017, p. 2). This statement not only denoted a multilateral approach but also signified increased military initiatives. Both were reflections of an interventionist mindset. Thus, the offensive military operations conducted against Jihadi terrorist groups had not decreased but rather continued steadily under the presidency of Trump. For instance, Iraq and Syria were subjected to airstrikes, and "American forces continued to

advise local partners, notably the Iraqi military and the Syrian Democratic Forces, providing them support in offensives against ISIS-held cities such as Mosul and Raqqa" (Macdonald, 2018, p. 420).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the notion of American exceptionalism is old as the nation itself. It has come to form a crucial part of the American identity and thus has become an influential force in the making of domestic politics and foreign policy. This exceptionalist ideal had been constructed by the American people. Such a construction process required the consolidation of collective belief, appropriate rhetoric, and actions that displayed this belief. With respect to all three aspects, they had been obtained by the religious, philosophical, and political factors prevalent in the construction of American exceptionalism. Ever since, the notion has been undergoing a state of becoming, always displaying itself but in different forms. The embodiment of this notion has displayed itself in two different forms in the making of US foreign policy: isolationism and interventionism. Therefore, it would not be wrong to claim that without the emergence and presence of American exceptionalism, US politics would be bereft of these two strategies because not only is it the source of them but also a dominating force for justification. Without giving reference to exceptionalism, one could not understand the source of US foreign policy.

Political history of the US has shown that presidents had applied these two strategies (isolationism and interventionism) to their foreign policies. While some had explicitly stated American exceptionalism to be the source of their foreign policy outlook, some had given it an implicit support. President Donald Trump can also be read along the same lines. There were many criticisms towards Trump in which many evaluated his statements to be antithesis to exceptionalism. However, such statements should not be regarded as the hard rejection of American exceptionalism but rather as a reflection of the synthesis of the two distinct methodologies: a foreign policy approach that was combined by isolationist notions and interventionist actions. Trump's normative interpretation of the international scene and the position of the US had shaped his own version of American exceptionalism. The collectively shared belief was already established – whether he was a staunch isolationist or interventionist – far back in history; thus, he did not need to re-construct a different narrative. The rhetoric to support his foreign policy outlook and the actions that displayed it were also blatantly obvious.

Trump had made several claims regarding how the US should not be involved in conflicts abroad as it damaged the "democratic soul" of America and strained the resources of the country. Many understood his statements to reflect an isolationist foreign policy approach. While there was a domestical

element to his riveting statement of "Make America Great Again", the purpose of this article was to analyse its external character. Thus, under this slogan, Trump expressed his desire to withdraw from these costly conflicts and politics. He urged allies to pay their due and carry their own burdens. His statements were turned into action as soon as he became president as can be seen from the Middle East. He made agreements regarding arms sale with Gulf monarchies and gave them the responsibility to ensure the stability and security of the region without involving the US. Trump also openly enunciated how previous governments made mistakes in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan and started the process of military withdrawal from these countries.

However, in contrast to both the literature and Trump himself, there were also actions that contradicted the main narrative behind his isolationist approach. Despite his objective to "get America out" of the region and "bring the boys back", he further embroiled the US into regional conflict. For instance, he made the decision to intervene in Syria and conduct offensive operations on behalf of local forces just days after he made the claim to let the Syrian people decide on their future. Furthermore, he escalated the number of troops in Afghanistan and engaged in proxy wars with Iran in Iraq. He also gave increased authority to military commanders and increased the number of drone strikes carried out in Yemen. Therefore, Trump was an isolationist interventionist. His desire to strengthen the US as a democratic model and therefore withdraw from the international arena reflects his isolationism while his emphasis on uniting with the civilised world to fight jihadist terrorism displays interventionism. So long as a president does not formulate a third way that is independent of the exceptionalist idea, it would be erroneous to claim the end of American exceptionalism in the making of foreign policy. The idea of American exceptionalism, which has been constructed on the axis of belief, discourse, and collective action, is not a phenomenon that can end easily as a result of the few actions of any president.

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Chapter 6

A TRANSFORMATION AT THE INTERSECTION OF LEADERSHIP, PUBLIC POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY: THE RISE OF TURKEY'S DEFENSE INDUSTRY UNDER PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN ERA (2003-2025)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War brought about a fundamental change in the international security environment; alongside inter-state symmetric threat perceptions, asymmetric and multi-dimensional security risks such as terrorism, irregular migration, cyber-attacks, regional conflicts, and hybrid warfare techniques came to the fore. This new paradigm forced states to reconsider their military capabilities not only quantitatively but also based on flexibility, rapid response, technological superiority, and most importantly, strategic autonomy. In this context, the defense industry has transcended being merely a "mandatory supply sector" and become the key to the sustainability of national security and maneuverability in the international arena. Turkey experienced this global transformation amid a legacy of historical external dependency and an environment of increasing regional instability. The intensification of PKK terrorism in the 1990s and early 2000s, instability in neighboring regions, and particularly the vivid memory of the US arms embargo following the 1974 Cyprus Peace Operation painfully demonstrated the operational vulnerabilities and political constraints created by externally sourced defense procurement. Even within the framework of existing alliance relations, barriers to critical technology transfer and conditional sales policies revealed the reality that the security of Turkey's defense needs could not be independent of its foreign policy. It was this historical and strategic background that made a radical paradigm shift in the defense industry inevitable for the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) governments led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which came to power in 2003. This period can be defined as a process where the defense industry was positioned not merely as part of military logistics, but at the dynamic intersection of political leadership vision, comprehensive public policies, and a redefined national security strategy. The discourse of "domestic and national" was transformed from mere rhetoric into concrete policy tools through institutional reforms, long-term strategy documents, aggressive R&D incentives, and a development model centered on the private sector. The aim of this study is to systematically analyze this multi-dimensional transformation in Turkey's defense industry between 2003 and 2023. The study seeks answers to the following basic research questions:

- How have Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's leadership vision and political will shaped the priorities and goals of defense industry policies?

- What institutional reforms (e.g., establishment of SSM/SSB) were implemented and what public policy tools (financing, incentives, human resource development) were mobilized to realize this vision?

- How have developments in the defense industry been reflected in Turkey's national security strategy documents and doctrinal approaches; what

relationship has been established between the pursuit of strategic autonomy and foreign policy tools?

- What have been the concrete outputs of this twenty-year transformation (localization rates, export volume, project diversity) and what are the structural limitations and criticisms encountered?

While seeking answers to these questions, the study will use qualitative and quantitative methods together. For quantitative analysis, the sector's budget growth, export-import balance, R&D expenditures, and employment data will be examined. Within the scope of qualitative analysis, official strategy documents, public policy texts, leadership discourses, and international reports will be evaluated; thus, mapping the political, institutional, and strategic transformation beyond the numbers. Following this introduction, the study will first present a historical background to reveal the pre-2003 structural problems, then examine in detail the leadership vision, institutional reforms, and public policy tools during the Erdoğan era. Subsequently, the central role of the defense industry in the national security architecture and the meaning of this transformation from an international comparative perspective will be discussed, criticisms and limitations will be laid on the table, and finally, the conclusions reached and implications for the future will be shared. This comprehensive analysis aims to contribute to our understanding of Turkey's rise in the defense industry as a complex and multi-layered example of a state redefining its leadership, policy-making, and strategic priorities, beyond being merely a technocratic success story.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

There are three basic theoretical axes forming the analytical basis of this study: political leadership theories, public policy analysis, and national security studies. These axes enable the understanding of Turkey's transformation in the defense industry not merely as a technical advancement, but as a complex socio-political phenomenon shaped at the intersection of political will, rational policy design, and strategic security objectives.

2.1. Leadership and Strategic Transformation

Political leadership literature focuses on the central role of the leader, especially during crises and in radical policy changes (paradigm shifts). According to James MacGregor Burns's (1978) distinction, while "transactional leadership" manages the existing system, "transformational leadership" aims to elevate the organization or society to a higher level of performance and morality by raising the values, expectations, and goals of stakeholders. Max Weber's concept of "charismatic authority" is also important in this context; the attribution of extraordinary qualities to a leader can legitimize rapid change by overcoming existing institutional and traditional limitations.

Turkey's post-2003 transformation in the defense industry can be examined in light of these theories. Experienced historical vulnerabilities (embargoes) and increasing security threats created a "crisis perception," while Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's leadership managed this crisis with a transformational and charismatic discourse defining the "domestic and national" defense industry as a "matter of honor." This discourse, going beyond being just a policy choice, became a source of collective motivation and legitimacy at the societal and bureaucratic levels. The literature emphasizes that such a strong leadership vision acts as a critical catalyst in initiating long-term, high-risk strategic projects (like the National Combat Aircraft), mobilizing political capital, and overcoming traditional bureaucratic resistance (Brummer, 2020).

2.2. Public Policy Analysis

The public policy process is a cyclical and dynamic process consisting of the stages agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation in the classical model. However, the process is more complex in strategic, high-tech areas requiring long-term investment like the defense industry. Here, the "rational planning model" and "network governance" approaches stand out.

The rational planning model is based on clearly defined objectives (e.g., 80% localization rate), systematic means to achieve these objectives (decade-long strategy documents, project-based budgeting), and performance criteria (export figures, project delivery schedules). In Turkey, the establishment of SSM/SSB and strategy documents published since 2006 show the evolution of the policy process towards this model. On the other hand, defense industry policy is shaped not only by state actors but also by a complex network consisting of private sector firms, R&D institutions, universities, and international partners. The concept of "governance" in public policy analysis refers to these multi-actor and multi-level decision-making processes. In Turkey, encouraging the private sector as the main contractor, technoparks, and university-industry collaborations indicate a partial shift from the traditional hierarchical state model in policy implementation to a more flexible and participatory network governance model.

2.3. National Security and the Defense Industry

National security studies deal with the integrated development of military, political, economic, and social capacities against elements threatening the state's survival. While the traditional realist approach places military power and independence at the center, today the concept of security has expanded to include broader perspectives such as "human security" and "economic security". Within this framework, the domestic defense industry should be considered as a multi-dimensional security asset:

In conclusion, these three theoretical axes are complementary in nature. Political leadership brings the defense industry to the agenda and securitizes it as a national security priority. Public policy analysis explains the process of transforming this priority into concrete policy tools and institutional structures. National security studies reveal the ultimate goal, which is ensuring strategic autonomy, economic resilience, and technological sovereignty. The Turkish case offers a rich case study for understanding how these three areas are intertwined and feed each other in practice.It is a theory used in solving linear electrical circuits with more than one electrical source (current or voltage). These resources can be dependent or independent. The difference of the superposition theorem from other theorems is that the effects of the sources on the circuit are examined one by one. This feature in the superposition theorem provides an advantage in the calculation of current and voltages in the circuit without the need for long mathematical operations such as matrix and determinant, according to the analysis with the perimeter and node methods [10].

The superposition theorem is the mathematical sum of the effects of all sources in a circuit on any circuit element. Therefore, while examining the effect of a source on the circuit, other sources should be silenced. Silencing the sources in the circuit means that the current sources are deactivated and their ends are open circuit, the voltage sources are deactivated and their ends are short-circuited. If the welds have internal resistance, they should stay in place. Similarly, during the analysis, the dependent sources also remain in their places in the circuit. After the effect of one resource is calculated, the process is repeated for the other resource. The number of repetitions depends on the number of resources in the circuit. The individually calculated effects of all independent sources are summed up taking into account polarity. In this respect, the name of this theory is also known as the Theory of Sociality. In summary;

1- Current/voltage sources in the circuit are determined and independent sources are determined and numbered.

2- Other independent sources are muted so that only one independent source remains on the circuit at a time.

3- According to the source to be left alone, the current or voltage value to be obtained in the circuit is calculated.

4- These current or voltage values, which are calculated one by one for all independent sources, are added considering the current direction / voltage polarity. In this respect, the name of this theory is also known as the Theory of Sociality [2-3].

3. STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS OF TURKEY'S DEFENSE INDUSTRY BEFORE 2003

Before 2003, Turkey's defense industry faced structural problems such as low localization rates, a technology transfer-based production model, and high dependency on external political constraints. Embargo experiences created vulnerabilities in the defense supply chain and limited operational capability.

3.1. Historical Background

From the early years of the Republic of Turkey, the defense industry was attempted to be built upon the limited infrastructure inherited from the Ottoman Empire. After the War of Independence, military needs were generally met through imports. The US arms embargo applied after the 1974 Cyprus Peace Operation strengthened the idea of "self-sufficiency" in Turkey, and the Defense Industry Development and Support Administration Presidency (SAGEB) was established in 1975. However, even indigenous projects starting in the 1980s (licensed F-16 production, establishment of entities like ASELSAN, ROKETSAN) could not overcome structural problems. The pre-2003 period was characterized by a lack of strategic planning, budget constraints, and external dependency (Şahinkaya, 2004; Gür, 2012).

19th Century Reforms: The Ottoman State turned towards the defense industry with the need to establish a modern army during the periods of Selim III and Mahmud II (Yıldız, 2015). Facilities like Tophane-i Amire (copper foundry) and Humbaracı Kışlası aimed at cannon and mortar production. However, as an empire that missed the industrial revolution, basic technologies (steel production, advanced processing machines) were lacking.

Picture-1 Selim III (Url-1)

Zeytinburnu Iron Factory (1843) and Tersane-i Amire were attempted to be modernized, but sustainable production could not be achieved due to lack of technical personnel and continuous wars.

Picture-2 Zeytinburnu Iron Factory (Yıldız Albums - Url-2)

Beginning of External Dependency: Massive arms imports from England and France began after the Crimean War (1853-1856). Purchases of Krupp cannons from Germany consolidated a long-term technology dependency.

Picture-3 German Krupp 240/35 cannon (Url-3)

National Economy Policy: With Atatürk's emphasis on "Domestic Goods" and "National Defense," the defense industry was attempted to be established by the state.

Turkey's First Defense Factories: Ankara Cartridge Factory (1925), Kırıkkale MKE Weapon Factory (1928) -- established with German and

Czechoslovak technology -- and Nuri Killigil Pistol and Ammunition Factory (1938) -- a private sector attempt, but destroyed by sabotage in 1949 (Kayıran, 2010).

Limited Capacity: These factories could produce basic infantry rifles, ammunition, and light weapons; complex systems like heavy weapons, aircraft, and ships were met through imports.

Entry into NATO (1952): Turkey, taking its place in the Western bloc, benefited from US military assistance programs (Military Assistance Program -- MAP) (Hale, 2000). The positive aspect was access to modern weapons. The negative aspect was the reduction of motivation for domestic production due to the "free weapons" culture and the army being equipped mostly with second-hand equipment.

Planned Period (1960s): The State Planning Organization (DPT) included the defense industry in development plans. The 1968 First Defense Industry Master Plan aimed for domestic production but could not be implemented due to lack of resources.

Effect of the Embargo: The US arms embargo of 1975-1978 revealed the risk of Turkey's defense needs being dependent on foreign policy.

Institutional Structuring: The Defense Industry Development and Support Administration Presidency (SAGEB) was established in 1975. Strategic companies like ASELSAN (1975), HAVELSAN (1982), ROKETSAN (1988) were established in this period.

Licensed Production Model: The F-16 Project (1984) with licensed production of 52 aircraft at TUSAŞ was a critical step for aviation engineering capacity. Projects like M60 Tank Modernization, G-3 Rifle Domestic Production led to partial technology acquisition (Şahinkaya, 2004).

Economic Constraints: High inflation and budget deficits in the 1990s made financing defense projects difficult.

Post-Cold War Uncertainty: The US strictly controlled technology transfer with CoCom lists. Turkey was viewed as a "stability element," but sharing advanced technology remained limited.

Project Examples and Failures: The Gendarmerie Helicopter Project remained inconclusive. The Combat Tank Project (1996) was shelved due to cost and technology transfer disagreements.

Development of the Private Sector: FNSS (1988) created a successful model with armored vehicle production, but the private sector generally remained a subcontractor, not the main contractor (Gür, 2012).

3.2. Structural Problems

Although licensed production of F-16s provided technology transfer, critical design and engineering knowledge was generally not shared. Turkey remained dependent on foreign suppliers for key subsystems. In the 1990s, 70-80% of defense expenditures were imports (Defense Industry Undersecretariat [SSM], 2000).

Defense industry projects progressed slowly due to dispersed authority areas between the General Staff, Ministry of Defense, SAGEB, and various ministries. There was no long-term, integrated Defense Industry Strategy (Akgümüş, 2001).

Insufficient R&D and Human Resources In the 1990s, defense R&D expenditures were less than 0.1% of GDP (Turkish Academy of Sciences [TUBA], 1999). Qualified engineers and researchers were experiencing brain drain.

Defense industry projects were frequently postponed or canceled due to budget deficits. The Defense Industry Support Fund (SSDF) established in 1987 remained insufficient (Hâkim, 2002).

Institutions like ASELSAN, HAVELSAN, ROKETSAN had State Economic Enterprise (KİT) status; the private sector could not go beyond being a subcontractor (Yalçın, 1998). Private firms hesitated to invest due to political risk and financing uncertainty of long-term projects.

CoCom restrictions during the Cold War prevented advanced technology transfer. Even after the 1974-1978 embargo, "export license" problems in critical technologies continued (Park, 1995).

While consolidation occurred in the world defense industry, Turkey could not achieve domestic consolidation. The Combat Tank Project, considered a precursor to the Altay tank, was shelved due to budget insufficiency (Güvenç, 2006).

The pre-2003 Turkish defense industry was a sector with import substitution goals but unable to overcome structural barriers. External dependency, institutional fragmentation, lack of R&D, and financing problems severely limited strategic autonomy. Post-2003 reforms were steps aimed at overcoming this legacy.

4. LEADERSHIP VISION AND DEFENSE INDUSTRY POLICY DURING THE ERDOĞAN ERA

4.1. Political Will and Strategic Determination

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's leadership placed the defense industry at the center of national development and security strategy. The discourse of

localization and nationalization was reflected in policy documents as concrete goals.

Erdoğan's becoming Prime Minister in 2003 initiated a radical paradigm shift in the defense industry. A model central and bound to political will was created instead of a fragmented structure:

Establishment of the Defense Industry Undersecretariat (SSM) (2005): Consolidation of defense industry decisions under a civilian authority roof.

National Defense Industry Strategy (2006): For the first time, a comprehensive strategy document with a 10-15 year roadmap and "domestic and national" emphasis (SSM, 2006).

Erdoğan's approach evolved from political discourse to concrete projects. Discourses like "For us, the defense industry is a national issue, a matter of honor" (Erdoğan, 2015) provided societal motivation. Vision projects like the National Combat Aircraft (MMU/TF-X), Altay Tank, and Anadolu Ship (LHD) were launched (Presidency Strategy and Budget Directorate, 2024).

Impact of Foreign Policy Crises: The FETÖ Coup Attempt (2016) made localization an urgent need. Exclusion from the F-35 Project (2019) and CAATSA Sanctions strengthened the emphasis on technological independence and accelerated the search for alternatives (Stein, 2020).

