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A New Strategic Responsibility for the EU: EU-NATO Cooperation against Hybrid Warfare from Russia

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
	The article critically examines the process of the EU as a defence actor, its cooperation with NATO, especially in hybrid warfare, and how the EU needs a new 'strategic responsibility', in front of an increasing hybridization of war by Russia. *Since the beginning of the European Community in the 1950s, the idea of a 'defence union' reemerged regularly in the history of the European continent. Since 1999, the EU has developed common defence and security policies, collaborating with NATO for decades; however, this cooperation is increasingly insufficient. Since the Russian war against Ukraine and the increased use of hybridisation of warfare by Russia, the EU has been forced to rethink the need to 'defend itself by itself', even if it is unable to achieve full 'strategic autonomy'.* *After describing the EU becoming a security-defence actor in the last decades, this article argues that the EU must look to a new 'strategic responsibility' for more efficient common defence and stronger cooperation with NATO, especially in hybrid warfare. Strategic responsibility means that the EU will need to maintain its Atlantic Alliance but increase its part of the responsibility, its engagement not only in its periphery but globally and not only with political and economic means but with military ones. Hybrid warfare is a concept that includes the use of a 'whole of government' approach, meaning using all tools of national power to attack a rival in its political, social, economic and military spheres. Russia is increasingly using this towards the West, and so the EU and NATO need to step up their cooperation in order to deter, defend and react to this hybrid warfare. To increase this cooperation, the EU will need to pass a new strategic responsibility.*

The EU as a security-defence actor

Scholars argue that the EU lacks sufficient 'hard' military power to shape international politics, a claim explored through various traditional and critical debates (Galbreath, Mawdsley, and Chappell, 2019). According to liberal-idealist IR theories, in fact, the EU is a postmodern civilisation and normative power (Whitman, 2011; Manners, 2002) and acquiring military strength could destroy the idea of the EU's peaceful identity itself, while realists believe that European integration, including at defence level, has to follow systemic changes in the distribution of power (Hyde-Price, 2006). Some scholars stressed that Europeans abandoned power politics to focus on integration, losing the possibility to influence the international arena (Kagan, 2002), especially after the end of the Soviet

Union (Rosato, 2011), while others see Brexit as a moment of change towards a new direction (Biscop, 2016).

In any case, the EU, and before it the European Community, has always been considered an engine for economic integration and development, even if not for investing in defence, at least until recently. This was also possible because of NATO's presence, with its main goal of defending Europe from the Soviet Union. Without NATO, an investment by European countries in common defence would have been a necessity. Furthermore, while economic integration was seen as an important element for development that did not necessarily impact the sovereignty of nation-states, the defence integration would have been seen as an unnecessary imposition from the EU on the members, eroding the national interest and sovereignty of each nation-state. Therefore, a possible 'European Defence Union', after an economic and political one, has always been rejected by the EU members, at least until recently.

The EU started thinking more seriously about this possibility during the Trump presidency when Trump himself frequently questioned NATO's relevance and the financial contributions of member countries. He suggested that the US might not come to the defence of NATO allies if they did not meet their spending commitments. This rhetoric raised concerns about the future of the alliance, so the EU started to think about 'strategic autonomy.' The Obama administration's 'pivot to Asia' also contributed to discussions in Europe about strategic autonomy and defence capabilities, prompting EU leaders to consider how they could bolster their own military readiness. The war in Ukraine further intensified these debates, highlighting the importance of NATO but also the need to start quickly with an EU new engagement, in the face of Russian aggression, ultimately reaffirming the European need for a common defence. Overall, the combination of Trump's rhetoric, the impact of the pivot to Asia, and the urgent situation in Ukraine has prompted significant reflection and debate about NATO's future and Europe's defence strategy.

Nevertheless, even if a 'Defence Union' was not a question of discussion until recently, the EU has been working on the path of integrating its security and defence policies for decades, especially after the end of the Cold War, when US military presence in Europe started to decline (Allen, Martinez Machain, and Flynn 2022). Furthermore, the natural development of European institutional and economic integration also started to impact the foreign and security policies of each member state. Both these elements compelled the EU to launch its first Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (also known as the Treaty on European Union, TEU). The CFSP was important as the first step of the EU in building a common foreign policy to preserve peace, strengthen security, and defend democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. However, not much was done on defence until 1999, when the Treaty of Amsterdam created a 'European Security and Defence Policy' (ESDP), that allowed the EU to carry on peacekeeping and conflict prevention actions, with the deployment of military operations or civilian missions, following the principles of UN Charter. Since then, the EU has intervened abroad with civilian or military operations and missions at least 37 times, in Europe, Africa and Asia, from the former Yugoslavia in 2003 to Armenia and Moldova in 2023. Today (2024), there are 24 missions and operations: 13 civilians, 10 military, and one civil-military (EEAS, 2024). The Treaty of Amsterdam also created the figure of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, as chief co-ordinator of the CFSP.

Then, in 2004, the EU created the European Defence Agency (EDA) to promote and facilitate defence integration between member states with four main functions: support the development of defence capabilities and military cooperation among member states; promote defence Research and Technology (R&T); promote armaments cooperation; and create a competitive European Defence Equipment Market strengthening the European Defence, Technological and Industrial Base/DTIB (European Defence Agency, 2005). Actually, in 2007, the EDA also adopted a Strategy for the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), clarifying that a fully adequate DTIB

was no longer sustainable nationally. Still, the momentum to really ramp up and accelerate the common defence industry had not yet come.

An important moment for the common security and defence of the EU came in 2009 with the Treaty of Lisbon amending the Maastricht Treaty coming into effect and specifically strengthening the solidarity with its Member States in dealing with external threats by introducing a 'mutual defence clause' (Art. 42 (7) of the Treaty of the European Union). This clause was important as, similarly to Art. 5 of NATO, it stated that 'if a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter' (EUR-Lex 2024). This obligation of mutual defence is binding to all Member States; however, it does not affect the neutrality of certain Member States and is consistent with the commitments of the NATO members.

Additionally, with the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU transformed the ESDP in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) as the policy framework through which member states could develop a European platform of security and defence, and created the European External Action Service (EEAS), as the diplomatic service of the EU.

In 2017, another step was made towards the defence structural integration, with the creation under the CSDP of a 'Permanent Structured Cooperation' (PESCO), enhanced cooperation of the EU members' national armed forces with different projects and bodies, to include the European Commission's defence industry directorate-general; the Crisis management and planning directorate, in charge of civil-military planning; the EEAS permanent operation Headquarters for command and control (C2); the Military Staff (EUMS) with its Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) headquarter; and several Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) and preparatory bodies, such as the EU Military Committee (EUMC) composed by member states Chiefs of Defence (CHODS). PESCO has been important in strengthening operational cooperation among member states, connecting their forces with interoperability and improving industrial competitiveness.

In 2017, the EU also opened a European Defence Fund (EU Defence Industry and Space, 2024), for the industrial side of defence in which, until then, member states were independent, in the context of the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027 has a budget of € 8 billion, to finance multinational defence projects and stimulate defence industry cooperation. Finally, in 2021, the CSDP created an off-budget European Peace Facility (EPF) to fund the common costs of the military CSDP missions and operations, thereby enhancing burden-sharing between the member states. By September 2024, the EU had provided around € 6.6 billion in military assistance to Ukraine through the EPF, for example, and the initial facility budget of € 5 billion for 2021-2027 was increased by € 2 billion in 2023 and € 5 billion in 2024 (EU Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, 2024)

Nevertheless, only as a consequence of the strategic challenge and threat to European security posed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine did the EU start to think seriously about the possibility of a Defence Union (Fiott, 2023). Before NATO's Strategic Concept of June 2022, which defined Russia as the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area, in March 2022 the EU adopted a 'Strategic Compass for Security and Defence' (EEAS, 2024), a joint strategy to strengthen the bloc's military capabilities by 2030. European citizens also felt the urgency: at the EU Conference on the Future of Europe in May 2022 involving thousands of European citizens, political actors, and civil society, the second among the 14 recommendations, after the energy resilience, was to strengthen the EU's common defence and security (EU Commission, 2022). Actually, even if some scholars (Anicetti, 2024) argue that the Russian war against Ukraine has negatively impacted EU defence cooperation, potentially increasing EU fragmentation, the EU launched several new initiatives of its CSDP, in a joint effort for common procurement and so a 'common defence industry'.

In particular, in September 2023, the EU Parliament adopted the Commission's proposal on establishing the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through the Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), a short-term joint defence procurement instrument worth € 500 million. It tries to address the most urgent and critical defence capability gaps and to incentivise member states to procure defence products jointly. Also, in November 2023, the Foreign Affairs Council emphasised the need to strengthen the EDTIB. Of particular importance has been the recent enhancement of the EDTIB's access to both public and private finance, fostering innovation and enhancing competitiveness (EU Foreign Affairs Council, 2023). Finally, at the beginning of 2024, the EU Commission sent a proposal to the Parliament and the Council introducing a European Defence Investment Programme (EDIP) to finance joint defence projects and present measures to ensure the timely availability and supply of defence products. The EU Commission also proposed a 1.5 B Euro for a European Defence Industrial Strategy that was approved by the College of Commissioners (Borrel, 2024). The package is still very small financially, but it can give countries incentives to buy jointly from European firms and encourage industries to raise capacity and develop new technologies. The Commission actually asked to spend at least 50% of defence procurement budgets in the EU by 2030 and 60% by 2035 and to collaboratively buy at least 40% of defence equipment by 2030 (European Commission, 2024).

As we can see, gradual but steady developments related to Europe's common defence are happening at the EU level, even if the path for a Defence Union is still long, and the EU has to think about clear strategies to reach that goal. To do that, it should improve its relationship with NATO and its role within NATO, but first, it should start with a new 'strategic responsibility'.

A European path for a new "strategic responsibility"

Following these groundbreaking initiatives and growth in military spending, the discussion on European defence in recent times passed from the concept of 'Strategic Autonomy' (EU Parliament Think Tank, 2022) to a possible fully fledged 'European Defence Union' (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2024). Even if the quest for 'autonomy' failed to deliver what was expected for European defence in the last decade (Howorth, 2019), the current historical moment to give new impetus to a European strategic union for its own deterrence and defence is evident, even if still in cooperation with the US that remains the main ally of EU (Atlantic Council, 2024). Nevertheless, to create any type of 'European Defence Union' in the future, the EU would, first of all, need what we can call a 'strategic responsibility', meaning maintaining its Atlantic Alliance but increasing its part of the responsibility, its engagement not only in its periphery but globally and not only with political and economic means but with military ones. This has to be based on two fundamental elements: a strong political will, with leadership to support the EU treaties reforms and a geopolitical understanding of how a defence union should be established, and a financial capability to invest in common defence, given the fact that the European protection since WWII has been based on the American ally of NATO that is the US. As the Russian war has pushed these two political and financial elements, they seem to be gaining *momentum*.

To reach the goal of a European common defence, a real 'Defence Union', there are two possible ways in the long term: one approach sees each member state merging the military capabilities into a unified, overarching super-force with a common doctrine. Some scholars argue that the EU's growing engagement in an area of national sovereignty, like defence, is already beginning to eliminate the traditional distinction between intergovernmental and supranational decision-making (Håkansson, 2021) with new initiatives like the EDF that could lead to further supranationalism (Haroche, 2020). However, national interests are still strong in the EU, as we saw with the recent results of the European Parliament elections, and so are still able to block such outcomes, at least in the short term. Alternatively, following the path of PESCO and EDIP, but also collaborative military initiatives of some EU countries, like the Joint Expeditionary Force or NORDEFCO (Government

Offices of Sweden, 2024), member states could continue the gradual integration and defence cooperation, to contribute an increasing portion of their resources to a collective military organism and industrial complex, and strengthen their coalescence in a common defence policy and structure. This second path seems more doable as it has already started, for a real 'strategic responsibility' of the EU in its defence.

