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Cooperation between the European Union and Türkiye in Context of Security

Avrupa Birliđi ve Türkiye Arasındaki Güvenlik Alanında İşbirliđi

Elif ÖZDİLEK

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Güney Kafkasya’da Enerji Bağlamında Ermenistan’ın Jeopolitik Dışlanması

Armenia’s Geopolitical Exclusion in the Context of Energy Competition in the South Caucasus

Merve DEMİRKOL

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Exploring OECD Countries in Terms of Government Artificial Intelligence Readiness with Multidimensional Scaling

Devlet Yönetiminde Yapay Zekâya Hazır Olma Açısından OECD Ülkelerinin Çok Boyutlu Ölçekleme İle İncelenmesi

Mehmet Hakan ÖZDEMİR

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From the Editor

In her article “*Cooperation between the European Union and Türkiye in Context of Security*”, Elif Özdilek aims to investigate the concept of state security in the context of contemporary imperatives by analyzing the security management strategies and various dimensions of security cooperation between Türkiye and the EU. She argues that in an era characterized by rapid globalization and advances in science and technology, the importance of state security has intensified, compelling countries like Türkiye to establish relations with international political formations. In this context, the EU has consistently emphasized Türkiye’s fundamental role in European security; however, the turbulent nature of Türkiye-EU relations is evident in defense and security cooperation. Moreover, inconsistencies in threat perception and policy have led to differences between Türkiye and the EU on security and defense issues. Particularly after the Arab Spring uprisings, regional security priorities have diverged between the two parties. While the EU has struggled to maintain a unified internal stance, it expects that Türkiye will align its actions with its own policies. However, as Özdilek argues, Türkiye, a NATO member that has intermittently established relations with Eurasia since 1952, is trying to integrate into European security frameworks in line with its predominantly Western-oriented foreign policy. As a result, Türkiye sees a strategic opportunity in the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) project. It is believed that the problem could be addressed if NATO members outside the EU were given the right to consult within the Council on the policy direction of PESCO and full participation in its capability and operational modules. Türkiye should seek to increase the opportunities for deep integration into potential Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) structures, including PESCO. This approach is considered one of the most pragmatic ways to establish a viable and effective cooperation model with the European Union. For the EU, Türkiye should not be seen as an incompetent neighbor, but as a strong partner in the field of security and defense, capable of contributing to the ongoing development of the EU’s Strategic Compass and Defense Union.

In her article “*Armenia’s Geopolitical Exclusion in the Context of Energy Competition in the South Caucasus*”, Merve Demirkol analyzes the political, economic, and strategic dynamics that have led to Armenia’s systematic exclusion from major energy projects in the South Caucasus. She argues that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the newly emerging regional order saw the construction of energy transit routes shaped not only by economic rationality, but also by broader geopolitical interests, alliance structures, and security considerations. Within this context, Armenia has been consistently bypassed by key regional energy projects due to the strategic preferences of regional actors—particularly Azerbaijan and Turkey—as well as the geopolitical calculations of global powers. Demirkol’s study provides a comprehensive examination of infrastructure projects such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, the Southern Gas Corridor (TANAP and TAP), the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, and the proposed Zangezur Corridor, all of which

reinforce Armenia's geopolitical marginalization. It reveals that Armenia's exclusion from energy projects is linked not only to historical conflicts with Azerbaijan but also to the regional energy security strategies of actors such as Russia, Turkey, the US, and the EU. The author concludes that Armenia's geopolitical exclusion is a result of the multi-layered structure of power balances and energy competition in the South Caucasus.

In his article "*Exploring OECD Countries in Terms of Government Artificial Intelligence Readiness with Multidimensional Scaling*", Mehmet Hakan Özdemir states that Artificial intelligence (AI), impacting all sectors today, is employed to enhance production processes and increase business efficiency through advanced algorithms and big data analysis. AI-powered decision support systems and autonomous devices transform healthcare, finance, education, and production. Özdemir argues that AI also helps governments serve citizens faster, better, and more efficiently. Big data analytics and automation can cut public service costs, speed up bureaucracy, and improve quality. Citizens can get instant answers from AI-powered chatbots and automated response systems. Countries are competing to advance the use of AI and become leaders in its benefits. The 2024 Government AI Readiness Index (GAIRI) investigates the AI readiness of countries by analyzing forty indicators across ten dimensions, which make up three fundamental pillars (government, technology sector, and data and infrastructure). In his study, Özdemir aims to visualize the thirty-eight member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) according to their similarities in terms of AI readiness using the three pillar scores of the 2024 GAIRI with multidimensional scaling. As a result, the author claims that OECD countries that are similar to each other in terms of AI readiness are identified.

We thank all authors for their contribution to this issue with their analytical and valuable pieces. We are also very grateful to our colleagues, particularly our assistant Ecem COŞAR CANLIER, the Rector of IAU, Professor İbrahim Hakkı AYDIN, and the President of IAU, Professor Mustafa AYDIN, for their continued support for the FCPE.

Assoc. Prof. Murat KASAPSARAÇOĞLU
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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND TÜRKİYE IN CONTEXT OF SECURITY

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the concept of state security in the context of contemporary imperatives by analyzing the security management strategies and various dimensions of security cooperation between Türkiye and the EU. In an era characterized by rapid globalization and advances in science and technology, the importance of state security has intensified, compelling countries like Türkiye to establish relations with international political formations. In this context, the EU has consistently emphasized Türkiye's fundamental role in European security; however, the turbulent nature of Türkiye-EU relations is evident in defense and security cooperation. Moreover, inconsistencies in threat perception and policy have led to differences between Türkiye and the EU on security and defense issues. Particularly after the Arab Spring uprisings, regional security priorities have diverged between the two parties. While the EU has struggles to maintain a unified internal stance, it expects that Türkiye will align its actions with its own policies. In contrast, Türkiye, a NATO member that has intermittently established relations with Eurasia since 1952, is trying to integrate into European security frameworks in line with its predominantly Western-oriented foreign policy. As a result, Türkiye sees a strategic opportunity in the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) project. It is believed that the problem could be addressed if NATO members outside the EU were given the right to consult within the Council on the policy direction of PESCO and full participation in its capability and operational modules. Türkiye should seek to increase the opportunities for deep integration into potential Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) structures, including PESCO. This approach is considered one of the most pragmatic ways to establish a viable and effective cooperation model with the European Union. For the EU, Türkiye should not be seen as an incompetent neighbor, but as a strong partner in the field of security and defense, capable of contributing to the ongoing development of the EU's Strategic Compass and Defense Union.

Keywords: *Türkiye, EU, NATO, Security, Security Cooperation*

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In this article, Ethical Committee Approval is not needed.

AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ VE TÜRKİYE ARASINDAKİ GÜVENLİK ALANINDA İŞ BİRLİĞİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye ile AB arasındaki güvenlik yönetimi stratejilerini ve güvenlik iş birliğinin çeşitli boyutlarını analiz ederek devlet güvenliği kavramını çağdaş zorunluluklar bağlamında araştırmaktır. Hızlı küreselleşme ve bilim ve teknolojiadaki ilerlemelerle karakterize edilen bir çağda, devlet güvenliğinin önemi yoğunlaşmış ve Türkiye gibi ülkeleri uluslararası siyasi oluşumlarla ilişki kurmaya zorlamıştır. Bu çerçevede, AB, Türkiye'nin Avrupa güvenliğindeki temel rolünü sürekli olarak vurgulamıştır; ancak, Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin çalkantılı doğası, savunma ve güvenlik iş birliğinde belirgindir. Dahası, tehdit algısı ve politikadaki tutarsızlıklar, Türkiye ile AB arasında güvenlik ve savunma konularında farklılıklara yol açmıştır. Özellikle Arap Baharı ayaklanmalarının ardından, iki taraf arasında bölgesel güvenlik öncelikleri farklılaşmıştır. AB, içeride birleşik bir duruş sergilemekte zorlanırken, Türkiye'nin eylemlerini kendi politikalarıyla uyumlu hale getireceğini öngörmektedir. Buna karşılık, 1952'den beri Avrasya ile aralıklı olarak ilişki kuran bir NATO üyesi olan Türkiye, ağırlıklı olarak Batı odaklı dış politikasıyla uyumlu bir şekilde Avrupa güvenlik çerçevelerine entegre olmaya çalışmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, Türkiye proje tabanlı Kalıcı Yapılandırılmış İşbirliği (PESCO) içinde stratejik bir fırsat görmektedir. AB dışındaki NATO üyelerine, PESCO'nun politika yönüyle ilgili olarak Konsey içinde istişare etme hakkı ve kabiliyet ve operasyonel modüllerine tam katılım hakları verilirse sorunun ele alınabileceği düşünülmektedir. Türkiye, PESCO dahil olmak üzere potansiyel Ortak Güvenlik ve Savunma Politikası (CSDP) yapılarına derin entegrasyon olasılıklarını artırmaya çalışmalıdır. Bu yaklaşım, Avrupa Birliği ile uygulanabilir ve etkili bir işlem modeli kurmanın en pragmatik yöntemlerinden biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. AB için Türkiye beceriksiz bir komşu olarak değil, AB'nin Stratejik Pusula ve Savunma Birliği'nin devam eden gelişimine katkıda bulunabilen, güvenlik ve savunma alanında güçlü bir ortak olarak görülmelidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Türkiye, AB, NATO, Güvenlik, Güvenlik İşbirliği*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of security, as a need, is among the needs that comes after the basic "physiological" needs of an individual to sustain their life, such as eating, drinking, and shelter. According to Maslow (1943), one may not seek out the satisfaction of a need—as described within his metaphor of hierarchy of needs, before fully satisfying those other most pressing needs. The need for security or the need for trust is among the important needs for a person.

Security has always been a valid and necessary need. In human history, since the beginning of settled life, the need for order, peace, security and safety has always been important in healthy relationships within society. In order to ensure the continuation of social rules and the continuation of the existence of society, responsible persons and institutions have been establishing and maintaining to ensure this (Dinçer, 2009: 37).

Individual security has always been considered important historically; especially because people live in groups, the concept of "social security" is accepted as the basis of the concept for individual security. Social security has been one of the basic requirements for individuals or communities no need to live (Aydın, 2008: 307).

The state apparatus can restrict the individual's freedoms in order to prevent disruptions of public order and general security through the laws it enacts. In a democratic society, the demand for living in general security and peace, as well as for receiving accessible and quality public services, is more important than individual priorities.

As security problems have become global, it has become an inevitable necessity for states to cooperate with other states in order to successfully combat new problems that they cannot overcome alone. In addition, a broader perspective and cooperation are needed to address the increasing security risks.

The undeniable validity and importance of the concept of security in international relations have been shaped within the framework of the military capabilities and possibilities of countries. The existence of the state apparatus, which is the main element in ensuring security within the international system, also reveals a dualistic situation in this regard. The duality in question is that that the state's security is both produced and consumed.

The state, which has undergone various evolutions throughout history, has managed to maintain its existence as an indispensable element in the modern world. The Peace of Westphalia, the Enlightenment Period, and the French Revolution, which are considered turning points for the state apparatus, have this duality refers to the fact defined the main lines of the state's transformations. In this process, the concept of sovereignty has descended from the sky to the earth, and the concept of nation has also gained significance. The concept of sovereignty became the basic reference for the security of states after World Wars I and II. On the other hand, after the Cold War, states entering an uncertain period with the globalization process began to make concessions in their attitudes regarding security.

It is considered that all security strategies have emerged as a result of increasing anxiety due to the expanding threat environment and uncertainty with the globalization process. With the increasing demand for security, providing security has become increasingly difficult for nation-states. With the virtual disappearance of borders due to globalization, nation-states have become more susceptible to by international security problems such as terrorism and anarchism, economic crises, individual security, environmental and climate-related problems (Polat, 2020: 500). Moreover, the concept of uncertainty reveals that threats are increasingly difficult to detect and are unpredictable in terms of timing and scale. As a result, it can be considered that may offer diminishing benefits since it is not always possible to prepare effectively and in accordance with the characteristics of all possible threats and to respond to them accordingly. National security has become increasingly important for nation-states. Despite this, states have continued to fulfill their traditional, regionally focused security roles, which may not align well with the resilience approach. Their main strategies include strengthening domestic military power, forming security alliances, and attempting to eliminate threats entirely to achieve total security (Merom, 2003).

In order for the modern state structure to provide a complete security environment, sanctions, rules, and the legal system alone are often insufficient. The state with a modern social structure prioritizes public interests and public security in all surveillance activities it carries out.

Due to globalization, existing threats to city and state security have both increased and diversified; these threats now affect not only individual

cities or states but the entire world. In summary, security threats have also taken on a global character in the globalization process.

This study will present the claim from various aspects that “In the globalizing world where science and technology are rapidly developing, despite many new approaches to security management, the concept of state security has become even more important as a result of international threats and compelling countries like Türkiye and international political unions (such as the EU) to cooperate.”

The aim of this study is to examine the concept of state security within the framework of the new necessities of the age by considering various aspects of security management approaches and security cooperation between Türkiye and the EU. It would be useful to evaluate the concept of state security, which maintains its importance in a rapidly globalizing world where science and technology are advancing, in terms of new security management approaches. This study is expected to contribute to the literature and guide researchers who will work in this field.

CONCEPT OF SECURITY

Security As A Phenomena

The concept of security is one of the most important phenomena in terms of an individual's entire personal and social life. For this reason, the concept of security is considered as a vital need. The fact that the concept of security is addressed under different headings such as state security, family security, child security, building security or business security is an indication of the existence of a search for security in all areas related to society.

When evaluated in terms of historical periods, the practice of building shelters to protect against wild animals and natural events dates back to the beginning of human history. People's efforts to provide materials to protect these shelters and ensure the sustainability of life within them, as well as to continuously develop materials for higher living standards, can be viewed as a comprehensive expression of their search for security. Despite the different dynamics that led to these actions between the first person who used fire to prevent wild animals from coming near their shelters and the person who insures their house, built with the most modern products and equipped with technological products, with an international insurance company; it is striking that there is a common search for security behind

the actions (Dedeoğlu, 2003: 9). The concept of security, when considered individually, encompasses all concerns of the individual. The stages that create anxiety can be explained as the safety of the individual and their relatives, the safety of the individual's property, and the sustainability of this safe environment. Individuals, in various stages of anxiety, try to protect their lives by taking certain precautions.

In order to fully define the concept of security, it is necessary to focus on the concepts of “existence” and “value”. It is impossible to talk about security for something that does not exist or does not have an equivalent value (Dedeoğlu, 2003: 21-22).

Another important concept related to security is “value”. An asset with value needs protection when faced with any kind of threat or danger. While the basis of the need for security is the individual's protection of himself and their family from dangers, the need to protect valuable assets, along with the expansion of the protection scope, constitutes the next stage.

Security is one of the most primitive and primary needs of humans. While it emerged in the prehistoric period as the behavior of seeking shelter in a cave to eliminate a possible danger from nature, today it is evaluated within the scope of security to protect a nation from the threats such as weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, the perception of security acquiring new meanings that align with social, political, technological and economic developments.

For an individual, security refers to the absence of any danger or threat to their person and the possessions they own. The security problem, which is considered to be one of the primary and most important problems for individuals as well as for states, is a concept that remains relevant throughout a person's life and should be evaluated by taking into account the social, political, technological, and economic dimensions of life.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SECURITY PHENOMENA

With the security concerns that have persisted throughout history, the security concepts in the international system have carried different meaning in each period; the concepts of threat and risk have been re-evaluated according to each environment and condition. However, avoiding the so-called “other”, protecting the rights of individuals referred to as the 'other', suffering harm due to competition with the 'other' and even becoming

superior to the so-called “other” have been seen as natural attitudes and behaviors of all actors. Accordingly, it is difficult to speak of a universally accepted security system in the international arena. It is only possible to talk about some general rules established. In this sense, foreign policy and security strategies are in a constant state of production and innovation (Dedeoğlu, 2003: 55).

Security is like a battery that provides the necessary energy for the internal functioning of a no need state within the framework of the general policies and global strategies that states follow. In this respect, it is insufficient to evaluate the phenomenon of security solely in the context of military dynamics. In other words, the dimensions of security are sociological dynamics that shape the psychology of each individual in society and influence the functioning of society, as well as political and economic factors.

National security has two components: external security and internal security. External security includes certain risks and dangers that may threaten the state outside its borders. Internal security, on the other hand, covers events that occur within the country's borders. Despite this distinction, national security should be understood as a unified concept; this differentiation is only used to identify the sources of security threats.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

The concept of security, like terms such as peace, identity, and international political theory, is broadly defined and varies because individuals interpret it based on their own ideologies. Since it is so difficult to define the concept of security, it follows that it encompasses many different issues. In order to ensure their security, both individuals and governments have taken various measures to prevent intended and unintended situations. Security has become one of the fundamental foundations of many political projects at both the state and international levels.

Within the framework of international security, Samuel Makinda's characterization of security as "the protection of the norms, rules, institutions, and values of society" is highly pertinent. Additionally, Makinda argues that it is essential to safeguard all societal institutions, principles, and structures, including individuals, from both "military and non-military threats." The notion of "protection," a critical element of this definition, implies intentional, purposeful, and definitive measures.

Consequently, the actions taken by a society's leadership are shaped by their perceptions, which are reflected in the scope and focus of their security agenda and guide their initiatives (Yimer and Abdiyo Ensene, 2022).

National security refers to a state's capability to protect and defend its citizens. Conversely, global security has evolved from the inherent obligations placed upon states, along with various factors, particularly globalization. These issues are beyond the resolution capacity of any national security system acting independently, thus necessitating collaboration among states. The global interdependence and interconnectedness observed since the conclusion of the Cold War compel states to enhance cooperation and engage in collective efforts.

A significant challenge faced by states in the realm of global security is the complex notion of security itself; the security concerns of nations must be grounded in a realistic assessment of each state's security requirements. The competitive dynamics among countries are fueled by the fear or threat inherent in the security phenomenon. Effective resolution of this competition can only be achieved through collaborative efforts among states on security initiatives (Osisanya, 2021).

In summary, international security is a concept addressed within the framework of universal principles established by regional and global organizations shaped by the behaviors of all actors ... according to their perceptions. However, considering that the phenomenon of security began with human history, it becomes clear that this phenomenon is also viewed as a process within the international system. Changes in conditions over time have enriched the concept and driven its transformation.

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

Nato In The Context Of Post-Cold War Security

Following the conclusion of the Cold War and the alleviation of the Soviet Union's threat, Türkiye's perspective towards the Alliance began to evolve. Recent evaluations indicate that Türkiye's hard and soft power capabilities have made notable advancements. Concurrently, Türkiye has assumed a more proactive role in foreign policy, leading to increased engagement with non-Western regions and actors. Furthermore, as the stringent limitations of the Cold War have dissipated, the international system has transitioned towards a more multipolar structure. These dynamics are progressively undermining the previously singular, and NATO-focused

characterization of Turkish foreign and security policy. Additionally, the landscape of threats to Türkiye's national security has transformed over time. Although the conclusion of the Cold War diminished the risk posed by the Soviet Union, thereby positively influencing Turkish-Russian relations, developments in the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus have gained prominence within Türkiye's security framework. It is important to recognize that threats emanating from these regions have never held the same significance as those from the Soviet Union; rather, they have manifested as risks and challenges rather than direct threats. This situation has lessened NATO's special and privileged role in shaping Türkiye's foreign and security policies, as reliance on NATO's nuclear umbrella has declined. Furthermore, Türkiye's enhanced maneuverability and increased ability to influence regional developments have made it increasingly essential for the country to employ varied methods and tools in its foreign policy (Karaosmanoğlu, 2014).

Considering NATO's role as a collective defense entity within the framework of European security, one might contend that the dissolution of the Soviet Union, along with the progressive enhancement of security perceptions in Europe, has contributed to the erosion of NATO's dominance as a European security institution. The challenge of NATO functioning effectively as a collective defense organization without the Soviet threat explains NATO's diminished appeal among the Turkish elite.