Resistance to Financial and Technological Barriers: Defense industry R&D expenditures, which were 100 million TL in 2003, exceeded 15 billion TL in 2023. Domestic engine projects like TEI PD-170, TF-6000/10000, and BMC Power were initiated. Bayraktar TB2 UCAV became a global brand.

Direct Presidential Initiative: The Presidency Defense Industry Policies Board was established. Public procurement laws introduced local contribution ratio requirements (Official Gazette, 2015).

Private Sector Incentives: Incentives such as export tax rebates in the defense industry, SSB-supported risk-sharing models were implemented (Defense Industry Presidency [SSB], 2022).

"Centralization" Risks of Political Will: Claims of projects being limited to political lifespan and coordination problems arising from SSB's broad authority became subjects of criticism (Kasapoğlu, 2021).

Technological and Economic Limits: High inflation and exchange rates increased project costs. External dependency continued in areas like engines for MMU, avionics for ATAK (International Institute for Strategic Studies [IISS], 2023).

4.2. Institutional Reforms

The restructuring of the Defense Industry Undersecretariat (SSM) and its transformation into the Defense Industry Presidency (SSB) in 2017 accelerated decision-making processes.

Background of Institutional Reforms: Fragmented Pre-2003 Structure: A multi-headed and uncoordinated structure (General Staff, SAGEB, Ministry of Industry) existed before 2003. Decision-making mechanisms were slow, civilian oversight and transparency were limited.

Establishment of Central and Civilian Authority: The Defense Industry Undersecretariat (SSM) was the most radical institutional reform with its 2005 transformation. Being attached to the Ministry of National Defense strengthened civilian political authority. Authority for needs definition, project management, and setting local contribution requirements were consolidated under a single roof (Law No. 5275, 2004).

Establishment of Strategic Planning Mechanisms: The 10-Year Defense Industry Strategy Document (2006) created the first long-term roadmap. Annual performance programs and monitoring policy provided transparency. The Defense Industry Executive Committee created a high-level approval and monitoring mechanism for strategic projects (SSB, 2023).

Financial and Legal Infrastructure Reforms: Revision of the Defense Industry Support Fund (SSDF): Revenues were directly allocated to defense industry projects. Private Sector Incentive Packages: Tax deductions up to 100% for R&D expenditures, customs exemptions were introduced (Law No. 5746, 2008).

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Model: Applied in projects like the Altay Tank Project.

Institutionalization of the R&D and Innovation Ecosystem and Technology-Focused Corporatization: Institutions like TUSAŞ, ASELSAN were restructured. Clusterings like SAVTEK and TÜBİTAK programs were supported through Technopark and University Collaborations (TÜBİTAK, 2021). Test and Certification Infrastructures: Facilities like TÜBİTAK SAGE, TUSAŞ Wind Tunnel were established.Institutional Framework for International Collaborations: Bilateral Agreement Offices: International Relations Department was established within SSB. Tightening of Offset Policies: Offset obligations were tied to a minimum 50-70% local contribution requirement (SSB, 2018).

Results and Criticisms of Reforms: Positively: Defense industry turnover increased from 1 billion USD in 2002 to 10 billion USD in 2023, exports from 250 million USD to 4.5 billion USD. Project diversity increased (SSB, 2023). Criticisms and difficulties: Claims of excessive centralization, political risk, lack of technological depth, and bureaucratic slowness were voiced (Kasapoğlu, 2022).Comparative Perspective: Institutional Models in Other Countries are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of Defense Industry Institutional Models in Selected Countries

Country	Institutional Model	Main Difference with Turkey
USA	Pentagon + DARPA + private sector	More private sector autonomy
Israel	MAFAT + Rafael + startup ecosystem	More flexible, entrepreneur-focused
South	DAPA + chaebol cooperation	Stronger family company integration
Turkey	SSB + State Economic Enterprises + private sector	State leadership and political will emphasis

5. PUBLIC POLICY TOOLS AND IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

This section examines the basic policy tools and implementation mechanisms that financed and incentivized the defense industry transformation during the Erdoğan era. Financing models, human resource development strategies, and the institutionalization of the R&D ecosystem reveal the concrete steps underlying policy success.

5.1. Financing and Incentive Policies

During the Erdoğan era, a multi-layered and goal-oriented financing model beyond traditional budget allocations was developed to support the defense industry transformation. This model aimed to support the strategic autonomy goal with economic tools.

Macro Policy Framework: Financing Model Aligned with Strategic Goals: The basic aim was to increase the local contribution rate from around 20% in 2002 to 80% in 2023 and reduce defense imports. Five main policy tools were used to achieve this goal: 1) Direct budget allocations, 2) Tax incentives, 3) Risk-sharing models, 4) International financing instruments, 5) Private sector investment incentives.

Direct Financing Mechanisms: Defense Industry Support Fund (SSDF) Reform: After 2005, SSDF revenues were directly allocated to projects, reaching a budget exceeding 45 billion TL in 2023. Project-based allocation and performance monitoring obligation were introduced (SSB, 2022). Presidency Strategic Project Budget: A special item providing priority financing to symbolic projects like MMU, Altay, TF-2000 was created from

2018 onwards. The 2023 budget was 28 billion TL (Presidency Strategy and Budget Directorate, 2023). Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Model: As in the Altay Tank example, while SSB covered a large portion (60-80%) of project financing, the private company undertook the remaining risk and technology responsibility (Official Gazette, 2017).

Tax incentives and financial facilities: R&D tax incentives (Law No. 5746): Incentives such as 100% tax deduction, insurance premium support, and income tax exemption specific to the defense sector provided 4.2 billion TL in tax advantages in 2022 (TÜBİTAK, 2023). Customs Duty Exemptions and VAT Exemption: Zero customs duty on intermediate goods imports and zero VAT application on defense product sales improved companies' cash flow and competitiveness (Ministry of Customs and Trade, 2022).

Risk sharing and guarantee mechanisms: SSB Repayable Support Model: This model, where part of the credit is granted if the project is successful, supported initiatives like Bayraktar TB2 (SSB, 2015). Export Credit Guarantee (Eximbank): 85-90% credit guarantee for exports facilitated entry into international markets. Order-Guaranteed Production Model: Guaranteed financing access for firms receiving advance orders from the Turkish Armed Forces, reducing production risk.

Private sector incentives and investment environment: Investment incentive certificates: Special rates like corporate tax reduction (80-100%), insurance premium support, and VAT exemption attracted 22 billion TL investment to 47 projects in 2023 (Ministry of Industry and Technology, 2023). Technopark Advantages and Local Product Obligation: Tax exemption was provided to R&D centers in technoparks. A 15% price advantage for local products in public procurements created a guaranteed market.

Table 2: Financial Performance Indicators of the Turkish Defense Industry (2002-2023)

Indicator	2002	2023	Growth (%)
Total Turnover (Billion USD)	1	12.5	+1150
Exports (Billion USD)	0.248	5.5	+2118
R&D Expenditure (Billion USD)	0.085	2.1	+2370
Active Project Count	56	750+	+1239
Direct Employment (Persons)	25,000	85,000	+240

International Financing Sources: Bilateral credit agreements from institutions like UKEF of the UK, SACE of Italy, and international bank consortia (e.g., MİLGEM export to Pakistan) increased financing diversity. Performance and Impact Analysis: The exponential growth observed in the 2002-2023 period shows the critical role of financing and incentive policies in revitalizing the sector, as Table 2 shows. The increase in exports and R&D expenditures signals a transition from quantity to quality.

Success Stories and Criticisms: Projects like Bayraktar TB2 and ASELSAN KORKUT proved that incentives could transform into concrete outputs. However, annual tax loss of 8-10 billion TL, risk of resource waste, limited access for SMEs, and compliance problems with international trade rules are important criticism topics (World Bank, 2021). Policy Recommendations for the Future: Transition to performance-based gradual incentives for sustainability, creating special channels for SMEs, establishing a defense venture capital fund, and integration into international innovation programs like NATO DIANA, EU Horizon Europe.

Synthesis of Political Will and Financing Model: Erdoğan era financing policies attracted the private sector to the defense field, creating a strategic investment area. However, resource efficiency, performance focus, and compliance with international norms are fundamental problems to be solved for this success to be permanent.

5.2. Human Resources and R&D Ecosystem

The technological leap in the defense industry was only possible with qualified human resources and a solid R&D infrastructure. This section analyzes policies aimed at reversing brain drain and the construction of the institutional R&D ecosystem.

Strategic Framework: Positioning Human Resources as a National Security Element: Acting with the paradigm "Domestic technology is produced with domestic minds," human resources were defined as a strategic value. Main goals were; increasing R&D personnel tenfold, reclaiming talent from abroad, and institutionalizing university-industry cooperation.

Human Resource Development Policies: Talent Reclamation Programs from Abroad: BITAR Program (2006) and SSB Overseas Internship Program brought over 1,250 researchers and engineers to the sector by 2023. Leadership Programs and University-Industry Collaborations: Programs like SSB Lead Engineer Program, Council of Higher Education (YÖK) PhD scholarships, and TUSAŞ MYP bridged theoretical education and sectoral needs (SSB, 2021).

Financial Incentives and Support Mechanisms: TÜBİTAK's programs like 1501, 1507 and SSB's TEKNOFEST competitions and SAV-GİR entrepreneur supports encouraged both firms and individuals towards R&D. Financial incentives like income tax exemption for R&D personnel also made employment attractive.

Education and Competency Development Programs: Defense-focused undergraduate programs opened within YÖK, NATO certification trainings,

and international exchange programs (Erasmus+, NATO STO) increased engineers' global competencies.

Table 3: Transformation of Human Resources and R&D Capacity in the Turkish Defense Industry

Indicator	2003	2023	Growth (%)
R&D Personnel Count	2,850	32,500	+1040
PhD Researcher Count	420	5,800	+1281
Annual Patent Count	18	485	+2594
University-Industry Joint Project	35	720	+1957

Performance and Impact Analysis: Table 3 shows the extraordinary increase in R&D personnel and patent numbers is an indicator of a qualitative leap in the sector's innovation production capability, beyond quantitative accumulation. The reversal of brain drain and the decrease in the average age of engineers prove the sector has become an attractive career center for young talent.

Criticisms and Difficulties: Unbalanced regional distribution of R&D capacity, universities' insufficiency in basic research, lack of R&D culture in SMEs, and disadvantage in global salary competition are expressed as obstacles to sustainable growth (TÜSİAD, 2023).

New Era Policies and Comparative Analysis: The 2028 target is 100,000 R&D personnel. Expert training programs in areas like digital twin, quantum, and space technologies have been initiated. As shown in Table 4, the Turkey model has followed a unique path by taking elements from Israel's agility and South Korea's state-industry cooperation approach, while emphasizing SSB's central coordination and importance given to SMEs.

Table 4: Comparison of Defense Human Resources Models in Selected Countries

Country	Main Model	Main Difference with Turkey Model
Israel	Compulsory military service + Talpiot (early talent discovery)	More flexible, entrepreneur-focused model
South	KAIST + Chaebol cooperation	State-private sector balance similar, scale different
USA	Pentagon DARPA + University Network	Much larger budget basic research
Turkey	SSB Coordination + SME Incentive	Hybrid model synthesizing central planning with private sector dynamism

Human resource policies, with leadership emphasis and a holistic approach, have reversed brain drain and laid the foundation for a strong R&D culture. For permanent success, increasing capacity in basic sciences and providing conditions competitive in the global talent market are necessary.

6. THE ROLE OF THE DEFENSE INDUSTRY IN NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

This section examines how the defense industry has been integrated into Turkey's national security understanding and transformed into a "strategic autonomy" tool. The defense industry has now become a fundamental component not only meeting needs but also creating foreign policy maneuvering space and providing deterrence.

Paradigm Shift: Integration from Defense Industry to National Security Strategy: The traditional "threat response" model was abandoned, transitioning to a proactive model based on "threat creation and deterrence" capacity. Three principles underlie this new doctrine: Industrial autonomy for military independence, domestic capacity for foreign policy maneuvering, and technology production ability for regional power claim.

Position of the Defense Industry in National Security Policy Documents: Revisions of the National Security Policy Document (MGSB) (2005, 2019) and National Security Council (MGK) decisions have clearly placed the defense industry at the center as the "cornerstone of national security" and the goal of "becoming a global supplier" (MGK General Secretariat, 2023). Military doctrine changes ("Red Book") have emphasized combat superiority with domestic systems, asymmetric warfare capacity, and multi-domain warfare. Bayraktar TB2's transformation from an intelligence tool to a direct assault element is a symbolic example of this doctrinal transformation.

Strategic Autonomy and Foreign Policy Tools: Technology Independence and Foreign Policy: The S-400/F-35 crisis showed Turkey prioritized "technology independence over alliance relations." The use of TB2s in Ukraine provided Turkey both a neutral supplier image and flexibility to balance between NATO and Russia. Regional Power Projection: MİLGEM corvettes and TCG Anadolu in the Eastern Mediterranean, domestic armored vehicles and ammunition in Syria are areas where military presence is supported with domestic products and operational sustainability is ensured. Military Diplomacy (Soft Power): Defense exports to Azerbaijan, Qatar, African countries have led to military cooperation agreements and expansion of influence sphere. The number of countries exported to increased from 8 in 2003 to 75+ in 2023 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023).

National Security Threat Perceptions and Defense Industry Steering: Counter-terrorism: "No martyr policy" prioritizing unmanned systems was supported by the operational success of UCAVs (85% target destruction rate). Defense Against Weapons of Mass Destruction: The S-400 purchase and development of national HİSAR/SİPER systems are the result of seeking multi-

layered defense against ballistic missile threats. Cyber and Space Domains: Cybersecurity strategy and projects like TÜRKSAT 6A satellite show national capacity building in new security areas.

Economic Security and Defense Industry Integration: Foreign Trade Balance: The defense industry transformed from a sector with a 1.85 billion USD deficit in 2002 to a net exporter with a 1.7 billion USD surplus in 2023. This is the direct contribution of a strategic sector to economic security. Critical Technology Supply and Employment: The pandemic and semiconductor crisis revealed the importance of supply chain security; accelerating investments like ASELSAN semiconductor facilities. The sector supported economic security by creating 85,000 direct, 250,000+ indirect employment.

Geopolitical Positioning and Defense Industry: Turkey's Position within NATO: Evolved from a "reliable ally" to a "competitive partner" developing its own technology. This resulted in a Eurasian Axis and Alternative Cooperations: Technology transfer from Russia with the S-400 agreement, from South Korea with the Altay tank, shows alternative cooperations with the West were also made. Also, Leadership Claim in the Islamic World is put forward in some circles. Defense technology production has been supported with a political and religious discourse like "It is obligatory for Muslims to produce technology," preparing ground for cooperation with Islamic countries.

Risks and Criticisms: Strategic Overextension: Running many simultaneous large projects like MMU, TF-2000, Altay is a criticism topic in terms of resource distribution and technological risk. Also, some steps by Turkey caused Tension in Alliance Relations. These steps, acquisition of S-400 from Russia, incompatibility with NATO systems, and CAATSA sanctions, caused friction within the alliance. Economic Sustainability: High inflation, exchange rate risk, and pressure on the budget (2.5% GDP share) threaten the financial sustainability of projects (SIPRI, 2023).

Post-2023 Scenarios and Strategic Orientation: The future will be shaped around a new security doctrine based on multi-domain warfare, AI integration, and space capabilities. The goal is to be among the top 10 defense exporters in the world by 2030 and achieve leadership in maritime systems supporting energy exploration activities.

In conclusion, Revolution in National Security Strategy: The Erdoğan era witnessed a radical transformation making the defense industry both the **means** and the **goal** of national security. This transformation has risen on five pillars: doctrinal, political, economic, technological, and socio-cultural. The success criterion is no longer just meeting TAF needs but having a say

in the global market, creating geopolitical maneuvering space, and ensuring technological independence. This risky but transformative path has moved Turkey's security paradigm from "alliance security" to "strategic autonomy."

7. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DEFENSE INDUSTRY IN THE ERDOĞAN ERA: 2003-2025 INDICATORS AND PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Under Erdoğan's administration in Turkey, the defense industry localization rate increased from around 20% to over 80%. Defense industry exports reached about 5 billion USD levels in 2023 from approximately 250 million USD in 2002. Also during this period, project count and total budget volume showed continuous increase.

7.1. Macroeconomic Indicators

During the Erdoğan era, Turkey, as seen in Table 5, the over 11-fold growth in defense industry turnover between 2003-2023 reflects the increasing weight of the sector within the Turkish economy. 2023 turnover sectoral distribution: Aviation: 38%, Electronic warfare: 25%, Land systems: 22%, Maritime: 12%, Other: 3%.

Table 5: Macroeconomic Growth Indicators of the Turkish Defense Industry (2003-2025)

Indicator	2003	2013	2023	2025 (Est.)	Growth (2003-2023)
Total Turnover (Billion USD)	1.02	4.15	12.50	15.80	+1125%
Share in GDP (%)	0.15	0.52	1.12	1.30	7.5 times
Per Capita Defense Ind. Contrib. ($)	15.2	55.1	147.3	180.5	+869%

7.2. Foreign Trade Indicators

Interpreting Table 6, becoming a net exporter for the first time in 2020 and the export/import ratio reaching 145% is a critical turning point of structural transformation.

Table 6: Evolution of Export-Import Balance in the Defense Industry (2003-2025)

Year	Exports (Bil $)	Imports (Bil $)	Balance (Bil $)	Exp/Imp Ratio (%)
2003	0.248	2.10	-1.852	11.8
2008	0.832	3.45	-2.618	24.1
2013	1.65	4.20	-2.55	39.3
2018	2.83	3.95	-1.12	71.6
2023	5.52	3.80	+1.72	145.3
2025 (Est.)	7.10	3.65	+3.45	194.5

Table 7 shows the concentration of exports in Asia and Europe indicates Turkish defense products are accepted in different geographies and both developing and developed markets. Top Exported Products in Turkey in 2023 respectively: Bayraktar TB2 UCAV: 1.2 billion USD, MİLGEM Corvettes: 850 million USD, ASELSAN Radars: 720 million USD, ROKETSAN Missile Systems: 650 million USD, BMC Armored Vehicles: 480 million USD.

Table 7: Regional Distribution of Turkish Defense Exports (2023)

Region	Share (%)	Major Countries
Asia	32	Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Malaysia
Europe	28	Ukraine, Poland, United Kingdom
Africa	22	Niger, Somalia, Tunisia
Middle East	15	Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE
Americas	3	USA, Canada

7.3. R&D and Innovation Indicators

Table 8 shows the share of defense-specific R&D exceeding 70% within general R&D and the striking increase in absolute value reveals the strategic importance and resource allocation the sector gives to technology development.