At this point, the EU should decide the means to use and the practical economic steps to reach that goal. For example, the EU should first create a single market for defence, making joint investments in EU defence capabilities and creating agreements for industry and businesses for a 'European military-industrial complex'. A common procurement could ensure that manufacturing takes place in different countries of the EU to build common assets, as until recently, for example, the 22 EU member states with battle tanks operate 14 different basis models (Marrone and Sabatino, 2020). The European Investment Bank (EIB), which agreed in 2024 to invest in defence innovation, could become more active in financing defence projects and invest in common projects with strategic partners. All these elements will probably come out with the White Paper of the new Commissioner for Defence and Space. According to a report (Martens Center, 2024), there are at least ten building blocs for a viable European Defence Union: a rationale of European defence; armament production capabilities with an internal market; military mobility with transport and logistics guaranteed; the case for a European DARPA, with an ambitious strategy for technology and defence innovation; the filling strategic capability gaps; reinforcing the European Civil Protection Service; to design a European military model; to reform the EU's military operations; an EU institutional reform in defence; and a nuclear deterrent. These are all important elements to consider, as the EU has the political, legal and financial infrastructures preconditions for a 'strategic responsibility' needed for a Defence Union.

The momentum seems really coming. The recent EU report by Mario Draghi (Draghi, 2024) showed that the EU has an existential threat, as it has slow growth and low investment in innovation and competitiveness, so to become a leader in tech and a player on the world stage, the EU needs investment to rise by 5% of GDP, something like 3 Marshall Plans. The report identifies three needs: to close the innovation gap between the US and China, especially in advanced tech; make a joint plan for decarbonisation and competitiveness; and increase security by reducing dependencies, in particular from the Critical Raw Materials (CRMs) and advanced technologies. Furthermore, the new 2025/2029 Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen created for the first time the Commissioner for Defence and Space, even if some scholars argued that the EU needed more of an 'Armament Commissioner' (Guntram, 2024) or others believed that the first priority was the EU defence bonds (Chihaia, 2024). Very importantly, in the mission letter (European Commission, 2024) the President asked the new Commissioner first to prepare a White Paper on the future of European Defence in the first 100 days of the mandate, that "should frame a new approach to defence and identify investment needs to deliver full-spectrum European defence capabilities based on joint investments".

Furthermore he will have to draw on the work of the report on how to enhance Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs; identify and harness the EU's dual-use and civil-military potential across all relevant domains; work on creating a true Single Market for Defence products and services, enhancing production capacity and fostering joint procurement of European equipment; as proposed in the Draghi report work to increase the aggregation of demand for defence assets; in close coordination with NATO lead the work on proposing Defence Projects of Common European Interest; overseeing the implementation of the European Defence Industrial Strategy; seek to reinforce the European Defence Fund; rapidly implement the European Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA) and of the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP); incentivise public and private investment in defence; address our vulnerabilities to cyberattacks and hybrid attacks; contribute to

strengthening the EU-NATO partnership; and foster a strong and innovative space industry. The new European Commission made, therefore, the common defence a priority as the new EU Strategic Agenda (2024-2029), adopted by the European Council in June 2024, was also focusing on security and defence as the first priority, the others being resilience and competitiveness, energy, migration, global engagement and enlargement (European Council, 2024). And it also asked to reinforce the EU-NATO partnership.

EU-NATO relationship and the Hybrid Warfare from Russia

For the deterrence and defence of the European continent, the strategic partnership and cooperation between the EU Member States and NATO Allies become crucial, especially given the rising assertiveness of strategic competitors and the growing complexity of security threats. When we speak about EU-NATO cooperation, therefore, it is important to consider that a possible Defence Union would not substitute but complement NATO, improving the cooperation between the two organizations, and it would focus not only on traditional deterrence and defence but also on more modern 'hybridization of warfare,' as threats are not only military but comprise economic, technological, political dimensions.

In this landscape where virtually everything is weaponized, the traditional roles and capabilities of institutions like the EU and NATO have been challenged, as they lacked the comprehensive tools required to address the multifaceted hybrid security challenges of today. However, with a prospected long-term hybrid conflict with Russia, the EU and NATO have an opportunity to cooperate more in these grey zone conflicts and challenges in the sub-threshold (of war) and, in doing so, complement each other in other sectors. The EU and NATO, therefore, must work in tandem against hybrid warfare. Some scholars have discussed whether the final goal of possible increased cooperation would have been more of an EU-NATO division of labour or a new balance of responsibilities and commitments between the US and the Europeans (Howorth, 2017). In any case, as other scholars argued (Marrone, 2024), a 'Europe-led NATO', with tailored and specific US support, could be a much more viable option than creating an alternative EU defence.

This article does not analyse the definition of 'hybrid warfare' as the concept is already much debated in academia (Libiseller, 2023). However, in general, we can say that hybrid warfare refers to a strategy that blends conventional military operations with unconventional tactics, including cyber warfare, information campaigns, and economic measures, to achieve strategic objectives. While the concept of using diverse means to conduct warfare is not new, the increasing emphasis on non-kinetic approaches—such as misinformation, political manipulation, and economic coercion—has become more pronounced in recent conflicts. This blend of tactics allows adversaries to exploit vulnerabilities in their opponents across multiple domains, making traditional military responses more complex. Hybrid warfare reflects the evolving nature of conflict, where both military and nonmilitary tactics are employed to achieve strategic goals, adapting to changing technologies and societal dynamics.

Even if Russia's hybrid warfare strategy has been carried out in its peripheries already over the last decades (Marsili, 2021), it is clear that recently, Europe has been increasingly experiencing the 'weaponization of everything' (Galeotti, 2023) by Russia. NATO actually sounded alarmed about this increased hybridization of warfare for several years, but recently, there have been more and more hostile Russian activities in Europe (Askew, 2024), and also the EU called for a firm response to counter Russian interference (European Parliament, 2024). Russia's strategy of 'weaponising everything' is evident: from the blockade on Ukraine's grain exports to the orchestrated influx of refugees towards the Belarus-Poland border, from the removal of border markers with EU countries like the case of Estonia river to the jamming of GPS for air transport on the Baltic Sea, to plotting sabotage across Europe (Seibt, 2024). NATO (NATO Council, 2024) and the EU (EU Parliament,

2024) became, therefore, increasingly worried about Russian hybrid actions and made several declarations against Russia's hybrid warfare in the NATO-EU sphere.

The two organizations can work complementary first because of their nature. NATO has a role at the forefront of the confluence of deterrence defence and hybrid warfare with its military preparedness and its common command structure, under which the different national armed forces train together and, when necessary, fight together. The EU has the political and economic integration necessary to better fight the hybridization of war, especially today with the energy and technological transition. Beyond that, NATO has a 'military model', with a strategic concept, tactics, and a doctrine, that is the way the defence is conducted at the operational, tactical and strategic levels, while the EU has a 'political model' with a CSDP to work in synergy for preserving peace, defending democracy, strengthening international security, and promoting international cooperation. Finally, NATO includes non-EU states like the UK, Türkiye, US and Canada, who are, in fact, the strongest members of the alliance and so will be helpful for the EU in the case of a major escalation in Europe, while the EU has countries that are non-NATO members that will result useful for the future international security architecture in Europe.

It makes sense, therefore, to strengthen the European role within NATO and reinforce their collaboration, in particular, to fight hybrid wars together, which is the future of warfare, given that technological advancements will make hybrid warfare more and more pervasive. But how do the EU and NATO already cooperate today?

The collaboration between the Transatlantic Alliance and the EU has been crucial in the last decades for deterrence and defence from possible attacks, to ensure security at a broader level, and to defend democracy (Tardy and Lindstrom, 2019). NATO actually has in its security tasks not only deterrence and defence but also two other pillars: Crisis management and cooperative security. Cooperative security, in particular, is conducted through partnerships with many countries around the world, along with civil society (NATO, 2024), defence industries (NATO, 2024), and international institutions like the UN, OSCE, African Union, and European Union (NATO, 2024). The partnership with the EU is the strongest of these, given that both organisations aim at peace and security and share common values. In addition, many countries, for now 22, belong to both organisations (and the other 4 NATO countries are EU applicants: Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Türkiye). The EU, too, has in its mandate the important tool of cooperation with other international or supranational institutions, and the EEAS acts as the EU diplomatic service, with delegations in many countries in the world and inside international institutions, including NATO.

Therefore, the cooperation between the EU and NATO has existed for decades but has been institutionalised in particular since the early 2000s. The EU-NATO Declaration on European Security and Defence Policy (NATO, 2024), signed in December 2002 in particular, allowed the EU's access to NATO planning capabilities for its own military operations and affirmed the political principles of a strategic partnership. Furthermore, in April 2003, the two organizations signed an agreement of a framework for cooperation, the 'Berlin Plus agreement' (EUR Lex, 2003), that provided the basis for EU-NATO cooperation in crisis management in the context of EU-led military operations that make use of NATO's assets and capabilities, including command arrangements and assistance in operational planning.

Nevertheless, since 2016, the EU and NATO have really stepped up their cooperation. Since the NATO summit in Warsaw that year, the EU and NATO have issued three Joint Declarations (in 2016, 2018 and 2023) that have outlined a series of actions for the two organisations to take together in concrete areas, strengthening and expanding the EU-NATO strategic partnership. Additionally, the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept identified the EU as a distinctive and indispensable ally, advocating for an intensified and fortified strategic partnership between the EU and NATO.

Therefore, the two organizations cooperate in a complementary way. In general, while NATO supports the EU, especially in deterrence and defence, the EU offers support in areas where NATO's capabilities fall short, including financial assistance, infrastructure development, humanitarian aid, and fostering a unified European political community, all important elements also for the security of the continent. Additionally, the EU possesses tools like economic sanctions that NATO does not have and should not wield. Cooperation between the EU and NATO, therefore, is becoming vital, especially when addressing hybrid warfare, such as energy, economy, cyber and other non-kinetic threats.

The EU-NATO Cooperation in Hybrid Warfare

NATO stated that hybrid actions against a member of the alliance could lead to the invocation of Article 5 of the Treaty already in 2016 (NATO, 2024). In 2018, NATO set up counter-hybrid support teams to assist Allies upon their request in preparing for and responding to hybrid activities (NATO, 2018). In July 2022, NATO Leaders endorsed comprehensive preventive and response options to counter hybrid threats, and NATO's Joint Intelligence and Security Division created a hybrid analysis branch to improve situational awareness. In 2023, NATO created a Virtual Cyber Incident Support Capability. Furthermore, to deter nonmilitary hybrid threats, NATO has several Centers: a Maritime Centre for the Security of Critical Undersea Infrastructure just opened in the UK; a Climate Change and Security Centre of Excellence (COE) just opened in Canada; a Space COE in France; a Strategic Communications COE in Latvia; a Cooperative Cyber Defence COE in Estonia; and an Energy Security COE in Lithuania. Sweden also has a proposition to open a new COE on "Supply Chain Security" for the energy transition supply chain.