An additional element that has significantly influenced Türkiye's perspective on NATO in the post-Cold War era is the increasing dependence of Türkiye's relations with its European allies on the progress of its European Union accession process. According to Yiğittepe (2017a), as the importance of Türkiye's role in bolstering Europe's security through NATO has diminished in the absence of a shared Soviet threat, the ties between Türkiye and European nations have increasingly become linked to developments in Türkiye's EU membership journey.

However, given that NATO was instrumental in resolving ethnic conflicts in the Balkans during the 1990s, it can be asserted that the Alliance sustained its role in European security for an extended period. Nevertheless, the events of the 1990s should be regarded as an anomaly. Although the ethnic conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo were resolved and a significant portion of the Balkans expressed a desire to integrate into Western institutions, these areas no longer posed a threat to European security. During this

decade, NATO enhanced European security by first expanding into Central and Eastern Europe and subsequently into the Balkans. However, as developments on the European continent ceased to represent a potential danger to European security, NATO's identity as a European defense entity became increasingly irrelevant. In a climate where voices advocating for NATO's continued relevance diminished, and as Türkiye's security became more influenced by developments beyond Europe, the challenge of ensuring Türkiye's security intensified. The foreign and security policies of Türkiye remain predominantly focused on the West, with NATO serving as the most crucial element.

The emergence of a new approach to foreign and security policy in Türkiye became increasingly apparent with the rise of the AKP to power in the early 2000s. Over the past decade, successive AKP administrations have made substantial strides in enhancing relations with neighboring nations and fostering peace and stability in the region. Türkiye considers the cultivation of ties with its neighbors essential and has intensified efforts to mitigate potential security threats originating from these countries. Had Türkiye maintained a foreign and security policy primarily centered on NATO, it is unlikely that it would have achieved its objectives. In this regard, it is particularly noteworthy that Türkiye's relationships with both Russia and Iran have markedly improved as the nation has gradually moved away from a NATO-centric mindset in its foreign and security policies.

Ideas centered on identity, which played a significant role in shaping Türkiye's perspective toward NATO throughout the Cold War era, began to evolve with the onset of the 1990s. While identity-related motivations became increasingly prominent during the tenure of the AKP governments, remnants of these concerns were clearly observable in the first decade following the Cold War. Over the past 20 years, a unified position has been maintained by all governments, asserting that Türkiye's national identity cannot solely be defined in relation to the Western world. There is a persistent emphasis on highlighting Türkiye's diverse identities. Notably, many perceive Türkiye as a nation capable of bridging and connecting various civilizations and identities. This trend is considered to have gained significant momentum in the last decade.

AKP government has proposed that Türkiye should adopt a worldview centered on its own interests when formulating national policies. Furthermore, Türkiye ought to position itself as an integral part of each

region. It is believed that the primary objective of Türkiye's foreign policy is to influence regional developments in a manner that fosters stability while cultivating pragmatic relationships with key global players based on mutual interests. To ensure that both regional and global developments do not adversely impact the domestic processes of liberal democratic transformation and economic growth, Turkish foreign policy must be articulated and executed in a multilateral and multidimensional manner. "Embracing the role of a nation that engages in regional and global initiatives, mediates conflicts both between and within states, and fully adopts a global perspective is not only beneficial for Türkiye but also constitutes a historical obligation inherited from the Ottoman Empire.

It is essential to recognize that Türkiye has sought to adopt a more proactive stance in NATO's transformation process following the Cold War. While there is ongoing debate regarding Türkiye's effectiveness in shaping this transformation to align with its own interests, it is clear that the country has begun to take the initiative. As noted by officials from the Turkish Foreign Ministry in recent years, Türkiye aims to be a principal actor and stakeholder within the Alliance rather than merely an object of NATO policies. In the context of NATO's transformation, Türkiye has expressed a desire to engage more actively to ensure that the policies adopted by its allies do not adversely impact its multilateral national identity and foreign policy interests. The underlying concern is that the strong relationships Türkiye has cultivated with its neighbors and its efforts to foster peace and stability in its region should not be compromised by the policies pursued by NATO allies during this transformation. A significant challenge for Türkiye in this endeavor has been navigating its position between its traditional NATO partners and its neighboring countries to the east, south, and north.

As previously mentioned, Türkiye has contributed military support to NATO's peacekeeping initiatives in the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia and Kosovo, consistent with its own position. Furthermore, Türkiye has endorsed NATO's expansion into Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. Additionally, Türkiye has promoted the Alliance's efforts to disseminate NATO values to nations that are not slated to become members of NATO, within the context of NATO's Partnership for Peace Program.

Türkiye has exerted considerable effort to navigate the delicate balance between its alliance with NATO and its relationship with Russia. In this

regard, it is essential for NATO to acknowledge Russia's sensitivities concerning Türkiye. Türkiye perceives NATO's expansion toward Russia and its initiatives to enhance military presence in the Black Sea as potential threats, which may evoke a feeling of encirclement within Russia. Consequently, Russia is likely to adopt more nationalist and expansionist policies. This shift could lead to a redefinition of Turkish-Russian relations characterized by competition and hostility, reminiscent of the dynamics observed during the Cold War.

Certainly, following the conclusion of the Cold War, the relationship between Türkiye and Russia has evolved based on principles of cooperation and camaraderie. Within this framework, Türkiye's stance regarding NATO-Russia relations, as well as the Alliance's assessment of the possible repercussions stemming from the membership of Georgia and Ukraine, aligns closely with that of its European allies in NATO. Türkiye shares the perspective held by other European nations, particularly Germany and France that Russia's apprehensions must be taken into account in the formulation of NATO's missile defense shield systems.

Secondly, during the transformation process of NATO, Türkiye has exhibited a more critical and inquisitive stance. Türkiye's primary goal was to ensure that this transformation did not negatively impact its relationships with neighboring countries or its favorable image within the Islamic community. For instance, Türkiye assessed NATO's missile defense shield system while considering its relations with Iran. Security circles in Türkiye believed that the deployment of certain elements of this system on Turkish territory would be perceived by Iran as a threat, potentially leading to a more antagonistic posture from Tehran towards Ankara. This concern explains Türkiye's intensified efforts to exclude Iran from being labeled a threat in NATO's new security document, which was to be ratified in Lisbon in November 2010, and to emphasize that the radar component stationed in Türkiye was purely defensive (Yiğittepe, 2017a). The third aspect of Türkiye's evolving stance toward NATO is its tendency to maintain a critical and questioning perspective on certain issues within the Alliance's agenda, while simultaneously being cautious not to veto any decision accepted by all other allies. Türkiye aimed to avoid the perception of acting independently as a member of the Alliance. A prime illustration of this approach is NATO's military operation in Libya. Initially, Türkiye opposed NATO's intervention in Libya, which was first initiated by the

United Kingdom and France outside of the NATO framework before being adopted by the Alliance. Concerns regarding the potential for significant human casualties in Libya and the adverse impact on Türkiye's reputation in the Islamic world caused considerable discomfort. Nevertheless, once the alliance members resolved their differences and agreed that NATO should take charge of the operation, Türkiye chose to align itself with this consensus. Throughout this process, Türkiye significantly influenced the delineation of boundaries and the operational authority for the undertaking in Libya. Türkiye was particularly sensitive about the non-deployment of ground troops, with its primary responsibility being the enforcement of the embargo on Gaddafi's forces from both maritime and aerial perspectives (SETAV, 2022).

A notable aspect of Türkiye's revised approach to the alliance is its foundation on interest-based calculations rather than identity considerations. This is evident in Türkiye's role within the institutional interactions between NATO and the EU. Türkiye has sought to leverage its NATO membership to facilitate the EU's access to NATO's operational resources and military assets. It is clear that Türkiye's position on this matter is influenced by the dynamics of its relationship with the EU, particularly the sluggish progress of its accession process. Given that EU member states maintain a hesitant attitude toward Türkiye's EU membership and question its European identity, Türkiye is not actively facilitating the EU's access to NATO's capabilities and resources.

Ultimately, Türkiye's evolving perspective towards the Alliance appears to be influenced more by the risk of becoming ensnared in NATO policies than by the fear of being forsaken by the Alliance. While Türkiye's reliance on NATO for security and identity has diminished, a more critical stance toward the Alliance has emerged. Nevertheless, this shift does not imply that Türkiye undervalues NATO's essential role in safeguarding its security interests amid emerging regional and global security challenges. Although such an analysis may lead observers to conclude that Türkiye's reliance on NATO has waned and that the Alliance has lost its former esteemed status in Türkiye's foreign and security policy framework, Türkiye continues to regard NATO and the security assurances it offers as significant. Recent developments associated with the Arab Spring have adversely impacted Türkiye's security interests, contributing to increased chaos and instability in the Middle East, which has in turn has underscored Türkiye's

reliance on NATO. Concerns about security have escalated in light of Iran's advancing nuclear ambitions and its growing influence in Iraq. Additionally, the civil war in Syria, the sectarian policies implemented by Maliki in Iraq, the heightened likelihood of Israel targeting Iran's nuclear facilities, and the evolving dynamics of the Kurdish movement in the region have all contributed to Türkiye's apprehensions (Ozan, 2017).

In the wake of the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan and Iraq, regional rivalries and divisions have markedly intensified. These changes seem to have prompted Turkish officials to reevaluate the significance of NATO within Türkiye's security framework. It is now believed that Türkiye recognizes the relevance of the Alliance, particularly in light of the ongoing civil conflict in Syria, which poses a threat to Türkiye's territorial integrity. In this context, Türkiye's request for the Alliance to deploy surface-to-air Patriot missiles along its border with Syria is especially significant.

In conclusion, NATO continues to hold significance for Türkiye; however, Türkiye's evolving identity and interests are anticipated to prompt its decision-makers to adopt a more critical and questioning stance towards the Alliance in the years ahead. Within this framework, it is expected that NATO will struggle to retain the esteemed role it once held in Türkiye's security landscape.

THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE CONTEXT OF SECURITY AFTER THE COLD WAR

In the post-Cold War era, the global landscape is characterized by open borders, with a close interrelation between internal and external security dimensions. Security is regarded as a fundamental prerequisite for development. Conflict not only devastates infrastructure but also fosters criminal activity and obstructs the normal functioning of economic processes. Furthermore, acts such as genocide, inhumane and degrading treatment, the existence of missing persons, slavery, and crimes against humanity, alongside significant breaches of wartime laws as outlined by the Statute of the International Criminal Court, represent threats to public security. This category also encompasses serious infringements related to access to adequate food, health care, and shelter.

The European Union lists five main security threats to itself: (i) terrorism, (ii) proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, (iii) regional conflicts, (iv) states in crisis and (v) organized crime. It seeks to confront threats and

promote its values; to ensure proximity security; and to achieve strategic objectives of establishing an international order based on an efficient multilateral character.

The significance and scope attributed to the future of security in Europe are unparalleled in the annals of European history. There has been a fundamental reorganization of the nature of security, which has now emerged as a persistent concern for the European Union. In the 21st century, the most effective role for the EU is to advocate for global security. Since 1989, the conceptualization of security has experienced a profound transformation, enriched and expanded in accordance with the shifts observed in the study of international relations. The primary domains that offer the theoretical frameworks necessary for understanding the concept of security include international relations, comparative politics, and political analysis.

Security studies experts assert that the contemporary understanding of security encompasses five interrelated factors: (i) the political aspect, (ii) the military aspect, (iii) the economic aspect, (iv) the social aspect, and (v) the ecological aspect. The security challenge does not pertain to deficiencies in the regular operations of the state across these dimensions; rather, it concerns situations that threaten the very existence of the state through these dimensions. Political security pertains to the stability of organizational systems, governance frameworks, and the ideologies that provide them legitimacy. The military aspect considers the relationship between a state's offensive capabilities and defensive resources, along with the state's interpretation of the intentions of other actors of international relations. Economic security relates to access to essential resources, funding, and markets necessary to uphold acceptable levels of development and state authority. Social security refers to preservation of a nation's shared identity, traditional linguistic patterns, culture, religion, and customs under conditions conducive to an evolutionary process. Environmental security seeks to be sustained at the local level within a global context, serving as a critical foundation for the system upon which other human endeavors rely.

Security is not a fixed concept. It is also a term that denotes an object or situation and a process or series of processes. Security refers to the study of the security problems faced by some nations, the formulation of policies and programs to solve these problems, as well as the governmental processes involved in implementing these policies and programs.

Concerning the European Union, the management of shared policies aimed at creating a common market facilitating the unrestricted movement of goods, individuals, services, and capital across the European Community was entrusted to the European Community during its initial period. Over the years, member states have recognized the European strategy as beneficial in emerging areas, including environmental protection, technological research and development, consumer protection, public health, transportation, the enhancement of economic cohesion, and collaboration with developing nations.

American literature emphasizes that no universally accepted definition of security. Security is the study of the security problems of some nations, the formulation of policies and programs to solve these problems, as well as the government process through these processes and programs.

In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty facilitated the European Union's emphasis on the establishment of a unified security policy, which encompassed the "Common Security and Defense Policy" (CSDP). As stipulated by the Treaty, CSDP consolidated all matters pertaining to EU security, including the development of a collective defense policy that has the potential to evolve into a common defense in the future. This initiative led to the creation of a collaborative framework among member states concerning foreign and security policy within the EU's second pillar.

The provisions were established through the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997, which facilitated the creation of the institutional framework necessary for a unified foreign policy. As outlined in the Treaty, the primary aims of the Common Security and Defense Policy include: safeguarding the shared values, fundamental interests, independence, and integrity of the EU Member States in alignment with the principles set forth in the UN Charter, as well as enhancing the security of the EU; ensuring peace and security in accordance with the UN Charter's principles, including the stipulations regarding external borders in Paris, the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, and the goals defined in the 1991 Charter; fostering international cooperation; and advancing the development and consolidation of democracy, while upholding the rule of law and fundamental human rights and freedoms.

In December 1998, at the Anglo-French Summit in Saint-Malo, the leaders of the United Kingdom and France decided that, against the backdrop

of the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo, Europe needed a military force that would be capable of autonomous action sustained by credible forces (Turan, 2020).

The European Security Strategy also seeks to consolidate the alliance between the EU, the US, and Canada within NATO, based on the principles of the UN Charter. The national army is under the control of a supreme national commander appointed only during an EU mission. The first historical military operation outside the continent was in Congo (12 June-1 September 2003), called "Operation Artemis", which aimed to improve the humanitarian situation in the Bunia region under French command at the request of the UN.

In 2004, the European Council stated its intention to "participate in such operations, but only under the political control and operational command of the UN" in relation to its assistance to the UN. It was decided to exclude the participation of forces and reserve vehicles, preferring operations based on tactical groups established by the EU as a continuation of the operations, while continuing to allow national contributions to the UN reserve forces.

The Lisbon Treaty, signed by member states on 13 December 2007 and coming into effect in November 2009, introduced modifications to the institutional framework of the European Union. In this context, the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty resulted in the renaming of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) to the Common Security and Defense Policy. Prior to the Lisbon Treaty, the treaties did not include provisions related to the ESDP. With the Lisbon Treaty, the inclusion of provisions concerning the ESDP and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the Union Treaties marked their first legally binding status. Conversely, Article 3A of the Lisbon Treaty explicitly delineated the limitations of the ESDP by asserting that "national security is the exclusive responsibility of each member state."

Although the Lisbon Treaty foresees the general rule of the qualified majority voting and the removal of the right of veto on many issues, the unanimous voting and the right of veto have been preserved on issues related to the CFSP and CSDP. Thus, the Lisbon Treaty has not made any changes to the nature and decision-making mechanism of the CFSP and CSDP.

Consequently, the Lisbon Treaty, which for the first time incorporated provisions related to the ESDP within the text of the “EU Treaty,” did not alter the fundamental character of the ESDP. While the Lisbon Treaty introduced the general principle of the qualified majority voting and eliminated veto powers on numerous matters, the decision-making processes concerning the CFSP and ESDP—both retaining a distinctly intergovernmental nature—along with the oversight functions of the European Parliament and the Court of Justice in the realm the CFSP, remained largely unchanged, aside from minor enhancements. The operational framework of the ESDP allows each member state to safeguard its own interests to the fullest extent. Nevertheless, the introduction of the “Mutual Solidarity” provision in the Lisbon Treaty does not transform the EU into a defense entity. Essentially, the ESDP has emerged as a constrained instrument of EU foreign policy that serves the interests of the Union. Within this framework, military capabilities represent merely one aspect of the strategies employed for crisis management operations under the ESDP.

THE SECURITY DIMENSION OF EUROPEAN UNION-TÜRKİYE RELATIONS

Türkiye And The European Union, Common Security And Defense Policy

The relationship between Türkiye and the European Union (EU) in the area of security and defense has long been complex and occasionally contentious. Despite being a NATO ally and an EU candidate country since 1999, Türkiye’s involvement in the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) has been constrained by political, legal, and institutional challenges. The CSDP, which emerged as a central pillar of the EU’s external action framework through the Treaty of Lisbon (2009), aims to strengthen the EU’s capacity for crisis management and conflict prevention in both civilian and military dimensions (Keukeleire & Delreux, 2022).

Türkiye, as a candidate for EU membership and a third country, has participated in CSDP operations, including Operation Althea and Operation Concordia, aligned itself with various CFSP joint actions and common positions, and pledged to contribute to several non-active EU military frameworks, including the EU Rapid Reaction Force. For example, Türkiye has pledged to contribute 4,000-5,000 troops as a non-member to the EU Rapid Reaction Force to be established under the Helsinki Headline

Objective, as foreseen at the Brussels Capability Pledge Conference on 20 November 2000.

“Türkiye has so far contributed to nine EU-led missions and operations as a third country” (Düzgit, Bond, & Scazzieri, 2021), mainly through troops and personnel, making it “the third largest country contributor to the CFSP” (European Commission, 2020). Here, its participation in the EU Advisory Missions Ukraine and EULEX Kosovo was suspended following the withdrawal of Turkish personnel after the 2016 coup attempt in Türkiye, but Türkiye has since continued to express its interest in contributing to these missions again.

Türkiye's exclusion from full participation in the CSDP is often attributed to the unresolved Cyprus issue and the EU's institutional setup that restricts third-country involvement. Although Türkiye contributed significantly to some CSDP missions (e.g., in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Democratic Republic of Congo), it remains outside decision-making processes (Tocci, 2011). This has led to mutual frustration: the EU remains cautious about fully integrating a non-member state into its defense policy, while Türkiye perceives the EU as undermining NATO-EU cooperation by creating parallel security structures that exclude key NATO allies like itself (Aydın-Düzgit & Keyman, 2012).

The 2002 Berlin Plus Agreement — which allows EU access to NATO assets — provides a partial solution to this dilemma, but Türkiye has used its veto power within NATO to block full implementation of the agreement for missions involving Cyprus, thereby contributing to institutional gridlock (Howorth, 2014). This reciprocal blockage has undermined both NATO-EU strategic cooperation and Türkiye-EU defense dialogue. Nevertheless, Ankara continues to view European security as strategically important and has repeatedly expressed willingness to cooperate under more inclusive and reciprocal conditions (Ülgen, 2010).

A Framework Participation Agreement (FPA) for more structured participation or an Accession Agreement (PA) for temporary participation in an individual mission, as well as Article 37 of the Treaty on the European Union and Article 218 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, have established the legal basis for the participation of third countries in EU activities (Bakker, Drent, & Zandee, 2017). In this context, Türkiye has participated in EU activities with the statement that “in accordance with

the legal instruments referred to in Article 2(1) of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Türkiye establishing a Framework for the Participation of the Republic of Türkiye in European Union Crisis Management Operations, which entered into force in July 2006, it will have the same rights and obligations as the EU Member States involved in the operation in terms of day-to-day management of the operation.” “However, third countries do not have the possibility to plan, organize and coordinate an operation and are expected to follow the EU’s programs and procedures as well as adopt EU practices.” Any attempt to grant a decision-making role for third countries in the CFSP and CSDP is completely excluded by the Lisbon Treaty. As Wessel (2008) notes, “the Brexit debate has shown that the EU does not seem to favor any ‘quasi-member’ status, let alone voting rights for non-members”.