Table 8: Development of R&D Expenditures in the Defense Industry (2003-2025)

Year	R&DExp.(Mil $)	Share in GDP (%)	Defense-Sp. R&D (Mil $)	Def/Gen R&D Ratio (%)
2003	85	0.012	35	41.2
2008	420	0.045	210	50.0
2013	1,150	0.098	680	59.1
2018	2,850	0.215	1,920	67.4
2023	6,200	0.385	4,350	70.2
2025	8,500	0.460	6,100	71.8

Table 9 shows the exponential increase in patent applications and registrations (27 times and 46 times) are concrete indicators of technological capability accumulation and transition to an original design-oriented production model. Companies with most patent applications in 2023: ASELSAN (142), TUSAŞ (98), ROKETSAN (67), HAVELSAN (45), Baykar (38).

Table 9: Intellectual Property Production in the Defense Industry (2003-2025)

Indicator	2003	2013	2023	2025 (Est.)
Annual Patent Applications	18	125	485	620
Patents Registered	7	68	320	410
International Patents (PCT)	2	28	145	190
Trade Secrets/Technical Know-How	45	420	2,150	2,900

7.4. Human Resources and Employment

During the Erdoğan era, the 6.7-fold increase in engineer count and 13.8-fold increase in PhD personnel count reflect the radical transformation in the sector's qualified human resource capacity, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Employment and Qualification Development in the Defense Industry (2003-2025)

Year	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2025 (Est.)
Total Employment	25,400	38,200	52,100	65,800	84,700	96,500
Engineer Count	4,850	8,920	14,300	21,450	32,500	39,200
PhD Personnel	420	850	1,650	2,850	5,800	7,500
Female Engineer Ratio (%)	8.2	12.5	16.8	21.3	24.2	26.5

Table 11 shows salaries increasing by around 240% in real terms at all levels, indicating the sector has become an attractive employment and career area for qualified human resources. Sector salaries are 3.2 times the Turkey average (2023).

Table 11: Wage and Salary Development in the Defense Industry (2003-2023)

Position	2003 (TL)	2013 (TL)	2023 (TL)	Real Increase (2003-2023)
New Engineer	8,500	18,200	28,500	+235%
Senior Engineer	15,200	32,500	52,000	+242%
R&D Leader	22,800	48,000	78,500	+244%
General Manager	45,000	95,000	155,000	+244%

7.5. Project and Production Indicators

The 9-fold increase in total project count shown in Table 12 indicates the sector's product range has expanded, gained technological depth, and system integration capability has developed.

Table 12: Growth of Active Project Portfolio in the Defense Industry (2003-2025)

Project Type	2003	2013	2023	2025 (Est.)
Major System Project	8	24	42	48
Subsystem Project	35	120	285	320
Technology Development	13	65	185	210
Total	56	209	512	578

Table 13 shows the cumulative increase especially in UCAV/UAV and armored vehicle production reveals the dimension of the quantitative contribution Turkish defense industry directly makes to operational capacity building and TAF modernization.

Table 13: Defense Systems Production and Delivery Figures (2003-2025)

System	2003-2013	2014-2023	Total	2024-2025 Target
UCAV/UAV (units)	85	420	505	180
Armored Vehicle (units)	1,250	3,850	5,100	950
Air Defense System (units)	8	35	43	12
Guided Munition (thousand units)	15.2	82.5	97.7	25.4
Radar Systems (units)	120	680	800	160

7.6. Financial Indicators

Table 14: Public-Source Financial Flow to the Defense Industry (2003-2025)

Year	SSB Budget	TÜBİTAK Defense R&D Support	University Support	Total
2003	0.85	0.12	0.03	1.00
2008	2.35	0.45	0.15	2.95
2013	5.80	1.20	0.42	7.42
2018	12.50	3.15	0.95	16.60
2023	28.40	7.80	2.10	38.30
2025 (Est.)	35.20	9.50	2.80	47.50

Budget Allocations, The over 40-fold increase in the SSB budget under Erdoğan's leadership shows the dimension and stability of direct financial support political will gives to the sector.

7.4. Private Sector Investments (Billion USD)

Table 15 shows private sector investments accelerating especially post-2019 and exceeding 20 billion USD indicates the sector has begun to be seen as a profitable and strategic investment area by private capital.

Table 15: Private Sector Investments in the Defense Industry (2003-2023)

Period	Direct Investment (Bil $)	R&D Investment (Bil $)	Total (Bil $)
2003-2008	0.85	0.32	1.17
2009-2013	2.10	0.95	3.05
2014-2018	3.85	2.10	5.95
2019-2023	6.20	4.25	10.45
2003-2023 Total	13.00	7.62	20.62

7.8. Technological Capability Indicators

When data in Table 16 is examined, the up to 92% local contribution rate in UAVs materializes the success of Turkey's "asymmetric technology focus" strategy. The general average rising to 81% signals a comprehensive transformation.

Table 16: Development of Local Contribution Rates in Defense System Categories (2003-2025)

System Category	2003 (%)	2013 (%)	2023 (%)	2025 Target (%)
Unmanned Aerial Vehicles	32	68	92	96
Armored Land Vehicles	45	72	88	92
Air Defense Systems	18	52	78	85
Combat Aircraft	12	38	65	75
Warships	28	62	82	88
Average	27.0	58.4	81.0	87.2

7.9. Self-Sufficiency in Critical Technology Areas

Table 17: Self-Sufficiency Level in Critical Technology Areas (2003-2023)

Technology Area	2003 (%)	2013 (%)	2023 (%)	Status
Flight Control Software	15	65	100	Fully self-sufficient
AESA Radar	0	25	85	Partially externally dependent
Helicopter Engine	0	0	45	Development phase
Combat Aircraft Engine	0	0	20	Early phase
Semiconductor Production	5	18	55	Medium level
Guidance Software	22	70	95	Advanced level

Full self-sufficiency in flight control software versus continuing dependency in basic technologies like engines and semiconductors shows the main limits in front of the technological deepening of the Turkish defense industry, as seen in Table 17.

7.10. Institutional Structuring Indicators

Table 18 shows the 16-fold increase in startup count is the clearest indicator of the entrepreneurial ecosystem reviving in the sector and new ideas being included in the system. The 10-fold increase in total company count reveals the sector has gained a dynamic structure.

Table 18: Corporatization and Scale Growth in the Defense Industry (2003-2023)

Company Type	2003	2013	2023	Growth
Large Scale (>1000 emp.)	4	8	15	+275%
Medium Scale (100-1000)	18	65	185	+928%
SME (<100 emp.)	85	320	820	+865%
Startup (0-3 years)	12	45	210	+1650%
Total	119	438	1,230	+934%

Table 19 shows 330 companies and 11,250+ R&D personnel gathered in four main technopark-based clusters are the concrete output of university-industry cooperation and geographical focus.

Table 19: Defense Technology Clusters and Capacity (2023)

Cluster	Establishment	Company Count (2023)	R&D Personnel
SAVTEK (METU)	2008	125	4,500
ITU SAVTEA	2012	68	2,100
Gebze Defense Cluster	2016	95	3,200
İzmir Defense Valley	2020	42	1,450
Total	-	330	11,250

7.11. International Rankings and Comparisons

Table 20 shows Turkey rose from 46th to 12th in world defense export rankings and increased its market share from 0.08% to 1.75%. This is the clearest indicator of the position gained in the global market. In 2023, it is right behind the top 10.

Table 20: Turkey's Rise in Global Defense Export Rankings (2003-2025)

Year	Turkey's Rank	Exports (Billion USD)	World Share (%)
2003	46	0.248	0.08
2013	28	1.65	0.52
2018	18	2.83	0.89
2023	12	5.52	1.75
2025 (Est.)	10	7.10	2.20

Interpreting Table 21, the progress recorded in the general index and especially in the defense technologies sub-index (44 step rise) indicates that the innovation capacity of the Turkish defense industry has gained global recognition and relatively strengthened.

Table 21: Defense Technologies Performance in the Global Innovation Index (2010-2023)

Year	General Rank	Defense Tech. Sub-Index	R&D Intensity Rank
2010	75	68	72
2015	58	45	52
2020	41	32	38
2023	36	24	31

7.12. 2025 Projections and Goals

Turkey's 2025 strategic goals foresee that turnover will be 15.8 billion USD (1.3% of GDP), exports will rise to 7.1 billion USD (net exports +3.45 billion USD), employment size will be 96,500 persons of which 39,200 will be engineers, R&D Expenditure will be 8.5 billion USD (0.46% of GDP) and the Average Local Contribution Rate will reach 87.2%.

Additionally, Major Projects Expected to be Completed in the 2024-2025 Period: MMU Prototype Flight Tests will occur by end of 2025, TF-2000 Air Defense Destroyer launching, Altay Tank Serial Production start 2024, HÜRJET Trainer Aircraft, TAF deliveries 2024, and KAAN, 5th Generation Combat Aircraft First flight target in 2024 has been largely achieved.

7.13. Analysis and Assessment

Under Erdoğan's administration, Turkey experienced a leap in exports, with 22-fold growth in 22 years and transition to net exporter status. Employment Quality: Engineer ratio increased from 19% to 38%, transforming the sector's technical profile. R&D Culture: Private sector R&D expenditure increased 200-fold; became central to the innovation system. During the same period, Global Branding: Global recognition and market built with Bayraktar TB2. Structural Transformation: A dynamic industrial structure formed with strengthening SME and startup ecosystem.Inflation Effect: Growth in TL terms remained lower in dollar terms, real value increase questionable. Critical Technology Gaps: External dependency in areas like engines, semiconductors, advanced composite materials creates strategic vulnerability. Qualified Personnel Shortage: 8,500 engineer shortage in 2023 shows the human resource obstacle in front of growth. International Regulations: US CAATSA sanctions and European export restrictions make market access difficult. Financing Costs: Project financing becomes difficult in high-interest environment, costs increase.In Turkey's defense industry, turnover per employee was 147,600 USD in 2023, while this value was around 40,200 USD in 2003. Patents per R&D Personnel was 0.067 in 2023, while this value was 0.005 in 2003. Export/Employment Ratio, which was 9,800 USD/person in 2003, reached 65,200 USD/person in 2023. Return on Investment (ROI) increased from 3.1% in 2003 to 8.2% in 2023.

The defense industry became the fastest growing sector of the Turkish economy, with Exponential Growth: average annual growth of 13.2%. Structural Transformation: Transition from importer status to net exporter during the Erdoğan era. Technological Leap: Local contribution rate increased from 27% to 81%, laying the foundations for transition to technology producer status. Human Resource Quality: Brain drain partially reversed, the sector became a high-skilled employment pool. Global Competition: Share in world defense exports increased from 0.08% to 1.75%, visibility in global supply chains increased. The 2003-2023 period has been the period of quantitative growth and structural transformation for the Turkish defense industry. The 2023-2030 period will focus on qualitative leap and seeking global leadership. Sustainability of success will depend on self-sufficiency in critical technologies and capacity to have a say in global supply chains.

8. INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS AND THE TURKEY MODEL

Turkey's defense industry model bears similarities with South Korean and Israeli examples, but exhibits a unique structure in terms of strong political leadership and public-private sector integration.

8.1. Introduction: Uniqueness of the Turkey Model

The defense industry model developed by Turkey during the Erdoğan era is a hybrid approach combining elements of "state capitalism," "strategic autonomy," and "asymmetric technology focus." Differing from traditional Western models, it synthesizes the "developmental state" tradition with the "entrepreneurial state" approach.

8.2. Comparative Analysis of International Models

Table 22 draws attention to Turkey's state-led structure diversifying with SMEs and holdings and having higher sectoral weight relative to GDP, compared to the US's market-oriented giant companies and regulatory state model.

Table 22: Comparison of US and Turkey Defense Industry Models

Feature	US Model	Comparison with Turkey
State Role	Orderer, regulator	More active, directive, financier
Private Sector	Giant companies like Lockheed, Boeing, Raytheon	SME-weighted, growing holdings
R&D Financing	DARPA, SBIR programs	SSB, TÜBİTAK, direct project financing
Export Policy	ITAR controlled, strategic	More flexible, multipolar
Technology Focus	Full spectrum, leading technologies	Asymmetric focus in selected areas
2023 Exports	157.4 billion USD	5.5 billion USD

Feature	US Model	Comparison with Turkey
GDP Share	0.78%	1.12%

Table 23: Comparison of Israeli and Turkish Defense Industry Models

Feature	Israeli Model	Comparison with Turkey
Basic Dynamic	Existential threat, immig. scientists	Strategic autonomy, historical legacy
Human Resources	Compulsory military Talpiot prog.	Univ.-industry coop., sch. Prog.s
Company Structure	Startup ecosystem, small-agile firms	SME + holding mix
R&D Conc.	Cybersecurity, UAV, elect. warf.	UCAV, air defense, armored vehicles
State Support	MAFAT (Ministry of Defense Research)	SSB coordination
Export/GDP Ratio	3.2%	0.49%
Per Capita Exports	1,850 USD	65 USD

Table 23 compares Israeli and Turkish Defense Industry Models. Accordingly, both countries have specialized in niche areas under resource constraints. However, Israel's compulsory military service-based human resource model and much higher per capita exports show differences arising from Turkey's university-industry cooperation model and population size.

Table 24 compares South Korean and Turkish Defense Industry Models. South Korea's chaebol structure-based mass production and high R&D intensity model contrasts with Turkey's more flexible, diverse production and holding-SME mix approach. Turkey has a more regional market focus.

Table 24: Comparison of South Korean and Turkish Defense Industry Models

Feature	South Korean Model	Comparison with Turkey
Industry Structure	Chaebols like Hyundai, Hanwha, LIG Nex1	Holdings like Koç, Bayraktar, BMC
State Planning	DAPA (Defense Acquisition Program Administration)	SSB central planning
Techn. Transfer	Licensed production from US → original design	Transfer from multiple sources → domestic design
Export Target	Global market, especially Asia	Regional market, Islamic countries
R&D Intensity	4.1% (ratio to GDP)	0.385%
Scale Economy	Large-scale mass production	Medium-scale, flexible production

Table 25 compares Russian and Turkish Defense Industry Models. Interpretation: Contrasting Russia's model preserving state monopoly, export-

priority and focusing on traditional power areas, Turkey differentiates with mixed ownership structure, domestic market-focused growth strategy, and rapid development in next-generation systems.

Table 25: Comparison of Russian and Turkish Defense Industry Models

Feature	Russian Model	Comparison with Turkey
Ownership Structure	Rostec state holding	Mixed (state + private)
Market Orientation	Priority export, then domestic needs	Priority domestic needs, then export
Technology Level	Strong in trd.areas (air def.)	Rapid development in new gen. systems
International Cooperation	Limited, mostly own technology	Multiple cooperations (West + East)
Export Revenue (2023)	14.7 billion USD	5.5 billion USD
Main Products	S-400, Su-35, T-90 tank	TB2, MİLGEM, Altay, HİSAR

8.3. Distinctive Features of the Turkey Model

In Turkey, Direct Presidential Initiative determined the acceleration in the defense industry. Erdoğan's personal interest and political capital investment, for example taking TEKNOFEST under his patronage, high-level participation in the Defense Industry Executive Committee played a determining role. Additionally, providing Central Coordination: SSB's broad authority and budget control owes to Erdoğan's leadership for transition from the pre-2005 fragmented structure to single-handed coordination.

Table 26 shows this hybrid model using public budget, private sector investment, international credits, and tax incentives together provides both stable public support and market dynamism.

Table 26: Multi-Layered Structure of the Turkish Defense Industry Financing Model

Financing Source	Turkey	Comparative Advantage
State Budget	SSDF, Presidency budget	Stable, politically prioritized
Private Sector	Holding investments, SMEs	Market discipline, innovation speed
International Credits	Eximbank, bilateral agreements	Foreign exchange input, technology transfer
Tax Incentives	R&D deductions, insurance premium support	Cost advantage, employment incentive

Technology was developed in three stages in Turkey. First stage, 2003-2013 period: Licensed production and assembly like F-16, M60 modernization. Second stage, 2014-2023 period: Domestic design, global supply used in Bayraktar TB2, ATAK, MİLGEM projects. Third stage, 2024-2030 period: Pioneering technology development like MMU, hypersonic missile projects. The uniqueness here is adopting a gradual transition strategy from being a "fast follower" to becoming a "leader in a niche area."

This strategy focusing on developing countries, the Islamic geography, and countries with problems with the West, instead of the West's traditional markets, shows Turkey uses its geographical, cultural, and diplomatic advantages, as seen in Table 27.

Table 27: Market Segmentation and Approach in Turkish Defense Industry Exports

Market Segment	Turkey's Approach	Differentiation
Developed Countries	Limited (NATO compatibility problems)	Technology transfer focus
Developing Countries	Main focus (Asia, Africa, Middle East)	Suitable price, ease of maintenance, political unconditionality
Islamic Countries	Priority (religious and cultural ties)	"Muslim brotherhood" discourse
Post-Soviet Countries	Increasing interest (Azerbaijan, Ukraine)	Positioning as Western alternative

8.4. Comparative Analysis of Success Indicators

Turkey has the highest growth rate in all indicators comparatively, as seen in Table 28 data. This reinforces the sector's position as a rising player and its speed in the "catch-up" process.

Table 29 shows Turkey is behind Israel and South Korea in turnover per employee and patent productivity, close to OECD average. The export/GDP ratio is relatively low. This indicates Turkey has **a sector with high growth potential but in the maturation phase in terms of productivity**.

Table 28: Defense Industry Growth Rates in Selected Countries (2003-2023 Average)

Country	Turnover Growth	Export Growth	R&D Growth	Comment
Turkey	13.2%	17.1%	24.8%	Fastest growing
Israel	8.5%	9.2%	11.3%	Mature market, stable
S. Korea	7.8%	8.9%	9.5%	Large scale, slow growth
Brazil	4.2%	5.1%	6.8%	Low growth
India	9.5%	10.2%	15.3%	Large market, fast growth

Table 29: Comparison of Defense Industry Productivity Indicators Among Countries (2023)

Indicator	Turkey	Israel	S. Korea	OECD Avg.
Turnover per Employee ($)	147,600	285,000	210,000	195,000
Patent/R&D Pers. Ratio	0.067	0.095	0.082	0.071
Export/GDP Ratio (%)	0.49	3.2	1.8	0.85
Local Contribution Rate (%)	81	90+	75	68

Table 30 shows Turkey is playing for leadership in selected areas like UAVs and naval platforms, while being in the development phase in other critical areas like cybersecurity and combat aircraft. This situation is a reflection of the asymmetric focus strategy.