The EU also already has strong policies and programs against hybrid warfare, in particular, two major documents: the 2016 Joint Framework on Countering Hybrid Threats (EUR-LEX, 2016) and the 2018 "Joint Communication on Increasing Resilience and Bolstering Capabilities to Address Hybrid Threats" (EEAS, 2018). The Joint Framework already in 2016 declared that an 'essential element for countering hybrid threats is to further diversify EU's energy sources, suppliers and routes, in order to provide more secure and resilient energy supplies' for example, even if the EU didn't do that and the results were evident with the invasion of Ukraine. Also, the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre Hybrid Fusion Cell (HFC) has an annual Hybrid Trends Analysis, with contributions from Member States and EU institutions. Furthermore, the EU has a Protocol for countering hybrid threats, which outlines the processes and tools applicable to hybrid threats or campaigns throughout the whole crisis management cycle. It starts with prevention and goes through preparedness and initial identification to response, recovery, and lessons learned, as well as to map the roles of various EU institutions. The EU Protocol for Countering Hybrid Threats of 2023 (Council of the EU, 2023), a revised version of the one in 2016, includes the lessons from Parallel and Coordinated Exercises (PACE) and deepens cooperation with NATO. As stated in the Annual Progress Report of the Strategic Compass (EEAS, 2024), the EU developed Hybrid warfare Toolboxes (EUHTs) like the Cyber diplomacy toolbox, and finally, recently, the EU adopted a series of acts to fight hybrid warfare in the cyber, information and supply chain of CRMs sectors: the Cyber Resilience Act; the Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI); and the CRM Act.

Today, the EU and NATO cooperate on hybrid threats with a specific emphasis on cyber defence, enhanced resilience, strategic communication, and situational awareness (NATO, 2024). Countering hybrid threats was one of the seven areas of cooperation between EU and NATO already in the first Joint Declaration signed in Warsaw in 2016, while the third and last one in January 2023 aimed to deepen their cooperation in hybrid threats "to address in particular the growing geostrategic competition, resilience issues, protection of critical infrastructures, emerging and disruptive technologies, space, the security implications of climate change, as well as foreign information manipulation and interference" (NATO, 2023). As an example of fighting in hybrid warfare, the EU

and NATO in March 2023 created a Task Force on resilience and protection of critical infrastructure, focusing on resilience in four sectors: energy, transport, digital infrastructure and space (EU Commission, 2023).

EU and NATO cooperate indirectly on hybrid warfare, as well as through the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats (HCoE) in Finland, an arena for exchanges between the EU and NATO on hybrid tools. This is an autonomous international organization that promotes the need to counter hybrid threats through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, inaugurated in 2017 by the NATO Secretary General and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Together with the EU Joint Research Centre (JRC), the HCoE developed a conceptual framework for hybrid threats, besides the ongoing trends in hybrid threats in a report in 2023, 'Hybrid threats: a comprehensive resilience ecosystem' (Jungwirth, Smith, Willkomm, Savolainen, Alonso Villota, Lebrun, Aho and Giannopoulos 2023). This report proposes a 'Comprehensive Resilience Ecosystem' model, CORE, which is a systems-thinking approach to help policymakers counter complex hybrid threats in an efficient and coordinated way. This model could be the base for stronger EU-NATO cooperation in hybrid warfare, for example.

Actually, in 2023, the "Eighth progress report on the implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by EU and NATO Councils in 2016 and 2017" (NATO, 2023), highlighted how the EU and NATO cooperate in the HCoE and how cooperation between the NATO Joint Intelligence and Security Division Hybrid Analysis Branch and the EU INTCEN Hybrid Fusion Cell further developed, with the aim of strengthening situational awareness. Also, the report underlined how the EU and NATO collaborated closely to stay informed about hostile activities in the information environment, using methods such as analyst exchanges, the EEAS-led Rapid Alert System, and the Commission's Network against Disinformation. Their focus is on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and China's efforts to support Russia.

How to improve EU-NATO cooperation in Hybrid Warfare

To deal with future hybridization of war will be important the use of new emerging technologies as they play a significant role in hybrid warfare, from infowar to energy war, and the defence using dual-use (civilian-military) technologies must now consider a wider range of risks and opportunities that could be exploited by malicious hybrid actors. The path to stronger cooperation is still long, but better cooperation seems the only solution in defending the Transatlantic community from increasing conflict and hybridization of war and winning at the same time the future competition and transition towards new technology, energy, and societies.

Improving EU-NATO cooperation in hybrid warfare can be approached through several key strategies, but here are a few ideas and suggestions:

1. Strengthen interoperability. Enhance joint exercises and training programs that focus on hybrid threats, ensuring that both EU and NATO forces can operate seamlessly together in crisis situations.

2. Information Sharing: Develop robust mechanisms for sharing intelligence and information about hybrid threats. This could include establishing joint task forces that facilitate real-time data sharing

3. Policy Alignment: Ensure that EU and NATO policies are aligned when addressing hybrid warfare. Regular meetings, workshops, and joint strategic frameworks can help harmonize their approaches.

4. Capacity Building: Invest in building the capacities of member states to detect and respond to hybrid threats, including cyber threats, misinformation, and unconventional tactics.

5. Public Awareness Campaigns: Launch joint campaigns aimed at raising awareness about hybrid threats among the public. Educating citizens on the tactics used by adversaries can help build resilience.

6. Cyber Defense Collaboration: Enhance collaboration in cyber defence through joint initiatives. This includes sharing best practices, conducting joint cyber exercises, and developing coordinated responses.

7. Research and Development: Encourage joint research and development initiatives focused on countering hybrid threats. This involves exploring innovative technologies and methodologies that can be shared between EU and NATO members.

8. Crisis Response Plans: Create comprehensive crisis response plans that specifically address hybrid warfare scenarios. This may involve simulations to test the effectiveness of these plans.

9. Engage with Nonmilitary Stakeholders: Collaborate with civil society, academia, and the private sector to develop a comprehensive approach to countering hybrid threats. These stakeholders can provide valuable insights and support.

10. Tailored Support for Neighboring Regions: Support non-member states in their efforts to counter hybrid threats through assistance programs, training, and resources. This can help stabilize regions that may be vulnerable to such threats.

By focusing on these areas, the EU and NATO can enhance their cooperation and readiness to address the challenges posed by hybrid warfare more effectively. Nevertheless, to start this, the EU must recognize that it needs to develop a resilient defence infrastructure and capabilities, as the new EU Commission realized, and the new Commissioner for Defense and Space will explain this in its first White Paper soon.

Conclusions

This article explored at the beginning the role of the EU as a security and defence actor and the urgent need for the EU to adopt a new sense of 'strategic responsibility' in response to Russia's growing imperialism and use of hybrid conflict tactics. Afterwards, the article recounted the EU-NATO relationship, especially in hybrid warfare. Finally, the article argued that the EU and NATO need to cooperate more efficiently, taking a complementarity approach to avoid overlapping actions, improving their institutional collaboration to adapt faster to new conflicts, and giving some possible recommendations for new strategies.

Hybrid warfare with Russia and other rivals is evolving so rapidly that the EU and NATO need to step up their collaboration to fight and win the competition, the kinetic conflicts, and the hybrid warfare together. The EU and NATO are committed to enhancing the resilience of their societies, including internal unity against evolving threats and risks in different sectors, from disinformation to infrastructure attacks, from technology dependencies to supply chains for critical materials. Deterrence and defence of the members of both organizations, therefore, should be achieved through parallel and coordinated collaboration, taking proactive measures to address any present and future vulnerabilities.

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Africa Through the Lens of Chaos and Complexity

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ABSTRACT

Africa cannot be looked at as a big country. The Continent is politically organised into 54 states, which are very diverse entities with different histories within and without their borders. Almost all these states are multinational - multiethnic places with different regions, and when emergency or crisis situations arise, people's "sense of belonging" is usually in the family, in the tribe, in the language, or in the religious group, not in "the state". However, notwithstanding this reality, many analyses and positions are still based on neo-realist readings, assuming the existence of rationalities that do not exist or are not strong enough to understand the dominant realities. The article applies some of the tools of the Complexity theory to look at the current African situation and politics.

Introduction

Chaos theory, primarily analysed within the scope of physics and physical systems, has at its base the second law of thermodynamics, the law of entropy, according to which all physical systems tend to lose energy, which leads to disorganisation and disintegration. This has been a subject under discussion for several decades within the social sciences domain, with particular emphasis on the area of the theory and practice of organisations (Nicolis and Prigogine, 1989).

The application of physics theories, in this case the law of entropy, has a corollary – when increasing, the dynamics of entropy become irreversible. This does not (obligatorily) happens in the social sciences because organisations are not closed systems.

Therefore, in the context of the debates about the application of entropy to organisations, the concept of complexity sometimes substitutes or is added to the concept of chaos, just because one must assume that chaos may also happen in non-closed systems - without necessarily leading to disorganisation and disintegration.

The same assumption applies to the broader case of international relations (Root, 2013), once when "organisations" are states or international organisations, entropy works in broader, non-closed, sometimes global contexts. Hence, the difficulties of analysing chaos and complexity increase – the

same as any social (political, sociological, psychological, economic) theory that pursues the aim of explaining what is and could happen in a broader and very open framework.

However, reflecting on the chaos and complexity of the international open system is relevant. More so when, for example, neorealist theories are proving unable to accurately explain an increasing number of events and phenomena that happen in international relations and even within states' borders (Dye, 2004).

To give an example, the coup d'état in Niger in July 2023 cannot be fully explained within the scope of neo-realism. It was not a consequence of outside interference, and the "country's deterioration of security" rationale presented by the military coup plotters did not cope with reality in the case of Niger, where the action of violent extremist groups was being contained. For sure, after the coup, regional and global players intervened to take advantage of or resist the new situation. However, by applying a complexity lens to the analysis of the situation and not a neo-realist lens, one can better understand what actors were pursuing: their own individual and group agenda. As a matter of fact, the coup was not inspired or commanded by any hidden or open third party – France, the US, or Russia just to name some of the powers with interests in the country and the region.

This article, "Africa through the Lens of Chaos and Complexity," will apply some of the tools of the complexity theory to look at current African geopolitics, economic, and security dynamics. The analysis will be driven by CAS, the acronym for "Complex Adaptive International System", as explained in Valle (2000) and in Tomé and Açıkalın (2019).

CAS postulates are summed up as follows:

- Numerous independent and interdependent actors

The international system is no longer a game of just classical actors (states and great powers) but one of several entities that transform the system in unexpected ways. In Africa, they range from 54 sovereign states, with a growing 1,5 billion population, to multinational corporations which, after some retraction, came back again not only to mine hydrocarbons and to export commodities but also to invest in a larger range of critical minerals, as well as in infrastructure – case of public and private China companies, global social movements and NGOs, that took over some usual state functions since the 1980's, transnational terrorist groups, such as Al Qaeda, Daesh affiliate groups as well as other violent extremist organisations, that continue spreading in several African geographies, organized crime networks, mostly cocaine in the West and heroin and methamphetamines in the East and the South, as well as other international or regional entities of diverse nature, such as charities or evangelical churches – these ones exerting growing public and political leverage.