Of course, this does not constitute an obstacle to Türkiye’s participation in the policies and actions of the CFSP under the conditions mentioned above. However, as the annual Commission reports show, Türkiye’s compliance with the CFSP positions has decreased since 2003. The year 2011 was one of the most critical moments due to Türkiye’s refusal to comply with the EU’s restrictive measures against Iran, Syria, and Libya. The report stated that “Türkiye’s foreign policy increasingly clashed with EU priorities within the scope of the Common Foreign and Security Policy” (European Commission, 2020). In EU circles, the increasing “autonomy” of Turkish foreign and security policies was seen as a result of Türkiye’s interventions in northeastern Syria and Libya and its growing cooperation with Russia. This situation poses an obstacle for Türkiye, which, as a candidate country for full membership, has an obligation to align its legislation and policies... more closely with those of the EU.

Moreover, the post-2016 regional security environment — marked by instability in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Syrian civil war, and tensions with Greece and France — has further strained Türkiye-EU relations in security matters. These developments have highlighted not only the EU’s limited strategic autonomy but also Türkiye’s increasing emphasis on national defense capabilities and autonomous security partnerships (Kirişçi & Toygür, 2020). Thus, while both actors share overlapping interests in regional stability, counter-terrorism, and migration management, the absence of institutional trust and political will has prevented deeper alignment in the framework of the CSDP.

Individually, Türkiye has signed bilateral and multilateral security and defense agreements with EU member states. For example, on November 8, 2017, Türkiye signed an agreement with France and Italy at the NATO headquarters in Brussels to strengthen cooperation in the field of defense. This agreement aimed to develop the Turkish Long-Range Regional Air, and Missile Defense System (T-LORAMIDS) by the European company EUROSAM GIE, Turkish ASELSAN Electronics Industry and Trade Inc. and ROKETSAN Rocket Industry and Trade Inc. (Erkuş, 2018). “MELTEM-3 and GÖKTÜRK projects are other examples of Turkish-Italian cooperation. In the MELTEM-3 project, “six ATR-72/600 Maritime Patrol Aircraft with Anti-Submarine Warfare and Anti-Surface Warfare features” are being supplied by Türkiye from the Italian supplier” (Sünnetçi, 2020). The GÖKTÜRK project was also initiated with Italy and France to create an Earth Observation Satellite for various purposes such as homeland surveillance and natural resource management. The most recent example of bilateral cooperation in the field of defense occurred when Polish President Duda purchased a Bayraktar TB2 UAV from Türkiye during his visit to Türkiye in 2021 (Zorlu, 2021).

In addition to its individual contributions to EU member states, Türkiye has cooperated with the EU in the development and implementation of certain defense projects, especially through EU financing. For example, the HYPERION and TALOS (Portable Autonomous Patrol for Land Border Surveillance System) projects are being developed with contributions from ASELSAN. “Several European companies also contribute to Türkiye’s defense systems. For example, Turkish companies ASELSAN and ROKETSAN are working with EUROSAM GIE on the Air and Missile Defense System project” (Kaya, 2019). As a result, Türkiye has maintained close contact with EU members for defense cooperation.

Going forward, the EU’s *Strategic Compass* initiative (2022), which seeks to enhance the Union’s strategic culture and defense readiness, may offer renewed opportunities for third-country partnerships. However, without progress on the Cyprus question and a broader reset in Türkiye-EU political relations, any substantive cooperation on security and defense is likely to remain limited and transactional rather than institutionalized.

TÜRKİYE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF EUROPEAN UNION SECURITY

During the Cold War, Türkiye allied with the West due to its geostrategic location, through the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and finally joining NATO in 1952, acting in line with transatlantic solidarity. “The American partnership and Turkish-Greek relations, the North Atlantic Alliance, and the Transatlantic connection remained the cornerstones of Türkiye’s security policies at the end of World War II and throughout the 1990s” (Ereker & Açıkmüşe, 2021). As part of its Westernization strategy, Türkiye prioritized strengthening its ties with the European Communities and signed an Association Agreement (Ankara Agreement) with the EEC in 1963, which paved the way for the establishment of the Customs Union in 1995, thus increasing its potential membership prospects.

In other words, Türkiye has contributed to Western European security, especially through its NATO membership, since the Cold War. Türkiye ranks second after the United States as having one of the largest armies in the alliance and is ranked 11th out of 139 countries with a rating of 0.2109 according to the 2021 Military Strength Rankings. Since the end of the Cold War, Türkiye has participated in many NATO operations and missions, including the Multinational Task Force South as part of NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR), the ISAF-II mission in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2003, the NTM-I Iraq Training Mission, Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean, Operation Ocean Shield in the Indian Ocean, and Operation Libya. In 2021, Türkiye also assumed responsibility for the NATO High Readiness Force by allocating the 66th Mechanized Infantry Brigade to NATO service (NATO, 2021).

As a reliable NATO ally with a special significant military contributions to the alliance, Türkiye, one of the EU candidate countries, was expected to be an asset within the European Union when the EU decided to establish its own military structure in 1999 when Türkiye was declared a member of the alliance. It was anticipated that Türkiye would contribute to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) that developed even during the candidacy and negotiation period and provide added value to the EU's security policy in the common EU-Türkiye neighborhood. Specifically, in the first decade of the 2000s, Türkiye, which had the ability to set the agenda and had no problems with its neighbors, could have had engaged with countries such as the EU, Iran and Syria. However, in the context of

the CFSP and the EU neighborhood policy, Türkiye's potential contribution was hindered by two important developments.

The first limitation came with the transformation of NATO immediately after the end of the Cold War, and thus NATO evolved from a simple defense alliance into a security provider in a broader sense, including non-traditional security approaches. In such a context, while NATO was looking forward to a European partnership, the EU's need for defense cooperation with NATO increased since the early 1990s and especially since 1999, when it launched the CSDP (Açıkmeşe & Koppa, 2022).

The major changes that occurred with the end of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union significantly changed the security strategy of the West. In addition, the developments that occurred worldwide after September 11 have further complicated the security perceptions of key players in the international arena. Thus, the changes in the sources and nature of threats have led to the emergence of a new European security architecture and NATO's search for a new role, strategy and organizational structure compatible with the realities of this new era. EU members have managed to create a "security community" in Europe, but extending this peace and cooperation to conflict-ridden neighboring regions such as the Balkans and the Middle East remains an extremely difficult challenge. Since Europe is not immune to the negative effects of conflicts and deep socio-economic and political problems in neighboring regions, the promotion of Euro-Mediterranean security becomes extremely important for both hard and soft security problems (Kınacıoğlu, 2015).

In addition, Türkiye was keen to gain rights similar to those granted by the (WEU) in the 1990s. Although Türkiye was not a member of the WEU, it became one of the six non-voting associate members of the (WEU) in 1992, along with the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, and Poland. However, in March 2010, the members decided to cease the operational functions of the WEU, and the organization was officially dissolved in June 2011. In fact, the process of integrating all aspects of defense and security into the EU had begun much earlier: the first major change came in 1998 with the decision to develop an autonomous Security and Defense Policy at EU level in Saint-Malo. This decision received a strong reaction from individual member states as well as from NATO. The US, which did not want to be involved in a competitive plan with its NATO partners in

practice, nevertheless welcomed any EU effort that would contribute to military burden-sharing without unnecessary duplication.

Türkiye, which feels excluded from European security developments, was further disadvantaged by the decision to dissolve the WEU, of which it had been an associate member since 1992, and to transfer all issues related to European security, including the right to vote, to the EU, an organization in which Türkiye has no presence. Thus, Türkiye lost its privileged status in European security structures, which was provided through its connections with the WEU. According to the new arrangements made at subsequent EU Summits (especially in Feira and Nice in 2000), despite the condition that Türkiye would participate in decision-making processes in EU-led operations that required the use of NATO assets and capabilities, it remained in a position where it could easily be excluded from exclusive EU operations if the countries did not reach unanimity.

The second limitation hindering Türkiye's potential security contribution to the EU is the declining power of both Türkiye and the EU in some of their common neighborhoods, such as the Middle East, along with Türkiye's policies in these regions that often contradict those of the EU. Türkiye was quickly accepted as a role model in the Middle East after the Arab uprisings with its democracy and transatlantic/Western connections. However, "it did not take long for Türkiye to find what it was hoping for" because Türkiye tried to redesign the region without considering the limits of its capabilities and influence, and often against the interests of its transatlantic partners (Ereker & Açıkmeşe, 2021).

Despite all the limitations mentioned above, in EU security policy, both benefits and costs may arise from Türkiye as a candidate country, neighboring partner and NATO ally. In this context, there are various opportunities and challenges for Türkiye to be included in the EU's security structures as a NATO partner, EU neighbor and EU candidate.

TÜRKİYE'S APPROACH TO EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

After gaining considerable economic and political power through integration within the European Union structure, European countries that are members of NATO have sought to minimize their dependence on the United States in security and defense matters. This goal is reflected in the European Union's attempts to create a European Security and Defense Policy

(ESDP), which aims to create an EU military capacity that complements NATO but is also capable of autonomous action from NATO. European Union countries seek more political authority and operational control, which would lead to a more equitable sharing of power and responsibility (Yiğittepe, 2017b: 120).

France has taken the lead in efforts to end American hegemony over European security affairs and has strongly expressed the need to balance US primacy in a unipolar world. France's position was supported first by Germany and then by the UK. The US, which has remained reluctant to reduce its influence in transatlantic security arrangements and decision-making processes, has been quite skeptical of this development. The US's biggest concern was the development of an independent European Security system that France envisioned and that could undermine NATO. Furthermore, given the constraints on European countries' defense budgets, the US has doubts about whether European defense capabilities can achieve NATO and EU military objectives such as deployability, sustainability, interoperability, flexibility and survivability. It was thought that the new European security architecture would require larger national defense budgets as well as more cooperative European investment in defense. Another important issue affecting the future of Euro-Mediterranean security has been Türkiye's approach to the ESDP. During the finalization process of the ESDP, Türkiye was very reluctant to relinquish the rights it had gained within the framework of the WEU.

The goal of providing a security and defense mechanism for Europe resulted in the establishment of the Western European Union (WEU) in 1948. However, with the increasing influence of NATO during the Cold War, the WEU was shelved, and the US became the dominant actor shaping transatlantic security relations. In the post-Cold War era, the revived WEU accelerated efforts to establish a "European Identity" for security and defense. Since the mid-1990s, the WEU has experienced significant institutional growth and the number of members increased to ten with the accession of Greece in 1995. In addition to these full members, the WEU had six associate members: Türkiye, Norway, Iceland, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, all of whom were also NATO members. These countries were NATO members but were not part of the EU. The WEU also had five "observer" countries (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland and Sweden), which were members of the EU and preferred limited

participation for political reasons. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, ten more Eastern European and Baltic countries became members of the WEU as “partners” in 1994 (Korkmaz, 2011).

The WEU’s goal of ensuring collective defense and security through cooperation with NATO was realized through the so-called Petersberg Missions. According to the 1992 EU decision, these important missions included humanitarian aid and rescue operations, crisis management, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement in areas that endangered European security. The WEU’s greatest weakness was that, due to its very limited political power and operational capabilities, it was heavily dependent on US decisions and military assets to conduct large-scale operations. The US had an advantage over its allies, especially in terms of secure communications, data transfer technologies, all-weather precision capabilities, logistics, and intelligence expertise. The war in Kosovo, where the US had to conduct two-thirds of the high-precision operations alone, was a clear indicator of Europe’s weaknesses at the strategic and operational levels (Karabulut, 2014: 82-83).

In 1999, when the EU decided to incorporate the WEU, it set an ambitious goal of establishing a rapid reaction force with 60,000 troops by 2003. These forces would be ready to deploy within sixty days and would remain in crisis areas for at least one year to carry out the Petersberg Missions. After the force requirements were assessed through close interaction with NATO at the EU meeting in November 2000, initial plans for the EU force were determined. As a result, the EU decided to establish a pool of 100,000 troops, 400 aircraft and 100 ships for rapid reaction. In this process, one of the most controversial and important issues for Türkiye was the redefinition of the future role of non-EU NATO members within the framework of the new ESDP (Şöhret, 2013: 61).

During the Cold War, Türkiye, positioned on the Southeastern flank of NATO, served as a reliable ally. Türkiye maintains a strong interest in European Security arrangements and in ensuring itself a continuing preeminent role in NATO as a Southern Region country. Unlike other EU member states in this region, such as Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece, Türkiye, which was particularly excluded from the decision-making mechanisms of the ESDP, had a high stake in preserving the institutional status quo (Erdoğan, 2004: 73).

As an associate member of the WEU, Türkiye participated in important activities such as having five officers in the defense planning cell, attending biweekly meetings of twenty-eight ambassadors, and representation by Turkish parliamentarians for two terms. Although an agreement was reached regarding the activities of the Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTFs), Türkiye was excluded from decision-making in the WEU Council and the collective defense provisions of the WEU agreement. If the CJTFs use NATO assets, Türkiye will have the right to fully participate in the WEU decision-making process. In addition, the decision that the collective defense clause will not apply in conflicts between NATO members will also apply to the status of the WEU in the event of a possible military conflict between Türkiye and Greece (Caşın, Özgöker and Çolak, 2007: 214-215).

During the NATO Summit in Washington in April 1999, the Strategic Concept defining NATO's objectives and strategies was updated with the aim of "equipping the Alliance for the security challenges and opportunities of the 21st century and guiding its future political and military development". In this context, Türkiye reiterated the necessity of reaching an agreement on any decision of the NATO Council regarding the use of alliance assets for European purposes. As a result, while creating NATO's New Strategic Concept, Türkiye made it mandatory that this right be indirectly taken into account for alliance decisions on a case-by-case basis. Accordingly, "arrangements for the release, monitoring, return, and/or recall of NATO assets and capabilities" would be provided "on a case-by-case basis in support of WEU-led operations". In addition, NATO-EU relations would be organized around the mechanisms existing between NATO and the WEU (Çakmak, 2003: 205-206).

During the Nice Summit of the EU in December 2000, the changes in the EU decisions compared to the Washington Summit of 1999 caused great disappointment in Ankara. At the Nice Summit, there were no references to shaping the new security and defense strategies according to the previous mechanisms of the WEU, and non-EU NATO members were completely excluded from the decision-making structures. In 1995, the WEU Council of Ministers decided that in the case of full integration of the WEU into the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), "the participation of the common members in the further development of the ESDP should continue and that they should further improve their

current situation by means of appropriate arrangements to ensure their participation and partnership with the CFSP” (Vershbow, 1999). However, it was unclear how such a goal could be achieved for non-members of the Union. As a result, Ankara argued that non-EU NATO members should not be expected to automatically comply with political decisions taken without their participation.

Türkiye, one of the WEU associate members, has been the country most affected by this restructuring process. Due to its geographical location, Türkiye is situated in a very volatile region. According to reports by the French Defense Institute and the International Strategy Institute in Switzerland, Türkiye is surrounded by thirteen of the sixteen “hot spots” (i.e. Kosovo, Syria, Cyprus, and Chechnya) and these are prone to the outbreak of possible conflicts that could affect European security. Norway, which is quite far from the hot spots, has only agreed to participate in decision-making mechanisms. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic have also complied with EU decisions since they would soon be granted full membership status in the EU. Türkiye has been frustrated by the fact that these former Warsaw Pact members will become EU members before Türkiye and will have more power than Türkiye, which has long been a NATO security ally. As a result, Ankara’s determined insistence led to the collapse of the NATO consensus on command-sharing and planning arrangements with the EU in December 2000 (BBC Monitoring European, 1999).

It is a generally accepted approach that Europe needs Türkiye to strengthen its security and defense. Its proximity to the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Mediterranean region provides Türkiye with a critical position in a strategic area of great importance. In this context, it is seen that all possible scenarios of crisis management operations led by the EU somehow include Türkiye. On the other hand, it is thought that Türkiye, which is at the center of crisis regions, will protect its vital interests by continuing to take part in the European security system (Ağca, 2010,237-238).

Türkiye’s concerns were expressed as risks that the EU’s initiative would undermine the influence of NATO and the transatlantic link that it would erode NATO’s deterrent power, and that operations and other activities initiated by the EU could negatively affect Türkiye’s security. In this

context, Türkiye was particularly concerned about the possibility of intense pressure from Greece in the event of escalating tensions in the Aegean or Cyprus. The long-standing deadlock between Türkiye and Greece had been an obstacle to the ESDP. This deadlock was finally resolved through a compromise at the Copenhagen Summit in December 2002. The Council, which was defined as a 'Partnership for Peace' member and therefore signed bilateral security agreements with NATO, decided that the Berlin-Plus Agreements and their implementation would only apply to EU member states that were NATO members or parties to the EU. Thus, Cyprus and Malta were excluded from EU military operations conducted using NATO assets, and a breakthrough was achieved in ensuring the EU's access to NATO capacities and assets. The Union was now allowed to use NATO logistics and access the NATO planning base SHAPE, thus becoming a turning point in the history of relations between NATO and the EU (Demir, 2009: 29).

For the ESDP, this development will also make the Union with a stronger capacity for crisis management and will also make a significant contribution to the development of cooperation on Euro-Mediterranean security. In this context, since 2003, Türkiye has played an active role in all EU-led peacekeeping operations, except in Congo. Türkiye has been especially important in multinational peacekeeping efforts in the Balkans, Somalia and most recently in Afghanistan. For example, Türkiye participated in UNPROFOR with 1,450 soldiers in 1995. It also participated in NATO's IFOR and SFOR with 1,200 soldiers and took part in police operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. In addition, Türkiye assumed command of the NATO-provided International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) forces in Afghanistan in June 2002. It assumed command again in 2005. (SETAV, 2022).

As a central regional power with significant military capabilities, Türkiye has a critical role to play in strengthening peace and stability in its volatile region by (i) consolidating its democracy; (ii) maintaining good neighborly relations; (iii) achieving a balance in the complex EU-Türkiye-US triangle; and (iv) operating within the European framework. Türkiye's role in Euro-Mediterranean security is clearly defined by its long-standing relations in the transatlantic context and its goal of EU membership.

POSSIBLE EU-TÜRKİYE RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SECURITY IN THE FUTURE

“Despite the EU repeatedly emphasizing the key role Türkiye plays in European security, the turbulent relations between Türkiye and the EU are clearly evident in their defense and security cooperation. Especially since the Arab uprisings, the two sides have diverged in their regional security priorities” (Müftüler-Baç, 2017). It is clear that Türkiye and the EU now have different threat perceptions in their common areas, especially in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean, suggesting that from the EU perspective, Türkiye is no longer the desired security partner between the EU and the EU South. This difference in threat perception and policy has undoubtedly led to disagreements between Türkiye and the EU on security and defense issues. For example, the EU criticizes Türkiye for its military support, including the deployment of foreign fighters, to the internationally recognized Tripoli-based government, which it states jeopardizes “the EU’s effective contribution to the implementation of the UN arms embargo” (European Commission, 2021). Türkiye’s military actions in Syria are different from the EU’s policy of non-intervention and its goal of “building a peaceful and prosperous Syria” (European Commission, 2021). In this context, it is considered useful to state that the EU continues its traditional inconsistent stance and lacks a unified voice in both areas. In the case of the Eastern Mediterranean, the EU and Türkiye have conflicting interests, and the EU continues to condemn Türkiye for its unilateral actions and escalations (European Commission, 2021). Therefore, it would be explanatory to present the sentence expressed in the EU’s 2021 Türkiye Report: “Türkiye’s increasingly assertive foreign policy has continued to conflict with EU priorities within the scope of the CFSP, especially due to its support for military operations in the Caucasus, Syria and Iraq”.