Table 30: Countries' Capability Levels in Selected Technology Areas and Turkey's Position

Technology Area	Turkey	Israel	S. Korea	Turkey's Position
Unmann.Aerial Veh.	Advanced Level	Advanced	Medium	Leader (with TB2)
Air Defense	Medium-Advanced	Advanced	Medium	Developing (with HİSAR, SİPER)
Cybersecurity	Medium	Leader	Advanced	Rapidly developing
Combat Aircraft	Developing	Medium	Developing	Breakthrough phase with MMU
Naval Platforms	Advanced	Medium	Advanced	Standing out with MİLGEM

8.5. Weak and Strong Aspects of the Turkey Model

Turkey's strong aspects listed: Political Stability and Determination: Over 20 years of continuous policy and leadership support can be shown. Also, geographical location and market diversity: East-West, North-South bridge; has access to very diverse markets. Low Production Costs: Engineer cost 1/3 of USA; has relative cost advantage. Turkey's operational experience, systems tested in Syria, Libya, Karabakh; "battle-proven" also became a prestige element. Flexible and Fast Decision Making: Speed increased with new centralized structure and reduction of bureaucratic obstacles in Turkey. Turkey's weak aspects listed: Critical Technology Dependency: Has external dependency in basic areas like engines, semiconductors, advanced materials. Lack of Scale Economy: Efficiency low in mass production in Turkey; unit costs can remain high. International Regulations: ITAR, Wassenaar, EU restrictions and CAATSA risk affect production. Financing Cost: High interest, exchange rate risk, and inflation pressure create burden. Brain Drain: Loss of talented engineers continues.

The SWOT matrix of Turkey's defense industry, systematically lays out the model's internal strengths like political stability and operational experience, as well as its vulnerabilities against external threats like technology embargoes and financial fragility, in Table 31.

Table 31: SWOT Analysis of the Turkish Defense Industry Model

	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
Opportunities (O)	SO Strategies	WO Strategies
• Rising Asia/Africa markets • West's China/ Russia concerns • Energy revenues (Middle East coop.)	• Technology leadership in Islamic countries • Becoming "reliable alternative" for the West • Joint investment with petro-dollars	• Technology transfer from China/Korea • Attracting foreign investment (JV) • Regional production centers
Threats (T)	ST Strategies	WT Strategies
• Global recession • Technology embargoes • Regional instability	• Focus on domestic market and maintenance-repair • Distributing risk with multiple suppliers • Selling security service	• Crisis management plans • Backup systems and stock • Risk reduction through diplomacy

Table 32 scenario analysis shows the sector's future could be shaped in a wide range depending on technological breakthroughs, macroeconomic conditions, and geopolitical conjuncture.

Table 32: 2030 Export Scenarios and Conditions for the Turkish Defense Industry

Scenario	Probability	2030 Export Target	Global Rank	Conditions
Optimistic	30%	15-20 billion USD	8-10	Technological breakthrough (MMU, engine), world peace, normalization of relations with West
Realistic	50%	10-12 billion USD	10-12	Current trend continues, gradual technological progress, regional tensions continue
Pessimistic	20%	6-8 billion USD	15-20	Economic crisis, heavy technology embargoes, regional war

The Erdoğan era Turkish defense industry model is **neither a full state capitalism nor a pure market economy**. This is a balanced hybrid approach between "**state leadership and direction in strategic sectors, and market dynamism and private sector initiative in other areas.**"

The keys to its success can be listed as: Political will and continuity (20 years of consistent policy), Young and dynamic human resources (channeling

population advantage to technology), Turning geographical location into advantage (both as threat and market), Correct reading of global trends (UAV revolution, asymmetric warfare, regional power vacuums).

The future test for Erdoğan's Turkey is: Technological originality and patent production (transition from follower to pioneer), Global standard-setting capacity (directing the sector), Sustaining qualitative growth (productivity, innovation, brand value), Maintaining balance in geopolitical tensions (sustainable positioning on West-East axis).

The Turkey model offers an important case study for rising powers' defense industry building in the 21st century. Its success or failure has strategic importance enough to affect not only Turkey but also power balances in the global defense ecosystem and technology sharing norms.

9. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that during the Erdoğan era, Turkey's defense industry underwent a radical transformation at the intersection of leadership, public policy, and national security strategy. The defense industry has now become one of the fundamental components, even the most visible symbol, of Turkey's strategic autonomy goal.

The defense industry policies followed by Turkey during the Erdoğan era represent a comprehensive transformation towards redefining the national security understanding and integrating this understanding with economic development goals. The ideals of "strategic autonomy" and "technological independence" formed the basic dynamic of this transformation. In this context, the 2003–2023 period has gone down in history as a phase where the Turkish defense industry achieved a remarkable quantitative leap in its structural capacity, production diversity, and position in the global competition arena. However, this magnificent progress has also brought along important criticisms, structural risks, and sustainability questions that need to be examined in depth.

Achievements and Gains

The Erdoğan administration transformed the defense industry from being merely a supply sector into the central and determining component of national security. The concrete outputs of this comprehensive strategic upgrade are as follows:

Remarkable progress was recorded in quantitative growth; defense industry turnover rose from 1 billion USD level in 2003 to 12.5 billion USD in 2023, exports increased from 248 million USD to 5.5 billion USD, achieving

22-fold growth. This increase moved Turkey from 46th to 12th rank in the world defense export league.

Local contribution rate increased from around 27% to 81%; system integrator position was achieved in critical platforms like UAVs, corvettes, air defense systems, and armored vehicles, and important technological capabilities were gained.

Integration and centralization were achieved in institutional infrastructure; the Defense Industry Presidency (SSB) undertook central coordination role under a single roof, liquidating the fragmented structure, strengthening strategic planning and project management capacity.

Human resource development became a strategic priority; engineer count in the sector increased from 4,850 to 32,500, a lively R&D ecosystem was established with talent reclamation programs from abroad and university-industry collaborations.

Global branding and function as a diplomatic tool were gained; Turkish defense products, especially Bayraktar TB2 UCAVs, were exported to over 75 countries, expanding Turkey's regional and global influence sphere, transforming into a "soft power" instrument.

These developments enabled Turkey to gain partial autonomy in meeting its traditionally externally dependent defense needs and the defense industry to integrate into the economy as a value-added export sector.

Limitations and Criticisms

However, behind this bright picture, there are important structural and strategic difficulties that will determine the sector's future and serious academic/critical perspectives towards them:

Progress has remained limited in technological depth and original design. External dependency in critical subsystems like engines, AESA radar chips, semiconductors, advanced composite materials continues; original patent production and basic science-based research capacity have not yet reached the desired level.

Serious problems were experienced in project management and cost control; budget overruns of hundreds of billions of dollars and delays spanning years were observed in symbolic projects like the Altay tank, TF-2000 destroyer, and National Combat Aircraft (MMU). This situation brought along the risk of resource waste and efficiency concerns.

Strategic tensions experienced with the West (exclusion from F-35 project, CAATSA sanctions, technology transfer restrictions) continue to

pose a permanent risk in Turkey's access to advanced technology and position in global supply chains.

Economic vulnerabilities (chronic high inflation, volatility in exchange rates, increasing borrowing costs) directly threaten the financial sustainability of defense industry projects.

Qualitative deepening in human resources has remained insufficient; brain drain continues, there are significant gaps in interdisciplinary skills, systems engineering, and complex project management experience.

Future Perspective and Policy Recommendations

For the Turkish defense industry to sustain its current momentum, achieve a permanent and respectable position in the global arena, and transform "quantitative growth" into "qualitative leap", radical policy revisions and institutional reforms are needed in the following areas:

Deepening Technological Autonomy: Long-term, stable, and high-budget basic research programs should be implemented for critical technology areas like engines, semiconductors, advanced software, and materials. University-industry collaborations should not be limited to short-term applied projects, capacity and free research environment in basic sciences should be strengthened.

Strengthening Governance and Transparency: Multi-stakeholder, transparent, and accountable mechanisms should be established in the selection, monitoring, and auditing of defense industry projects. TBMM's oversight role should be effectively enabled, project cost and progress reports should be regularly shared with the public in non-confidential parts.

Developing Sustainable Financing Model: Stricter cost control mechanisms should be adopted in project-based budgeting, the private sector's risk assumption ratio should be increased. Hedging tools against exchange rate risk should be developed, long-term and low-cost financing sources (green bonds, sovereign wealth fund, etc.) should be diversified.

Diversification and Pragmatism in Global Cooperations: The goal of technological independence should not mean international isolation. While trying to repair relations with the Western bloc, balanced, pragmatic, and mutually beneficial technology partnerships and joint ventures should be established with Asia, the Middle East, and other rising powers.

Qualitative-Oriented Revision of Human Resources Strategy: Quality, critical thinking, and original design skills should be brought to the fore in engineering education, attractive career, living conditions, and academic freedom should be provided for researchers to reverse brain drain.

General Assessment and Final Inferences

Erdoğan era defense industry policies demonstrated determined, visionary, and result-oriented political will towards breaking Turkey's historical inferiority and structural dependency in this field. This will, combined with institutional reforms, generous financial incentives, and societal motivation, produced an undisputed and impressive success story in quantitative terms.

However, the transformation of this story into permanent global competitiveness, technological originality, and a sustainable development dynamic depends on the criticisms detailed above being taken seriously, the extremes of the current model being moderated, and structural reforms being deepened.

The future success criterion of the Turkish defense industry will no longer be measured only with "domestic and national" production figures; but with original technology and patent production capacity, transparent and accountable governance structure, sustainable financing model compatible with macroeconomic balances, and integration level in the global innovation ecosystem. Successfully passing this multidimensional and intricate test will carry Turkey to true strategic autonomy and a respectable global technology actor position.

Otherwise, today's magnificent achievements could be evaluated as tomorrow's strategic experiment with high resource waste and opportunity cost. In conclusion, the defense industry legacy of the Erdoğan era should be seen as an incomplete structure whose foundations have been solidly laid but upon which a more balanced, inclusive, transparent, and sustainable strategy needs to be built. Completing this structure is a collective responsibility falling on future policymakers, sector stakeholders, and Turkish society.

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Chapter 7

A PROPOSAL TO THE CONFLICT IN CYPRUS ISLAND: TWO FEDERATED STATE UNDER A UNITER STATE[1]

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Turkey's Legitimate Right Stemming from International Rights

Why Cyprus is Important?

Cyprus with its geography and distinctive status among the many islands in the Mediterranean Sea and in the region not only for its strategical and historical position but also for its natural beauty triggered the close concern and attention of the people. The rivalries among the countries therefore have become indispensable. The uniqueness of Cyprus in this regard stimulates many challenges among the countries who currently have and who wish to have borders in the future. The contestation on the island fostered social, cultural, political and demographic changes including Ottoman presence and British Mandate and till now. Today two independent sovereign countries are acting on their premises. One is Turkish Federated State of Cyprus whose ties were laid in 1960 with constitutional and treaty settlement which was accelerated by accelerated by the coup attempt by Greece in Cyprus in 1970s the other one is Republic of Southern Greek Cyprus (White, 1981: 135). It is very well acknowledged by the history that Greek population in the island was supported by British Government as they did in Islamicjerusalem towards Jewish population. The reason beneath this aim is no longer secret and it is not underneath anymore, contrary to that, today there are two problematic states in the world which are Republic of Southern Greek Cyprus and Israel. They were both powered, sponsored and supported by British government and today these both states still constitute threat and create conflicts for the region and the world each day. Besides this, these two problematic states still try their best to expand their borders and increase their population in the territories they stand. Alternative solutions to the problems and possible conflicts stemming out of these two problematic states lay in itself. Fostering mutual respect, cooperation, coordination and along with that, leaving their expansionist policies will help the conflict be resolved. Today the world is suffering from 19th 20th century constructed problems and issues which need urgent resolutions. The resolution of the problem lies in structural, political and ideological dislocation of the governments and their politics towards Palestinians in Palestine and Cypriot Turks in the island.

Two Sovereign States in Cyprus

One of the most recent changes which have its effect on 21th century politics in Cyprus is the military coup that is initiated by Greece in Cyprus in 1970s. The outcomes of this coup attempt are important in terms of it destructing and marginalizing attitudes towards Turkish folks living more densely in the north part of the island. The coup attempt initiated by Greece resulted two important consequences. One of the consequences is: Makarous dethroned from power in 1970s second consequence is that Turkish

military force interfered the island in order to protect the rights of Turkish Cypriots civilians on the island in 20 July 1974 named under the name of Cyprus Peace Operation. (Denizli,2014:103). While the resolutions that are initiated by United Nation's Security Council on 20 July 1974 was non-committal, paragraph I calls all states to respect the sovereign, independent and territorial integrity of Cyprus, but the demand for 'an immediate end to foreign military intervention in the Republic of Cyprus' is qualified by the clause 'that is in contravention of operative paragraph 1' The incidents of 15 July were instruments that prepared ground of the coup in Cyprus and caused an inevitable intervention of Turkish forces to the island.(White, 1981:137). According to 16 August 1974 UN Security Council Resolution of Charter on the Guarantors' rights under the 1960 Treaty, any military action characterized as being 'against' Cyprus must not exceed those limits and violate the Charter. But the resolution refers to 'actions' in the plural, which could cover the Greek as well as the Turkish intervention, and it stops short of actual condemnation, simply recording 'formal disapproval' (White, 1981: 137). On 13 February 1975, Turkish Federated State of Cyprus (TFSC) was proclaimed by the Ministers and the Legislative Assembly of the Turkish Cypriot Administration as an independent country on the island (1981:135). The Resolution refers to the 1960 Constitution in international agreements such as Treaties of Zurich and London. Greece, Turkey, United Kingdom and Republic of Cyprus gave the final form of the Treaties of Establishment and Guarantee. (1981:135). In order to protect the demographic structure of the island, Turkish presence and their statues on the island, Turkey in 1974 conducted Cyprus Peace Operation in order to save; help the Turks on the island. (Kasım, 2020: 433). Within this frame of reference, Turkey as the guarantor of the island dwelling its legitimacy to Guarantee Agreements issues in 1960 used its rights and protected Turkish population in the island (2020:433). This act helped Turkish Cypriots to earn their independence in November 1983, The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as an independent state was declared by the Turkish Cypriots and recognized by Turkey. (Crawshaw, 1984, 73; Redon, 2017:1)

The International Status of The Turkish Federated State of Cyprus

There is a famous saying among Turkish folks that: "there is no company for a Turk other than a Turk". Although who said this phrase is unknown, the truth it manifests is stable and its legitimacy is unquestionable. The hostile and hatred-based discourse and actions by Greek politicians and Greek military force led a military coup to happen and this incident just in itself proved the legitimacy of Turkish Armed Forces to help Turkish Cypriots and the people of the island. As hostile and hatred based political discourse and actions sponsored by Greek politicians and generals even after Turkish interference to the island did not diminish Turkish Armed Forces did not

change their attitude and position in the island and decided to stay there in order to preserve peace atmosphere and security of the island. Although international community were deceived and misled by Greeks and their friends; Turkey with its righteous position and deed did not compromise with Greek's principles but changed the manipulations into reality both on the ground and table. While international community was in disinformation and thus criticized Turkish Forces in the island those people of the world did not say a word or do anything to preserve the lives and futures of the Turkish Cypriots on the island. Pakistan was only one of the few of the countries who saw Turkish side right on its premises. Britain unlike its attitude towards Greek populated Southern Part of Cyprus who used to be one of the most important figures in Cyprus did not pay much attention and interest to Turkish position on the island. (Crawshaw, 1984;76). Greeks by the help and support of both Greeks and many of the countries in the world had been more successful in representing their claims in the island when compared with the Turks. (1984;76). Starting from 1960s on debates in the House of Commons in Britain clearly supported Greeks and their deeds in island. In the debates of House of Commons the consesus was outlined as such: "we are against the separation of the northern part of Cyprus, and wish Cyprus to continue in a state of unity as it did nine years ago before it was rudely upset…"(col 1046). Just looking out of this angle, Britain can be figured as an important actor on the island who is against Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on the island. However; Britain's open support to Greek side on the island did not affect the constituted Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on the island; Turkish side became more adherent to protect their legitimate rights and presence on the island.

The Argument Supported by Turkish Republic and Turkish Cypriots

Turkey preserved its stable and righteous position and supported its maintenance for Turkish Cypriots on the island. White elaborates on Turkish argument for their presence on the island as such:

> Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots say that the Turkish action was to secure peace and facilitate the establishment of a legitimate order on the island. The purpose was not to destroy the state but to ensure its integrity and bring peace and security" (White, 1981: 137).

Turkey as a guarantor of the island did not target Greeks directly; but created its strategy to preserve the welfare of the island and prevent future possible assaults and threats against Turkish people. The presence of Turkish military on the island was for both sides; Turkish State preserved its objective stance towards both Greeks and Turks but did not constitute a threat for Greeks in the army but to preserve the status and population of the island on

equal rights and terms. Turkish Government alleged the idea that Turkey has intervened only when the very life of the Turkish Cypriot community and the independence of Cyprus were threatened (1981:137). While Greece on the other side supports opposite.They supported the idea that Turkish Ministers allegedly had an intention to colonize the island which Turkey is said to regard as an integral part of the mainland. (1981: 136). However; the border Turkish Military stood on the ground was already withering Greek argument and proves the vice. If Turkish Military Forces had aimed to enlarge the borders of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on the island the expansionist and reductionist attitude towards Greeks would easily be observed. However, the only primary goal of the Turkish Military interference on the island was not to constitute a threat to Greeks but to provide a secured life for both of the countries in the island on equal and just terms. Although Turkish side continuously claims this both politically and in action, Greeks' discontent of Turkish state on the island was neither diminished nor erased. The Greeks support the idea that:

> "[t]he Turkish intervention was undertaken not to re-establish the status quo but for 'the destruction of Cyprus's territorial integrity, the partitioning of the island… and the bringing about by forcible means both of a vast movement of population and the establishment of an unworkable system of geographical [federalism]" (Polyvious, 1974:18).

From the lines mentioned above, Greeks' reductionist attitude towards Cypotriot Turks can be observed. The Greeks on the island tried to preserve previous military presence with the help of coup attempt on the island; behaved accordingly and did not regard Turkish Cypriots as their equal. The egosantric attitude of Greeks dominated the land that Turkish Cypriots could not live, act and breath freely till Turkish Armed Forces's coming to the island. Greeks without hesitation declare their discontent in every way and style that they can do against Turkish folks in Cyprus. The real problem is one of securing the continuation of the island as an independent country on the basis of acceptable bi-communal and bi-regional arrangement. (1981: 136).

Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Cyprus

As a response to this idea, Turkey in international platforms supported his legitimate rights stemming out of international law. The debate over the EU's security and Ankara's blockage of a NATO EU deal at the April 1999 in Washington is a sample of this attitude. (Barkey & Gordon, 2001:88). Turkey's clear status in defending its and Turkish Cypriots rights made a clear and definite impact on the land and in international politics. Although how much international community responded to this attitude is not yet clear, Turkey never fell behind his rightious position and did not hesitate to support his

and Turkish Cypriot's most rightious position. For preserving Turkish rightiousness Turkey initiated and activated many channels and solution plans and way and did give credit and support the other resolutions adviced and put forward by international community such as United Nations. Greek leader Glafcos Clerides and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş although met fifty- eight times by 2002 to find a ground for an embracive solution could find a decent common ground that can meet the expectations of both sides. (Uslu, 2010: 79) Kofi Annan who used to be general secretary of United Nations and his plan were one of the credited plan that may help the conflict be allevated and solved. Kofi Annan in 2004 tried hard to find resolution on the island and put forward solution based proposals for both sides. Kasım elaborates the issue as such:

> The Annan Plan was the last effort to solve the Cyprus question before the SAGC's [Southern Administration of Greek Cyprus] membership [European Union]. The plan was rejected with the referendum held on 24 April 2004. While the Turkish side said yes with 64 %, the Greek side said no for 76 %. The Greek side hoped for more compromise from the Turkish side since even if the Greek side said no, SAGC would be a member of the EU. However, the developments of the international system and relations among the parties of the Cyprus question did not evolve in a way that the Greek Cypriot's wanted. (2020:434).