- Infinite interactions-feedback system within actors

Complexity theory suggests two different roles for interaction between actors in the international system: one, it has no limit, can be spontaneous, and occurs in a nonlinear way, and this can be seen in the current African landscape; two, it is determinant for the patterns of the change-based system, as the emergent behaviour of actors strongly results from their interaction – for example, smugglers and drug traffickers, interacting with politicians at the central and local levels in several African countries.

- Emergence

There are constant actions and reactions to what other agents are doing, as is the case of the recent coup d'états in the Sahel. Thus, nothing in the environment is immutable. Emergence can happen at national, regional and systemic levels.

- Self-organization through coevolution and coadaptation

Facing the emergence of a new order, the system and the actors self-organize themselves to adapt to change - again, that is what France, the US and Russia are doing in the Sahel. Actors' self-organization aims at their own ideas of reforming, based on their interests - which challenges the realist perspective that rational actors make decisions for the state, which often they do not, as noted in the case of Niger. Two types of self-organization are dominant: coevolution and coadaptation. Evolution is a local process of maximization, not driven by future anticipation or previous experience. Adaptation is a strategic choice, as actors are driven by their experience and will - and their behaviour is anticipated by others. Actors and the system have self-organization capacity, which applies to the international domain - this century in Africa is an example of self-organisation through coevolution and coadaptation, not only from local African groups but also from foreign states and organisations.

1. Formation and shape of the African States

Africa is politically organised in 54 states[i], mostly defined by the colonising powers at the Berlin Conference in 1884/85, some of their final borders being rearranged before decolonisation, after the 2nd World War. Since independence, only two border alterations occurred, resulting from agreed partitions (preceded by long wars): Eritrea from Ethiopia in 1991, and South Sudan from Sudan in 2011. However, fitting to the initial paragraph of the emergence postulate of CAS – "…constant actions and reactions to what other agents are doing", the forced annexation of parts of Ukraine by Russia since February 2022 and of Nagorno-Karabakh by Azerbaijan in September 2023, raises the prospects for wars of annexation on the African soil by African countries or of secession, as a result of civil wars -, regardless of the postulates of the UN or of the African Union Charters[ii].

Africa, with its 42 million km2, ranging from the Mediterranean and the Red Sea to the Atlantic and Indian Ocean, is very diverse, geographically and socially.

A major continental divide results from the Sahara Desert, a natural barrier between the North and the Northeast and the Sub-Saharan regions. The Sahara, with an estimated 9,2 million square Km2 in 2022, corresponding to around 8% of the earth's land area, is almost the same size as China. According to Hereher (2011)[iii], it has cycles of contraction and expansion, having attained 10.35 million km2 in 1984, meaning that if it was a country, it would rank second to the USSR in that period, surpassing Canada; actually, for Hereher (2011), since 1994 the Sahara is experiencing a cycle of contraction. Relations between The North of Africa and the sub-Saharan regions always existed – through trans-Saharan routes[iv], some of which existed for millennia, being still used today as routes for all kinds of interactions, including drug trafficking and flows of (often mafia controlled) migration towards Europe.

Nonetheless, there are common historical traces, with a strong print from Arab and European expansion, occupation, and exploitation. With wider effects in the Sub-Saharan regions, foreign interference resulted in two huge societal disruptions, with deep and lasting overall impacts: slave trade and colonialism.

a) The first societal disruption was the slave trade.

The slave trade was responsible for the break-up of millions of families and barred the consolidation of emerging chiefdoms, kingdoms and empires. It was made up of two main flows of trade.

The Arab slave trade

Orientated towards the markets of Southwest Asia, the Arab-Islamic slave trade lasted from the 8th century to the beginning of the 20th century, mainly in the Sahelian and Eastern Sub-Saharan regions, having also reached some parts of Western and Central Africa, as illustrated by Segal (2001) or River (2017). The capture of slaves, practised by merchant soldiers through "razzias", was meant mostly to feed domestic and construction labour. As there are no registries, historians, anthropologists and other experts estimate a range of between 12 to 20 million Africans captured (killed or deceased) in the process. As a matter of fact, the Arab-Islamic slave trade is much less studied than the Atlantic one, not only for lack of registry but also because research about it is much scarcer.

The European slave trade

Mostly orientated towards the Americas, it lasted around 300 years, from the 17th century to the end of the 19th century, and it has been extensively studied, e.g., Black (2015). Being concentrated in 3 centuries, it was much more socially disruptive than the Arab one. The European-Christian slave traders created trading posts alongside the Atlantic coast, the major one being Luanda and engaged in partnerships with local lords that captured and sold slaves – with the European merchants transporting them to the Americas. African slave labour was mostly employed in plantations – mainly sugar and cotton – and in mines. According to many historians, such as French (2021), the African slave trade was on the basis of European wealth accumulation that fed the Industrial Revolution and, on par with the formation of the proletariat, gave rise to capitalism. Although there was some abundance of registries, the numbers of African slave captures were contradictory, with estimations varying from 12 to 30 million people (traded, killed or deceased).

In any case, whichever the numbers, having in mind that the estimates of the Sub-Saharan population were less than 100 million inhabitants in the 17th century, one can guess the huge disruptive effect that the slave trade had in the sub-continent.

b) Second societal disruption: colonialism

By the end of the 19th century, following European explorations and occupation of some coastal areas, and as a follow-up of the Brussels Geographical Conference in 1876 (promoted by the Belgian King, Leopold II), a Partake of Africa among European powers took place at the Berlin Conference in 1884/85 – convened by the German Chancellor Bismarck that, in strong alliance with Leopold II, was very much eager to have a hand on large parts of Africa. This partakes, and the effective military and administrative occupation that followed were fought by Africans who resisted European subjugation – some of the resistance fights to go on until the beginning of the 1940s.

As a result of the Berlin Conference and later agreed or arbitrated land modifications, the first borders of African States were drawn by the colonial powers, often disregarding ongoing endogenous social and political constructions. One may follow through maps the evolution of African boundaries - from the Berlin Conference to modifications resulting from the 1st and the 2nd World Wars to the redesigning of some borders by the British and French before decolonisation, to African independent countries borders – modified twice, as already noted in the cases of Eritrea – Ethiopia and Sudan – South Sudan.[v]

As a result of historical and geographical evolution, as thoroughly illustrated by Meredith (2014), contemporary independent African countries are diverse and complex entities, sometimes with striking differences within and beyond their current boundaries. In fact, almost all the states are multinational - multiethnic entities composed of diverse subregions within larger African regions. More so, the contemporary African independent states are historically young, with weak institutions, and their populations are very much bound to strong family, ethnic, linguistic, and religious ties. Notwithstanding this reality, several analyses and positions are still based on neo-realist readings, appealing to state-led rationalities which do not suffice to understand the real situation and dynamics on the ground, which can be better understood according to CAS, namely given the reality of "numerous independent and interdependent actors", as well as the "infinite interactions-feedback system within actors.

2. African diversity and complexity

So, one first corollary is that Africa cannot be treated as a country (this might seem an odd sentence, but it is not, as the imaginary Africa of savages on the bush with illness and famine is very much propagated worldwide); it should be looked at as a very much diverse Continent, containing more than 25% of all the countries of the world – most of them having huge domestic differences of all sorts.

Despite similar past experiences of exploitation and the existence of shared interests, Africa is not one single or even homogeneous entity, and, therefore, there is no such thing as an "African strategy" or an "African geopolicy". This should sound obvious, but it is not. Some experts' analyses, as well as positions taken by African leaderships and third parties (including governments and international institutions), persist in making the same diagnosis for diverse realities, hence prescribing similar solutions.

African countries are not only diverse; they are also young states still under construction, with rather fragile institutions – and yes, this is a very common characteristic. Countries usually have incipient, often outdated industries and with the advent of neoliberal policies in the 1980s, states' weaknesses were only accentuated. Given the absence of private sectors or the small size of private sectors, privatisations and concessions, which accelerated in the 1990s, have benefited political and commercial elites, who often base their power on family ties and fickle alliances, both internal and external. As already said, in plurinational countries, people identify more with their nation/ ethnicity/ language/ religion, more so when the state is not capable of providing basic needs and employment opportunities, often with rulers focused on self-entrenched leadership and wealth accumulation, sometimes protected by praetorian guards – which tend to be a source of revolving coups d'état. This reality is better understood by employing the analytical tools of CAS, namely the rationale of "self-organization through coevolution and coadaptation", as people adapt to evolving situations and diverse sources of power.

Therefore, the usual postulates for treating Africa "as one" should be looked at with caution.[vi]

On the one hand, countries share similar colonial legacies, and "African unity" expresses the will of political, academic and business elites that look at unity as a path for building regional and continental institutions (e.g., the African Union and Regional Economic Communities), arguing that this is the way to solve potential border conflicts, modernise economies and strengthen influence in a global world. So, under this perspective, Africa can be looked at "as one".

On the other hand, African economies, not to mention (many) states, are still very weak and disintegrated, and the historical and geopolitical contexts within regions and individual countries are rather diverse. Under this perspective, Africa cannot be looked at "as one".

To develop this diversity argument a little further, let's have a brief look at some regions and subregions (or countries) that have specific, sometimes common characteristics that diverge from other regions. To illustrate this argument, the North and the North-East, the Greater Sahel, the Gulf of Guinea, Central Africa, the Indian Ocean coastal countries and Southern Africa will be discussed[vii].

The history, economy and demography of North and Northeast Africa (including the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia) are heavily influenced by the Mediterranean and the Red Sea - meaning Southern Europe and the Arab Peninsula. Until today, these neighbourhoods are crucial to explaining the geopolitics and geoeconomics of countries that spread from Morocco to Somalia, including parts of the Sahara and the Sahel. It suffices to remember the long-term influence of the expansion and often occupation from great empires and civilisations, beginning with the Phoenicians, one thousand years before Christ, followed by the Romans, whose presence lasted for large centuries, by the Arab expansion and the spread of Islam to the Maghreb (continuing to expand to the Sahel and large parts of Sub-Saharan Africa), that occurred since the eight century, as well as by the domination of the Ottoman Empire on large chunks of North and Northern Africa, since the 16th and 17th century until the 1st World War. All this happened before the already discussed disruption caused by colonialism and only partially coincided with the Arab-Islam slave trade, practised since the Arab expansion and during the Ottoman Empire.

Up to a certain point, some of these influences have also spread through the Greater Sahel, namely those related to the Arabs' expansion (that eventually led to Arab settlement, occupation and integration of the Maghreb in the Arab world. Today, this region is the prime area of expansion of violent extremist organisations of radical Salafi inspiration, the so-called "jihadists", who spread within and beyond the Sahel mostly after the destruction of the Libyan regime (and the state) in 2012. The Sahelian region is also home to six of the seven coups d'état that took place between 2020 and 2023 – in Guinea, Mali, Chad, Burkina-Faso, Sudan and Niger (the seventh being Gabon).

The Gulf of Guinea is a region characterised by the resilience of piracy, drug, and human trafficking, and home to a very complex Nigeria Federation, the most populated country in Africa, deeply divided internally and suffering from banditry actions all over its states. Recently, after the coup d'état in Niger, Nigeria, followed by other CEDEAO - the Regional Economic Community of East Africa - countries, including Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, the other two more economically advanced countries in West Africa, could not impose its (their) position to give a military response, due to the opposition of some of the other members of the CEDEAO and of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. This was a very sharp example of the existence of diverse countries' interests and strategies in the same region. Interests not imposed by foreign powers, as a matter of fact, regardless of them - mostly France.