On the other hand, Türkiye, which has been a part of NATO in particular since 1952 and follows its Western-oriented foreign policy in general, aims to be included in European security structures. In this context, Türkiye sees its own window of opportunity in the project-based PESCO. As Aydın-Düzgün (2018) stated, it is accepted that the problem would be solved if NATO non-EU member states have the right to decide on the policy direction of PESCO in the Council and fully participate in PESCO's capabilities and operational modules. Members involved in a project can agree on whether to include a third party or not. This contribution is clearly

seen in Türkiye's participation in many EU-led operations. Moreover, there is no doubt that Türkiye's military power and willingness to contribute will be an important asset for the EU.

One scenario for advancing Türkiye-EU cooperation in the field of security and defense is to grant a common status to the United Kingdom and Türkiye. This is mainly meaningful at the level of security and defense, where both states have significant military capabilities and participate in CFSP missions and operations. In this context, former European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has repeatedly stated in his statement in December 2016 that a “different trajectory” could be invented for countries neighboring the EU, such as the United Kingdom and Türkiye, as an alternative to EU membership. This situation stems from the idea of a “special, privileged relationship” between both countries and the EU, and places the United Kingdom and Türkiye on the same footing (Pop, 2016).

Türkiye's potential accession to the European Union is both important for the EU's security and Türkiye's role in this regard. It is considered that the potential benefits of Türkiye's inclusion in these formations, as opposed to the possible geopolitical and security risks that Türkiye's exclusion from defense formations would pose for the EU, triggered the EU's decision to grant Türkiye candidate status. Türkiye's contribution to the EU's CFSP stems from its role in the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Caspian region, as well as its military capabilities, and also includes its ability to influence EU operations through voting in the NATO Council (which has the final say). Türkiye is an important player in the changing European security arena, and it is believed that EU-led operations without its participation have little chance of success. Türkiye's stance on this issue is closely linked to its relationship with the EU. Türkiye wants to participate in EU-led operations, and the EU needs Türkiye in order to have a reliable European force. Türkiye's role is certainly different from that played during the Cold War in terms of its geographical location and military capabilities, but it is no less vital. Therefore, Türkiye's integration into the EU has an additional advantage that Central and Eastern European countries do not possess. Therefore, just as the decisions taken at the 1997 Luxembourg Summit were seen as a strategic mistake against Türkiye, granting Türkiye candidate status at the Helsinki Summit can be considered as an appropriate step taken by the EU.

A possible scenario for Türkiye-EU relations in the near future is that Türkiye will be closely integrated into the CFSP, the “second pillar” of the EU, thus securing its role in the future development of EU security policies. This scenario fits into the complex structure of European integration, where Türkiye can act primarily as a full member on certain issues, especially security, but will not have the same influence as a full member on other issues. However, any scenario short of full membership will not be welcomed in Türkiye. While the Helsinki decisions are undoubtedly a turning point in Türkiye’s relations with the EU, they can also be seen as a compromise to secure Türkiye’s partner status in the EU’s evolving security role. Another aspect of this compromise is that Türkiye still has a long way to go in terms of political and economic development. The EU needs to adopt reasonable attitudes in order to anchor Türkiye in the West. This situation will be better understood when we look at Türkiye’s size, what it can prevent and what it can open doors to.

In short, Türkiye’s entry is considered too would provide numerous benefits to the Union’s foreign and security policies through Türkiye’s capabilities and existing ties in the surrounding regions. At the same time, Türkiye’s exclusion by the EU—despite its ability to influence EU military operations and decisions through its vote in the NATO Council—is viewed as problematic and even risky for the Union. Although the EU takes this into account in its policy towards Türkiye, Türkiye’s motivation is the desire to belong to Europe. Since the foundation of the Republic of Türkiye in 1923, Türkiye’s foreign policy has been directed towards the ultimate goal of being accepted as a European nation. The Turkish view is that joining the EU supports one’s European identity. For this reason, many Turkish citizens believe that if Türkiye becomes a member of the European Union, the century-old dream of being part of Europe will finally come true.

The future trajectory of EU–Türkiye relations in the domain of security will likely be shaped by a convergence of strategic necessities, shifting geopolitical dynamics, and institutional recalibrations within both the European Union and NATO. Despite persistent political disagreements and longstanding mutual skepticism, the changing security environment in Europe and its periphery is generating new imperatives for pragmatic engagement between the two actors. Shared challenges such as regional instability, terrorism, irregular migration, and energy security increasingly necessitate functional cooperation irrespective of political divergence.

Türkiye's geostrategic location, acting as a pivotal nexus between Europe, the Middle East, the Caucasus, and the Black Sea, renders it an indispensable actor for European security. Although the EU has often framed Türkiye as a difficult partner, it remains aware of Ankara's importance in managing security risks emanating from Europe's southern and eastern flanks. The EU's Strategic Compass (EEAS, 2022), a recent initiative aimed at enhancing European strategic autonomy, highlights the need for closer collaboration with third countries in security and defense matters. While Türkiye is not prioritized in this document, the policy framework does create space for flexible, project-based cooperation.

Migration management will continue to represent a foundational pillar of EU–Türkiye security engagement. The 2016 EU–Türkiye Statement functioned as a crisis management tool, effectively reducing irregular migration flows from Türkiye to the EU through coordinated border control, financial assistance, and refugee support mechanisms (European Council, 2016). In light of potential new waves of displacement from Syria, Afghanistan, or Sub-Saharan Africa, the EU and Türkiye may find it mutually beneficial to update this agreement to include broader components such as joint intelligence sharing, anti-trafficking operations, and protection of vulnerable populations.

Furthermore, Türkiye's evolving military-industrial capacity, particularly its indigenous production of drones and its operational experience in asymmetric conflicts, opens the possibility of selective technological and defense cooperation. Türkiye's defense exports, as demonstrated in Ukraine, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh, have elevated its role as a regional security actor. While political conditions currently constrain Türkiye's participation in EU defense initiatives like PESCO or the European Defence Fund, the EU could consider more flexible engagement formats that allow for technical and industrial collaboration in dual-use technologies, provided that normative and regulatory standards are met (Biscop, 2021).

Nevertheless, significant institutional and political obstacles remain. Türkiye is not formally part of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) structures and continues to be excluded from decision-making mechanisms. This exclusion stems largely from the unresolved Cyprus issue and broader deterioration of EU–Türkiye political relations over the last decade. The absence of mutual trust, ongoing tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, and disagreements over democratic backsliding

in Türkiye complicate the prospects for deeper institutional integration (Aydın-Düzgüt & Tocci, 2021). These structural issues limit long-term planning and make most security cooperation transactional and reactive rather than strategic and sustained.

Looking ahead, a pragmatic path forward would involve focusing on concrete areas of shared interest rather than aiming for comprehensive alignment. Counterterrorism, cyber security, border surveillance, and maritime security in the Mediterranean are potential areas for limited but constructive cooperation. NATO could also serve as a platform to mediate some of the EU–Türkiye security disagreements and foster dialogue between Ankara and EU member states. As Tocci (2023) argues, a green, digital, and geopolitical reset in EU–Türkiye relations is still possible if both sides embrace a more realistic, interest-based approach grounded in functional cooperation rather than grand political convergence.

CONCLUSION

While the EU has repeatedly emphasized the key role Türkiye plays in European security, the turbulent relations between Türkiye and the EU are clearly evident in their defense and security cooperation. Particularly since the Arab Spring uprisings, the two sides have diverged in their regional security priorities. Türkiye and the EU now have different threat perceptions in their common neighborhood, especially in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean, suggesting that Türkiye is no longer seen as a desirable security partner for the EU to bridge the gap between the EU and its southern neighbors. Of course, these differing threat perceptions and policies have led to divergences between Türkiye and the EU over time on security and defense issues.

For example, the EU criticized Türkiye’s military support for the internationally recognized Tripoli-based government, including the deployment of foreign fighters, and said that this jeopardized “the EU’s effective contribution to the implementation of the UN arms embargo.” Türkiye’s military actions in Syria are different from the EU’s policy of non-intervention and its goal of “building a peaceful and prosperous Syria.” In this context, it is worth noting that the EU’s traditional inconsistent behavior continues. While the EU does not have a direct role in either area, it expects Türkiye to comply with its policies. As in the Eastern Mediterranean, there are a number of conflicts of interest between the EU

and Türkiye, and the EU continues to condemn Türkiye's unilateral actions and its attitude that fuels tensions. Therefore, it would be revealing to note the following sentence in the EU's 2021 Türkiye Report: "Türkiye's increasingly assertive foreign policy in contradiction with EU priorities has continued within the scope of the CFSP, particularly with its support for military operations in the Caucasus, Syria and Iraq."

On the other hand, as a part of NATO that has occasionally turned towards Eurasia since 1952, Türkiye aims to be included in EU security structures in line with its generally Western-oriented foreign policy and sees a window of opportunity in PESCO, which is project-based. It is considered that the current problem can be resolved if the non-EU members of NATO are given the right to consult in the Council in deciding on the policy direction of PESCO and full participation rights in PESCO's capability and operational modules. The logic here is that it is up to the members participating in each project to reach an agreement on whether a third party will be included or not. Türkiye has high level of visibility and influence in many EU-led operations. Furthermore, it is an undeniable fact that Türkiye's military power and willingness to contribute will be an important asset for the EU. The biggest challenge in these relations is how to build trust and how to seriously rebuild the damaged relationship.

The Strategic Compass, adopted by the EU Foreign Affairs Council on March 21, 2022, is a framework that aims to strengthen the EU's ability to anticipate and respond to security threats. The Strategic Compass, which is a comprehensive document, has introduced a new dimension to its adversarial approaches by seemingly attempting to keep Türkiye on the sidelines, influenced by the deep crisis centered on Ukraine.

Apart from these approaches, it is evaluated that the Strategic Compass has positive and negative aspects, especially for Türkiye, which is eager to take part in the security formations of the EU. It is possible to collect the positive aspects under certain headings:

The potential for enhanced cooperation could provide the basis for increased cooperation between Türkiye and the EU, particularly in combating a number of common security challenges such as terrorism, cyber threats and organized crime.

Enhanced dialogue could also facilitate dialogue on security issues between

Türkiye and the EU, which could help improve frayed understanding and build trust between the two sides.

In general, it is seen that the Strategic Compass brings both opportunities and challenges for Türkiye. The success of the Compass will depend on the willingness and effort of both parties to cooperate in a constructive dialogue.

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GÜNEY KAFKASYA'DA ENERJİ REKABETİ BAĞLAMINDA ERMENİSTAN'IN JEOPOLİTİK DIŞLANMASI

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ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Güney Kafkasya'daki enerji jeopolitiği bağlamında Ermenistan'ın sistematik biçimde dışlanmasına neden olan siyasal, ekonomik ve stratejik dinamikleri analiz etmektedir. Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasının ardından şekillenen yeni bölgesel düzen içerisinde enerji nakil hatları, sadece ekonomik rasyonaliteye değil, aynı zamanda bölgesel güç projeksiyonlarına, güvenlik kaygılarına ve ittifak yapılarına göre tasarlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda Ermenistan, hem bölgesel aktörlerin (özellikle Azerbaycan ve Türkiye) stratejik tercihleri hem de küresel güçlerin enerji merkezli politikaları sonucunda büyük enerji projelerinin dışında tutulmuştur. Çalışmada, Bakü-Tiflis-Ceyhan (BTC), Güney Gaz Koridoru (TANAP, TAP), Bakü-Tiflis-Erzurum Doğalgaz Boru Hattı gibi altyapı projeleri ile Zengezur Koridoru gibi güncel jeopolitik girişimlerin güzergâh politikaları kapsamlı biçimde incelenmiştir. Ermenistan'ın enerji projelerinde dışlanmasının yalnızca Azerbaycan ile yaşanan tarihsel çatışmalara değil, aynı zamanda Rusya, Türkiye, ABD ve AB gibi aktörlerin bölgesel enerji güvenliği stratejilerine de bağlı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Sonuç olarak, Ermenistan'ın jeopolitik dışlanması Güney Kafkasya'daki güç dengelerinin ve enerji rekabetinin çok katmanlı yapısının bir sonucudur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Güney Kafkasya, Ermenistan, Enerji Jeopolitiği, Enerji Güvenliği, Enerji Nakil Hatları*

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ARMENIA'S GEOPOLITICAL EXCLUSION IN THE CONTEXT OF ENERGY COMPETITION IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the political, economic, and strategic dynamics that have led to Armenia's systematic exclusion from major energy projects in the South Caucasus. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the newly emerging regional order saw the construction of energy transit routes shaped not only by economic rationality, but also by broader geopolitical interests, alliance structures, and security considerations. Within this context, Armenia has been consistently bypassed by key regional energy projects due to the strategic preferences of regional actors—particularly Azerbaijan and Turkey—as well as the geopolitical calculations of global powers. The study provides a comprehensive examination of infrastructure projects such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, the Southern Gas Corridor (TANAP and TAP), the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, and the proposed Zangezur Corridor, all of which reinforce Armenia's geopolitical marginalization. It reveals that Armenia's exclusion from energy projects is linked not only to historical conflicts with Azerbaijan but also to the regional energy security strategies of actors such as Russia, Turkey, the US, and the EU. Consequently, Armenia's geopolitical exclusion is a result of the multi-layered structure of power balances and energy competition in the South Caucasus.

Keywords: *South Caucasus, Armenia, Energy Geopolitics, Energy Security, Energy Transmission Lines*

GİRİŞ

Güney Kafkasya, Soğuk Savaş sonrasında büyük güçlerin etki alanı mücadelelerinde yeniden şekillenen bir jeopolitik alan olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasıyla birlikte bölgedeki üç ülke, Azerbaycan, Ermenistan ve Gürcistan, yeni bir bağımsızlık ve kalkınma sürecine girerken, bu süreçte enerji kaynaklarının kontrolü ve aktarımı bölgesel dinamiklerin en önemli unsurlarından biri haline gelmiştir. Azerbaycan'ın hidrokarbon rezervleri, Gürcistan'ın coğrafi konumu ve Türkiye'nin enerji geçiş noktası olma iddiası, Güney Kafkasya'yı enerji güvenliği ve ulaşım koridorları açısından stratejik bir merkez haline getirmiştir (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997; Shaffer, 2011a). Bu bağlamda dikkat çeken temel olgulardan biri, Ermenistan'ın bölgesel enerji projelerinden sistematik olarak dışlanmasıdır. Bakü-Tiflis-Ceyhan Petrol Boru Hattı (BTC), Güney Kafkasya Doğalgaz Boru Hattı (SCP), Trans Anadolu Doğalgaz Boru Hattı (TANAP) ve Trans-Adriyatik Boru Hattı (TAP) gibi dev projelerde Ermenistan'a yer verilmemesi, yalnızca teknik veya ekonomik parametrelerle değil, jeopolitik ve stratejik hedeflerle de açıklanmaktadır. Bu durum, enerji altyapısının sadece ticari değil, aynı zamanda siyasi ve ideolojik sınırlar inşa eden bir unsur haline geldiğini göstermektedir.

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Güney Kafkasya'daki enerji projelerinin Ermenistan'a yönelik dışlayıcı etkilerini analiz etmek ve bu dışlanmanın arkasındaki jeopolitik akıl yürütmeleri ortaya koymaktır. Enerji güvenliği, yalnızca kaynak erişimi değil, aynı zamanda enerji yollarının güvenliği, geçiş ülkeleriyle ittifak ilişkileri ve bölgesel istikrar politikaları ile doğrudan ilişkilidir (Yergin, 2011). Bu bağlamda enerji güzergâhlarının tasarımı, yalnızca fiziksel değil aynı zamanda politik sınırları da şekillendirmektedir. Bu makale, enerji hatlarının oluşturduğu güzergâhların nasıl bir jeopolitik düzen kurduğunu ve Ermenistan'ın bu hatlardan dışlanmasının tarihsel ve siyasi arka planını incelemekte ve bu sorulara yanıt aramaktadır. Çalışma, klasik jeopolitik kuramlar (Mackinder, Spykman, Brzezinski), enerji güvenliği yaklaşımları ve çok kutuplu küresel sistemdeki stratejik yönelimler üzerinden kuramsallaştırılmıştır. Literatürden elde edilen bilgiler, enerji haritaları ve resmî belgeler ışığında nitel içerik analizi yöntemiyle işlenmiştir. Özellikle enerji altyapısının tasarımı ile bölgesel dışlama arasında yapısal bir ilişki olduğu iddia edilmektedir. Bu bağlamda Ermenistan'ın dışlanması yalnızca Azerbaycan-Ermenistan çatışmasına indirgenemez, Türkiye'nin dış politikası, Batı'nın stratejik öncelikleri

ve Rusya'nın bölgedeki çıkar dengeleriyle birlikte değerlendirilmelidir. Böylece çalışma, enerji jeopolitiği alanındaki literatüre önemli bir katkı sunmayı hedeflemektedir.

KURAMSAL ÇERÇEVE VE LİTERATÜR TARAMASI: JEOPOLİTİK KURAMLAR VE ENERJİ REKABETİ

Jeopolitik kuramlar, uluslararası ilişkilerde coğrafi konumun güç projeksiyonu üzerindeki etkisini açıklamak için temel teorik çerçeveyi sunmaktadır. Halford J. Mackinder'in (1904) klasik "Kalpgâh" (*Heartland*) kuramı, Avrasya'nın iç kısımlarında egemenlik kuran bir gücün dünya egemenliğine ulaşabileceği fikrini savunmaktadır. Mackinder'in (2013: 9) meşhur formülasyonu, "Doğu Avrupa'ya hükmeden Kalpgâh'a, Kalpgâh'a hükmeden Dünya Adası'na, Dünya Adası'na hükmeden ise dünyaya hükmeder", özellikle Avrasya'nın enerji kaynakları açısından stratejik önemini vurgulamaktadır. Güney Kafkasya, bu bağlamda Kalpgâh'ın savunma hattını oluşturan ve enerji akışının yönünü belirleyen eşik bölge konumundadır (Akter, 2016: 193-194).

Mackinder'in kara egemenliği kuramına karşı bir alternatif olarak Nicholas Spykman (2020), "Kenar Kuşak (*Rimland*) Teorisi"ni ileri sürerek Avrasya'nın kıyı bölgelerinin, yani Avrupa kıyıları, Orta Doğu ve Asya muson hattının, dünya hâkimiyetinin anahtarı olduğunu savunmuştur. Bu bölgelerin yüksek nüfus yoğunluğu, doğal kaynak zenginliği ve stratejik geçiş noktaları, büyük güçlerin müdahale sahası haline gelmesini sağlamıştır. Spykman'a (2020: 210) göre "Kenar Kuşağı kontrol eden, Avrasya'yı, Avrasya'yı kontrol eden, dünyayı kontrol eder". Zbigniew Brzezinski'nin "Büyük Satranç Tahtası" (*The Grand Chessboard*) benzetmesi ise 21. yüzyılın enerji odaklı dış politika stratejilerini anlamak açısından işlevseldir. Brzezinski (1997: 103), Avrasya'nın hem nüfus hem de kaynaklar açısından en değerli kara parçası olduğunu savunarak, bölgeyi kontrol edemeyen bir büyük gücün küresel liderliğinin sürdürülemez olduğunu belirtmiştir. Ona göre enerji koridorları yalnızca ticari ağlar değil, küresel siyasi düzenin taşlarını hareket ettiren stratejik hamlelerdir. Bu kuramların ortak noktası, enerji hatlarının sadece taşıma altyapısı değil, aynı zamanda ittifaklar inşa eden, çatışmaları şekillendiren ve aktörlerin uluslararası hiyerarşideki konumlarını belirleyen araçlar olarak değerlendirilmesidir (Yıldızoğlu, 2017: 51). Bu teorik arka plan, Güney Kafkasya'daki enerji projelerinin Ermenistan'ı neden dışladığını anlamak için kritik önemdedir.