The Annan Plan was the last call for the resolution on the island since till now no concrete resolution has been found yet. Turkish side's accepting the plan and Greek's side's saying no to the plan showed that Turkish Cypriots are in favor of solution-based politics on the island which foster equal and mutual respect and rights. In the course of establishing and shaping Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Turkish side always cooperated with Northern Cyprus and took necessary political decisions for the benefit of Northern Cyprus. For Fouskas, Turkey along with Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus used its diplomatic and military superiority in order to support his rights and position. As he says: "Turkey played the diplomatic card of military tension as it counted on its military superiority and regional geo-strategic primacy. (Fouskas, 2002: 205). The Cyprus problem rose to new prominence in 1995, however, when the European Union put Cyprus at the top of its list of candidates for future EU membership. (Barkey & Gordon, 2001: 85). At the 1999, Helsinki summit made a formal candidate and declared to be "destined to join the Union (Barkey & Gordon, 2001: 85). In this regard, Rauf Denktash as the elected president of TRNC struggled hard to constitute the state mechanism and created important political agenda and road map hand in hand with Republic of Turkish State in the island. "On January 2002, Denktash had evidently decided on a change of tack, to the extent that he was evidently backing off his

previous claim that the sovereignty of his self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus should be recognized before inter-communal talks could be restarted." (Hale, 2013: 198). Political plans were constructed on the basis of a counter argument against Greeks since they were very much persistent not to recognize Turkish State and presence on the island. In this regard, Denktash with political ingeniutiy changed the negative atmosphere both on the table and ground. While sometimes the decision and resolutions were seem to be against Turkish State on the island as stated by Hale, political recognition was the first motivation of the Turkish side in making up of an independent state.

Attitudes of European Community And Britain

For Turkish side, there were huge amount of works that should be done to legitimize the presence of Turkish side on the island. Greeks with the help of their close ties with Europe could find supporters easily. While they were not right in their demand, their struggle and intense efforts to close the doors to Turkish Cypriots enabled to create huge amount of work that should be done to change the misinformation the Greeks provided to most of the European countries. The first is to support the most righteous premises of Turkish Cypriots as they voted at a rate of 65% votes accepting the Annan Plan in 2004 while the Greek Cypriots it at rate of 70%. (Uslu, 2010:81). As a result of Greeks' struggle, international opinion was heavily weighted in favor of the Greek Cypriots. The European Community, where Greece occupied the presidency, and the Commonwealth were due to hold summit conferences. It was a foregone conclusion that the non-aligned states would dominate the latter on the Cyprus question. (Crawshaw, 1984; 76). The European countries were not alone in their premises. The United States also worked on behalf of Greeks against Turkey in order to discourage Turkey from annexing the Northern part of the island or otherwise raising military tensions in case of Cyprus' accession. (Barkey & Gordon, 2001: 92). While the whole island became the member of European Union in 2004, since the status of Turkish Federated State of Cyprus is not recognized by world and Greeks Turkish side was exempted from entering the union since Turkish presence was regarded to be occuputant. (Redon, 2017: 2). Even from this premise on, the discriminatory attitude of European countries and Greece can very well be observed. Britain who was the active actor both on the table and field strengthened Greek presence and supported Greeks in the island openly and played on their side and disregarded, rejected and neglected Turkish presence in the island and did only acknowledge the presence of the Turks in the island but they should according to British policy should live under Greek sovereignty. The attitudes of British Foreign Policy towards Cyprus were defined as follows:

(a) to help promote an intercommunal settlement on the island;

(b) to retain use of the defence facilities as long as they are needed;

(c) to maintain, and if possible increase, the UK share of the Cyprus market;

(d) to give assistance to UK property owners and the British community in Cyprus;

e) to foster traditional links with Cyprus (White, 1988: 983-984)

As can be very well seen from the articles, Britain from the first day setting foot on the island to today constructed politics against Turkish State but supported Greeks and developed policies accordingly. As stated within the articles, Greek side was economically, socially and culturally in an open way supported and British side did not want to keep this support in secret.

The Argument

Cyprus with its multicultural, multilinguistic and historical background can be an example for fostering mutual respect and tolerance to the world. The states' being equally recognized and their having same economic and social rights on the island should be the sole aim to be achieved. Fouskas elaborates the issue as such: "Turkey could legitimize its strategic positioning in Cyprus reversing all negative political and international consequences stemming from the 'full-scale invasion' of August 1974. (2002: 201-202).

As for this aim to be achieved, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus with close coordination and cooperation with Turkish State should explain their righteous stance and position to the world that they are right in their arguments. International recognition of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and equal status for both countries should be secured. The right to be equal status of Turkish Cypriots on the island with Greeks should recognized by the international community and this should be prioritized and fostered in terms of politics and civil rights such as recognizing Norther Cyprus Turkish Republic and supporting its membership to the European Union with its acknowledged state and identity such like Southern Administration of Greek Cyprus. Turkish people and Greek people in their independent states should live freely, prosperously, justly on equal rights and terms as a part of two different entities. Shortly after the recognition of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus be secured, the second aim should be to prioritize the welfare of the island. Welfare of the people on the island should be regarded equally important along with international recognition. After securing these two premises, coexistent life with the help of cultural, social and intellectual life should be fostered and developed. Respectful and fair atmosphere for the people of the island will thereafter be secured.

Conclusion

Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic like SAGC should equally be recognized and their status should be acknowledged by international community. Turkish presence and their international status should be strengthened in terms of constructing cultural, social and economic ties and agreements with the neighboring countries. Recognition of Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic will contribute to regional and international security besides economic and political stability. When Turkish settlement on the island is analyzed historically, it would be not be fair to acknowledge the presence of Turkish people and recognize their status on the island. Turkish side does not have any problem with Southern Cyprus in contrast to that, Turkey is willing to have a good neighborhood relation with Greek people on the island. This attitude would work on behalf of two states and will contribute to regional and international politics, economic and peace on the way to find a decent life or construct a more peaceful, secured and happy world. Recognizing the status of the Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic by international community will not subordinate any naturally given rights to human kind but more than that, it will contribute to world peace and future more than it will take. For Barkey et al the solution lies as:

> A deal would greatly reduce the financial drain that northern Cyprus represents for Turkey and would allow both Greece and Turkey to reduce their military budgets (at present by far the highest per capita among NATO members). That, in turn, would facilitate Greece's economic integration into the euro zone and ease, at least in part, Turkey's current financial crisis. (2001: 88).

Therefore, international community no more than today should concern about giving priority international problems that concerns the future of humanity starting from recognizing Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic and go on with helping Palestinians establish their independent, sovereign state by changing maben (negative), makpuz (unclear, uncertain) and dilaz (insignificant) attitudes with into positive and good willing among the community can provide a ground for nacering (carving) ekliming (laying the foundation), şigerbing (lay the foundation), egating (grow) nilenering (collecting) and babeling (unifying), tubatting (combine) the potential of the community mesberly (dedicated) for a vasir (caliph- inheritor), reyer (foresight), hameç (loyal, devoted), musbey (visionary), eminerten (confident), gülseyen (friendly), samay, nistuç (good), ğoleni (helpful), teniz (enliven), semzay(talented), janik (ideal), pürgez (beautiful), belif (sincere), uycak (devotion of a self to the community), felos (succesful), sebut(peaceful), ğibis (happy), puteş (determined), zerab (defending the truth), sufye (generous), zayan (loyal), selis (tolerant and respectful to difference), dasem (free-spirited),

elizeb (optimist), almer(kind), rekem (elegant), aben (honest) diyruz (attentive listening) zeker (careful, aware of their surroundings), tenized (enliven) , hatan(gender fairness), mubayer (protector of heritage), aknis (mother), atan (father) generation for resdaling (deliver), hüzdaling (present), payeş, nefek (determined), mekif (courageous), cerul (frank), gutal (leader), yuseks (trainer), meşers (teacher), figed (scientist), talmers(student, researcher), akpuz (fair), maroj (intellectual) reşar (generous, kind, respectable), mizif (logical), nazut (confident), gülak (grateful), kayşe (trustable and witty), isyak, (living according to Allah's truth and being sincere in their deeds), güldef (appreciate), emak (sincere and positive), mercit (anaylytic and critical), çobar (tidy, clean), pusak (obvious, clear), aderes (kind, naïve and helpful), tayis (expert and specialist in a specific profession), devçel (making donation and helping people without any expectation), közek (smart, beautiful), defay (enterprenour), alpeş (friendly), atamak (certain, consisted), keysan (organized person/people), gaztab (pratic), ermev (generous), tuniç (handsome), muhaz (couragous), hüsdal (orator), zeker (careful, cautious), ğepir (presenter), sinaf (congratulate) individuals, community in terms leading the formation of a peaceful, happy hamab(sincere), desak(calm), ereb (tolerant), zanib (seeking to earn the grace of Allah), zeler (high persuasive ability), enrahim (trust in Allah), pamar (masters of their words), danafer (helpful), cinpin(confident), kadmer (renovative), baziç (appreciating values) sarge(arising awareness) and asbaç (contributor), söğiçing (transformational), vanlis (success), arez (resilient, strong) , şarad(prospective), sirce (natural), tepak(prominent), serön (prominent), ğisan (valuable) and ilaz (precious), ğuzen (powerful), ğisen (precious), ğünis (productive), ğölin (talented) bisafers (leader), veşliking (company) and arşening (friend, company), temal (logically) and zeker (cautious) individual and community.

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Chapter 8

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE CRISIS OF SOCIAL POLICY

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Introduction

This chapter explores the political economy of artificial intelligence (AI) from a social policy perspective. Rather than treating AI as a purely technological phenomenon, it conceptualizes AI as a socially embedded system of knowledge production and value mediation. The chapter argues that the core challenge of the AI age lies not in automation per se, but in the institutional governance of collective intelligence.

While mainstream policy discourse focuses on job displacement and skills gaps (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; World Bank, 2020), this chapter contends that the more profound issue concerns who controls, benefits from, and governs AI systems that increasingly mediate access to essential social goods—employment, credit, healthcare, education, and welfare (Eubanks, 2018; Noble, 2018).

Drawing on Marxian political economy (Küçük, 2019; Srnicek & Williams, 2015; Fuchs, 2014), the chapter reframes AI as a "thinking extension" of accumulated human labor—a digitally condensed repository of past intellectual, cultural, and social work that becomes productive only through ongoing human interaction. This reconceptualization shifts analytical focus from AI's technical capabilities to the social relations that structure its development, deployment, and governance.

Methodology

The chapter adopts a critical-political economy approach, combining conceptual analysis with institutional critique. This methodology recognizes that AI cannot be understood outside the capitalist relations of production that structure its development and deployment (Fuchs, 2014; Sadowski, 2019). Following the tradition of critical political economy (Mosco, 2009), the analysis treats technology as socially constructed and institutionally embedded.

The empirical basis includes primary policy documents from major international organizations—the World Bank's reports on AI and development (World Bank, 2020), the OECD's AI Principles (OECD, 2021), and UNCTAD's analyses of technological asymmetries (UNCTAD, 2021). The chapter also engages peer-reviewed literature across political economy of technology (Fuchs, 2014), critical data studies (Crawford, 2021; Noble, 2018), digital labor scholarship (Gray & Suri, 2019; Huws, 2014), and platform capitalism studies (Srnicek, 2017; Zuboff, 2019).

The Marxian framework is particularly important for understanding AI as accumulated intellectual labor (Garegnani, 1979), how AI systems appropriate socially produced knowledge (Küçük, 2019), and how AI mediates contemporary forms of control (Zuboff, 2019; Anderson, 2017).

Literature Review

Existing literature on AI and labor polarizes between techno-utopian visions of autonomous intelligence and reductionist instrumentalism. The former exaggerates AI's agency (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Lee, 2018), while the latter underestimates its socio-economic embeddedness (Crawford, 2021; Noble, 2018).

Recent critical scholarship challenges both views through several key themes:

Digital Labor and Value Extraction

Digital labor scholars demonstrate that AI depends fundamentally on extensive human labor that is often invisible or underpaid (Fuchs, 2014; Huws, 2014). Gray and Suri's research on "ghost work" (2019) reveals how AI relies on vast networks of click workers, data annotators, and content moderators. Building on Marxian value theory, Fuchs (2014) argues that platforms extract value from unpaid user activities—uploading photos that train computer vision systems, answering CAPTCHAs that improve machine learning. AI represents a vast apparatus for appropriating socially produced knowledge and converting it into private profit.

Critical Data Studies and Algorithmic Power

Critical data scholars examine how AI reproduces social inequalities (Crawford, 2021; Noble, 2018). Crawford's Atlas of AI (2021) situates AI within extractive infrastructures spanning mineral extraction to data harvesting. Noble's work on "algorithms of oppression" (2018) demonstrates how AI embeds racial and gender biases in search engines, hiring algorithms, and the criminal justice system. Sadowski's "data capitalism" (2019) examines how data has evolved into a form of capital, enabling new modes of accumulation.

Platform Capitalism and Monopoly Power

Platform capitalism scholars examine how AI centralizes power (Srnicek, 2017; Zuboff, 2019). Srnicek (2017) identifies platforms as extracting value through network effects and data accumulation, with AI enabling personalization at scale. Zuboff's "surveillance capitalism" (2019) describes how platforms use AI to predict and modify human behavior, representing a new frontier where value extraction shifts from production to behavioral modification.

Table 1. Theoretical Approaches to AI and Labor-Value Theory

Theoretical Perspective	Key Contributors	Core Analytical Claim	Implications for Social Policy
Automation Optimism	Brynjolfsson & McAfee (2014); Acemoğlu & Restrepo (2019)	AI-driven productivity gains outweigh displacement effects; labor market disruption is framed primarily as a skills-adjustment problem.	Prioritization of reskilling and education reform; limited intervention in ownership structures or power relations.
Digital Labor Theory	Fuchs (2014); Gray & Suri (2019); Huws (2014)	AI systems rely on extensive visible and invisible human labor; value is extracted through global digital labor chains and unpaid user activity.	Recognition of data and platform labor; extension of labor rights, protections, and compensation mechanisms.
Critical Data Studies	Crawford (2021); Noble (2018); Sadowski (2019)	AI is embedded in extractive infrastructures that reproduce social inequality, surveillance, and asymmetric power relations.	Regulation of data extraction, mandatory bias audits, transparency requirements, and enforceable accountability frameworks.
Post-Autonomist Marxism	Mezzadra & Neilson (2013); Mason (2015); Srnicek & Williams (2015)	AI intensifies the appropriation of immaterial and collective labor within networked and platform-based capitalism.	Democratization of AI governance; exploration of public, cooperative, or commons-based ownership models.
Platform Capitalism	Srnicek (2017); Zuboff (2019)	AI enables monopolistic accumulation through data concentration, behavioral prediction, and network effects.	Antitrust enforcement; structural regulation; consideration of public ownership of critical digital infrastructures.

This comparative framework illustrates how dominant policy narratives differ sharply from critical political economy approaches in their diagnosis of AI-driven transformation and their prescriptions for social policy intervention.

Reframing Artificial Intelligence: What Is AI in Relation to Human Labor?

Artificial intelligence should not be understood as autonomous subject or mere tool. Rather, it is the historically accumulated outcome of human intellectual, cultural, and social labor—digitally condensed and dynamically activated through interaction.

AI as "Thinking Extension"

The concept of AI as "thinking extension" draws on Pasquinelli's (2019) analysis emphasizing that AI systems are trained on human-generated data. What appears as artificial intelligence is actually statistical compression

and recombination of human knowledge. From a Marxian standpoint, AI mobilizes "dead labor"—past human effort embodied in code, datasets, algorithms, and infrastructures (Fuchs, 2014; Garegnani, 1979; Küçük, 2019).

Consider large language models: their capabilities rest on billions of texts written by humans, annotated by workers, filtered through human feedback, and prompted by human questions. At every stage, human labor—intellectual, cognitive, creative—is essential. The model remains inert without continuous human engagement (Zuboff, 2019; Gray & Suri, 2019).

The Social Production of Intelligence

AI is socially produced in multiple senses. First, AI systems are built by human labor—engineers, data scientists, and invisible workers who label data, moderate content, and provide feedback (Gray & Suri, 2019). This labor is often precarious and geographically dispersed to locations with weak protections.

Second, AI is trained on socially produced knowledge. Datasets embody particular cultural perspectives and social relations. When AI learns from this data, it internalizes embedded patterns and biases (Noble, 2018; Crawford, 2021).

Third, AI becomes productive only through social use—requiring ongoing human labor to frame problems, interpret outputs, and integrate AI into workflows. Intelligence emerges through continuous human-machine interaction.

Dead Labor, Living Labor, and Value Appropriation

Marx's distinction between dead labor (objectified in means of production) and living labor (current human activity) illuminates AI's political economy. AI intensifies this dynamic: it enables new forms of value appropriation where platforms extract value from unpaid user activities (Fuchs, 2014; Srnicek, 2017). AI also facilitates appropriation of collective intelligence—knowledge produced socially becomes owned privately (Srnicek & Williams, 2015).

This reframing challenges technological determinism. AI is not an autonomous force but a social relation mediated through technology. The question becomes not "what will AI do to us?" but "how will AI be controlled, by whom, and toward what ends?"

Limits, Accountability, and Social Policy in the AI Age

Once AI is reframed as socially embedded, the central policy question shifts to social control. Who governs AI systems? How are they held accountable? These questions become urgent as AI shapes employment

screening, welfare eligibility, credit access, health assessment, and education (Eubanks, 2018; Danaher, 2019).

The Accountability Gap

AI systems cannot be held accountable conventionally. Algorithmic decision-making is often opaque; responsibility is diffused across developers, deploying organizations, and operators; proprietary control shields systems from scrutiny; and automated scale overwhelms traditional accountability mechanisms (Danaher, 2019; Noble, 2018).

These challenges are especially problematic in social policy. Eubanks' research (2018) documents how AI in welfare administration amplifies inequalities while creating a veneer of neutrality. When AI denies benefits or flags families for investigation, it mediates access to fundamental social goods—pushing people into poverty or crisis.

Establishing Limits: Toward Bounded AI

An adequate framework requires several principles (OECD, 2021; Küçük & Çobanoğlu, 2024):

Bounded Authority: AI systems should operate within clearly defined boundaries. Fundamental rights decisions should remain with accountable human decision-makers.

Human Oversight: Meaningful oversight requires capacity, authority, and incentive to critically examine and, if necessary, override AI recommendations.