In Central Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the most important country in terms of size, population, and raw materials (as a matter of fact, it is probably home to the richer and larger mineral deposits of Africa). It has a high degree of political instability and statelessness - in that region, the same fragility applies to the Central African Republic and South Sudan. DRC is a country that has around half of the world's reserves of coltan (columbite + tantalite, crucial for electronic equipment) in the East, near the borders with Rwanda and Uganda and is also responsible for its south-eastern lands near Angola's border, for about 60% of the world production cobalt, a critical mineral essential for stabilizing the ion-lithium batteries. It is also home to high-grade deposits of copper, being one of the five biggest world producers. Its riches are part of the explanation for the "whys" of the persistent armed conflicts in the Eastern border, where Congolese and nationals of other border countries, among them Rwandese and Ugandans, are mining. This region of the country is also home to the so-called Daesh Central Province, also involved in mineral illicit trade.

The African coast of the Indian Ocean has been home to millenary trade routes, mostly dominated by Oman (Al Salimi and Verlag, 2016), until the beginning of the 20th century. It is a coast used to trading with greater India (Machado, 2016), and it is demographically and linguistically home to communities of people who speak Swahili (a Creole language made up of Bantu and Arab, mixed with some English and Portuguese words), who understand each other and are an integral part of the commerce networks all over the coastal countries, since Kenya until North Mozambique. Since the end of last century, it was home to piracy in the Horn of Africa, now reasonably controlled through international surveillance and military navy presence – the same cannot be said of the Bab-El-Mandeb entrance in the Red Sea. Besides residual acts of piracy in the northern part, the coast is now home to a growing trafficking of heroin and, more recently also by methamphetamines, coming from Afghanistan through Pakistan to Eastern African ports and then to European markets - in the last years also to Australia and New Zealand[viii]. This is also an area of operation of Al-Shabab (that declared its affiliation to Al Qaeda) in South Somalia and Northern Kenya and of several violent extremist organisations affiliated to Daesh - in Northeast DRC, in parts of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and since 2019, also in Northeast Cabo Delgado Province in Mozambique – see Morier-Genoud (2023), Cardoso (2021). Finally, Southern Africa and its Regional Economic Community, SADC. Parts of this region, namely Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Mozambique, Eswatini, Zambia, and Malawi, are under a strong economic influence of South Africa, the regional economic giant (Libby, 2014). It is interesting to note that South Africa, despite its relative economic strength, is poorly regarded by neighbours, who do not see a big difference between Apartheid and the new South Africa in what relates to economic transactions – as a matter of fact, South Africa is regarded in the region as an economic hegemon but as a political-military dwarf – and this feeling only accrued after the flawed 1998 intervention in Lesotho, as well as by the difficulties the South African army demonstrated to develop a two battalion strong to Cabo Delgado (2 years to deploy) – partly because of the inoperability of its navy. Besides, SADC is an institutional construction that followed the end of Apartheid and the Cold War and is usually disregarded by its members, who do not believe in it as a source of economic growth, despite the government rhetoric (as a matter of fact Angola, the DRC, Tanzania, Madagascar, Comoros, Seychelles and Mauritius, the other SADC members, have almost no economic interchange amongst them - and with the other members -, exception made, in different degrees, to existent bilateral economic relations with South Africa). Countries in this region are much more involved in consolidating national sovereignties and economies, their relations being of a bilateral nature, mostly with South Africa and countries outside the area, with a special interest in those that buy raw materials and invest in minerals, agriculture, and infrastructure – meaning mostly China.

Summing up and resorting again to the numerous independent and interdependent actors of CAS postulates, in Africa, there is not "... a game of just classical actors (states and great powers) but one of the millions of entities that transform the system in unexpected ways. They range from sovereign states to individuals, multinational corporations..., transnational terrorist groups, and organized crime networks...".

3. African Development and Security Trends

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the demand for raw materials and the supply of finance have skyrocketed, essentially due to China, after joining the WTO in 2002, becoming the engine of global growth - with the help of the relocation of parts of production by North American, European, Japanese and other countries multinational companies, which were already taking place since the end of the cold war.

In Africa, private investment and infrastructure financing grew, and domestic demand increased, a par with urbanisation and the growth of "nouveaux riches" and middle classes; since 2002, the

average annual growth of African countries has exceeded 5% (apart from Eritrea, Zimbabwe and Somalia).

In the first decade of this century, violent conflicts and coups d'état slowed down in direct relation to the upturn in economic growth. This proves, if proof was needed, that the interdependent link between security and development has always existed.

Moreover, in this century, China, Japan, Turkey, India, Malaysia and other "emerging economies" have and continue to invest in areas of European disinvestment since decolonisation (such as industry and infrastructure), as well as in mining, namely hydrocarbons, in timber and in agriculture. China is a case apart (Suisheng, 2017) for its huge involvement in financing infrastructures, investing in raw materials, and trading with almost all African countries, turning to be the first economic partner with the whole of African countries.[ix]

Since the second half of the last decade, the abundance of raw materials critical to industry, energy, and digitalisation has led old and new economic groups to reinvest. Chief amongst investments are those in hydrocarbons (oil, natural gas and coal), as African leaders defend that they have the right to take advantage of their resources and were not responsible for the huge increase in CO_2 emissions. Moreover, the digitalization trend increased the search for new sources of critical minerals, which are crucial for industry (from the military to pharmaceuticals to energy), and there are plenty of them in several African geographies. This trend might allow us to better understand Africa's role in the current and future global geopolitical context - 135 years after the Berlin Conference, Africa is once again in a central position to fulfil expansion strategies (Padraig, 2016), this time not only European but much more global ones.

This potentially positive trend does not go along with other dynamics that signal harsher times.

First, new violent conflicts of an identity and religious nature expanded after the destruction of the Libyan state in 2011/12 - and led to a state crisis (Celso and Nalbandov, 2023). Thus, the increasing presence of external military forces, mainly French and North Americans, at the entrance of the Red Sea and in the Greater Sahel – until the recent coups d'état in the region that did not make jihadism decrease, but led to a forced retreat of Western military actors, followed by an increase of paramilitary groups (mercenaries) from third countries, as the growing presence of the Russian Wagner – Africa Corps demonstrate.

Second, the slowdown in world economic growth and China since the middle of the last decade, mostly due to confinements and disruption in supply and distribution chains, the rise in inflation (reflected in import prices), and in sovereign debts, the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the increased rivalry between the US and China (Gaillard, Gotoh and Michalek, 2023).

These two last trends caused a worsening economic environment for the poor, which was aggravated by the Pandemic and by unfulfilled promises of environmental-related aid. Therefore, migration among African countries and towards Europe expanded, fuelling xenophobic movements. The worsening in living conditions further weakened African economies – and states (Celso and Nalbandov, 2023), and created social discontent in the poor and the incipient middle classes, particularly among the youngsters, who stopped believing in development led by current African elites (who often "captured" the state for their own interests) and point their fingers to foreign powers – in West and Central Africa mostly "the West" and particularly France, the former colonizer in the Sahel, seen as the culprit of neocolonialism.[x]

In such a scenario, the return of coups d'état in Africa would have to be expected.

Hence, at the start of the current decade, 7 coups d'état in the Greater Sahel and West Africa occurred. Mali (August 2020 and May 2021), Chad (April 2021), Guinea-Conakry (September 2021), Sudan (October 2021 - suspended from the AU since 2019, now living in a harsh civil war), Burkina Faso (January 2022), Niger (July 2023), Gabon (August 2023). Except for Sudan, all of them happened in former French colonies...

In general, they were the result of palace coups (not civil wars), carried out by military factions against the government of the day, with a show of popular support in the streets (except in Sudan and in Chad), usually with a tendency of rapprochement with Russia, which is seen as a substitute for France (except in Chad - and Gabon, at least for now). In the case of the Greater Sahel, in addition to increased economic and institutional fragility, the action of jihadist groups continues to unravel the region, confronting older and new leaderships.

4. From the unstable present into the unknown future

Institutional developments (creation of the African Union) and continental agreements - notably the African Continental Free Trade Area, AfFCTA, as well as a growing trend in some countries towards modernisation (which means adding value to basic products on African soil, developing national and regional infrastructures, benefiting from the digital revolution and energy transition) are positive notes compared to the post-independence neo-colonial and rentier growth model - which was (and still is) practised, particularly in countries where the ruling elites benefit from "perpetual" development aid and control the budget for personal purposes (Lopes and Kararach, 2021).

Regional integration, always presented as a panacea for development (by Africans and Europeans alike), needs infrastructure and tradable goods - not just trade in agricultural products, handicrafts, and imported goods. However, it continues to be cyclically voiced and (logically) delayed. Indeed, rather than economic integration, economic modernisation, effective public institutions and training (plus the rule of law) are more crucial for development (Cardoso, 2018). That does not imply that the European Union and "traditional donors" do not offer some important inputs - mainly supporting health and education, some sparse projects for reinforcing NGOs and civil society – plus the non-called by-name political conditionalities. As a matter of fact, the way some East Asian countries have grown - production of global quality goods for exportation – and domestic use – (Hyungkee, 2023) could perhaps have been an adequate path to modernisation and development. However, the social fabric and the historical factors were rather divergent, and as that was not the case, this would be a rather speculative debate.

However, one cannot avoid interrogating the reasons for such a resilient and flawed development model.

Will it be due to the co-operation ecology (Hubbard and Duggan 2009), constituted by (some) politicians and civil servants, development consultants, NGDOs, charities and some of the recurrent entrepreneurs – either of a donor or recipient countries?

Will it be because of a need to rely on the model of raw materials export, without or with minimal local incorporation of value, to not jeopardise companies and jobs in the destination countries – and of rentier ways of living on the side of some privileged elites in the "recipient" countries?

Should these hypotheses be correct, they would be understandable, whether being accepted or not.

In most donor countries, political interests follow electoral cycles, and pressure is exerted on governments by the voters and on companies by their own workers, not predisposed to supporting the relocation of production (and eventually their own jobs) to third countries. A parallelism can be

done with what is happening now in the West, where protectionist (now named reshoring) policies are growing as a result of the huge delocalisation of factories and production to China and some other Asian countries done by multinationals after the end of the Cold War.

In most "recipient" African countries, rulers and other members of the governing elites and even parts of the civil society rely upon rents from mineral and agricultural concessions, as well as from aid. Changing established ways of living and profiting is not an easy task sometimes, especially when that would imply a pull from one's comfort zone. Of course, narratives and discourses do not have to follow reality - namely, when reality is not a convenient path for some. Proof of discourses that do not follow reality is given by the continuing fallacy of North-South (or Global North – Global South) divisions/alliances or by demonising the "West" - while continuing to accept aid, welcoming investment (with "recipient countries' elites feeding "western" banks accounts...).

Anti-Western rhetoric has its raison d'être for historical reasons, some of them quite recent, but it is also used to avoid discussing why inequalities are increasing more within countries than between countries. After all, this is a part of capital movements and/or resource plundering carried out by internal elites allied with external interests.

Since the triumph of the neoliberal capitalist model (less state, more market) after the end of the Cold War, African countries were "convinced" to privatise public goods - accelerating wealth concentration. Therefore, it is in the interests of those who control power and wealth (and the mechanisms for distributing it), both in the South and the North, to speak out against the "dangers" of State intervention. As a matter of fact, states are now much more unable (and the elites in government are more unwilling) to prevent the capture of public goods by private interests.