Enerji güvenliği, günümüzde uluslararası siyasetin temel belirleyicilerinden biri haline gelmiştir. Uluslararası Enerji Ajansı (IEA, 2019), enerji güvenliğini “ekonomik olarak erişilebilir, çevresel açıdan sürdürülebilir ve kesintisiz enerji arzının sağlanması” olarak tanımlamaktadır. Ancak bu teknik tanımın arka planında, çoğu zaman jeopolitik çıkarlar, bölgesel istikrar hesapları ve dış politika stratejileri yer almaktadır. Güney Kafkasya özelinde enerji güvenliği, yalnızca kaynaklara erişimle sınırlı kalmamakta, taşıma hatlarının güvenliği ve bu hatların geçtiği ülkelerle kurulan siyasi ilişkiler de belirleyici olmaktadır. Bu noktada Türkiye’nin Azerbaycan ile geliştirdiği stratejik ortaklıklar (BTC ve TANAP gibi) enerji hatlarının bir ittifak mimarisi kurduğunu açıkça göstermektedir. Ermenistan’ın bu mimariden dışlanması, enerji güvenliği stratejilerinin aynı zamanda dışlama mekanizmaları oluşturduğunu göstermektedir (Papazian, 2021: 93).

ABD’nin enerji politikası, 1970’lerde yaşanan petrol krizi sonrasında büyük ölçüde enerjide kendi kendine yeterlilik hedefi üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Ancak Sovyetler Birliği’nin dağılmasının ardından Washington, Hazar Havzası’nı enerji güvenliği stratejisinin merkezine yerleştirmiştir. Bu dönemde geliştirilen BTC ve BTE projeleri, ABD’nin bölgedeki enerji kaynaklarını Batı pazarlarına entegre etme politikasının somut örnekleri olmuştur. Dolayısıyla, ABD’nin Hazar enerji projelerine desteği esasen 1990’lar sonrasında belirginleşmiştir (İyikan, 2009). Bu bağlamda Bakü–Tiflis–Ceyhan (BTC) ve Güney Gaz Koridoru gibi projeler, yalnızca enerji güvenliği sağlamakla kalmamış, Rusya ve İran’ın etki alanlarını dengeleme amacı taşımıştır (Shaffer, 2011a; Koch, 2010). Çin’in Kuşak-Yol Girişimi çerçevesinde Bakü-Tiflis-Kars demiryolu gibi projelerle Güney Kafkasya’ya açılması da enerji güvenliğinin ulaşım ve ticaret altyapısıyla nasıl bütünleştiğini göstermektedir (Üzümcü & Akdeniz, 2014). Bu bağlamda Ermenistan’ın dışlanması, enerjinin yanı sıra, ticaret ve ulaşım entegrasyonlarına katılamaması anlamına gelmektedir.

Ermenistan’ın enerji projelerinden dışlanmasına dair literatür, genellikle iki ana kategoriye ayrılmaktadır. İlk grup çalışmalar, dışlanmayı Karabağ çatışması gibi siyasi nedenlere bağlarken (Shaffer, 2011b; Ziyadov, 2012), ikinci grup ise jeopolitik stratejilere odaklanmaktadır (Cornell, 2006; Kucera, 2014). Ancak bu çalışmaların çoğu, enerji hatlarının tasarımı ile bölgesel dışlama mekanizmaları arasındaki yapısal ilişkiyi sistematik biçimde analiz etmemektedir. Örneğin, Shaffer (2011b), Ermenistan’ın

dışlanmasını teknik ve siyasi riskler çerçevesinde değerlendirirken, Aleksandr Dugin (2017) gibi Avrasyacı teorisyenler, bu dışlanmayı Batı'nın bölgedeki etkisini sınırlama stratejisinin bir parçası olarak ele almaktadır. Bu çalışma, her iki yaklaşımı sentezleyerek hem tarihsel çatışma arka planını hem de büyük güçlerin stratejik hesaplarını dikkate alan çok katmanlı bir analiz sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Cornell (2006: 63), Güney Kafkasya'daki enerji hatlarını, yalnızca ekonomik değil aynı zamanda ideolojik ve diplomatik sınırlar oluşturan “jeopolitik mühendislik” unsurları olarak tanımlar. Bu bağlamda Türkiye-Ermenistan ilişkilerinin enerji projeleri üzerinden yeniden şekillendiği, Ermenistan'ın ise bu yeniden yapılanmanın dışında kaldığı gözlemlenmektedir.

Bu makalede kullanılan “konumsuzluk” kavramı, bir devletin bölgesel ve küresel düzeyde herhangi bir ittifak mimarisine, güvenlik blokuna ya da enerji altyapısı sistemine tam anlamıyla entegre olamamasını ifade etmektedir. Uluslararası ilişkiler literatüründe benzer biçimde kullanılan liminality (sınırlılık) veya in-betweenness (arada kalmışlık) kavramları, aktörlerin ne merkezî bir konum kazanabildiğini ne de tam anlamıyla bağımsız hareket edebildiğini vurgulamaktadır (Rumelili, 2012: 501-503; Mälksoo, 2012). Bu durum, özellikle küçük devletlerin büyük güçler arasındaki rekabetten doğrudan etkilendiği jeopolitik alanlarda sıkça gözlemlenmektedir. Konumsuzluk, yalnızca coğrafi veya ekonomik bir marjinalite değil, aynı zamanda stratejik işlevsizlik anlamına da gelmektedir. Yani aktör, herhangi bir projenin vazgeçilmez parçası olarak görülmediği gibi, alternatif bir işlev de üstlenememektedir. Bu nedenle konumsuzluk, dışlanmadan daha derin bir duruma işaret eder: dışlanmış bir aktör belirli bir sistemin dışında bırakılabilirken, konumsuz bir aktör hiçbir sistemde anlamlı bir rol üstlenemez. Bu bağlamda, kavram yalnızca pasif bir edilgenlik değil, aynı zamanda bölgesel ve küresel karar alma süreçlerinde yapısal görünmezlik halini tanımlamaktadır.

Ermenistan örneğinde konumsuzluk, enerji projelerinden dışlanmanın ötesinde bir jeopolitik işlevsizlik biçiminde ortaya çıkmaktadır. Ülke, ne Batı'nın desteklediği Güney Gaz Koridoru gibi projelerde bir transit ülke olarak yer bulabilmiş ne de Rusya'nın enerji stratejilerinde merkezi bir rol üstlenebilmiştir (Rumelili, 2012: 505; Erenel & Gedik, 2024: 129). Çin'in Kuşak-Yol girişiminde de marjinal bir konumda kalması, bu durumu pekiştirmektedir. Dolayısıyla Ermenistan, yalnızca belirli projelerden dışlanmış değil, aynı zamanda hiçbir büyük güç mimarisinde anlamlı

bir konuma sahip olamayan bir devlet görünümüne bürünmektedir. Bu nedenle “konumsuzluk”, Ermenistan’ın enerji jeopolitiğindeki yapısal pozisyonunu açıklamak için uygun bir kavram olarak tercih edilmiştir.

Literatürdeki önemli boşluklardan biri, enerji altyapısının tasarım süreci ile siyasi dışlama arasında doğrudan ve yapısal bir ilişki kurulamamasıdır. Mevcut çalışmalar çoğunlukla proje bazlı analizlere dayanmakta, enerji hatlarının dışlayıcı karakterini sistem düzeyinde değerlendirmemektedir. Bu çalışma, Ermenistan’ın enerji projelerinden dışlanmasını yalnızca ikili siyasi krizlerle değil, aynı zamanda küresel güçlerin stratejik yönelimleri, jeopolitik kuramlar ve enerji güvenliği politikaları ışığında bütüncül bir çerçevede ele alarak bu boşluğu doldurmayı hedeflemektedir.

YÖNTEM

Bu çalışma, nitel araştırma yaklaşımı temel alınarak hazırlanmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı, Güney Kafkasya enerji koridorlarının tasarımı ile Ermenistan’ın bölgesel dışlanma dinamikleri arasındaki ilişkiyi ortaya koymaktır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda araştırma, öncelikle ikincil kaynaklara dayalı kapsamlı bir literatür incelemesi üzerinden yürütülmüştür. Literatür incelemesi, konuya ilişkin daha önce yapılmış akademik çalışmaların, kitapların, bilimsel makalelerin ve politika raporlarının değerlendirilmesine dayanmaktadır. Araştırmada özellikle enerji politikaları, jeopolitik stratejiler, emperyalizm kuramları ve bölgesel işbirliği dinamiklerine odaklanan akademik yayınlar sistematik biçimde gözden geçirilmiştir. Çalışmada mevcut literatürün sunduğu veriler ve tartışmalar karşılaştırmalı bir perspektif içinde bir araya getirilmiştir. Böylelikle makalenin katkısı, farklı çalışmalarda ortaya konulan bulguları bir arada ele alarak bütüncül bir kavramsal çerçeve geliştirmek olmuştur.

Bu bağlamda yöntem, klasik anlamda bir içerik analizi ya da istatistiksel veri çözümlemesi olmaktan ziyade, literatürden elde edilen bilgilerin süreç izleme mantığına uygun olarak tarihsel ve karşılaştırmalı bir bakış açısıyla değerlendirilmesi üzerine kuruludur. Süreç izleme yaklaşımı burada, Güney Kafkasya’daki enerji projelerinin gelişim çizgisini ve Ermenistan’ın bu projelerden dışlanma sürecini tarihsel ardışıklık içinde kavramsallaştırmak için kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın yöntemsel katkısı, mevcut literatürü yeniden gözden geçirerek, enerji hatlarının tasarımı ile bölgesel dışlanma arasındaki bağlantıyı kavramsal ve teorik bir çerçeve içinde tartışmaya açmak şeklinde tanımlanabilir.

GÜNEY KAFKASYA ENERJİ GÜZERGÂHLARININ TASARIMI VE ERMENİSTAN'IN SİSTEMATİK DIŞLANMASI

Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde, Güney Kafkasya bölgesi enerji jeopolitiğinin merkezinde yer almaya başlamış ve bölgesel altyapı projeleri üzerinden şekillenen yeni güç ilişkilerinin laboratuvarı haline gelmiştir. 1990'lı yılların başından itibaren planlanan enerji hatları, yalnızca ekonomik ihtiyaçları karşılamaya yönelik değil, bölgesel düzenin siyasal mimarisini yeniden inşa etmeye yönelik araçlar olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bu bağlamda Bakü-Tiflis-Ceyhan (BTC) Petrol Boru Hattı, Bakü-Tiflis-Erzurum (BTE) Doğalgaz Boru Hattı, Trans Anadolu Doğalgaz Boru Hattı (TANAP) ve Trans-Adriyatik Boru Hattı (TAP) gibi büyük ölçekli projeler, Ermenistan'ın sistematik biçimde dışlandığı altyapı ağlarının temelini oluşturmuştur.

Enerji hatlarının güzergâhları dikkatle incelendiğinde, Ermenistan'ın coğrafi olarak daha kısa ve ekonomik açıdan daha avantajlı bir güzergâh seçeneği sunmasına rağmen bilinçli olarak bypass edildiği anlaşılmaktadır (Shaffer, 2011a). Azerbaycan ile yaşanan Dağlık Karabağ çatışması, Türkiye ile diplomatik ilişkilerin olmaması ve Batı'nın Ermenistan'a yönelik temkinli yaklaşımı bu dışlama kararlarının görünürdeki gerekçeleri arasında yer alsada esasen bu durumun arkasında daha derin jeopolitik yapıların etkili olduğu görülmektedir. Enerji hatlarının sadece birer ekonomik taşıma aracı olmadığı, aksine dost ve müttefik ülkeleri birbirine bağlayan, rakip ve güvensiz aktörleri sistem dışına iten siyasal enstrümanlar haline geldiği bir jeopolitik bağlamda, Ermenistan'ın dışlanması bir tesadüf değil, stratejik bir tercihtir. Boru hattı güzergâhları, ittifak hatlarının yeniden çizilmesinde temel araçlara dönüşmüş, bölgesel entegrasyon bu hatlar üzerinden sağlanırken, dışlama politikaları da yine aynı yollarla inşa edilmiştir (Cornell, 2006). Bu durumu daha somut gösterebilmek adına Tablo 1'de Güney Kafkasya'daki başlıca enerji projeleri ve Ermenistan'ın dahil olup olmama durumu gösterilmektedir.

Tablo 1. Güney Kafkasya’da enerji rekabeti

Proje	Türü & Kapasite	Stratejik Notlar
Güney Kafkasya Boru Hattı	Doğal gaz hattı; 692 km, 24 bcm/yıl kapasite	Şah Deniz gazını Türkiye üzerinden Avrupa’ya taşıyor; Gürcistan transit ücreti almaktadır
Bakü–Tiflis–Ceyhan Boru Hattı	Petrol boru hattı; 1,768 km, 1 milyon varil/gün	Azerbaycan-Rusya çevrelemesi; Ermenistan’ı bypass ederek bölge izolasyonunu güçlendiriyor
Trans-Anadolu Doğalgaz Boru Hattı (TANAP)	Doğal gaz hattı; 1,841 km, 16 bcm/yıl kapasite	Güney Kafkasya Boru Hattı ile bağlantılı olarak Azeri gazını Türkiye ve Avrupa’ya taşıyor
İran-Ermenistan Doğalgaz Boru Hattı	Doğal gaz hattı; 140 km, 2,3 bcm/yıl kapasite	Ermenistan’ı İran’a bağlayarak Rusya’ya bağımlılığı hafifletiyor
Dzuarikau–Tskhinvali Boru Hattı	Doğal gaz hattı 162 km, 0,253 bcm/yıl kapasite	Rusya’dan Güney Osetya ayrılıkçı bölgesine gaz taşınmakta, Gürcistan ise bu süreçte kesintisiz enerji arzını sürdürmektedir.

Görüldüğü üzere Ermenistan, yalnızca İran ile sınırlı ve düşük kapasiteli bir doğalgaz bağlantısına sahiptir. Bu hattın varlığı, Ermenistan’ın mutlak bir enerji izolasyonunda olmadığını gösterse de ülkenin Batı destekli geniş ölçekli projelere sistematik biçimde dâhil edilmediği açıktır. Bu durum, Ermenistan’ın bölgesel enerji sistematiğinden kasıtlı olarak dışlandığını ve yalnızca sınırlı erişim alanları ile yetinmek zorunda bırakıldığını göstermektedir. BTC hattı örneği, bu dışlama stratejisinin en simgesel biçimidir. 1990’ların sonunda projelendirilen ve 2006’da faaliyete geçen hat, Azerbaycan petrolünü Gürcistan ve Türkiye üzerinden Akdeniz’e taşıyarak hem Rusya’yı hem de İran’ı bypass etmeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu hat planlanırken Ermenistan’ın jeostratejik konumu gündeme gelmiştir. Ancak Azerbaycan’ın sert karşı çıkışı ve Türkiye’nin Ermenistan’a yönelik siyasi tutumu, bu alternatifini geçersiz kılmıştır (Pamir, 2011). Nitekim dönemin Azerbaycan Cumhurbaşkanı Haydar Aliyev, projenin yalnızca ekonomik değil, aynı zamanda “*Ermenistan’ın yalnızlaştırılması*” açısından bir araç olarak kullanıldığını açıkça ifade etmiştir (Karadağ & Top, 2012).

Benzer biçimde TANAP ve TAP projeleri de Ermenistan'ı sistem dışında bırakacak şekilde planlanmış ve hayata geçirilmiştir. TANAP'ın, Azerbaycan gazını Türkiye'ye, TAP'ın ise bu gazı Avrupa'ya ulaştırma amacı taşıdığı düşünüldüğünde, Ermenistan'ın coğrafi konumuna rağmen bu projelere dâhil edilmemesi stratejik bir dışlamanın kanıtı olarak değerlendirilebilir. Avrupa Birliği'nin enerji güvenliği politikaları çerçevesinde çeşitlendirilmiş tedarik yolları oluşturma hedefi, “stratejik uyum” göstermeyen aktörlerin sistem dışı bırakılmasını meşrulaştırmıştır (Yergin, 2011).

Tablo 2. Bakü- Tiflis–Ceyhan (BTC) boru hattı.

Yıl	Tonaj (milyon ton)	Notlar & Kaynaklar
2020	~211 Milyon ton (~578 kb/d ortalama)	2020'de günlük ortalama 578.000 b/d taşıma yapıldı; toplam yıllık taşıma yaklaşık 211 milyon tondur
2022	~30 Milyon ton (224 milyon varil)	2022'de 224 milyon varil (~30 milyon ton) petrol taşındı; 5.000 tanker yüklendi
2023	30.192 Milyon ton	2023'te 30.192 milyon ton petrol transfer edildi; yıllık artış %1,5; Kazakistan/Türkmenistan hacmi 5.24 Milyon ton
2024	29.471 Milyon ton	2024'te 29.471 milyon ton taşındı; yıllık %2,4 azalma; Azerbaycan payı %82 (24.173 Milyon ton); transit hacim 5.298 Milyon ton
2025 (Ocak–Nisan)	~9.3 Milyon ton	2025'in ilk 4 ayında taşıma 9.3 milyon tona geriledi; %3,1 düşüş gerçekleşti.

Bu dışlanma sadece enerji alanında kalmamış, ticaret ve ulaşım koridorları da benzer şekilde tasarlanmıştır. 2017'de hizmete giren Bakü-Tiflis-Kars (BTK) Demiryolu, “Demir İpek Yolu” projesinin bir parçası olarak inşa edilmiştir. Ancak bu güzergâhta da Ermenistan'a yer verilmemiştir. Sovyet döneminde faal olan Gümrü–Kars demiryolu hattı, siyasi sebeplerle işlevsiz hale getirilmiş ve Ermenistan ticari bağlantılarını kaybetmiştir (Üzümcü & Akdeniz, 2014). Bu projeler Ermenistan'ı yalnızca enerji geçiş gelirlerinden değil, bölgesel entegrasyon olanaklarından da mahrum bırakmıştır.

Enerji hatlarının geçtiği ülkelerle kurulan siyasi ilişkiler de Ermenistan'ın dışlanmasını pekiştirmiştir. Türkiye'nin Azerbaycan ile geliştirdiği “stratejik ortaklık” çerçevesinde enerji projeleri bir dış politika aracı haline

gelmiş; Ermenistan'ın dışlanması sadece güvenlik gerekçeleriyle değil, aynı zamanda kimlik, tarihsel hafıza ve müttefiklik ilişkileri üzerinden de gerekçelendirilmiştir (Altunışık, 2020). Türkiye'nin bu projelerdeki merkezi konumu, enerji hatlarının jeopolitik mühendislik aracına dönüştüğünü açık biçimde göstermektedir.

Güney Kafkasya'daki enerji güzergâhları, jeopolitik hedeflerin mekânsal izdüşümüdür. Bu güzergâhlar, dost ülkeleri birbirine bağlarken, “uyumsuz” ya da “kararsız” aktörleri sistemin dışında bırakmakta ve yeni bir bölgesel hiyerarşi kurmaktadır. Ermenistan'ın bu sistemin dışında tutulması, yalnızca çatışma temelli ilişkilerle değil, çok daha köklü bir bölgesel yeniden yapılandırma süreciyle ilgilidir. Bu dışlama, aynı zamanda Ermenistan'ı Rusya'ya daha fazla bağımlı hale getirmiş ve bölgesel özerkliğini zayıflatmıştır.