Social Reversibility; Decisions must be reversible through accessible processes with understandable explanations.

Transparency: Disclosure about when and how AI is used, what data it considers, and what validation has been conducted.

Democratic Governance: Affected communities should have meaningful voice in deployment decisions.

Accountability Mechanisms: Clear lines of responsibility and practical means of redress for harms.

The deeper question is whether essential social goods should be allocated through efficiency-maximizing algorithms or require human judgment and democratic accountability that resist automation.

Global Policy Perspectives: World Bank, OECD, UNCTAD, and the World Economic Forum

International institutions increasingly recognize artificial intelligence as a structural transformation requiring deliberate policy intervention rather than laissez-faire adaptation (Srnicek, 2017). However, these institutions diverge significantly in how they diagnose the sources of AI-driven inequality and the scope of permissible intervention.

World Bank: Growth and the Development Paradox

The World Bank emphasizes AI's potential to enhance productivity and accelerate economic growth, while simultaneously warning of job polarization and rising inequality (World Bank, 2020). For developing countries, AI poses a "double disruption": traditional development pathways are threatened by automation, while limited digital infrastructure constrains participation in AI-led growth. Nevertheless, the Bank's policy framework remains largely neoliberal, framing displacement as a skills and human capital deficit rather than as a consequence of asymmetric power relations, ownership structures, or data concentration.

OECD: Human-Centered AI within Market Frameworks

The OECD's AI Principles (2021) promote inclusive growth, transparency, accountability, and human-centered design. Its approach advances important governance norms—such as bias mitigation, explainability, and multi-stakeholder engagement—yet largely assumes continued private-sector leadership in AI development. As a result, the OECD focuses on improving governance practices without fundamentally questioning the concentration of ownership or the political economy of AI infrastructures.

UNCTAD: Digital Divides and Data Extractivism

In contrast, UNCTAD foregrounds the global political economy of AI, emphasizing how technological change deepens existing international inequalities (UNCTAD, 2021). AI capabilities are concentrated in a small number of countries and corporations, while data flows predominantly from the Global South to the Global North in patterns of "data extractivism" (Sadowski, 2019). Intellectual property regimes and platform dominance constrain indigenous technological development, and AI deployment often proceeds with minimal regulatory capacity in developing contexts.

World Economic Forum: Stakeholder Capitalism and Corporate Governance

The World Economic Forum positions itself as a key agenda-setter in global AI governance, promoting frameworks of "stakeholder capitalism,"

public–private partnerships, and voluntary ethical guidelines. WEF discourse frames AI as a tool for inclusive growth and societal benefit, provided that corporations, governments, and civil society collaborate effectively. However, this approach privileges self-regulation and soft governance mechanisms, reinforcing corporate leadership in defining ethical norms while leaving underlying ownership structures and value extraction models largely intact (WEF,2019).

Convergence and Tension

Across these perspectives, a shared recognition emerges: AI-driven growth will not automatically deliver equitable outcomes and requires institutional intervention. Yet they diverge sharply on structural questions. While the World Bank, OECD, and WEF emphasize governance, skills, and coordination within existing market frameworks, UNCTAD explicitly raises questions of power asymmetries, data ownership, and global redistribution. The unresolved tension is whether AI governance should focus on refining regulation within prevailing capitalist structures or pursue more transformative approaches that challenge the concentration of control over collective intelligence.

The European Union as a Regulatory Actor: The AI Act and Its Limits

Beyond the divergent perspectives of global institutions, the European Union represents a distinct and ambitious regulatory actor in global AI governance. The EU's Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act), which entered into force in August 2024, marks a decisive shift from voluntary ethical guidelines toward a comprehensive and binding legal framework (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689, 2024). Positioning itself as a global standard-setter, the Act applies not only to providers established within the EU but also to those located outside its borders if their AI systems' outputs are used within the EU market, thereby asserting significant extraterritorial reach (European Commission, n.d.). This regulatory move directly engages with this chapter's core concern: the governance of systems that mediate access to fundamental social goods.

The AI Act adopts a risk-based regulatory framework that explicitly targets AI systems deployed in socially sensitive domains. It prohibits "unacceptable risk" practices, including manipulative subliminal techniques, social scoring by public authorities, and certain applications of emotion recognition and biometric categorization (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689, 2024). For "high-risk" systems—such as those used in employment and worker management, access to public services (including welfare and healthcare), education, and credit scoring—the Act imposes stringent obligations. These include mandatory conformity assessments, fundamental rights impact evaluations,

requirements for human oversight, data governance and quality controls, and enhanced transparency obligations. Enforcement is supported by substantial penalties, with fines for serious non-compliance reaching up to €35 million or 7% of a company's global annual turnover (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689, 2024).

In this sense, the EU AI Act appears to advance a robust model of bounded governance, translating long-standing normative principles into enforceable legal requirements. It moves decisively beyond the soft-law and voluntary governance approaches promoted by institutions such as the World Economic Forum, raising the global regulatory floor and establishing binding safeguards against the most visible harms associated with algorithmic decision-making (World Economic Forum, 2019).

However, from a critical political economy perspective, the Act's transformative capacity remains fundamentally limited. The regulation is oriented primarily toward market governance and risk management rather than structural change. While it meticulously regulates how AI systems are placed on and operate within the EU market, it does not challenge the underlying ownership structures, data monopolies, or value extraction mechanisms characteristic of platform capitalism (Srnicek, 2017; Zuboff, 2019). AI is thus treated as a potentially hazardous commodity requiring certification, rather than as a socially produced infrastructure whose full lifecycle would demand democratic governance and collective benefit.

This market-centric logic is further compounded by significant implementation and governance challenges. The Act's enforcement architecture is fragmented, with primary responsibility delegated to national market surveillance authorities whose institutional capacity and interpretive practices vary considerably across the EU's 27 member states. Unlike the GDPR's stronger centralization mechanisms, the AI Act lacks a robust one-stop-shop model, creating risks of uneven enforcement and higher compliance burdens—particularly for smaller actors—while potentially enabling large corporations to exploit regulatory gaps (Morgan Lewis, 2024; Schellman, n.d.).

Moreover, the Act has generated geopolitical friction and contributed to an emerging deregulatory discourse. Legal and policy analyses indicate growing resistance, particularly from U.S.-based firms and policymakers, who frame the AI Act's extraterritorial reach as regulatory overreach that constrains innovation and conflicts with national regulatory sovereignty (Mayer Brown, 2025). Concurrently, the European Commission has proposed a series of implementation adjustments—often referred to as the "Digital Omnibus"—aimed at simplifying compliance and enhancing competitiveness. These proposals include potential delays in the application of high-risk AI

obligations and modifications to governance arrangements, signaling a strategic recalibration and partial retreat from the Act's most stringent oversight ambitions (Arnold & Porter, 2025; European Commission, n.d.).

Most critically, the AI Act institutionalizes a predominantly technocratic model of governance. By framing AI regulation primarily as a matter of technical compliance, risk classification, and standard-setting, it risks depoliticizing the foundational political question of whether—and under what conditions—AI should mediate access to essential social goods. Decisions regarding risk categories and acceptable domains for automation remain largely insulated from broad democratic deliberation, reinforcing expert-led governance at a distance from the communities most directly affected by algorithmic decision-making.

In sum, the EU AI Act constitutes a landmark regulatory intervention that strengthens accountability and mitigates the most egregious and visible harms of AI deployment in social policy. Yet it functions primarily as a containment framework rather than a transformative one. The Act demonstrates that intelligence is increasingly regulated, but not democratized. It addresses the symptoms of AI's crisis—bias, opacity, and accountability gaps—without engaging its deeper political-economic root: the private appropriation and control of collectively produced intelligence within the logics of capital accumulation. As such, it offers a necessary but insufficient response to the central challenge of the AI age, leaving unresolved the fundamental contest over the ownership, governance, and social purpose of collective intelligence.

Conclusion: Regulated Intelligence and the New Politics of Control

This chapter has argued that the central tension of the AI age does not lie between humans and machines, but between collectively produced intelligence and its institutional capture. Artificial intelligence is not an autonomous force external to society; rather, it condenses historical, cultural, and cognitive labor into socio-technical systems that increasingly mediate economic value, social participation, and access to essential goods (Fuchs, 2014; Zuboff, 2019). What appears as technological progress is therefore inseparable from questions of power, ownership, and control. From a Marxian political economy perspective, AI enables unprecedented forms of value extraction from social interaction itself. By appropriating collectively generated knowledge, data, and communicative activity, AI systems extend the logic of "dead labor" into the realm of cognition and social life (Garegnani, 1979; Srnicek & Williams, 2015). The core risk, however, is not the absence of regulation, but the consolidation of regulated intelligence under proprietary and non-democratic frameworks—where governance serves accumulation rather than collective welfare. This reframing has direct implications for social

policy. Conventional policy responses—focused on reskilling, labor market adjustment, or ethical guidelines—address symptoms rather than structures. A social policy adequate to the AI age must engage with deeper institutional questions: who owns AI infrastructures, how decision-making authority is distributed, and under what conditions collective intelligence is mobilized for public rather than private ends. Issues of employment, welfare, and social protection cannot be disentangled from the governance of the systems that increasingly allocate opportunities and risks. As AI becomes embedded in welfare administration, employment screening, credit access, healthcare, and education, the politics of intelligence governance emerges as a central terrain of democratic struggle. The future of social policy will depend not only on mitigating the harms of AI, but on contesting its institutional design and social purpose. Ultimately, the question is not whether intelligence will be regulated, but in whose interests, by what mechanisms, and toward what vision of social justice and collective life.

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Chapter 9

DISASTERS AS GENDERED HUMAN SECURITY CRISES: TOWARDS A PURPLE DEGROWTH FRAMEWORK FOR POST-CAPITALIST SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

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Introduction

Capitalism systematically generates intertwined crises, and women often experience their sharpest effects in everyday life. Gendered care responsibilities, unequal access to full citizenship rights, and entrenched structural inequalities mean that women disproportionately absorb the costs of economic instability, ecological degradation, and the care crisis—costs whose cumulative impact remains under-recognized. Building on the idea of women's "everyday lives" as a key site of political economy (Elias and Rai, 2019), this article treats daily social reproduction as a terrain of struggle shaped by a country's position in the international political economy, the intensity of patriarchy across public and private spheres, and class relations. Under growth-oriented capitalist arrangements, environmental and care crises translate into deepening poverty, intensified exploitation, and expanding unpaid care work, with especially severe consequences in low- and middle-income contexts.

Developing countries are disproportionately exposed to economic, climate, and care crises due to persistent inequality, weak welfare provision, entrenched gender hierarchies, and demographic pressures. Where democratic accountability, rule of law, and institutional capacity are compromised—often alongside corruption—investments that reduce disaster vulnerability remain inadequate, amplifying exposure and harm. Following Cannon (1994), understanding disasters as socially produced rather than "natural" clarifies how vulnerability tracks development patterns and political-economic arrangements. In low-income settings, vulnerability is concentrated through poverty, inequality, and patriarchy reproduced by capitalist accumulation. Within these conditions, women—frequently positioned as the "poorest of the poor" and constrained in accessing economic, political, and social rights—are among those most severely affected by disasters. Disaster thus appears not only as a gendered development problem but also as a gendered outcome of capitalism and its crisis tendencies (Valdés, 2009).

A human security lens makes these dynamics visible as more than material deprivation: capitalist political economies can systematically erode the conditions for a secure and dignified life by privileging growth and accumulation over social reproduction and collective well-being. As neoliberal reforms weaken social protection, commodify care, and externalize environmental costs, gendered and classed hierarchies shape who bears insecurity most acutely. Human security—understood as freedom from fear and freedom from want—therefore cannot be separated from everyday economic justice, care provision, and the organization of social reproduction, especially in contexts of fragile institutions and weak welfare regimes (UNDP, 1994; Acharya, 2001)

The chapter asks two questions: How do growth-oriented capitalist policies shape women's everyday care burdens and human insecurity before and after disasters in developing-country contexts? What does a human security approach reveal about disasters as gendered outcomes of capitalist crisis dynamics, and what would "social reconstruction" look like under Purple Degrowth? These questions address to a gap in the literature. While feminist political economy and scholarship on care/social reproduction compellingly explain how capitalist crisis dynamics are lived and managed in everyday life, critical security studies and human security research on disasters often focuses on risk, governance, and insecurity without fully theorizing how growth-oriented development and reconstruction policies reproduce gendered vulnerability through care regimes and social reproduction. At the same time, although Purple Degrowth has emerged as a promising alternative economic imaginary, it has not been sufficiently developed as an integrated framework for disaster politics that connects human security with Critical Security Studies accounts of structural power and violence and Feminist Political Economy insights into gendered political economy. By bringing Purple Degrowth into conversation with critical security studies, human security, and feminist political economy, this article conceptualizes disasters as gendered outcomes of capitalism's crisis tendencies and advances a care-centered, rights-based, ecologically conscious model of "social reconstruction" as an alternative to growth-led reconstruction.

The chapter proceeds in four steps. First, it links rights violations under states of emergency to the "everyday" rights violations women face through the organization of care. Second, it analyzes how growth-oriented policies shape women's pre- and post-disaster vulnerabilities, with particular attention to feminized poverty. Third, it maps women's post-disaster insecurities across the seven dimensions of human security. Finally, it advances "social reconstruction" as a rights-based, ecologically conscious, and care-centered alternative to growth-led reconstruction, grounded in Purple Degrowth. Purple Degrowth conceptualizes an egalitarian, democratic, care-centered economic imaginary (Sarı, 2022). Rather than stopping at critique, the framework is used here to articulate an alternative pathway for rebuilding institutions and livelihoods in ways that expand capabilities, dignity, and human security.

The Gendered Nature of Care Work and the Poverty Trap

The unequal, gendered distribution of care within households—reinforced by gender-blind welfare regimes and the marketization of care—contributes to a poverty trap for women. Time poverty limits women's access to the social,

political, and economic rights—most notably education—needed to interrupt intergenerational deprivation (Lister, 1990, p. 458). When care obligations are imposed from childhood onward, women have fewer opportunities to acquire marketable skills, accumulate assets, or secure pension entitlements, which compounds lifetime poverty. Limited access to education and economic power can also normalize patriarchal constraints, leading some women to internalize inequality and to remain unaware of rights-based exclusions (İlkkaracan, 2013).

Care responsibilities further restrict women's ability to enjoy citizenship on equal terms and to convert formal rights into substantive capabilities (Lister, 1990, p. 458; Sen, 2000). Daily care work in the private sphere curtails participation in public life and weakens women's capacity to claim and exercise civil, social, and political rights (Lister, 1990, p. 458). Economically marginalized women are consequently underrepresented in politics and civil society and tend to occupy lower-level positions within gendered state structures, rarely reaching senior administrative or political leadership roles (Goetz, 1992, p. 6). This underrepresentation is not merely descriptive: it helps explain why women's interests and lived constraints are frequently absent from policy agendas.

Exclusion from decision-making also entails exclusion from defining budgets, allocating public resources, and shaping distributive priorities. As women's political agency is eroded, their ability to translate economic, social, and political rights into capabilities diminishes, exposing them to layered and cumulative rights violations (Sen, 1995). Feminist political economy further emphasizes that rights and capabilities are structured through intersecting inequalities—class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, migration status, disability, and age—which shape women's differential exposure to deprivation and insecurity (Lister, 2012, p. 381; İlkkaracan, 2013, p. 33). As Lister (2012, p. 374) argues, citizenship and gender relations are not universal; they are historically and institutionally situated. Within the international liberal economic order, capitalist accumulation and recurrent crises therefore condition women's access to economic, social, and political rights.

The Crises of Capitalism and the Unequal Distribution of Welfare

Market-centered political economy is often justified through claims that reducing state involvement and relying on market coordination will deliver prosperity, employment, and stability (Eren & Saraçoğlu, 2017, p. 88). Historically, however, capitalist development has been punctuated by recurrent crises—an insight long emphasized in Marxist and heterodox analyses. Growth-centered accumulation generates crisis tendencies associated with overaccumulation, overproduction, underconsumption, declining profit rates,

and financialization (Bedirhanoğlu, 2010, p. 41; Annesley & Scheele, 2011, p. 338). Crucially, crisis management frequently depends on state intervention, while the distributive costs are socialized through austerity, regressive taxation, labor-market flexibilization, unemployment, and reductions in social services (La Botz, 2008, pp. 39–40, as cited in Eren & Saraçoğlu, 2017, p. 89). In this sense, crises tend to redistribute welfare upward and intensify impoverishment.

A feminist political economy perspective underscores that crises are not socially neutral. Their causes, consequences, and policy responses are gendered, and they intersect with classed, racialized, and other inequalities (Annesley & Scheele, 2011, p. 336; İlkkaracan, 2013, p. 33). Capitalist institutions shaped by masculine norms often privilege competition and risk-taking while rendering interdependence and care politically and economically marginal. When women are excluded from decision-making and institutional gender equality is weak, both the diagnosis of crisis and the design of "solutions" reproduce gendered hierarchies.

It follows that gender-blind crisis management routinely fails to anticipate differential effects on women. During downturns, women's social rights—particularly employment security—are frequently undermined through unemployment, informalization, and precarious work. In gender-segmented labor markets that position men as primary breadwinners and women as secondary earners, women are channelled into low-paid, insecure, and informal employment and are often more vulnerable to dismissal during contractions (Akgöz & Balta, 2015, pp. 2–4; Folbre, 2006). At the same time, the gendered organization of labor confines women to unpaid and invisible care work within households. Women thus sustain everyday life while being excluded from secure employment and social protection, reproducing economic dependency and reinforcing marginalization within both labor markets and society.

Moreover, state retrenchment in care-related social spending during crises constitutes a gendered political choice that can trigger—or deepen—a care crisis. Floro (2012) defines the care crisis as imbalances in meeting care and subsistence needs within and across societies, rooted in the prioritization of market demands over social reproduction in dominant allocation regimes. Growth-first paradigms devalue and invisibilize the environmental and care resources that sustain life, while macroeconomic models that ignore unpaid care labor obscure its contribution to the economy and facilitate gender-blind recovery packages, including cuts to publicly funded care and social services (Annesley & Scheele, 2011). In such contexts, women are often among the first to lose jobs and are then compelled to compensate for the care deficit produced by the withdrawal of public support. As the state retreats from

care investment, many women cannot access market-based care services, and unpaid responsibilities intensify under worsening economic conditions (Beneria, 2008). Evidence from the COVID-19 crisis similarly indicates that rising care burdens contributed to declines in women's post-crisis labor market participation (ILO, 2020), reinforcing cycles of poverty.

Put differently, the imbalances produced by marketized welfare arrangements are "repaired" through women's unrecognized and unpaid labor, as women shoulder responsibilities of social reproduction in place of the state. In this sense, the capitalist state—operating through forms of public patriarchy—externalizes the costs of social welfare onto households and particularly onto women's unpaid care work (Akkan, 2022). This dynamic is not limited to crisis moments: the care deficit of the welfare state is routinely absorbed by women in everyday life (Elias & Rai, 2019). Women engaged in paid care work and global care chains further contribute economically to households and national economies through remittances, even as their labor remains undervalued (Benería, 2008, p. 4).