It is impractical to create jobs and wealth without industrialisation, infrastructures, and adequate education; marginalising industry and using fallacies such as: "industry could jeopardise environment", and "unemployment may be solved by investing in services and in digital technologies" - are nothing less than "lullabies". Without infrastructures and industrial policies, African countries hardly will be able to forge common positions to negotiate better conditions with companies, banks, and governments from the "North", from the "South" or whatever cardinal point is invented, aiming at the creation of local capacities and employment, e.g., by aiding local value to mine or commodity exports.

In conclusion, Africa and African countries' realities are better understood through the lens of the theory of chaos and complexity rather than by traditional neo-realist postulates, which only capture parts of the whole – often leading to wrong analyses and conclusions.

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[i] Plus the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara), currently occupied by Morocco.

[ii] The stalemate positions in the CEDEAO and in the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on the military intervention to counter-act the coup d'état in Niger is an encouraging example for current or potential insurgents.

iii A map showing the Sahara Desert (and the Sahelian area) might be seen here: https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTcKxMh_KkzdUZnZORGSUTh5Q58hkeanICf1A&usqp=CAU; according to Hereher (2011), "results showed that the Sahara Desert witnessed two opposite episodes of expansion and contraction. The period 1984-1993 was a cycle of expansion and the period 1994-2003 was a cycle of contraction. Maximum desert area was observed during 1984 (10.35 million km2) and minimum area was during 1999 (9.15 million km2)

iv A map with trans-saharan routes may be seen here: www.researchgate.net/profile/Aliyu-Salisu-Barau/publication/277405390/figure/fig2/AS:667621691252745@1536184823565/Map-of-Trans-Saharan-Trade.png.

v Berlin Conference Partake: https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/P52Morm9T86oELfN5puEaiftQUY=/750x0/filters:no_upscale():max_bytes(150000):strip_icc():format(webp)/berlin-conference-1884-1885-divide-africa-14335563-97e30d55e305405d9276b081e1d3c17e.jpg

Redesign of borders resulting from the 2nd World War and before decolonisation: upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/0/0b/Mapa_del_%C3%81frica_colonial_%281947%29.svg/1525px-Mapa_del_%C3%81frica_colonial_%281947%29.svg.png;

Current countries' boundaries: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/50/Africa%2C_administrative_divisions_-_de_-_colored.svg/640px-Africa%2C_administrative_divisions_-_de_-_colored.svg.png

vi The following paragraphs are mostly a result of the author classes od the Autonomous University 3rd form BA classes of the course "Sub-Saharan Africa", which are based on a variety of sources.

vii Maps representing some African regions can be seen in the following addresses:

North and Northern https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/86/North_Africa_%28definitions%29.png

Sahel https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/82/Saharan_Africa_regions_map.png

DRC https://mondediplo.com/local/cache-vignettes/L756xH540/artoff4511-fa0e2-8b944.jpg?1583763672

Indian Ocean https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Schermata-2018-07-02-alle-10.23.54-512x682.png

Southern Africa https://tanzaniainvest.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/southern-african-development-community.jpg

viii This illicit trade being very much illustrated on public information from Interpol and the Organised Crime Observatory.

ix The Belt and Road Initiative is paying increased attention to Africa, through the renting and buying mines, ports and other critical hotspots. One can have an idea through the following map: https://static.dw.com/image/48461967_7.png

x These two regions are the heart of the so called France-Afrique, as it can be seen in: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/80/Francafrique_map.png/350px-Francafrique_map.png

Ethnic Conflicts in Ghana: Colonial Legacy and Elite Mobilisation

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the relationship between ethnic conflicts in Africa and their roots in the colonial legacy and elite mobilisation, focusing on the case study of Ghana by taking into account the regions of Dagbon and Bawku as examples. It examines how the dynamics of ethnic tensions in the post-colonial age have been influenced by the colonial past of Africa, which was marked by arbitrary borders, dividing policies, and preferential treatment of particular ethnic groups. The paper also looks into how Ghana's political elites use ethnic tensions for personal advantage, escalating disputes and impeding national unity. This study intends to provide a thorough knowledge of the complex interaction between colonial legacies, elite mobilisation, and ethnic conflicts in Ghana and Africa by analysing historical documents, academic writings, and empirical data.

Introduction

A social group's ethnicity is defined as its shared customs, cultures, languages, and ancestors' histories (Cambridge Dictionary, no date). African ethnic conflicts have been a recurring and complicated problem, frequently stemming from historical reasons like the colonial legacy and elite mobilisation. The colonial past of the continent, which was marked by arbitrary borders and divisive policies, set the stage for ethnic tensions that still exist today. Further exacerbating these problems is the political elites' manipulation of ethnic differences, which impedes national progress and cohesion.

European powers divided the continent during the "Scramble for Africa" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, frequently without regard for pre-existing ethnic, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. As a result, multiple ethnic groups coexisted within the same borders to form multiethnic nations. Artificial borders disturbed established systems of social structure and resource allocation, laying the groundwork for upcoming interethnic wars. Additionally, colonial governments established policies that gave preference to some ethnic groups over others, which caused marginalisation, inequality, and discontent among oppressed populations.

For their own political advantage, post-colonial political elites in Africa have contributed significantly to the escalation of ethnic hostilities. Elite mobilisation describes how political leaders manipulate ethnic identities and divisions to cling to power and exercise control. To rally support, foment ethnic conflicts, and maintain a divide-and-rule approach, these elites frequently prey on ethnic grievances, historical grievances, and a sense of marginalisation. They can maintain their hold

on power, gain access to resources, and obtain electoral support by playing on ethnic affiliations, further dividing the country and obstructing efforts to bring it together.

Moreover, the ethnic conflicts in Africa have a wide range of repercussions. They frequently result in bloodshed, population displacement, fatalities, infrastructure devastation, and economic upheaval. Conflicts like this damage social cohesion, obstruct growth and prolong poverty cycles. Conflicts and instability in the region might also result from ethnic tensions spreading to nearby nations (Deng, 1997).

Understanding the linkages between the colonial legacy, elite mobilisation, and ethnic conflicts is essential for formulating effective policies and interventions. Research in this field includes suggestions for fostering peace, harmony, and sustainable development in Africa, as well as insights into the underlying causes of ethnic conflicts. Scholars and decision-makers can develop a sophisticated grasp of the complexity involved and strive towards constructing inclusive societies that transcend ethnic barriers by analysing particular case studies within the larger African context.

Research questions

- How did colonialism impact the ethnic conflicts in Africa by taking into account the case studies of Ghana?
- What role do elites play in the ethnic conflicts of Africa by taking case studies of Ghana?

Research Methodology

This paper comprises qualitative research that utilises secondary sources of data. This approach allows the researcher to explore the role of elites and colonialism in the ethnic conflicts of Ghana by drawing on relevant data and literature from secondary sources such as books, articles, reports, or online databases. By incorporating qualitative methods, the researcher gains a deeper understanding of the legacy of colonialism and elite mobilisation in the aggravation of ethnic conflicts, while secondary sources provide a broader context and existing knowledge base for analysis. Moreover, this approach enables the researcher to triangulate data, corroborate findings, and uncover new insights by synthesising primary qualitative data with existing information from secondary sources, enhancing the validity and robustness of the research.

Colonial history of Ghana

Ghana is a country in western Africa that is located on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. Although relatively small in area and population, Ghana is one of the prime states of Africa. This is in part due to its abundant natural resources and also because it was the first black African state south of the Sahara to declare independence from colonial rule (Boateng et al., no date). The colonial history of Ghana is intricately entwined with the history of European colonisation in general in Africa. Due to its rich gold reserves, the area that is now Ghana was once a significant trading hub known as the Gold Coast. A period of colonial dominance began in the 15th century with the arrival of European powers, primarily the Portuguese (Brent-Turner, 2021). Other European nations, including the Dutch, British, and Danish, built forts and commercial posts along the coast after the Portuguese. These European nations wanted to make use of the resources in the area, primarily gold and, later, palm oil and other commodities. Millions of African people were captured and sent to the Americas as slave labourers as part of their participation in the transatlantic slave trade. Following their eventual conquest of the Gold Coast, the British steadily increased their sphere of influence inland through treaties, armed conflict, and diplomatic manoeuvres. The British officially recognised the Gold Coast as a crown colony in 1874, establishing direct British control over the region. The duration of this direct colonial rule ended with Ghana's independence in 1957 (Jones, 2022).

In the Gold Coast during colonial times, the British instituted a system of indirect rule that involved ruling via existing traditional institutions and indigenous authorities. This strategy reduced administrative expenses while allowing the British to keep control. Additionally, it helped to preserve stability and co-opt the local aristocracy. Ghana's socio-political landscape was affected by a number of policies that the British colonial administration implemented. They started growing cash crops like cocoa and palm oil, which revolutionised the economy and had a long-lasting impact on farming methods. They also constructed a revenue structure, brought in Western education, and put British common law-based judicial systems into place. The British colonial period also witnessed the emergence of nationalism and anti-colonial movements in Ghana. Leading nationalist figures like J.B. Danquah and Kwame Nkrumah came into prominence and pushed for independence and self-rule (Brent-Turner, 2021). Following World War II, the independence movement gathered steam, and Ghana became the first nation in sub-Saharan Africa to win its freedom from colonial domination in 1957.

The ethnic dynamics of Ghana have been significantly influenced by its colonial past. Multiethnic states were created as a result of the artificial borders that European powers drew, disregarding pre-existing ethnic, cultural, and linguistic barriers. In addition, the British government established policies favouring the Akan over other ethnic groups, which created a feeling of marginalisation and inequity among other ethnic groups (Decker, 2018). The colonial experience and independence struggle of Ghana have defined its national identity and continue to have an impact on its socio-political environment. To understand the intricacies of Ghanaian culture and tackle current difficulties, including ethnic conflicts, it is crucial to acknowledge and recognise this colonial heritage.

Colonial legacy of arbitrary borders and divisive policies

The colonial legacy, notably the arbitrary borders and division policies enforced by European colonial powers, frequently has an impact on ethnic conflicts in Africa as the African territory was split among European powers throughout the time of European colonisation without regard for pre-existing language, cultural, or ethnic barriers. Borders were frequently drawn without regard for the complexity of African communities, instead basing them on colonial goals, geopolitical factors, and talks among European powers. This led to the coexistence of multiethnic states with a range of ethnicities inside the same borders, which helped to create the conditions for subsequent ethnic tensions and conflicts. The imposition of arbitrary borders disrupted traditional patterns of social organisation, resource distribution, and political systems that had evolved over centuries. Communities that had previously coexisted peacefully and were tied by historical borders were abruptly divided by colonial borders, while diverse ethnic groups were compelled to coexist within the same geographical bounds (Gashaw, 2017). Communities often experienced tensions and conflicts as a result of these abrupt changes in social and political systems as they tried to adjust to new situations and negotiate new connections.

Divide-and-rule strategies were regularly used by European colonial rulers to keep their African colonies under control. They exacerbated tensions between various groups by taking advantage of already-existing ethnic rivalries, rivalries, and animosities. Colonial authorities frequently gave particular ethnic groups advantages over others, giving them access to resources, positions of authority, and privileges (Hyde, 2016). This unfair treatment increased racial animosities and increased the marginalisation of certain groups. Moreover, Certain ethnic groups were occasionally given preference by colonial powers, frequently due to their perceived usefulness or devotion to the colonial rulers. As a result, various ethnic groups received unequal distributions of wealth, territory, and political power. These differences stoked resentment and promoted a sense of injustice and marginalisation among the populations that these policies were excluded or disadvantaged.