ERMENİSTAN'IN JEOPOLİTİK YALNIZLIĞI: BÖLGESEL VE YAPISAL FAKTÖRLER

Ermenistan'ın Güney Kafkasya'daki enerji projelerinden dışlanması, yalnızca ekonomik altyapı düzeyinde bir durum değil, ülkenin bölgesel sistem içerisindeki yerinin yeniden tanımlandığı yapısal bir jeopolitik yalnızlaşma sürecine işaret etmektedir. Bu yalnızlaşma hem tarihsel ihtilafların hem de bölgesel ittifak mimarisinin sonucu olarak şekillenmiştir. Enerji hatlarının dışında bırakılmak, Ermenistan'ın bölgesel ve uluslararası karar alma süreçlerinden dışlanmasını da beraberinde getirmiştir. Böylece ülke, yalnızca fiziksel altyapıdan değil, siyasal etki alanından da giderek marjinalleşen bir aktör haline gelmiştir. Bu sürecin temel belirleyicilerinden biri, Ermenistan'ın hem doğudan (Azerbaycan) hem de batıdan (Türkiye) diplomatik abluka altında olmasıdır. Türkiye'nin 1993 yılında sınırlarını kapatması ve diplomatik ilişkileri askıya alması, yalnızca ekonomik bir kayıp değil, Ermenistan'ın Batı ile kara bağlantısını doğrudan etkileyen bir jeopolitik hamle olmuştur (De Waal, 2013). Aynı dönemde Azerbaycan ile devam eden Dağlık Karabağ çatışması ise Ermenistan'ı kuzeydeki Gürcistan dışında doğrudan temas kurabileceği bir komşudan da mahrum bırakmıştır. Gürcistan üzerinden Rusya'ya ve sınırlı ölçüde Avrupa'ya açılan yollar ise hem coğrafi hem de diplomatik olarak kırılmıştır.

Harita 1. Ermenistan ve Azerbaycan Çatışması: Dağlık Karabağ Bölgesindeki Saldırıları



Kaynak: (Cerillo, 2023).

Bu jeopolitik sıkışmışlık, Ermenistan'ın enerji projelerinden dışlanmasıyla daha da derinleşmiştir. BTC, TANAP, TAP ve SCP gibi projelerin tamamında Ermenistan'ın bypass edilmesi, ülkeyi bölgesel entegrasyonun dışında bırakarak kalmamış, Moskova'ya olan ekonomik ve güvenlik bağımlılığını da artırmıştır. Ermenistan'ın enerji ithalatında ana tedarikçisi Rusya'dır ve bu tedarik, Gazprom'un tam kontrolündeki Gazprom Armenia aracılığıyla sağlanmaktadır. Bu durum, ülkenin enerji alanında stratejik karar alma kapasitesini sınırlandırmakta, siyasi olarak da Kremlin ile uyumlu politikalar izlemek zorunda kalmasına yol açmaktadır (Giragosian, 2010; 2013). Diğer yandan, Türkiye bu süreçte yalnızca enerji geçiş ülkesi olarak değil, bölgesel düzen kurucu bir aktör olarak öne çıkmıştır. Türkiye, TANAP ve BTC gibi projelerde yalnızca bir enerji geçiş ülkesi değil, diplomatik görünürlüğünü artırmaya çalışan bir aktör olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, literatürde Türkiye'nin bu projelerde lider rolünden ziyade koridor ve aracılık rolü üstlendiğini vurgulayan çalışmalar da mevcuttur. Ermenistan'ın dışlanması, bu ittifakın güvenlik temelli değil, kimlik temelli bir yönelimi olduğunu da göstermektedir. Bu tür dışlama, yalnızca teknik kriterlerle değil, müttefiklik bağlarının ideolojik temelleriyle de açıklanmalıdır (Altunışık, 2020).

Harita 2. Zengezur Koridorunun Önemi



Kaynak: (Ketenci, 2022).

Zengezur Koridoru tartışmaları da Ermenistan'ın jeopolitik yalnızlığını derinleştiren örneklerden biridir. Azerbaycan ile Nahçıvan'ı karadan bağlamayı amaçlayan bu proje, Türkiye ile Türk dünyasını fiziksel olarak birleştirme hedefiyle kurgulanmıştır. Bu bağlamda koridorun sadece ekonomik değil, ideolojik bir işlevi de bulunmaktadır (Ağır, 2023). Ancak bu projede Ermenistan, yalnızca bir “geçiş noktası” olarak görülmektedir. Bu durum, ülkenin egemenlik kapasitesinin zedelendiği ve kendi toprakları üzerindeki karar alma mekanizmalarının dış aktörler tarafından yönlendirildiği anlamına gelmektedir (Avdaliani, 2021). Ermenistan'ın projeye mesafeli yaklaşımı, bu egemenlik kaybına duyduğu tepkiden kaynaklanmaktadır.

ABD ve AB gibi Batılı aktörlerin Ermenistan'a yönelik politikaları da bu yalnızlaşma sürecinde belirleyici olmuştur. Batı, enerji projelerinde Azerbaycan ve Gürcistan ile yakın işbirliği geliştirirken, Ermenistan'ı çoğunlukla Rusya'nın etki alanı içinde değerlendirmeyi tercih etmiştir. Bu durum, Ermenistan'ın Batı ile olan temaslarını büyük ölçüde yumuşak güç düzeyinde sınırlı tutmuş, doğrudan altyapı yatırımlarından dışlanmasına neden olmuştur (Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015). Ermenistan'a sağlanan yardımlar, daha çok demokratikleşme, yargı reformu ve kültürel işbirliği gibi alanlarda yoğunlaşmış, stratejik altyapı desteği konusunda dikkatli bir tutum izlenmiştir.

Çin'in Kuşak-Yol Girişimi kapsamında da Ermenistan'ın marjinal bir rol üstlenmesi dikkat çekicidir. Çin'in bölgedeki yatırımları büyük ölçüde Azerbaycan ve Gürcistan'a yoğunlaşırken, Ermenistan'a yapılan altyapı yatırımları düşük hacimlidir ve çoğunlukla yerel düzeyde sınırlı projelerden ibarettir. Bu durum, Ermenistan'ın büyük küresel projelere hem siyasi hem de ekonomik olarak entegre olamadığını ve bölgedeki yapısal dışlanmışlığın çok boyutlu olduğunu göstermektedir.

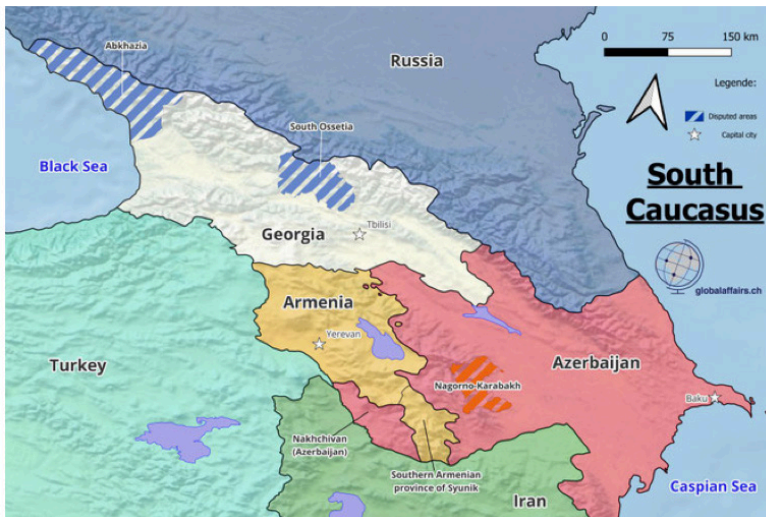
2020 İkinci Karabağ Savaşı sonrasında imzalanan ateşkes anlaşması ile ortaya çıkan yeni bölgesel düzlem, Ermenistan'ın yalnızlığını daha da kurumsallaştırmıştır. Azerbaycan ve Türkiye arasında geliştirilen yeni enerji ve ulaştırma projeleri, Ermenistan'a yalnızca "geçiş koridoru" rolü biçmekte, bu ise ülkenin siyasi egemenliğini sembolik hale getiren bir pozisyon yaratmaktadır. Ermenistan açısından bu durum, bağımsızlık sonrası elde edilen sınırlı egemenliğin yeniden tırpanlandığı bir jeopolitik krizdir (İsmayilov & Papazian, 2021: 115-117).

Rusya'nın bölgedeki rolü ise hem destekleyici hem de sınırlayıcıdır. Bir yandan Ermenistan'ın güvenliğini sağlama iddiasıyla bölgede askeri varlığını sürdürmekte, diğer yandan enerji politikası ve diplomatik yönlendirme yoluyla ülkenin hareket alanını kısıtlamaktadır. Kolektif Güvenlik Antlaşması Örgütü (CSTO) ve Avrasya Ekonomik Birliği (EAEU) gibi yapılar aracılığıyla Ermenistan'ın Batı ile entegrasyonunun önüne set çekilmekte, bu da ülkenin dış politika seçeneklerini daraltmaktadır (Tsygankov, 2012; Erenel & Gedik, 2022: 164). 2020 sonrası dönemde CSTO'nun Karabağ gelişmelerine kayıtsız kalması, Ermenistan'da bu yapılara karşı duyulan güveni ciddi şekilde zedelemiştir. Tüm bu gelişmeler ışığında, Ermenistan'ın dışlanması yalnızca enerji projeleriyle sınırlı olmayan, çok katmanlı bir yalnızlaşma sürecidir. Ülkenin bölgesel altyapı projelerine katılamaması, siyasi ittifaklara entegre olamaması ve büyük güçlerden stratejik destek görememesi, yapısal bir dışlanmışlık üretmektedir. Bu durum, yalnızca ekonomik büyüme açısından değil, uluslararası sisteme katılım ve bölgesel öznellik açısından da ciddi bir dezavantaj yaratmaktadır. Ermenistan'ın bu yalnızlığı, mevcut jeopolitik denklemde pozisyonunu zayıflatmakta, onu dış dinamiklere daha bağımlı bir aktör haline getirmektedir.

BÜYÜK GÜÇLERİN STRATEJİK YÖNELİMLERİ VE ERMENİSTAN'IN KONUMSUZLUĞU

Güney Kafkasya, enerji güvenliği, ulaşım koridorları ve büyük güç rekabeti bakımından stratejik önemi haiz bir bölgedir. Bu önemin artmasıyla birlikte, bölgedeki ülkeler yalnızca kendi dış politikalarını değil, aynı zamanda küresel güç merkezlerinin stratejik planlamalarını da doğrudan etkileyen özneler haline gelmişlerdir. Ancak bu çok kutuplu jeopolitik denklemde, Ermenistan, ne Batı'nın desteklediği enerji projelerine entegre olabilmiş ne de Avrasya merkezli stratejik vizyonlarda yapısal bir rol üstlenebilmiştir. Bu nedenle, Ermenistan'ın durumu, yalnızca dışlanmışlık değil, aynı zamanda bir "konumsuzluk" halidir, zira ülke, hiçbir büyük güç mimarisine anlamlı bir şekilde dâhil olamamaktadır. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin Güney Kafkasya politikasının temel yönü, özellikle enerji güvenliği bağlamında Azerbaycan ve Gürcistan'a yönelmiştir. ABD, 1990'ların sonundan itibaren BTC, BTE ve TANAP gibi projeleri desteklemiş, bu projelerdeki güzergâh seçimleri Ermenistan'ı doğrudan dışlamıştır. Washington yönetimi, Ermenistan'a yönelik yardımlarını ise çoğunlukla demokratikleşme, insan hakları ve sivil toplum gibi "yumuşak güç" araçları üzerinden yürütmüş, enerji gibi jeopolitik düzeyi yüksek projelerde Ermenistan'a yer açmamıştır (Shaffer, 2011b). Bu durum, Ermenistan'ın Batı nezdindeki pozisyonunun da belirsiz ve tali düzeyde kaldığını göstermektedir.

Harita 3. Güney Kafkasya'da Türkiye, Ermenistan ve Azerbaycan.



Kaynak: (Global Affairs, 2024).

Avrupa Birliği de benzer bir yönelim sergilemiş ve Ermenistan'ı enerji projeleri bağlamında ikincil düzeyde değerlendirmiştir. AB'nin "Doğu Ortaklığı" programı kapsamında Ermenistan'a yönelik yardım projeleri uygulanmış olsa da bu projeler çoğunlukla altyapı ve enerji entegrasyonu yerine idari reformlar, hukukun üstünlüğü ve yolsuzlukla mücadele gibi konulara odaklanmıştır (Delcour & Wolczuk, 2015; Gedik, 2025: 21-22). AB destekli enerji güzergâhlarının (örneğin TAP) tamamında Azerbaycan gazı, Türkiye üzerinden Avrupa'ya taşınmakta, bu süreçte Ermenistan hiçbir aşamada transit ülke veya üretici ortak olarak görülmemektedir. Bu dışlama, yalnızca teknik değil, aynı zamanda stratejik bir tercihi yansıtmaktadır. Ermenistan, Batı açısından güvenilir bir ortak değil, Rusya'nın etki alanındaki bir tampon ülke olarak konumlanmıştır.

Rusya ise Ermenistan'ı kendi etki alanı içinde tutmak için çok yönlü bir strateji benimsemiştir. Bu strateji, askeri iş birlikleri (örneğin Gümrü'deki 102. üs), enerji sektörü üzerindeki doğrudan kontrol (*Gazprom Armenia*), bölgesel güvenlik yapıları (CSTO), ve ekonomik entegrasyon girişimleri (EAEU) ile kurumsallaştırılmıştır. Ermenistan, enerji sektöründe Rusya'ya neredeyse mutlak bağımlı hale getirilmiş, bu durum ülkenin dış politika özerkliğini zayıflatmıştır (Giragosian, 2010). Ermenistan'ın dışı açılmasını mümkün kılacak projeler (örneğin BTK Demiryolu, TANAP) dışlanarak, Moskova'nın ülke üzerindeki denetimi daha da artırılmıştır. Ancak 2020 Karabağ Savaşı sonrasında Rusya ile Ermenistan arasındaki ilişkilerde derin bir güven krizi yaşanmıştır. CSTO'nun çatışmalar sırasında pasif kalması ve Rusya'nın Azerbaycan ile Türkiye'nin askeri ilerleyişine doğrudan engel olmaması, Ermenistan kamuoyunda Rusya'ya yönelik güveni zedelemiş, ancak alternatif bir stratejik destek de bulunmadığı için bu eleştiriler yapısal bir dönüşüme yol açmamıştır. Böylece Ermenistan, hem Batı'dan yeterli stratejik destek alamayan hem de Rusya'ya mutlak şekilde güvenemeyen bir "konumsuzluk" pozisyonuna itilmiştir.

Çin'in Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi (BRI) çerçevesinde Güney Kafkasya'ya açılımı da Ermenistan açısından kayda değer bir fırsat yaratmamıştır. Çin yatırımları Azerbaycan, Gürcistan ve Türkiye arasında bağlantı kuran hatlara yönelmiş, Ermenistan ise bu koridorların dışında bırakılmıştır. 2017 yılında hizmete giren Bakü-Tiflis-Kars demiryolu hattı, Çin'in Avrupa'ya ulaşımındaki ana güzergâhlardan biri olarak işlev görmeye başlamıştır. Bu süreçte Ermenistan transit güzergâh olmaktan tamamen uzak kalmıştır. Çin'in yatırım stratejisi doğrudan ekonomik getiri ve istikrar beklentilerine

dayanmakta, bu bağlamda Ermenistan gibi siyasi belirsizliklerin yüksek olduğu aktörler sistem dışı bırakılmaktadır (Üzümcü & Akdeniz, 2014).

Ermenistan'ın bu konumsuzluğu, enerji projelerinden dışlanmasıyla birlikte daha da derinleşmiştir. Bu dışlanma sadece ekonomik gelir kaybı değil, uluslararası sistemdeki söz hakkının da azalması anlamına gelmektedir. Enerji hatları, yalnızca kaynak taşıyan altyapılar değil, aynı zamanda siyasi müttefiklik ağlarını yeniden kuran ve pekiştiren jeopolitik araçlardır. Bu ağların dışında kalan Ermenistan, bölgesel karar alma süreçlerinde etkisiz, edilgen ve yalnız bir pozisyonda kalmaktadır. Örneğin, Güney Gaz Koridoru kapsamında yapılan toplantılar, teknik detaylar kadar siyasi mesajlar da içermekte, bu toplantılara dahil olmayan aktörler hem diplomatik temsil düzeyinde eksik kalmakta hem de küresel enerji yönetiminden dışlanmaktadır (Goyushov, 2019). Bütün bu gelişmeler Ermenistan'ı, çok kutuplu dünya düzeninde konumlandıramayan, sabit bir dış politika vizyonu geliştiremeyen, sistem dışı bırakılmış bir aktör haline getirmiştir. “Konumsuzluk” burada yalnızca coğrafi değil, diplomatik, stratejik ve normatif bir yalnızlaşmayı tanımlamaktadır. Ermenistan'ın dışlanmasını açıklayan bir diğer boyut ise “normatif yalnızlaşma”dır. Bu kavram, Ermenistan'ın uluslararası toplumda güvenilir bir ortak olarak görülmemesini ifade etmektedir. Demokratikleşme, insan hakları ve uluslararası hukuk konularında yaşanan sorunlar, Ermenistan'ın Batı ve bölgesel aktörler nezdinde güven kaybına yol açmıştır. Bu durum, enerji koridorları ve ekonomik işbirliği projelerinde Ermenistan'ın normatif açıdan dışlanmasına katkıda bulunmuştur (Kaya & Özdal, 2023).

Ermenistan'ın büyük güçler karşısındaki bu pasif ve belirsiz pozisyonu, enerji altyapısından dışlanmanın ötesinde bir yapısal dışlanmaya işaret etmektedir. Bu durum, sadece bölgesel düzlemde değil, uluslararası sistemdeki eşitsiz entegrasyonun bir tezahürü olarak değerlendirilebilmektedir (Şafak, 2025). Ermenistan ne Batı'nın stratejik ortağı ne Avrasya'nın merkez aktörü ne de Çin'in küresel lojistik vizyonunun parçasıdır. Bu “arada kalmışlık” hali, ülkenin yalnızca mevcut sorunlarını değil, gelecekteki pozisyonunu da belirsiz ve kırılğan kılmaktadır.

ENERJİ HATLARI: JEOPOLİTİK HARİTALARIN YENİDEN ÇİZİLMESİ

Güney Kafkasya'daki enerji projelerinin yalnızca ekonomik kalkınma ve teknik taşıma hatları değil, aynı zamanda jeopolitik sınırların yeniden

çizildiği ve stratejik aktörlerin konumlarının yeniden tanımlandığı araçlar olduğunu göstermektedir. Enerji hatlarının tasarımı, yalnızca mühendislik ve maliyet hesabına değil, aynı zamanda stratejik sadakat, güvenlik ortaklıkları ve siyasi uyum gibi jeopolitik parametrelere dayanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Ermenistan'ın enerji projelerinden sistematik olarak dışlanması, salt teknik veya çatışma temelli bir durum değil, küresel ve bölgesel güç mimarisinin bir sonucudur.