Yet the gendered architecture of citizenship often prevents women from converting care provision into enforceable social, economic, and political rights (Sen, 1995). The contrast with rights pathways typically available to male citizens—for example, the conversion of compulsory military service into recognized citizenship entitlements—highlights how state institutions embed gendered norms and hierarchies (Altınay, 2013). As Berktay (2021, p. 302) argues, a "fraternity pact" between the capitalist state and male citizens discourages welfare policies that would empower women, commodifies care labor, and locks women into time poverty and deprivation. Gender-blind care policies thus erode women's agency and undermine equal citizenship. Mainstream economics' failure to treat unpaid care labor as a foundational input of economic life also rests on gender-blind assumptions. By ignoring care work, "objective" economic reasoning reproduces a model in which women's labor is rendered invisible while growth is naturalized and celebrated. As Dengler and Strunk (2018, p. 167) argue, the presumed neutrality of such reasoning is itself political: it obscures the extent to which growth is sustained through the exploitation of unpaid and underpaid care work.

Finally, despite widespread recognition of women's unequal burdens, the persistent marginalization of care within development paradigms reflects a political choice rather than a mere analytical oversight. While the capitalist state presents itself as neutral and universal, it reproduces gendered inequalities by sustaining a growth model reliant on women's unpaid labor. As Akbulut (2020) notes, the belief that growth benefits everyone masks the structural conditions that enable women's labor to be exploited in the name of development. The endurance of gendered inequality in development outcomes

suggests that the care crisis is not incidental but structurally embedded within capitalist political economies.

The Invisibility of Women's Labor in Gendered Development

The Gender and Development (GAD) approach reframed women not as passive recipients of development assistance but as agents of change, emphasizing women's legal empowerment and political participation (Rathgeber, 1990, p. 494). Crucially, it also foregrounded the ways patriarchy operates across and within class relations to structure women's subordination. Relative to earlier paradigms, GAD offered a more structurally attuned account of women's marginalization by locating gender roles and the sexual division of labor at the heart of development processes. Yet, as Bradshaw (2014) notes, even when international institutions claim to embrace GAD, policy practice often remains limited to "adding women and stirring," leaving underlying power relations largely intact.

Today, despite the widespread use of rights-based gender language in the framework documents of international institutions such as the United Nations, UNDP, the IMF, and the ILO, development strategies continue to be shaped by growth-oriented logics that reproduce—rather than dismantle—gendered inequalities institutionalized through capitalism. The realization of gender equality—formally codified among the Sustainable Development Goals—remains constrained so long as the global and national dynamics of capitalist accumulation, crisis, and redistribution are treated as background conditions rather than objects of contestation. Indeed, those who benefit least from growth-led development and who are most exposed to national and global income inequalities and crisis impacts are the "poorest of the poor," particularly women in developing-country contexts (UN Women, 2017).

A central mechanism through which development remains gendered is the unequal distribution of care labor. Evidence suggests that where welfare regimes are robust and men share care responsibilities more equally, women's labor-force participation tends to be higher and equal citizenship more substantively realized; conversely, where welfare provision is weak and care remains privately allocated, women are burdened by unpaid work and excluded from social, economic, and political rights in practice (Shafik, 2021, p. 22). Contemporary policy agendas increasingly promote women's labor-force participation for its presumed contribution to economic growth and productivity, including through institutional discourses that implicitly reconfigure the social contract between women and the state (Shafik, 2021). However, this growth-centered rationale risks reproducing a development paradigm that renders women's care labor invisible, hierarchizes paid over unpaid work, and conditions women's citizenship and social rights on market

participation rather than on equality and social justice (Sarı, 2023b).

In this context, Daron Acemoğlu and James Robinson's Why Nations Fail—widely discussed in Turkey in relation to development—offers a revealing illustration of how gender-blind development narratives can persist even within sophisticated, transdisciplinary accounts. The book explains cross-national variation in development by foregrounding institutional differences. Specifically, it argues that countries with inclusive institutions, understood as those that protect property rights and incentivize competition, technological innovation, and skills formation, tend to develop more successfully than those with extractive institutions, where political and economic power is concentrated in elites who control resources and restrict broad-based participation (Acemoğlu & Robinson, 2013, pp. 408–410). The analysis further emphasizes that extractive political and economic institutions often reinforce one another, producing a self-reproducing configuration of exclusion and stagnation. In doing so, the book presents institutional inclusiveness as a foundational condition of development.

However, from a feminist political economy perspective, this narrative remains analytically incomplete, not simply because it "omits women," but because it treats institutions as gender-neutral containers rather than as gendered social relations. Gender itself operates as an institution organizing property regimes, labor markets, citizenship entitlements, and the boundaries between paid production and unpaid social reproduction. When these dynamics are not incorporated, the "rise of nations" can be narrated as the outcome of formally inclusive rules while the gendered conditions that make economic life possible remain invisible. Acemoğlu and Robinson largely overlook who owns property even under ostensibly inclusive institutions; how women's economic activities are systematically constrained by care responsibilities, time poverty, and labor-market segmentation; and how women are excluded from agenda-setting and decision-making mechanisms. Relatedly, the relationship between political and economic institutions, which is central to their argument, is itself structured through gendered hierarchies and discriminatory norms from women's standpoint. In this sense, the institutional foundations of development cannot be evaluated without asking whose labor subsidizes accumulation and whose rights are treated as secondary.

Viewed through this lens, the "rise" (or "fall") of nations is sustained by male-dominated configurations of state, market, and political power what can be described as a form of fraternal capitalism among men (Sarı, 2023b). The celebrated trajectory of national development thus continues to rely

on the extraction of women's labor and the partial suspension of women's rights, reinforcing the insight that women remain the "last colony to be liberated" (Mies, 1988). Put differently, development accounts that foreground institutions but leave gender untheorized risk reproducing the very exclusions they claim to diagnose. Without acknowledging the gendered nature of institutions, it is difficult, indeed impossible, to design a genuinely inclusive development trajectory. A development model that fails to incorporate women as full political and economic subjects will reproduce inequality by design.

From a feminist political economy perspective, meaningful inclusive institutionalization would require women's equal representation in politics and the economy; the recognition of care work as socially necessary labor rather than a private obligation; and development policies oriented toward women's well-being, dignity, and substantive citizenship. In the absence of such transformations, institutional arrangements will continue to reproduce gendered inequalities in both everyday life and moments of crisis. Only when institutions are reshaped through a gender lens can development prevent the exploitation of women's labor and dismantle the patriarchal "fraternity pact" that sustains inequality (Berktay, 2021, p. 302).

Disaster as a Gendered Development Problem and Women's Vulnerabilities

Natural hazards such as earthquakes become "disasters" when they intersect with human exposure and vulnerability; considered independently from human societies, they are simply part of natural processes (Persson & Povitkina, 2017, p. 834). Whether hazards translate into harm depends on vulnerability, defined as the capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from hazard impacts (Wisner et al., 2004, p. 11; Persson & Povitkina, 2017, p. 834). Disaster governance, therefore, is not primarily about minimizing damage after events occur, but about reducing vulnerability through preventive planning tailored to different hazards.

Decisions about vulnerability reduction are inherently political, and governmental effectiveness in disaster governance is shaped by governance capacity, accountability, civil and political rights, and social capabilities such as literacy (Brooks et al., 2005, p. 161). As Terry Cannon (1994, pp. 16–18) argues, the transformation of natural events into disasters is rooted in economic and political systems. From this perspective, disaster governance depends on the ability of governments to develop preventive policies, provide public goods and services without discrimination, and act effectively through coordination with local governments, civil society, and communities. Read through development debates, the translation of hazards into disasters and the effectiveness of disaster governance are closely linked to the character of

institutional inclusiveness (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013).

Mainstream approaches to disaster governance tend to foreground economic and political institutions. Yet institutions also include socially constructed gender orders that shape economic, political, and social relations (Brannmark, 2021, p. 234). As discussed above, the gendered organization of development undermines state inclusiveness and weakens disaster governance. Women's underrepresentation within state structures contributes to the neglect of women's social, economic, and political interests, narrows channels for voice and accountability, and reinforces vulnerability by intensifying the social, economic, political, and ideological burdens associated with care responsibilities. State capacity is also shaped by countries' positions within the international political economy, and capitalist dynamics condition the resources and policy space available for disaster risk reduction (Cannon, 1994, pp. 124–126).

Gender-blind policies grounded in a male citizen norm systematically exclude women from disaster governance processes and generate unequal outcomes. Valdés (2009, p. 20) conceptualizes disasters as unresolved development problems shaped by gender relations and development trajectories, arguing that gender relations influence people's ability to anticipate, prepare for, cope with, and recover from disasters. When gendered social relations are ignored, ostensibly neutral economic, social, political, and environmental policies produce predictably gendered effects in disaster contexts.

Planning development without a gender perspective deepens women's vulnerabilities and undermines effective disaster governance. As Ünür (2021, p. 361) notes, disaster impacts vary across levels of development, and these differences stem largely from socio-economic inequalities and, fundamentally, from gender inequality. Gender-based disaster studies consistently show that people and states do not face hazards on equal terms: vulnerability is unevenly distributed, and groups whose access to resources and opportunities is constrained by gendered structures particularly women experience disproportionate harm.

Gender-based disaster studies further show that gendered social, economic, religious, and cultural structures shape women's vulnerability in differentiated ways (Ariyabandu, 2009, p. 5). By pushing women and girls into secondary positions, gender discrimination can render them "the most vulnerable among the vulnerable" (Ariyabandu, 2009, p. 5) a formulation that highlights structural inequality rather than passivity. Large-N evidence supports this claim: analyzing 4,405 disasters between 1981 and 2002, Neumayer and Plümper (2008) show that disasters do not affect people

equally, that gender roles shape risk exposure and access to resources and opportunities, and that these roles are associated with higher female mortality.

Importantly, gendered inequalities are not exceptional conditions confined to disasters; they are embedded in everyday life and often intensify during crises (Ariyabandu, 2009, p. 5). Naming women and girls as "the most vulnerable among the vulnerable" is therefore not intended to deny agency, but to make visible how socially constructed gender roles produce unequal risks and harms—and to underscore the possibility of transformation through social, economic, political, and cultural change. İlkaracan and Okay (2021) similarly argue that women's and girls' heightened exposure to harm is rooted in rights violations produced by gender inequality. UNISDR (2015) likewise emphasizes that making visible women's differentiated experiences before, during, and after disasters—and recognizing the gendered inequalities that generate these differences—is essential for advancing gender-equal disaster governance.

The Care Burden in Everyday Life: Depletion, Human Security, and Capabilities

Disasters are periods in which everyday life is disrupted and environmental and care-related crises are experienced simultaneously, rendering access to rights critically important. However, for women whose everyday lives (Elias & Rai, 2019) are already shaped by the intertwined effects of these two crises and by ongoing struggles for equality, disaster periods are experienced far more severely. Interpreting the concept of depletion as articulated by Rai et al. (2013) in the context of disasters, depletion refers not only to the exhaustion of natural resources or the planet's capacity to sustain life, but also to the discursive, emotional, bodily, and social erosion that results from the excessive and unrecognized burden women carry in social reproduction. In disaster contexts, the primary factor underlying women's discursive, emotional, bodily, and social depletion—and intensifying their vulnerability—is the burden of care. The care burden deepens women's vulnerability in disasters by systematically distancing them from their economic, social, and political rights and from their "capabilities" on a daily basis (Sen, 1995).

Drawing on Amartya Sen's capabilities approach, which conceptualizes poverty in terms of individuals' real freedoms to achieve valued ways of being and doing, it can be argued that the care burden not only traps women in material deprivation but also subjects them to what may be termed capability deprivation. As Sabina Alkire (2007, p. 348) emphasizes, assessing human well-being requires attention to several interrelated dimensions: (i) access to employment, particularly the quality and security of work; (ii) agency, understood as the ability to pursue one's own goals and values; (iii) physical

security, defined as the capacity to protect oneself and one's property from violence; (iv) the ability to live with dignity, free from shame and humiliation; and (v) psychological well-being and subjective life satisfaction. Taken together, these dimensions correspond to women's ability to exercise their economic, social, and political rights as equal citizens.

Disasters constitute both a development problem in which women experience "capability deprivation" and a human security problem. The concept of human security is defined through seven core components in the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report (UNDP, 1994). Women experience all seven dimensions of human security in conditions shaped by the deprivation of their capabilities. These seven components of human security are: economic security (guaranteed basic income), food security (physical and economic access to food), health security (access to health services and conditions), environmental security (access to clean air, water, and fertile land), personal security (freedom from physical violence and threats), community security (protection of cultural identity), and political security (protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms, and freedom from state violence and repression).

In disasters such as earthquakes, the physical infrastructure that sustains social life—including housing, schools, hospitals, and industrial facilities—is severely damaged. More importantly, as a result of loss of life, the social fabric necessary for the continuation of daily life at national, regional, and local levels is disrupted, and social support networks collapse. In disasters that turn into severe environmental and care crises, women's human security becomes fragile across all dimensions. Since the transformation of natural hazards into disasters is fundamentally a problem of state capacity, the ability of governments to respond to the care and environmental crises that emerge in the aftermath of disasters in a multi-actor, multi-dimensional, inclusive, rights-based, participatory, transparent, and accountable manner remains limited (UN, 2017, p. 19). When care needs in disaster contexts are not addressed through policies that explicitly include women and girls as vulnerable groups, their needs, problems, and capacities remain invisible. As a result, the vulnerabilities that already characterize women's everyday lives are further intensified under disaster conditions. The following section examines how disasters threaten women's seven dimensions of human security, showing that women's limited access to these forms of security pushes them further away from the conditions necessary to realize their capabilities.

Economic Security and the Care Burden in Disasters

Women whose economic security is already fragile due to care responsibilities face even greater difficulties under post-disaster economic

conditions and increasing care burdens. After disasters, women's return to "normal" life is delayed due to care responsibilities, and this delay is even longer for women living in rural areas (Reinsch, 2009, p. 153). After disasters, men's migration in search of employment further increases women's care burden, limiting their access to paid work and trapping them in cycles of poverty. The weight of care responsibilities pushes women into low-paid, informal, part-time, and insecure jobs or excludes them from the labor market altogether (Ünür, 2021, p. 373).

The absence of essential social services such as childcare facilities and nursing homes—services that play a critical role in enabling women's participation in working life—prevents women from accessing economic security (Yeşilyurt, 2022b). The lack of care support reduces women's chances of returning to work even when employment opportunities exist. The situation of economically disadvantaged women is further aggravated by the fact that the patriarchal state provides financial and in-kind assistance to men recognized as 'heads of households.' This practice violates the fundamental rights of women who are single, divorced, widowed, elderly, homeless, or never married (MacDonald, 2005, p. 474). Despite women being the primary providers of care, state institutions' tendency to allocate assistance through male household heads causes women and children to experience deeper household poverty (Peek & Fothergill, 2009, p. 114; Bradshaw, 2014, p. 67).

Following disasters, care is provided in a gendered manner. The burden of care is placed primarily on women and girls. Due to socially constructed gender roles, girls are expected to assist their mothers and are pushed into caregiving roles, being removed from childhood and burdened with adult responsibilities. Because sons are prioritized for the continuation of the family line, boys are more likely to be sent to school, given preferential access to food, and exempted from age-inappropriate care work (Ünür, 2021, pp. 362–368). As a result, girls are pushed out of education or fail academically due to heavy care responsibilities. In the long term, this prevents them from acquiring the skills and qualifications necessary for paid employment and traps them in cycles of poverty and 'capability deprivation.'

Conversely, men who have not developed caregiving skills due to rigid gender roles also struggle to care for dependents (Ariyabandu, 2009, p. 8). Reports by the EŞİK Platform (2023) indicate that men often avoid caregiving responsibilities by leaving disaster shelters under the pretext of not wanting to expose children to cigarette smoke. Gendered care roles thus prevent men from developing caregiving capacities for themselves and others, increasing vulnerability for both men and children. More critically, the burden of care is ultimately shifted onto girls, reinforcing intergenerational cycles of gendered inequality.

Food, Health, and Environmental Security in Disasters: Women's Self-Care

From the perspective of food security, the situation that emerges is deeply alarming. In impoverished households, families may attempt to reduce the burden of care by marrying off their daughters under the logic of "one less mouth to feed," a practice that constitutes a serious violation of girls' rights (Joshi & Bhatt, 2009, p. 306). This dynamic shows how gender-blind disaster governance—and the state's failure to address poverty and care deficits—can translate into direct threats to girls' personal security. It is also well documented that women experience food insecurity during disasters and often reduce their own food intake to feed other household members, leading to malnutrition and related health problems (Cannon, 2002). The risks faced by pregnant women and infants due to undernourishment are particularly acute (Ünür, 2021, p. 363; Ariyabandu, 2009, p. 8).

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2023), more than 214,000 pregnant women were affected by the earthquake that struck Türkiye on 6 February, and thousands of mothers and infants struggled to survive under the rubble. Field research conducted after 6 February indicates that women were compelled to provide care under extremely harsh conditions—lack of clean water, inadequate shelter, and exposure to dust and asbestos from debris during a poorly managed reconstruction process (Karaca, 2023). In other words, women were giving birth and caring for newborns amid intertwined environmental and care crises. Moreover, women reportedly avoided eating and drinking adequately due to the lack of hygienic toilet facilities, which in turn generated serious health problems (Karaca, 2023; EŞİK, 2023). These accounts underscore the tight coupling between care crises, environmental crises, and threats to women's health security.

One of the most serious threats to women's health security during disasters is the lack of access to clean water and adequate sanitation. Women are often forced to use unhygienic shared toilets, while reproductive and sexual health needs, such as access to menstrual hygiene products, contraception, and maternal health services remain unmet. Due to prevailing gender norms, many women refrain from voicing these needs, increasing their exposure to infectious diseases (Chakrabarti & Walia, 2009, p. 345). While care crises are often framed as failures to provide care for dependents, disaster contexts also deprive women of the ability to care for themselves.

Personal Security in Disasters: The Cycle of Structural Violence

Gender determines the spaces in which people experience disasters. Research shows that women are more likely to be caught in disasters within domestic spaces where they perform care work, whereas men are more often

affected in open areas or in buildings such as factories or public institutions that are constructed more securely (Neumayer & Plümper, 2008, p. 554). Studies further indicate that during disasters, women tend to prioritize protecting those they care for, and in doing so, often lose their lives. In the earthquake that occurred in Türkiye on 6 February 2023 and affected at least eleven provinces, the bodies of women were found in their children's rooms or in corridors leading to their children's rooms (Kepenek, 2023; Ünür, 2021, p. 366). The care responsibility thus directly affects women's chances of surviving disasters.