African communities were frequently subjected to the social stratification and hierarchies imposed by colonial powers. They divided up ethnic groupings according to what they believed to be their shared traits, such as language, culture, or degrees of "civilisation." This led to artificial ethnic divisions and inequality, with certain ethnic groups being favoured and others being marginalised or subjected to discrimination. Social inequality that resulted has been a cause of contention and strife (Amadife and Warhola, 1993). Therefore, colonial rule left a legacy of ethnic animosities and rivalries, as certain ethnic groups were pitted against one another for the benefit of colonial powers. Long after independence, conflicts and resentment that were planted during the colonial era frequently still existed, feeding violent cycles and ethnic tensions.

Elite mobilisation and ethnic conflicts

Ethnic conflicts in Africa are significantly influenced by elite mobilisation. Elites frequently take advantage of ethnic identities and grievances for their own political, economic, or social gain, including powerful people, influential people, and power brokers. Here are some significant elements of elite mobilisation in African ethnic conflicts. By exploiting ethnic identities and employing them as a foundation for political organisation and mobilisation, elites mobilise along ethnic lines. To mobilise support and forge political ties, they use ethnic passions, cultural icons, and historical tales. Elites can increase their control and win the support of their ethnic group by framing problems in terms of ethnicity, frequently at the expense of other groups. Intense political rivalry between elites over money, authority, and control over state institutions frequently fuels ethnic conflicts (Tseer, Sulemana and Marfo, 2022). Elites may exploit ethnic animosities and divisions for political gain, mobilising their ethnic base to win over supporters or delegitimise rivals. This rivalry has the potential to turn violent, fuelling racial tensions and conflicts.

The management and distribution of resources are also related to elite mobilisation in ethnic wars. Political elites might exploit ethnicity as a means of gaining access to and exercising control over valuable resources like land, minerals, or business prospects. Elites can take advantage of resource imbalances and enlist the support of their ethnic constituency by presenting themselves as the protectors of their race. Furthermore, within an ethnic community, elites frequently create patronage networks where they provide their supporters with financial and social advantages in exchange for political allegiance. As people depend on their ethnic network for access to resources and opportunities, this strengthens their ethnic identities and allegiances. Such patronage structures, however, have the potential to widen ethnic gaps and fuel rivalry and conflict over scarce resources (Vermeersch, 2011).

Elites may use stories of historical wrongdoing and grievances to rally support for their ethnic group and fight off imagined foes. They frequently present conflicts as a battle for ethnic self-determination or as a continuation of historical injustices. This exploitation of past wrongs can stoke interethnic tensions and prolong violent and violent conflict cycles.

Media sources are also influenced by elites, who use incendiary rhetoric and misinformation to rally support and sway public opinion (Tseer, Sulemana and Marfo, 2022). This may heighten racial tensions, confirm negative perceptions, and cause disputes to escalate. Elites use the media to further divide societies and prevent the peaceful settlement of ethnic disputes.

Major ethnic groups in Ghana

Ghana is a West African nation renowned for its extensive ethnic variety. There are many different ethnic groups in Ghana, and each one has its own unique culture, language, and historical background. The principal ethnic groups in Ghana are:

1. Akan: Comprising various subgroups, including the Ashanti, Fante, Akyem, and Kwahu, the Akan are the largest ethnic group in Ghana. They primarily live in the southern and central regions of the nation. The Akan are well-known for their bright arts and crafts, traditional beliefs, and festivals. They also have a rich cultural legacy (Ndetei and Wangare, 2023).

2. Ewe: The home of the Ewe people is primarily in Ghana's Volta Region, close to the country's eastern border with Togo. Additionally, they can be found in regions of southwest Benin and southern Togo. The Ewe are well known for their fishing, farming, and lively musical traditions (Ndetei and Wangare, 2023).

3. Ga-Adangbe: The Greater Accra Region, which includes the nation's capital, Accra, is home to the Ga-Adangbe people. They are separated into the subgroups Ga and Adangbe. The Ga-Adangbe have a rich cultural legacy and are well-known for their artistic handicraft, drumming, and annual festivals (Ndetei and Wangare, 2023).

4. Mole-Dagbani: The Northern Region of Ghana, namely, is where the Mole-Dagbani ethnic group is most prevalent. Its subgroups include the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Gonja, Kusasi, and Nanumba. The Mole-Dagbani people primarily work in agriculture, particularly cattle rearing and subsistence farming (Ndetei and Wangare, 2023).

5. Gurma*:* The Upper East Region of Ghana, which borders Burkina Faso, is home to the majority of the Gurma population. They are renowned for their vivid traditional festivals, distinct cultural customs, and agricultural practices, such as millet and sorghum production.

Along with these significant ethnic groups, Ghana is also home to numerous smaller ethnic groups, including the Nzema, Sisala, Konkomba, Ahanta, and many others. With varying languages, customs, and social systems, each group adds to the nation's cultural tapestry (Ndetei and Wangare, 2023).

Historical context of ethnic conflicts in Ghana

Ghana's ethnic conflicts have a complicated historical background that spans the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras. The brief historical background of ethnic conflicts in Ghana is as follows:

Pre-colonial era

Ghana, once known as the Gold Coast, was home to a variety of ethnic groups that each had its own distinct cultures, dialects, and territories during the pre-colonial era. These groups interacted, traded, and engaged in wars with one another to varied degrees. Often, kinship, shared lineage, and territorial dominance were associated with ethnic identities. Although conflicts between various ethnic groups were widespread, they were usually small-scale and motivated by things like rivalry for resources, trading routes, or governmental influence (Keese, 2016).

Colonial era

In the late 19th century, Ghana came under the rule of European colonial powers, mainly the British. Divide-and-rule strategies were used by the colonial government to favour some ethnic groups over others. They altered conventional systems of government and land ownership by establishing administrative entities and boundaries that frequently crossed those of already-existing ethnic areas. The colonial rulers' arbitrary boundary and division practices worsened interethnic tensions and planted the seeds for future wars. Additionally, the colonial government instituted regulations that gave some ethnic groups preference over others, giving them access to jobs in administration,

employment, and education. Due to this unequal treatment, marginalised groups developed resentment and a perception of favouritism, which sparked tensions between different ethnic groups.

Post-colonial era

Ghana attained independence from British colonial rule in 1957, beginning the post-colonial era. The patterns of ethnic conflicts, however, were still shaped by colonialism in the post-colonial era. Because of the unequal distribution of resources, political sway, and opportunities left over from the colonial era, some ethnic groups continue to experience chronic socioeconomic imbalances and feel marginalised. Ghana experienced periods of political unrest, military takeovers, and governmental upheavals after gaining independence. Since political elites frequently mobilised support along ethnic lines, widening gaps and escalating confrontations for their own political advantage, ethnic connections frequently played a part in these political upheavals (Jinadu, 2007).

Inter-ethnic relations were further strained by increased urbanisation, economic difficulties, and rivalry for limited resources. Conflicts have occasionally erupted over property disputes, ethnic representation in government, or discrimination on the basis of race. Cultural disparities, resentments from the past, and rivalry for political power all contributed to the escalation of ethnic tensions and violence.

Case studies of ethnic conflicts in Ghana

There have been several notable ethnic conflicts in Ghana that can serve as case studies to understand the dynamics and complexities of such conflicts. Here are a few case studies:

The Dagbon war (1994–2002)

The Abudus and Andanis, two significant ethnic groups living in the Dagbon Kingdom in northern Ghana, were parties to the dispute. A disagreement about the Dagbon chieftaincy's succession gave rise to the conflict. The Abudu and Andani tribes engaged in a bloody brawl that left many people dead and displaced. The battle brought to light the long-standing rivalries and struggles for dominance between the two groups, as well as the role those traditional institutions played in sustaining and escalating the tensions. There have been ongoing efforts to bring about peace and reconciliation, including mediation by traditional leaders and governmental authorities (Hirsch, 2012). The Dagbon conflict in Ghana provides insights into the interplay between the colonial legacy and the role of elites in ethnic conflicts.

Colonial legacy

The Dagbon ethnic conflict in Ghana was significantly influenced by colonialism. The British colonial bureaucracy severely damaged the sociopolitical institutions and power relationships that already existed in Dagbon. The British imposed indirect rule, instituted new administrative structures, and gave preference to some leaders and factions over others. These interventions rooted the seeds of upcoming wars by creating power inequalities. Additionally, Dagbon's ancient chieftaincy structure was disturbed by British colonial officials, who chose chiefs among those more receptive to their control. Due to this intervention, many factions vying for the chieftaincy developed tensions and questioned the validity of traditional authority. The Abudu-Andani dispute was sparked by colonial officials' manipulation of the chieftaincy. Colonial borders in Africa were drawn arbitrarily, disregarding pre-existing linguistic, cultural, and ethnic affiliations. Colonial borders were imposed in the case of Dagbon, combining various ethnic groups into a single administrative division. As a result, there were tensions and struggles for control over resources and authority between different tribes, which fuelled interethnic conflicts like the Abudu-Andani fight. To maintain control and

thwart a cohesive revolt against colonial rule, the British took advantage of the divides between the Abudu and Andani tribes. Besides, traditional Dagbon methods of resolving disputes were hampered by the colonial authorities' implementation of Western administrative procedures (Ahorsu, 2014). Indigenous dispute resolution techniques that were based on cultural customs and norms were compromised. The absence of these conventional methods left an empty slot and reduced the options for peaceful conflict settlement, which facilitated the escalation of the Abudu-Andani conflict.

Role of elites

The Dagbon ethnic conflict in Ghana involved various elites from the Abudu and Andani factions, as well as other individuals who played influential roles. Ya-Na Mahamadu Abdulai, also known as Mahamadu Abdulai IV, was the Ya-Na (paramount chief) during the Dagbon dispute and a well-known member of the Andani group. While his specific role in escalating the conflict may be subject to different interpretations and perspectives, it is worth considering that he was an important representative of the Andani faction and claimed the Dagbon chieftaincy, which was the main factor igniting the conflict between the Abudu and Andani tribes. Mahamadu Abdulai IV, the head of the Andani group, made a substantial contribution to the polarisation and friction between the factions by emphasising the legitimacy of the Andani claim. As a leading member of the Andani side, Mahamadu Abdulai IV had the power to organise supporters and bring them together to support the Andani cause. His power and leadership inside the group undoubtedly contributed to the energising of Andani supporters and their involvement in the battle. The environment of the confrontation, as well as the dynamics of provocation and retribution, must be taken into account (Ahorsu, 2014). Over a lengthy period, numerous occurrences, complaints, and retaliatory measures contributed to the strife between the factions. Tensions and violence may have increased as a result of Mahamadu Abdulai IV's reactions to the Abudu faction's provocations or actions.

Moreover, traditional leaders also played a role in escalating the conflict. Kampakuya Na Abdulai Yakubu Andani was a prominent figure within the Andani faction who served as the regent of Dagbon during certain periods of the conflict, and Bolin Lana Abdulai Mahamadu was a key figure within the Abudu faction and a contender for the Dagbon chieftaincy. Their actions, speeches, and decisions affected the tactics of their faction, led to the division of the groups, and increased hostilities. The intensity and level of their followers' involvement in the struggle escalated if they had been able to organise their groups around their claims to the chieftaincy and further their own interests.