Jeopolitik kuramlar açısından değerlendirildiğinde, çalışmanın bulguları özellikle Halford Mackinder'in "Kalpgâh" (*Heartland*) ve Nicholas Spykman'ın "Kenar Kuşak" teorileri ile doğrudan örtüşmektedir. Mackinder'in öne sürdüğü gibi, Avrasya'nın merkezine hâkim olan güç, küresel dengeyi belirleyecek ana aktör konumundadır (Mackinder, 1904). Bu bağlamda Güney Kafkasya, Kalpgâh'ın doğal eşik bölgesi olarak tanımlanabilir. Enerji hatlarının bu bölgeden geçmesi, hem bu stratejik merkezde nüfuz tesis etme hem de buradan çıkan kaynakların Batı'ya güvenli biçimde ulaştırılması açısından yaşamsaldır. Ancak bu nüfuz mücadelesi, yalnızca aktörlerin varlığı üzerinden değil, kimin sistemin dışında bırakıldığı üzerinden de belirlenmektedir. Ermenistan'ın dışlanması, Kalpgâh çevresindeki hatlara erişimden mahrum bırakılmasının bir tezahürüdür. Benzer şekilde, Spykman'ın Kenar Kuşak teorisi de Güney Kafkasya'nın çevre bölge olarak taşıdığı önemi açıklamaktadır. Spykman'a göre Avrasya'nın kıyı kuşaklarını kontrol eden güç, küresel hâkimiyeti elde eder (Spykman, 2020). Bu bağlamda, Türkiye, Gürcistan ve Azerbaycan'ı birbirine bağlayan enerji güzergâhları, Kenar kuşağında Batı'nın stratejik etkisini sürdürme çabasının bir sonucudur. Ermenistan, bu çerçevede hem güvenlik hem de stratejik uyum açısından "riskli" bir ülke olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bu nedenle dışlanması büyük güçlerin uzun vadeli stratejileri açısından "işlevsel bir zorunluluk" olarak biçimlenmiştir. Zbigniew Brzezinski'nin Avrasya'ya ilişkin "Büyük Satranç Tahtası" benzetmesi de bu bağlamda açıklayıcıdır. Brzezinski (1997), Avrasya'yı küresel sistemin en kritik jeopolitik alanı olarak tanımlarken, buradaki enerji projeksiyonlarının yalnızca bölgesel değil küresel sonuçlar doğuracağını belirtmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, BTC, TANAP ve TAP gibi projeler sadece enerji taşıyan altyapılar değildir. ABD ve müttefiklerinin Rusya'yı çevreleme, Çin'in etkisini dengeleme ve İran'ı izole etme stratejilerinin araçları olarak işlev görmektedir (Kakışım, 2022). Bu bağlamda, Ermenistan'ın dışlanması, yalnızca Ermenistan'a dair bir strateji değil, daha büyük bir jeopolitik mühendislik sürecinin yan ürünü olarak okunmalıdır. Tartışmanın

bir diğer önemli boyutu, enerji hatlarının yalnızca teknik güzergâhlar değil, siyasi sadakatin ve ideolojik hizalanmanın haritası olmasıdır. Enerji projelerine dâhil edilen ülkeler, genellikle müttefiklik ilişkileri açısından güvenilir olarak tanımlanmakta, dışlanan aktörler ise “uyumsuz” ya da “kararsız” kategorisine yerleştirilmektedir. Bu noktada Daniel Yergin’in (2011) vurguladığı gibi, enerji güvenliği, sadece arzın sürekliliği değil, aynı zamanda stratejik uyumun ve bölgesel istikrarın sağlanması anlamına da gelmektedir. Bu bağlamda Ermenistan hem çatışmalı geçmişini hem de Rusya ile olan derin bağımlılık ilişkisi nedeniyle stratejik uyum sağlama kapasitesinden yoksun bir aktör olarak konumlandırılmıştır.

Enerji hatlarının geçtiği ülkeler, zamanla yalnızca geçiş koridoru değil, aynı zamanda bölgesel karar alma süreçlerinde etkili aktörler haline gelmektedir. Örneğin Türkiye, TANAP ve BTC projeleri sayesinde yalnızca enerji geçiş ülkesi olmamış, Güney Kafkasya’daki jeopolitik düzenin kurucu unsurlarından biri haline gelmiştir. Benzer şekilde, Azerbaycan, enerji kaynaklarını doğrudan ihraç edebilen bir üretici ülke olarak hem ekonomik hem de siyasi etkisini artırmıştır. Buna karşın Ermenistan, enerji sistematığının dışında kalmıştır (İlter & Kınık, 2017). Yalnızca tüketici ülke konumunda kalmakla birlikte, enerji stratejilerini belirleyen karar mekanizmalarının da dışında bırakılmıştır.

Bölgesel dışlama stratejilerinin sadece enerji sektörüyle sınırlı olmadığını, ulaşım, ticaret ve diplomasi alanlarına da yayıldığını göstermektedir. Bakü-Tiflis-Kars demiryolu hattının Gümrü-Kars hattının yerine inşa edilmesi ve Ermenistan’ın bu güzergâhta devre dışı bırakılması, dışlama mantığının çok boyutlu olduğunu kanıtlamaktadır. Bu dışlama pratikleri, yalnızca ekonomik işbirliğini sınırlamamakta ülkenin siyasi manevra alanını da daraltmaktadır. Bu noktada dışlama, ekonomik izolasyonun ötesine geçerek bir tür “jeopolitik kısıtlama” işlevi görmektedir (Özpay, 2018). Bu yapının Ermenistan üzerindeki etkisi, yalnızca bölgesel değil, iç politika düzleminde de derinleştirici sonuçlar üretmektedir. Ülke içinde Rusya’ya bağımlılığın artması, dış politikanın çeşitlenememesi, siyasi elitlerin bölgesel ittifak sistemlerine erişememesi gibi yapısal sorunlar, enerji temelli dışlanma stratejilerinin doğrudan sonucudur (Durmaz, 2025: 130). Bu bağlamda Ermenistan, kendi dinamikleriyle dış sistem arasında sıkışmış bir “ara bölge devleti”ne dönüşmüştür.

Literatürde Karabağ çatışması dışında Ermenistan’ın enerji projelerinden dışlanmasını açıklayan “teknik nedenlerden” de söz edilmektedir. Burada

teknik nedenlerden kastedilen, projelerin fizibilitesini doğrudan etkileyen jeolojik riskler, altyapı yetersizlikleri, yüksek yatırım maliyetleri ve güvenlik tehditleridir (Demirci, 2022). Örneğin, Ermenistan’ın dağlık coğrafyası ve mevcut enerji altyapısının yetersizliği, boru hatlarının bu ülke üzerinden geçirilmesini ekonomik açıdan maliyetli ve güvenlik açısından riskli hale getirmiştir. Bu nedenle dışlanma yalnızca siyasi değil, aynı zamanda teknik ve ekonomik gerekçelerle de ilişkilendirilmiştir. Ancak bu çalışmanın katkısı, dışlanma sürecini jeopolitik teoriler, büyük güç stratejileri ve enerji güvenliği bağlamında bütüncül biçimde ele almasıdır. Ermenistan’ın dışlanması, yalnızca iki ülke arasındaki çatışmanın ya da diplomatik gerilimin sonucu değildir. Aksine, bölgesel ve küresel güç dengelerinin, enerji hatları üzerinden yeniden inşa edildiği bir düzlemde, Ermenistan’ın “stratejik olarak işlevsiz” bir aktör olarak tanımlanmasının sonucudur. Bu tartışma, enerji projelerinin sadece teknik ve ekonomik yatırımlar değil, siyasi mühendislik araçları olduğunu açık biçimde göstermektedir. Güney Kafkasya’da çizilen her boru hattı, yalnızca petrol ya da doğalgazı değil, siyasi sadakati, güvenliği ve dışlayıcılığı da taşımaktadır (Bekirova, 2023). Bu bağlamda Ermenistan’ın dışlanması, bölgesel düzeyde bir kayıp olmanın ötesinde, uluslararası sistemin işleyiş mantığına dair yapısal bir örnek olarak değerlendirilmelidir.

SONUÇ

Güney Kafkasya bölgesi, jeopolitik önemi, enerji kaynaklarının taşıma güzergâhlarındaki kritik konumu ve büyük güçlerin stratejik yönelimlerinin kesişim noktası olması bakımından uluslararası ilişkiler literatüründe ayrıcalıklı bir yere sahiptir. Bu çalışma, söz konusu stratejik bağlamda Ermenistan’ın sistematik olarak dışlandığı enerji projelerini merkezine alarak, bölgesel dışlayıcılığın yapısal ve çok katmanlı doğasını analiz etmeyi amaçlamıştır. Ermenistan’ın yalnızca teknik projelerde yer almadığını değil, bölgesel jeopolitik düzenin dışında konumlandırıldığını göstermektedir. Ermenistan’ın dışlanmasının tek bir nedene indirgenemeyeceğini, aksine tarihsel çatışmalar, ideolojik kutuplaşmalar, büyük güç rekabeti ve stratejik güvensizliklerin iç içe geçtiği karmaşık bir jeopolitik bağlamda gerçekleştiğini ortaya koymuştur. Enerji hatları, yalnızca ekonomik rasyonaliteye değil, müttefiklik ilişkilerine, güvenlik mimarilerine ve normatif yönelimlere dayalı olarak şekillenmiştir. Bu noktada Ermenistan hem Batı hem de Avrasya blokları nezdinde “tam anlamıyla entegre edilemeyen”, dolayısıyla yapısal olarak dışlanan bir aktör durumuna itilmiştir.

Bu durumun ilk boyutu enerji güvenliğiyle ilgilidir. Türkiye, Azerbaycan ve Gürcistan arasında kurulan enerji ittifakı, sadece doğalgaz ve petrol taşımakla kalmayıp aynı zamanda Batı dünyasının enerji arz güvenliğini sağlama misyonu üstlenmiştir. Bu projeler ABD ve Avrupa Birliği tarafından desteklenmiş, Rusya'nın bölgesel enerji hegemonyasını dengeleme amacı taşımıştır. Ancak bu hattın dışında kalan Ermenistan hem teknik güzergâh alternatifsizliği hem de güvenlik temelli kaygılar nedeniyle sürecin dışına itilmiştir. Azerbaycan ile süregelen çatışmalı ilişki ve Türkiye ile diplomatik kopukluk, bu dışlamanın temelini oluşturmaktadır. Bu iki ülkeyle kara sınırlarının kapalı olması, enerji projeleri açısından Ermenistan'ı güvenilmez ve geçişsiz bir bölgeye dönüştürmüştür.

İkinci boyut, büyük güçlerin stratejik vizyonlarıdır. ABD, Güney Kafkasya'daki etkisini Azerbaycan ve Gürcistan üzerinden genişletmeyi tercih etmiş, Ermenistan'a ise ağırlıklı olarak yumuşak güç araçlarıyla yaklaşmıştır. Avrupa Birliği'nin bölgeye yönelik projelerinde ise teknik reformlar ve demokratikleşme ön plana çıkarken, stratejik altyapı yatırımları Azerbaycan ve Türkiye hattında yoğunlaşmıştır. Rusya, Ermenistan'ı kendi etki alanında tutmak için askeri ve enerji temelli bağımlılık ilişkileri geliştirmiş, fakat 2020 Karabağ Savaşı sonrası bu ilişkide kırılmalar yaşanmıştır. Çin ise Kuşak-Yol Girişimi kapsamında Azerbaycan ve Gürcistan'a öncelik verirken, Ermenistan marjinalize edilmiştir. Böylece Ermenistan, hiçbir büyük güç mimarisinde merkezi bir rol üstlenememiş, "konumsuz" bir aktör haline gelmiştir.

Üçüncü boyut, jeopolitik kuramlar bağlamında değerlendirilmelidir. Mackinder'in Kalpgâh, Spykman'ın Kenar Kuşak ve Brzezinski'nin Büyük Satranç Tahtası kavramları, bu bölgedeki enerji güzergâhlarının aynı zamanda siyasi gücün haritası olduğunu göstermektedir. Ermenistan'ın bu haritaların hiçbirinde stratejik bir geçiş noktası ya da güç merkezi olarak yer almaması, onun yalnızca teknik değil, kuramsal olarak da dışlanan bir aktör olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu dışlanma, ülkenin uluslararası sistemdeki ağırlığını zayıflatmakta, karar alma süreçlerinden uzaklaşmasına neden olmaktadır.

Öte yandan bölgesel ittifaklara entegre olamayan bir ülkenin, kalkınma, istikrar ve güvenlik gibi alanlarda sürdürülebilir politikalar geliştirmesi oldukça güçleşmektedir. Bu bağlamda, çalışmanın katkıları çok yönlüdür. İlk olarak, enerji hatlarının yalnızca ekonomik değil, aynı zamanda

ideolojik ve stratejik araçlar olarak işlev gördüğü gerçeği pekiştirilmiştir. İkinci olarak, Ermenistan örneği, dışlanmanın yalnızca aktif düşmanlıkla değil, pasif işlevsizlikle de gerçekleşebileceğini göstermektedir. Üçüncü olarak, dış politika yapıcıları için bu çalışma, yalnızca enerji güzergâhlarını değil, o güzergâhların dışına itilen aktörlerin risk faktörlerini de hesaba katmaları gerektiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu açıdan, dışlanmanın yalnızca bir ülkeye değil, bölgesel bütünlüğe ve uzun vadeli istikrara da zarar verebileceği vurgulanmalıdır. Gelecekteki araştırmalar açısından, bu çalışmanın genişletilmesi mümkündür. Özellikle Ermenistan'ın son dönemde AB ile yakınlaşma çabaları, enerji alternatifleri arayışları ve iç politik dönüşümler, yeni bir bağlam sunmaktadır. Ayrıca Zengezur Koridoru gibi projelerin uluslararası hukuk, egemenlik ve güvenlik perspektifinden incelenmesi, dışlama süreçlerinin yalnızca enerji ekseninde değil, çok boyutlu bir stratejik dizilim olarak değerlendirilmesine imkân tanıyacaktır. Ermenistan'ın yeniden entegre olabileceği bir bölgesel vizyonun nasıl inşa edileceği, sadece Güney Kafkasya'nın değil, daha geniş Avrasya coğrafyasının barış ve iş birliği mimarisi açısından da önem arz etmektedir. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, Ermenistan'ın Güney Kafkasya enerji haritasından dışlanmasını bir sonuç değil, bir strateji olarak okuyan, bu dışlanmanın yalnızca ekonomik değil, jeopolitik, normatif ve yapısal boyutlarını analiz eden bütüncül bir yaklaşım sunmaktadır. Jeopolitik rekabetin ve enerji diplomasisinin yoğunlaştığı bu dönemde, dışlama pratiklerinin uluslararası sistemde nasıl üretildiği ve hangi aktörleri marjinalleştirdiği sorusu, daha da önem kazanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda Ermenistan, sadece kendi başına bir örnek değil, küresel sistemin nasıl işlediğini anlamak açısından da açıklayıcı bir vakadır.

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EXPLORING OECD COUNTRIES IN TERMS OF GOVERNMENT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE READINESS WITH MULTIDIMENSIONAL SCALING

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI), impacting all sectors today, is employed to enhance production processes and increase business efficiency through advanced algorithms and big data analysis. AI-powered decision support systems and autonomous devices transform healthcare, finance, education, and production. AI also helps governments serve citizens faster, better, and more efficiently. Big data analytics and automation can cut public service costs, speed up bureaucracy, and improve quality. Citizens can get instant answers from AI-powered chatbots and automated response systems. Countries are competing to advance the use of AI and become leaders in its benefits. The 2024 Government AI Readiness Index (GAIRI) investigates the AI readiness of countries by analyzing forty indicators across ten dimensions, which make up three fundamental pillars (government, technology sector, and data and infrastructure). This study visualizes the thirty-eight member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) according to their similarities in terms of AI readiness using the three pillar scores of the 2024 GAIRI with multidimensional scaling. Thus, OECD countries that are similar to each other in terms of AI readiness are identified.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, OECD, Government Artificial Intelligence Readiness Index, Multidimensional Scaling*

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In this article, Ethical Committee Approval is not needed.

DEVLET YÖNETİMİNDE YAPAY ZEKÂYA HAZIR OLMA AÇISINDAN OECD ÜLKELERİNİN ÇOK BOYUTLU ÖLÇEKLEME İLE İNCELENMESİ

ÖZ

Günümüzde tüm sektörleri etkileyen yapay zekâ, gelişmiş algoritmalar ve büyük veri analizi sayesinde üretim süreçlerini geliştirmek ve iş verimliliğini artırmak için kullanılmaktadır. Yapay zekâ destekli karar destek sistemleri ve otonom cihazlar sağlık, finans, eğitim ve üretimi dönüştürmektedir. Yapay zekâ ayrıca hükümetlerin vatandaşlara daha hızlı, daha iyi ve daha verimli hizmet vermesine yardımcı olmaktadır. Büyük veri analitiği ve otomasyon, kamu hizmeti maliyetlerini azaltabilir, bürokrasiyi hızlandırabilir ve kaliteyi artırabilir. Vatandaşlar, yapay zekâ destekli sohbet robotlarından ve otomatik yanıt sistemlerinden anında yanıt alabilirler. Ülkeler yapay zekâ kullanımını ilerletmek ve onun sağlayacağı faydalarda lider olmak için yarışmaktadır. 2024 Devletlerin Yapay Zekâya Hazır Olma Endeksi, üç temel sütunu (hükümet, teknoloji sektörü ve veri ve altyapı) oluşturan on boyutta kırk göstereyi analiz ederek ülkelerin yapay zekâya hazır olup olmadığını araştırmaktadır. Bu çalışma, 2024 Devletlerin Yapay Zekâya Hazır Olma Endeksinin üç sütun puanını kullanarak çok boyutlu ölçekleme ile otuz sekiz OECD üye ülkesini yapay zekâya hazır olma açısından benzerliklerine göre görselleştirmektedir. Böylece, yapay zekâya hazır olma açısından birbirine benzer OECD ülkeleri belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Yapay Zekâ, OECD, Devletlerin Yapay Zekâya Hazır Olma Endeksi, Çok Boyutlu Ölçekleme*

INTRODUCTION

Intelligence can be compactly defined as the aggregate of perception, analysis, and response (Chowdhary, 2020). However, a universally accepted definition of AI does not exist (OECD, 2019). One reason might be that AI tools possess the ability to perform a diverse array of tasks and generate various outputs (NASA, 2024). Nevertheless, it generally denotes the capacity of machines to replicate the intelligence of higher organisms (Bhardwaj et al., 2022). It primarily focuses on the automation of intelligent behavior, examined in all domains, including the human, animal, and vegetative worlds (Chowdhary, 2020). In November 2018, a subgroup was established by the AI Group of Experts at the OECD to create a description of an AI system. The description is intended to be technically accurate, technology-neutral, and applicable to both short- and long-term time horizons. It is also intended to be comprehensible. Afterwards, a definition of an AI system was established in 2019 (OECD, 2019). However, this definition was revised in 2023, and the revised definition is as follows: “An AI system is a machine-based system that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments. Different AI systems vary in their levels of autonomy and adaptiveness after deployment” (OECD, 2024).

John McCarthy credited the origin of modern AI research, coining the term at a conference at Dartmouth College in 1956. This signified the inception of the AI scientific domain (Xu et al., 2021). Herbert Simon, Arthur Samuel, Alan Newell, and Marvin Minsky also participated in this conference (OECD, 2019). Nonetheless, the potential for machines to replicate human behavior and possess cognitive abilities was previously proposed by Alan Turing (Mintz & Brodie, 2019), who formulated the Turing test to distinguish between humans and machines. A machine that passes the test is deemed qualified to be designated as AI (Mintz & Brodie, 2019). Although AI research has advanced consistently over the last sixty years, the expectations set by early AI proponents have been excessively optimistic. This resulted in an "AI winter" characterized by diminished funding and interest in AI research throughout the 1970s. The AI winter concluded in the 1990s as advancements in computational power and data storage rendered complex tasks achievable (OECD, 2019).