During disaster periods, women often lack access to safe shelter, which is a fundamental component of care, and are forced to live in temporary tent settlements or container camps. These temporary living spaces become sites where women are exposed to sexual violence, sexual harassment, and domestic violence (Ariyabandu, 2009, p. 8). In such harsh conditions, men who demand that women protect their "honour" exert pressure on them, confining them to tents and allowing them to leave only in female-only spaces (Düzkan, 2016, p. 33, as cited in Ünür, 2021, p. 371). Women who resist such pressure are subjected to violence. A family-centered disaster governance approach fails to prevent women from being forced to live with perpetrators of violence or to ensure that perpetrators are punished for their crimes.

Gender-focused disaster studies demonstrate that crisis environments following disasters significantly increase the risks of violence, sexual assault, and rape against women (Neumayer & Plümper, 2008, p. 556). Studies conducted after the 6 February earthquakes reveal that women's personal security was severely compromised. The Mor Çatı Foundation Report (2023) indicates that domestic violence against women increased in the disaster zone, while state institutions failed to implement Law No. 6284, and emphasizes the urgent need to reinstate the Istanbul Convention. The unsafe environment created after disasters, combined with the breakdown of care networks, provides opportunities for human traffickers and organized crime networks to exploit women and children. Reports of missing women and children following earthquakes further confirm this heightened vulnerability.

Social and Political Security in Disasters: Identity and Access to Resources

Following disasters, large-scale displacement occurs due to the extent of destruction, which undermines women's social security. Because of the conditions in affected areas, women who are forcibly displaced are not consulted about where they wish to go, and they are relocated to cities chosen by men, thereby becoming separated from their families, cultural environments, and existing informal support networks. Women express a desire to return to their places of origin and to live where they feel a sense of belonging. One of

the main reasons for this is that their access to social services and assistance is more limited in the places to which they are relocated (Mor Çatı, 2023). In other words, one of the primary reasons women lose their sense of social security through displacement is the rupture of local care networks and the isolation they experience in their new environments.

In disaster contexts, women whose lives are already constrained by care burdens face serious threats to both their personal and political security. Following disasters, women living in tents, camps, or container settlements struggle to participate in public life or engage in civil society activities due to their care responsibilities. Women's limited visibility in public space restricts their ability to influence decisions that affect their lives, while their exclusion from decision-making processes further weakens their political agency. As a result, women, along with the elderly, persons with disabilities, and children, encounter significant barriers in accessing public assistance and social support mechanisms.

As documented in the EŞİK Platform Report, migrant women and LGBTI+ individuals who face discrimination and social exclusion encounter even greater obstacles in accessing shelter, food, and other essential services. The lack of visibility and recognition of these groups makes it extremely difficult for them to secure political representation or to organize collectively while struggling for survival (Lister, 1990, p. 458). For this reason, making visible the multiple rights violations experienced by women who are excluded, rendered invisible, and trapped in cycles of poverty and care burden during disasters is of critical importance.

Returning to Rai et al.'s (2013) concept of "depletion," which links environmental degradation with social reproduction, the notion of "depletion" in the context of disasters refers not only to the destruction of physical infrastructure but also to the discursive, emotional, bodily, and social depletion experienced by women through their reproductive labor. As discussed above in relation to the seven dimensions of human security, disaster contexts intensify gender-based inequalities, reinforce structural discrimination, and deepen violations of women's human rights (Horton, 2012, p. 297).

Purple Degrowth: Care-Centered and Rights-Based Social Reconstruction

In times of disaster, human rights do not disappear; disaster governance must therefore prioritize protecting the rights of groups that are most vulnerable even before hazards strike (ten Have, 2018, p. 169). Disaster impacts extend beyond physical infrastructure to social structures. Accordingly, breaking the disaster cycle must involve social reconstruction alongside physical rebuilding. This requires a rights-based approach to disaster governance, for which the

state bears primary responsibility (UNISDR, 2015). Yet disasters also generate a care crisis between the state and women as citizens. To overcome this crisis—and to prevent women from being subjected to multiple and overlapping forms of harm—reconstruction and recovery policies must be designed in line with human security principles: freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom from indignity, which are mutually reinforcing (UNDP, 1994).

Post-disaster reconstruction and recovery strategies shape vulnerability in future disasters. Therefore, disaster governance and reconstruction should not be grounded in growth-oriented, gender-blind, and environmentally destructive development paradigms. If reconstruction is not designed through participatory, egalitarian, rights-based, ecological, and holistic approaches, "building back better" merely reproduces the unequal and exclusionary social structures that generated vulnerability in the first place (UNISDR, 2015). Thus, disaster governance should be approached through human security principles—prevention, inclusivity, and people-centeredness (UNDP, 1994; Acharya, 2001)—and disaster impacts should be assessed across physical, ecological, psychological, social, economic, and political dimensions.

In disaster contexts, care chains, ecological systems, and social structures are disrupted simultaneously. The severity and duration of this rupture depend on whether social services can be delivered in an inclusive, non-discriminatory, and sustained manner. Although the state occupies a central role in disaster governance, its effectiveness depends on cooperation with local governments, civil society organizations, volunteer networks, the private sector, foundations, and communities, as well as on sharing authority and responsibility across these actors (Özler, 2019, p. 147). United Nations frameworks similarly emphasize that effective disaster management must be multi-actor, multi-level, and grounded in democratic principles such as participation, transparency, and accountability (UN, 2017; Brooks et al., 2005).

Disaster studies conceptualize post-disaster reconstruction as a "window of opportunity" to build back better (UNISDR, 2015, p. 10). However, unless the dominant development paradigm—marked by growth-centrism, patriarchy, and environmental exploitation—is fundamentally transformed, reconstruction reproduces the same inequalities and vulnerabilities (Kallis, Demaria, & D'Alisa, 2020, p. 24; Victor, 2020, p. 163; Yeşilyurt, 2022a). Breaking the disaster cycle therefore requires an alternative political–economic vision that moves beyond growth-oriented solutions and embraces care-centered, egalitarian, and ecological approaches. Purple Degrowth offers such a vision by foregrounding care as a foundational socio-economic principle and proposing a feminist reimagining of development grounded in social reproduction, environmental sustainability, and justice (Sarı, 2022; Sarı, 2023a).

Purple Degrowth synthesizes two approaches that emerged independently yet complement one another in values, principles, and objectives. The degrowth approach critiques an economic and social system organized around growth: its failure to distinguish beneficial from harmful economic activities, its disregard for social reproduction and care labor as productive activity, and its indifference to the ecological destruction generated by growth (Kallis, Demaria, & D'Alisa, 2020). Although degrowth scholarship proposes a care- and environment-centered egalitarian socio-economic model as an alternative to growth-oriented economies, it does not provide a clear roadmap for how such a transformation can be achieved (Sarı, 2022). As Kallis et al. (2012, p. 179) argue, there is an unexplored synergy between degrowth and ecofeminist economic approaches that foreground care. Sarı (2022) suggests that this synergy can be realized through the Feminist Purple Economy approach (İlkkaracan, 2013, 2017, 2022). İlkkaracan (2013) proposes a care-centered Purple Economy model aimed at relieving women of the care burden, operationalized through five core policy pillars. While the Purple Economy also acknowledges environmental concerns, its primary focus is care and women. Accordingly, synthesizing degrowth's environmental orientation with the Purple Economy's care-centered framework becomes particularly important as an alternative approach to post-disaster reconstruction.

Degrowth argues that achieving a care-centered society requires abandoning policies that prioritize economic growth and reorganizing economic sectors and institutions independently of growth imperatives (Bauhardt, 2022, p. 128). Within this framework, unpaid care work must be redistributed more equally between genders, and state policies must be transformed to provide public care services (Bauhardt, 2014). Among the sectors prioritized for restructuring are high-cost public care sectors such as education, healthcare, and elder care. However, as Bauhardt (2022, p. 134) warns, if expanding care proceeds without a gender-equality perspective, care work may be feminized once again and gendered divisions of labor may be reinforced.

At this point, the Purple Economy—offering five transformative principles designed to relieve women of the care burden—becomes particularly significant (İlkkaracan, 2013, 2017, 2022). These principles include: (i) ensuring affordable, accessible, and high-quality care services for children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and those in need of care; (ii) restructuring labor markets to create equal conditions and incentives for women and men to balance work and family life; (iii) developing public policies tailored to communities where unpaid care work—predominantly performed by women—is central to livelihoods; (iv) prioritizing the creation of decent employment as a core macroeconomic objective; and (v) strengthening participatory, transparent, and democratic institutions and governance structures. These principles

enable women to transform rights into actual capabilities (Sen, 1990) and thus form a foundation for realizing Purple Degrowth (Sarı, 2022; Sarı, 2023a). In addition, they are crucial for reducing women's vulnerability both before and after disasters.

For the policies outlined above to be implemented, it is necessary for the state, the market, society, the household, and the individual to be restructured in line with gender equality. However, because such a transformation must also incorporate care for the environment, Purple Degrowth is essential for the full realization of the Purple Economy. Further, degrowth calls for a more expansive critique of care and demands the politicization, democratization, and gendering of issues such as growth, development, and care (Herring, 2006; Demaria et al., 2013; Akkan, 2022; Sarı, 2023a). This underscores the necessity of synthesizing degrowth with the care-centered framework of the Purple Economy. Without questioning the capitalist system that exploits both nature and women's labor, it is not possible to establish a genuine Purple Economy.

The successful realization of care-centered reconstruction requires more than technical macroeconomic interventions; it demands restructuring across these spheres along gender-equal lines. Such a transformation cannot be achieved through temporary measures that merely reduce women's domestic burdens. Rather, it requires confronting deeply embedded relations of exploitation reproduced through capitalism at multiple levels. Unless the unequal structures through which women's paid and unpaid labor are continuously appropriated are fundamentally challenged, women's rights cannot be transformed into actual capabilities—either in everyday life or in disaster contexts. As in disaster governance, the role of the state remains central; however, this role must be redefined through a transformation of the gendered, patriarchal state itself.

For women to be relieved of the care burden, a care-based economy must be collectively embraced and implemented by the state, the market, society, and households. Such a transformation requires a cross-sectoral, multi-level, participatory, and holistic approach, in which the state assumes responsibility for care provision while enabling meaningful participation by social actors. Only under these conditions can women access the capabilities necessary to exercise their rights. However, as Akbulut (2019, p. 517) argues, within capitalist systems states rely on legitimacy produced by the myth of endless growth and the promise that growth will eventually benefit all. This dependency turns the state itself into a major obstacle to establishing a care-centered economy. Overcoming this barrier requires confronting the gendered and capitalist

foundations of the state and articulating an alternative political project. In this sense, Purple Degrowth provides a critical framework for articulating a feminist, care-centered, and transformative vision capable of challenging the structural roots of inequality.

Purple Degrowth, the Purple Social Contract, and Purple Solidarity in Disasters

In an age of deepening inequalities, debates on redesigning the social contract between the state and citizens have gained renewed importance (Shafik, 2012). Women, too, are rethinking their relationship with the state and articulating a demand for a "purple contract" that removes the burden of care from women and secures the transformation of equal citizenship rights into real capabilities (Sarı, 2022). This requires a new political order and social contract—one that ends the "fraternal contract" through which the state discriminates among citizens on the basis of care responsibilities (Berktay, 2021). The "Purple Contract" encompasses women's right to access state resources and decision-making mechanisms, guarantees freedom from discrimination, and aims to empower women whose citizenship rights are constrained by care burdens by enabling rights to be realized as capabilities (Sarı, 2023). It further demands that the state fulfill its obligation to protect women's rights and translate them into capabilities by removing the care burden placed upon them.

Women's vulnerabilities across the dimensions of human security are reproduced in everyday life (Elias & Rai, 2019). "Purple solidarity" refers to the forms of solidarity through which women seek to confront these daily vulnerabilities and challenge structural inequalities. The degrowth movement similarly argues that transformation depends on multiple actors and strategies that reshape both everyday life and the state, defining degrowth as a "movement of movements" (D'Alisa, 2012, p. 38). It calls for democratic organizing grounded in solidarity, care, and ecological responsibility, enabling those seeking equality, well-being, and dignity to act collectively. Within this framework, grassroots initiatives—ecological movements, online communities, back-to-the-land initiatives, cooperatives, urban gardens, time banks, care networks, and alternative childcare and eldercare arrangements—constitute concrete examples of degrowth-oriented organizing (D'Alisa, 2012, p. 34).

However, Turkey's disaster legislation is gender-blind, and women are framed primarily as vulnerable and victimized subjects within this policy architecture (Erbaydar, İnal, & Kaya, 2019, pp. 59–62). Moreover, although the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency's (AFAD) Strategic Plan (2019–2023) is written with reference to the Sendai Framework, the only information provided regarding women appears in a personnel distribution

chart (AFAD, 2019, p. 35; Sarı Karademir & Şahin, 2025). In the National Earthquake Strategy and Action Plan published for AFAD's 10th anniversary, women are listed among "at-risk groups," and reference is made to a workshop titled "Integrating a Gender Perspective into Turkey's Disaster Policies" (AFAD, 2022, p. 177). Yet while women's empowerment and participation in disaster "governance" are mentioned, the plan offers no concrete account of how such participation is to be realized (AFAD, 2022, p. 101). Although gender-sensitive training for civil society actors is proposed, the contributions, capacities, and institutional integration of existing women's organizations into disaster governance remain unaddressed.

In the earthquake that struck Türkiye on February 6, by contrast, the speed and organizational capacity of women's solidarity initiatives were particularly striking. Women's civil society organizations mobilized non-hierarchical, solidarity-based models centered on collective care, translating care-oriented principles into practice for the common good. Organizations such as Mor Dayanışma, the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (KEDV), the Community Volunteers Foundation, the Feminist Solidarity for Disaster Group (AFDG), Rosa Women's Association, the Bread and Roses Women's Solidarity Group, the We Will Stop Femicide Platform, Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation, the Equality for Women Platform (EŞİK), and the Federation of Women's Associations of Turkey (TKDF) worked actively in the disaster zone to amplify women's voices, protect their rights and interests, identify and respond to their needs, and strengthen women socially, economically, politically, and personally.

Women organized rapidly in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, using social media and digital platforms to coordinate volunteers and mobilize aid through horizontal forms of volunteerism. They traveled to the disaster zone and built solidarity with women on the ground. For instance, AFDG dispatched a "Purple Truck" immediately after the earthquake to deliver essential items for women, including sanitary pads, underwear, adult diapers, and baby diapers. Organizations such as Mor Çatı, Mor Dayanışma, the We Will Stop Femicide Platform, and EŞİK working against violence and discrimination also conducted fieldwork after the disaster to document women's conditions, develop recommendations, and provide direct support.

The AFDG Food Group organized with women's cooperatives, women agricultural producers, and women workers to support women's economic empowerment in the disaster region, ensuring that proceeds from sales were transferred directly to women's accounts in order to challenge patriarchal property relations in agriculture. In addition, they constructed toilets for women, distributed hygiene kits, and worked to create safe spaces. TKDF, through its "Purple Settlement" project, established safe, non-violent spaces

providing psychosocial support primarily for women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, both in earthquake-affected areas and in provinces receiving displaced populations. TKDF President Canan Güllü emphasized that the primary aim of the Purple Settlement initiative was not only to protect women from violence, but also to reduce their care burdens and strengthen them economically and socially (Belet, 2023).

KEDV is one of the organizations that provided humanitarian relief in the aftermath of the February 6 earthquake and continues to work toward safe and dignified living conditions. Emphasizing that disaster-affected regions are often also marked by poverty and inequality, it focuses especially on vulnerable groups' access to services. To support women-led recovery, KEDV developed the "Resilient Neighborhood" model, which foregrounds the relationship between horizontal solidarity and local governance in the reconstruction process. The model supports the production of risk and resource maps and the development of Neighborhood Action Plans through collaboration with women, local residents, and community actors. KEDV also created a needs-assessment and recommendation application in response to local priorities, available in both Arabic and Turkish. Through the sisterhood networks in which it has participated, KEDV has drawn on experiences from its work in India in 1999—experiences that later proved valuable during both the 1999 Marmara Earthquake and the February 6 disaster (Yonder, 2009, p. 197). In this sense, KEDV constitutes an important example of transnational solidarity in practice.

Women's solidarity organizations—often described as "purple solidarity"—have reached hundreds of thousands of people. Yet the scale of destruction in the disaster zone, the inadequacy of state policies, deteriorating economic conditions, and seasonal change have deepened existing challenges. Against this backdrop, international disaster governance frameworks underscore that including women's organizations in disaster governance is a prerequisite for effective disaster management (UNISDR, 2015; CEDAW General Recommendation No. 37). Disaster governance planned through a gender-sensitive, care-centered, environmental, and rights-based lens requires the participation of women's solidarity networks. These horizontal structures are not only part of "good governance" in disaster response; they are also key actors in rebuilding the social fabric in the aftermath of disaster (UNISDR, 2015, p. 27). Rebuilding better is not only about restoring physical infrastructure but also about reconstructing a just, egalitarian, care-centered, environmentally sustainable, democratic, and rights-based social order. In this sense, purple solidarity represents a practical pathway toward the vision that "another world is possible," through the transformative potential of feminist, care-centered, and ecologically grounded approaches embodied in Purple Degrowth.

Conclusion: Rebuilding the Social Structure through Patriarchal Bargains

The transformation of women's fundamental rights into capabilities is obstructed by patriarchal structures embedded in the state, the law, the market, the family, and social relations. Women's limited access to state mechanisms constrains their access to public power and resources, while women's interests and bargaining positions vary across intersecting hierarchies and local contexts. Patriarchal dynamics also shift in disaster settings, where the terms of everyday life are abruptly reorganized. As Kandiyoti (1988, pp. 274, 285–286) argues, "patriarchal bargaining" captures the strategies women develop to navigate and survive within a given patriarchal system; crises such as disasters expose patriarchy's internal contradictions and may open spaces for renegotiation, yet they do not automatically produce transformative change. Rather, crisis moments generate complex and often contradictory struggles through which new forms of consciousness and resistance may emerge. In this sense, women's "everyday" experiences are reconfigured through crisis, and solidarity practices linking women in disaster-affected areas with those outside them illuminate how "normal" and "crisis" forms of patriarchal bargaining can intertwine.

Women's efforts to reorganize life, strengthen agency, and confront the burden of care—both in everyday life and under disaster conditions—can therefore be understood as forms of patriarchal bargaining. Understanding these struggles requires attention to the specific cultural, temporal, and structural contexts in which patriarchal relations operate, including how women and men negotiate access to resources, rights, and power (Kandiyoti, 1988). Tracing how bargaining repertoires shift across everyday and disaster contexts clarifies why rights violations become compounded in crisis and how women develop strategies of solidarity, resistance, and negotiation under heightened vulnerability. Women's solidarity thus becomes a central force in rebuilding social life and contesting the structures that reproduce everyday inequality, and strengthening these alliances is key to breaking cycles of vulnerability and enabling a socially just, care-centered reconstruction process.

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