Humans have been the main determinant concept in solving many management problems, such as how to proceed, how to work the most

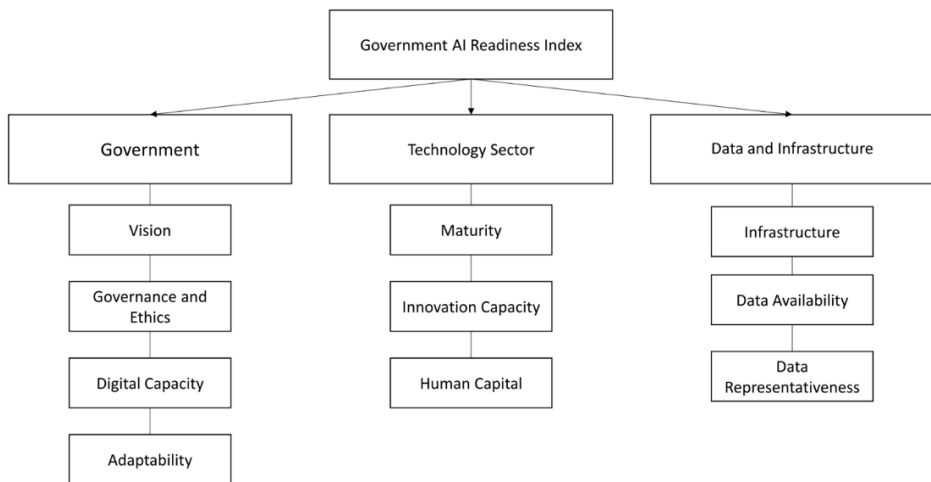
effective and efficient way, and how to achieve results. Scientists have constantly searched and studied to find better solutions, which has led to different periods. The digital age is the last stage of this development. It refers to the period when humans create technological infrastructure and data, service delivery is time- and labor-saving and efficient, and customers interact with software and applications instead of service providers (Ölmez & Bayrak, 2025). Currently, AI is revolutionizing the digital age. Since its rapid rise in recent years, AI has impacted almost all sectors. Thanks to advanced algorithms and big data analysis, AI has been implemented in a wide range of areas, including the optimization of production processes and the enhancement of business efficiency. AI offers innovative solutions in decision support systems and autonomous devices, revolutionizing healthcare, finance, education, and production. This rapid growth is transforming business and daily life. AI also helps governments provide faster, more efficient, and effective services to citizens. Big data analytics and automation can reduce public service operational costs, speed up bureaucratic processes, and improve service quality (Turkish Informatics Association, 2024). AI-powered chatbots and automated response systems can instantly answer questions from the public. In health, security, and transportation, smart systems can improve safety and reliability. AI-powered data analysis tools can improve public policy planning and resource efficiency. Thus, a more socially conscious and solution-focused public administration can be created (Turkish Informatics Association, 2024; Kayacı, 2025). In his study, Kayacı (2025: 413-422) lists the opportunities that AI offers to public administration at the individual and organizational levels. The opportunities offered by AI at the individual level include standardization of public service behavior, reduction of making different decisions, more effective decision-making processes and outcomes, increased information analysis capacity, insensitivity to incentives associated with decisions/tasks, prevention of corruption, and reduction of workload. Opportunities at organizational level include effective planning and allocation of necessary resources, increasing organizational efficiency through process automation, ensuring organizational flexibility, facilitating inter-organizational communication and cooperation, and strengthening transparency (Kayacı, 2025).

Countries are presently vying to establish leadership in AI development and to maximize the advantages of this technology previously outlined (Angın & Doğmazer, 2023). For this reason, they are engaging in research

and development endeavors to leverage AI. Dominant global economies, notably the United States of America, Russia, and China, anticipate the emergence of an ecosystem centered on AI in the future (Öztürk, 2022). The use of AI in the public sector is rapidly spreading in many different countries as a consequence of this (Busuioc, 2021).

Government AI Readiness Index (henceforth, GAIRI) (Nettel et al., 2024) evaluates the AI readiness of one hundred eighty-eight countries. While the global discourse predominantly centers on the governance of AI technology, a crucial inquiry pertains to how governments can utilize AI to enhance their performance. The effective and responsible adoption of AI can enable governments to improve service delivery, optimize operations, and tackle public challenges with increased precision and impact. The 2024 GAIRI investigates this readiness by analyzing forty indicators across ten dimensions which make up three fundamental pillars as shown in Figure 1 (Nettel et al., 2024).

Figure 1. Three pillars and ten dimensions of the GAIRI



Source: Nettel et al., 2024

A government must possess a strategic vision for the governance and development of AI, underpinned by suitable regulation and consideration of ethical risks (governance and ethics). Furthermore, it must possess robust internal digital capabilities, encompassing the skills and practices that facilitate its adaptability to emerging technologies (Nettel et al., 2024). Public entities depend on a robust provision of AI tools from the national

technology sector, that must be sufficiently developed to meet governmental demands. The sector must possess substantial innovation capacity, supported by a business environment conducive to entrepreneurship and a robust flow of research and development investment. Equally significant are robust levels of human capital, which propel the advancement of sophisticated AI solutions and guarantee the sector's responsiveness to the changing demands of governments (Nettel et al., 2024).

AI tools require substantial high-quality data (data availability) that must also be representative of the citizens within a specific country to mitigate bias and error (data representativeness). Ultimately, the potential of these data cannot be actualized without the requisite infrastructure to support AI tools and provide access to citizens (Nettel et al., 2024).

The GAIRI is calculated as follows: All indicator scores are normalized to a range of 0 to 100. The dimension score is derived by calculating the arithmetic mean of the indicator scores. The arithmetic mean of dimension scores within a pillar gives the pillar score. The GAIRI is the arithmetic mean of the three pillar scores. All indicators, dimensions, and pillars are assigned equal weight (Nettel et al., 2024).

This study seeks to address the research question: How similar are the thirty-eight OECD countries in terms of government AI readiness? OECD countries have set common goals, such as sustainable economic development, contributing to the development of global trade, and improving living standards in general (Eurostat, 2025). It is interesting to reveal how much similarity or difference there is among countries that share common goals. To that end, this study used the three pillar scores of the 2024 GAIRI for the thirty-eight OECD countries and employed multidimensional scaling to visualize these countries based on their similarities in AI readiness. To the best of the author's knowledge, multidimensional scaling has not been used to visually compare countries' readiness for AI in that sense. The resulting figure is subsequently analyzed to detect similar countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Montoya and Rivas (2019) examine factors affecting AI readiness in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) countries. They compare a ranking by the International Development Research Center (IDRC) on AI technology use in public services, governance, skills, and infrastructure to economic metrics such as unemployment rate, GDP-PPP, AI researcher cost, and

education levels. The study examines non-economic factors that affect AI readiness and its impact on citizens, such as data privacy policies and automation potential. It investigates current evaluation criteria for AI readiness and highlights key factors for LAC countries to consider during the AI revolution.

Nzobonimpa and Savard (2023) conduct a qualitative comparative analysis to assess governmental readiness for the responsible implementation of AI technologies. The authors contend that although numerous governments demonstrate readiness via policies and frameworks for AI integration, the actual execution frequently neglects ethical considerations and accountability measures, thereby posing substantial risks to trust and public interest. They utilized a fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis method, establishing a stringent consistency threshold of 0.80 to guarantee the robustness of their findings concerning the configurations of conditions that promote responsible AI practices. The study emphasizes that readiness encompasses more than technical infrastructure; it necessitates a comprehensive grasp of ethical ramifications and governance frameworks, thereby providing significant insights for both policymakers and academics in AI governance and responsible execution.

Nasution et al. (2024) critically examine the weighting criteria analyzed in the GAIRI to enhance assessment accuracy. Instead of using traditional averaging methods, the authors use geometric and arithmetic non-linear functions to analyze and evaluate the ranking of countries. They classify countries into three distinct groups through cluster analysis based on observed criteria. This classification provides a more nuanced view of how ready governments are for AI. The clustering method improves the way countries are grouped by their AI readiness and shows the similarities and differences within each cluster. This gives a better understanding of regional trends and allows for the formulation of targeted improvement strategies for each cluster.

Socol and Iuga (2024) utilize a dynamic panel data model with the System Generalized Method of Moments to examine the relationship between government AI readiness and brain drain from 2018 to 2022. They include multiple control variables, including government expenditure growth, GDP per capita growth, the number of employed ICT specialists, and various governance indicators. The findings demonstrate that brain drain adversely impacts governmental readiness for AI. The presence of ICT

specialists, strong governance frameworks, and favorable macroeconomic indicators, including government expenditure growth and GDP per capita growth, positively impact AI readiness.

Shonhe et al. (2024) examine the Eastern and Southern African Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) governments' readiness to use AI to improve public services. They used desktop research to analyze the 2022 GAIRI quantitative data. The findings showed that South Africa, Botswana, and Kenya are committed to using AI to advance. In the Data and Infrastructure pillar, ESARBICA countries excel, especially in data representativeness. The region is not ready to adopt AI due to several factors, including an immature technology sector for AI implementation, insufficient human capital, a deficit in innovation and digital capabilities, and the absence of a governmental AI strategy.

Tun et al. (2025) evaluate the GAIRI from 2020 to 2023 to measure the readiness of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) for AI implementation in healthcare. The study shows that AI governance for healthcare readiness in the ASEAN region is very different from one country to the next. Some member states are making a lot of progress, while others are falling behind, which could make the digital divide even bigger. Enhancing regulatory frameworks for comprehensive AI strategies, developing human capital, improving digital infrastructure, facilitating knowledge transfer, and guaranteeing access to high-quality Internet across the region will be crucial for the governance of AI in healthcare.

METHODOLOGY

Multidimensional scaling is a method employed to visualize the distances or dissimilarities among collections of objects. In a multidimensional scaling plot, similar objects are positioned in proximity to one another, while dissimilar objects are situated at greater distances apart. This method comprises various statistical techniques that spatially depict data structure, facilitating visualization and interpretation. It is especially effective for elucidating complex relationships and is frequently linked to mapping techniques (Manjunatha et al., 2024).

This method does not make any assumptions about the distribution of the data, whereas for factor analysis, there are assumptions such as multivariate normality and linear relationships (Alpar, 2013). Clustering analysis, a method comparable to multidimensional scaling, serves to group objects

without addressing their geometric representation in a low-dimensional space (Timm, 2002).

Multidimensional scaling comprises two types in general: metric and non-metric (Alpar, 2013). This study employs metric multidimensional scaling, and the steps are listed below. Let \mathbf{D} be an $n \times n$ matrix with the observed distances (original dissimilarities) $|\delta_{ij}|$ obtained from n objects and p variables. The following steps are then used to determine the coordinates of the objects in the plot. (Cox & Cox, 2001; Wickelmaier, 2003; Bulut, 2018):

- 1) By using Eq. (1), the matrix \mathbf{A} is calculated from \mathbf{D} by

$$\mathbf{A} = \left[-\frac{1}{2}\delta_{ij}^2\right] \tag{1}$$

- 2) Eq. (2) is used to compute the matrix \mathbf{B}

$$\mathbf{B} = \left(\mathbf{I} - \frac{1}{n}\mathbf{J}\right)\mathbf{A}\left(\mathbf{I} - \frac{1}{n}\mathbf{J}\right) \tag{2}$$

where \mathbf{I} is an $n \times n$ identity matrix and \mathbf{J} is an $n \times n$ matrix of ones.

- 3) \mathbf{B} is a symmetrical matrix and, with Eq. (3) it can be written as

$$\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{L}\mathbf{\Lambda}\mathbf{L}' = \mathbf{L}\mathbf{\Lambda}^{1/2}\mathbf{\Lambda}^{1/2}\mathbf{L}' \tag{3}$$

by using spectral decomposition where $\mathbf{\Lambda} = \text{diag}(\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_n)$, the diagonal matrix of eigenvalues of \mathbf{B} , and $\mathbf{L} = [\mathbf{v}_1 \ \mathbf{v}_2 \ \dots \ \mathbf{v}_n]$, the matrix of corresponding normalized eigenvectors.

If, for instance, \mathbf{B} is a positive semidefinite matrix of rank q it has q positive eigenvalues and $n - q$ zero eigenvalues. By using Eq. (4), the matrix \mathbf{B} can be rewritten as

$$\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{L}_1\mathbf{\Lambda}_1\mathbf{L}'_1 = \mathbf{L}_1\mathbf{\Lambda}_1^{1/2}\mathbf{\Lambda}_1^{1/2}\mathbf{L}'_1 \tag{4}$$

where $\mathbf{\Lambda}_1 = \text{diag}(\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_q)$ and $\mathbf{L}_1 = [\mathbf{v}_1 \ \mathbf{v}_2 \ \dots \ \mathbf{v}_q]$.

- 4) By extracting the largest k ($k < p$) from q positive eigenvalues and corresponding eigenvectors, the coordinate matrix \mathbf{X} can be calculated by using Eq. (5)

$$\mathbf{X} = \mathbf{L}_2\mathbf{\Lambda}_2^{1/2} \tag{5}$$

where $\mathbf{\Lambda}_2^{1/2} = \text{diag}(\sqrt{\lambda_1}, \sqrt{\lambda_2}, \dots, \sqrt{\lambda_k})$ and $\mathbf{L}_2 = [\mathbf{v}_1 \ \mathbf{v}_2 \ \dots \ \mathbf{v}_k]$. k is usually chosen as 2.

FINDINGS

First, it should be noted that the three pillars have different numbers of indicators and dimensions, and as explained in the introduction, the GAIRI is calculated by taking the arithmetic mean of the three pillar scores. Therefore, each of the three pillar scores has equal weight in the GAIRI.

This study used only the three pillar scores that make up the GAIRI in multidimensional scaling to visually compare countries regarding government AI readiness, as the comparison focused on the specified pillars with equal weight and averages.

The data were sourced from the report by Nettel et al. (2024), and the analysis was conducted utilizing R, resulting in Figure 2. The figure demonstrates how some countries stand out from the dominant group. In this context, the United States of America is prominent at first glance. The result is not surprising, as the United States of America possesses the highest score in all three pillars, ranking first among all OECD countries in terms of government AI readiness. Figure 2 indicates that Canada is also in close proximity to the United States of America.

At this point, it should be noted that North America leads the GAIRI in performance, a trend that is likely to persist. In terms of overall AI readiness, the United States of America and Canada are ranked first and sixth, respectively, on the global scale (Nettel et al., 2024).

In Figure 2, numerous Western European countries are also seen to be adjacent to the United States of America and Canada since Western Europe remains a robust contender in the GAIRI. France tops the regional ranking in 2024, closely followed by the United Kingdom. This region commands a prominent position within the global top ten, with the Netherlands, Germany, and Finland alongside France and the United Kingdom, establishing Western Europe as the most prominent region in the upper echelon (Nettel et al., 2024).

East Asia is positioned as the third highest-performing region in the 2024 GAIRI, and this region significantly exceeds the global average in all three pillars (Nettel et al., 2024). This explains the proximity of the Republic of Korea and Japan to the North American and Western European countries in Figure 2. The Government pillar is this region's primary strength, while the Data and Infrastructure pillar is also notable; however, as noted in the study by Tun et al. (2025), the Technology Sector pillar is underperforming, indicating a necessity for increased investment (Nettel et al., 2024).

Figure 2 also shows that Australia, which is from the Pacific region and ranks first in this region, and Israel, which is from the Middle East and North Africa region and ranks second in this region (Nettel et al., 2024),

are also situated close to the countries from the North America region, Western Europe region, and East Asia region mentioned before.

The upper section of Figure 2 shows that countries from the Eastern Europe region are close to each other. Eastern Europe is positioned 4th in the 2024 GAIRI, with the region exceeding the global average in all three pillars. Nonetheless, the Technology Sector presents a challenge, indicating the necessity for increased investment in technological capacity and innovation to realize the region's complete AI readiness potential (Nettel et al., 2024). It is important to acknowledge that Luxembourg, located in Western Europe, is close to these countries due to its low score in the Technology Sector pillar.

The Eastern Europe region perceives Türkiye, included in the South and Central Asia region, and Chile, Colombia, and Costa Rica, from the Latin America and the Caribbean region, as closely aligned. The Government pillar is a relative strength for the former region, reflecting efforts to advance AI strategies and governance frameworks. The latter region continues to face a challenge with the Technology Sector pillar, underscoring the necessity of additional investment in technological advancements (Nettel et al., 2024).

It can be noted that Switzerland, New Zealand, Greece, and Mexico, are distant from the other countries. Switzerland scored well in both the Data and Infrastructure pillar and the Technology Sector pillar, ranking among the top ten OECD countries in both pillars, but scored very low in the Government pillar. New Zealand, Greece, and Mexico occupy the lowest three positions in the Government pillar, indicating their proximity in Figure 2. Mexico ranks last among the thirty-eight OECD countries regarding average score.

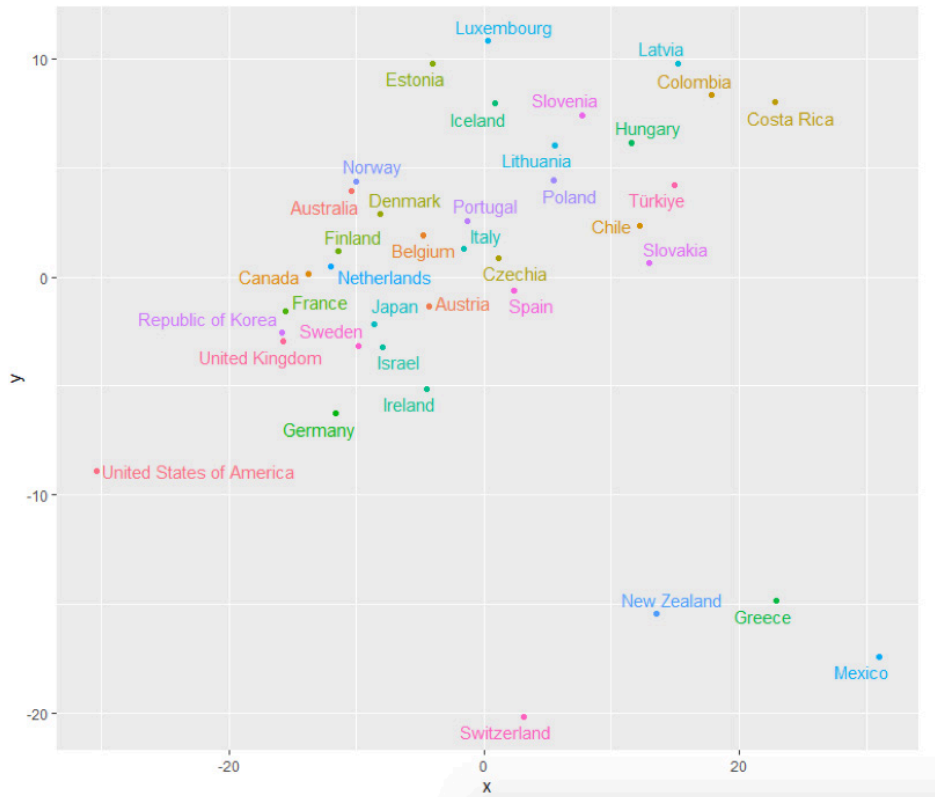
In R, there are two measures for goodness of fit calculated by Eqs. (6) and (7):

$$GOF_1 = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k \lambda_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n |\lambda_i|} \quad (6)$$

$$GOF_2 = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k \lambda_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n \max\{0, \lambda_i\}} \quad (7)$$

(Bulut, 2018). The proportion of variance elucidated by the initial two dimensions is 0.947381 for both GOF_1 and GOF_2 . The closeness of these values to 1 signifies an excellent fit.

Figure 2. Visualization of OECD countries with regard to government AI readiness



CONCLUSION

AI has become an integral part of everyday life. AI is employed not only in the corporate sector but also in governmental administration, facilitating the delivery of swifter, more efficient, and superior services to citizens. The primary advantages of employing AI in governmental administration include the reduction of public service expenditures, the acceleration of bureaucratic processes, the enhancement of quality, and the facilitation of equitable access to public services for all societal segments, thereby promoting greater equality within society. Consequently, countries are making substantial investments and competing to enhance the utilization of AI.

Alongside these advantages, several concerns must be addressed regarding the broader implementation of AI. The accountability in the event of an issue remains ambiguous. The reliability of data and the utilization of precise information are of paramount significance. Moreover, not all societal segments may possess equitable access to technology, a phenomenon referred to as the digital divide. The overutilization of AI may lead to a bigger digital divide. Consequently, the pursuit of equality may inadvertently result in the contrary outcome.

The OECD consists of countries that come together to achieve common goals. The increased utilization of AI has the potential to substantially assist in attaining these goals. Nonetheless, disparities have been identified among countries regarding their government AI readiness.

This study sought to visually emphasize the similarities and differences and consequently employed multidimensional scaling, a method commonly utilized in the literature. This study utilized data from only thirty-eight OECD countries. Future studies could expand the number of countries analyzed to elucidate the disparities among countries worldwide that exhibit significant variation in economic development. Subsequent research may employ alternative methodologies to perform a comparative analysis with the findings of this study. Moreover, this study utilized data from only one year. Analyzing data over multiple years may elucidate variations in countries' readiness and alterations in the grouping of analogous countries.

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