The Bawku conflict (since 1994)

The Kusasi and Mamprusi ethnic groups are still at odds with one another in the Bawku region of northern Ghana, which is known as the Bawku War. Cycles of violent encounters involving attacks, retaliations, and tensions within communities have defined the conflict. Competition over land, political representation, and historical grievances are some of the conflict's underlying reasons. Due to the region's severe ethnic differences, widespread small arms proliferation, and constrained economic possibilities, the war has been difficult to end. Many peacebuilding projects have been made to lessen the conflict, some of which involve community and religious leaders (Longi, 2014).

Colonial legacy

New land tenure protocols were imposed during colonial authority, upsetting established patterns of land ownership and use. Conflicts over land rights and resource access resulted from the emergence of private land ownership and the commercialisation of land. Tensions and ethnic violence in the Bawku region have been greatly exacerbated by land disputes between the Kusasi and Mamprusi populations. Certain ethnic factions or groups were given additional political clout and

representation by the colonial government. As a result, other groups, such as the Kusasi or Mamprusi communities, were marginalised, which sparked anger and sentiments of exclusion. The Bawku dispute has been exacerbated by the uneven allocation of governmental power and wealth. In a study cited by Taylor and Francis Online, ninety per cent of the participants attributed the dispute to the actions taken by British colonists while J.G. Syme served as the district commissioner for Bawku. They said that the decision-making procedures that resulted in the selection of the initial Bawkunaba created the conditions for the strife that Bawku has been going through since its independence. One response cited colonialism as the cause, asking how the colonialists merged two different ethnic groups and expected to have a positive interaction between them (Tseer, Sulemana and Marfo, 2022). Another response outlined how the colonial rulers' choice to elevate the Bawkunaba over all other divisional chiefs in Bawkuland was the catalyst for this dispute. Placing them under the authority of a Mamprusi chief was not feasible because most of the chiefs were Kussasis.

Role of elites

Influential individuals from both ethnic groups have encouraged their followers during intra-group encounters whenever the Kusasi-Mamprusi dispute erupted. Awani Akuguri, who championed the cause of the group and sparked the installation of a Kusasi, Bawkunaba Abugragu Azoka, even before the Nayiri arrived on Yerimiah Mahamah, led the first Kusasi agitation towards the "emancipation" of Kusasis from the Mamprusis. Additionally, John Ndebugri was credited for being important in this, particularly during the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) period. He was the one who filed a petition with the PNDC administration challenging the legality of Yerimah Mahama's re-enskinment (Tseer, Sulemana and Marfo, 2022). The Mamprusi side also provided reports on the actions of ethnic elites. When the Nkrumah government was deposed, it was said that Adam Amande and Salifu Imoro had led the protests calling for Abugragu Azoka's ouster. They urged that both the 1957 decision and the Bawkunaba's title as a paramount chief be overturned. The Mamprusi elites who provided strong motives through rigorous outbidding efforts that fuelled and prolonged the Kusasi-Mamprusi war in the Bawku traditional territory were Salifu Mahami and Rahaman Gumah, whose names also prominently appeared in the interviews. It's interesting to note that they all received prestigious government posts later on (Yobi, 2015).

These case studies demonstrate the diverse factors contributing to ethnic conflicts in Ghana, including issues of land, traditional governance, historical grievances, and political representation, but all of these factors have a linkage to colonialist practices and were exacerbated by elite mobilization.

Conclusion

A multifaceted approach is required to effectively address ethnic conflicts in Africa. It requires acknowledging and respecting the historical legacies of colonialism as well as its consequences on ethnic dynamics. Initiatives for reconciliation, including truth-and-reconciliation commissions, can help to end past grievances and promote healing. Inclusive politics and governance that offer fair representation and balanced economic distribution are crucial for reducing ethnic conflicts. Making investments in infrastructure, education, and socioeconomic development in underprivileged areas can also help tackle underlying problems and reduce the allure of identity-based activism. The root causes of ethnic conflicts in Africa must be addressed in order to eliminate the effects of colonial-era prejudice. Promoting inclusive government, equitable resource allocation, and opportunity for all ethnic groups are components of this.

Promoting inclusive government, equitable resource allocation, and opportunity for all ethnic groups are components of this. To develop trust and promote social cohesion, efforts must be made to reconcile, communicate, and comprehend diverse populations. Additionally, reducing the effect of

colonial-era bias on post-colonial ethnic conflicts may be accomplished through resolving historical grievances, advancing justice, and guaranteeing equal rights and opportunities for all individuals. In order to address elite mobilisation in ethnic conflicts, efforts must be made to advance inclusive government, bolster institutions, and encourage interethnic collaboration. Building institutions that reflect the interests of all ethnic groups, promoting equitable resource allocation, and challenging polarising myths are all vital. Additionally, initiatives to advance accountability and openness can aid in reducing the extent to which elites use ethnic identities for their own ends.

While ethnic identification is very important in Ghanaian society, it is also necessary to recognise that there are common national identities and initiatives to promote national cohesion among numerous ethnic communities. The multiethnic composition of the state presents chances and problems for social integration, nation-building, and governance. In Ghana, efforts need to be undertaken to address ethnic tensions through peacebuilding, reconciliation, and inclusive governance. Important stages in controlling and reducing ethnic tensions include the creation of democratic institutions, decentralisation of authority, and the encouragement of interethnic cooperation and discourse. Ethnic conflicts in Ghana have a long history, which emphasises the continued importance of resolving underlying issues, fostering social cohesion, and ensuring equal development for all ethnic groups.

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Examining Political Parties' Perspectives on Foreign Policy through Their Election Manifestos: 2023 General Elections in Türkiye[1]

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ABSTRACT

The election manifestos, published by political parties before a general election, provide important information about what the countries' domestic and foreign policies might be like. In Türkiye, it might be argued that the attitudes of political parties toward foreign policy are important to voters. Political parties in Türkiye state, in general, their approach to foreign policy in their general election manifestos. The aim of this study is related to the approaches of political parties' foreign policy perspectives. The perspectives of political parties on foreign policy are examined through their 2023 general election manifestos. More specifically, the aim of this study is twofold. Firstly, to understand how much importance political parties give to the issue of foreign policy in their election manifestos and secondly, to examine what are the raised key issues in foreign policy within the election manifestos.

Introduction

There is no doubt that political parties play a crucial role in modern society, especially ones governed by representative democracy. As it is stated in the 1982 Turkish Constitution, they are indispensable elements of democratic political life. It is worth stressing that this is not only the case in Türkiye but in other representative democracies as well. Political parties, in general, differ in policy priorities and policy approaches from their counterparts. Political parties announce their political approaches through different sources, such as weekly meetings, interviews, social media, and election manifestos. Foreign policy is one of the areas where political parties may have different opinions. Differences in terms of foreign policy are likely to be observed via different sources, such as election manifestos.

Although political parties are likely to have different approaches to foreign policy, it is unclear whether the issue of foreign policy has any impact on the party choice of voters in Türkiye. On the one hand, Yanık (2012: 213) claims that election surveys conducted in the 2000s in Türkiye demonstrate that foreign policy is not the main determinant of party choice of the Turkish voters.

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On the other hand, one of the recent studies in Türkiye also shown that although it is not the most important factor, the stand of the political parties on foreign relations is likely to have an impact on how people vote at polls (Kalaycıoğlu, 2009: 82). Based on these findings, it seems that it is not possible to claim that voters completely neglect the foreign policy perspectives of political parties at polls.

It is worth stressing that, almost without any exception, political parties in Türkiye have devoted space to the issue of foreign policy in their election manifestos. Thus, it is possible to argue that they consider it a significant policy area. The aim of this study is related to the approach of political parties' foreign policy perspectives in Türkiye. The perspectives of political parties on foreign policy are examined through their 2023 general election manifestos. More specifically, the aim of this study is twofold. Firstly, I want to understand how important political parties are to the issue of foreign policy in their election manifestos in Türkiye. Secondly, concentrating on the election manifestos to examine the raised key issues in foreign policy in Türkiye.

The paper is divided into four sections. In the next section, related literature is evaluated and the importance of this study is discussed. Then methodology section provides information about the data and how research questions are analysed. After that, findings are provided, and results are discussed. The last section concludes the paper.

Literature Review

Election manifestos are likely to provide quite useful and standard data about the perspectives of political parties. Several issues, such as education, health, migration, economy and foreign policy perspectives of political parties, are presented in the election manifestos. Therefore, these documents serve as valuable resources for comparing political parties. It is worth stressing that during the election period, speeches of the party leaders also provide sufficient data about the policy approaches/priorities of the political parties. However, it is claimed that access to the public speeches of the party leader is not uniform across the parties (Yanık, 2012: 214). Therefore, focusing only on the election manifesto is logical since it is uniform across political parties.

Taking election manifestos into consideration, discrepancies amongst political parties have been analysed from a different angles in Türkiye, such as policy priorities (Aytaç, 2017; Çatı and Cengiz, 2019; Kan, 2023), the issue of gender (Ekici and Acar, 2021; Kan and Kan, 2022; Şahin, 2021), the issue of foreign policy (Akçay, 2018; Apak et al., 2023; Kahraman, 2024; Sancak, 2024), environmental policies (Şeşen and Özkan Ertürk, 2017; Uzun and Özkan, 2019), national identity (İkiel and Bekleviş, 2024) and education (Korkmaz, 2018) and forestry (Atmiş and Günşen, 2019).

Policy priorities of political parties have been studied via election manifestos, in general, to acknowledge whether there is a difference among political parties or to understand whether a political party has shifted its policy priorities over the period being studied. Taking the major political parties into consideration, focusing on the years between 2002 and 2015, Aytaç (2017) investigated their policy priorities. It is found that economy, welfare and quality of life are the most mentioned policy areas in the election manifestos of major political parties (Aytaç, 2017: 9). In a similar vein, focusing on the general elections between 2002 and 2018, Çatı and Cengiz (2019) examine what are the most emphasised issues in the election manifestos. They found that political parties mainly focus on four issues, namely, democracy, economy, social life and culture-technology. One of the recent studies has compared the election manifesto of a political party with the earlier election. In more detail, the 2015 general election manifestos are compared with the 2018 general election manifestos to determine whether the issues emphasised have been changed or remain the same (Kan, 2023). It is found that the election manifestos of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma*

Partisi, AKP) and the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) have remained quite the same.

The issue of foreign policy within election manifestos, in general, has been examined among other policies, especially focusing on the issue of the European Union. For instance, concentrating on the years between 2002 and 2023 election manifestos, Kahraman (2024) aims to determine the similar and different aspects of the European Union policies of the AKP and CHP. He finds that while the AKP seems to diverge from its emphasis on the European Union, the CHP has shifted its focus to European Union-related values. Furthermore, in a recent study, AKP's perspective on being a member of the European Union was examined through two election manifestos, 2002 and 2023 (Sancak, 2024). Similar to Kahraman (2024), he finds that AKP's interest in the European Union seems to decrease. In addition, considering the 2018 general election, Akçay (2018) investigates two issues through election manifestos. The first one is the foreign policy perspective of political parties, and the second one is to what extent political parties give importance to the European Union relations. Similarly, Apak et al. (2023) analyse the election manifestos focusing on two issues. The first is foreign policy, and the second is women's policies.

Election manifestos of political parties have been analysed, focusing on the issue of gender in Türkiye. For instance, taking the years between 2002 and 2018, Ekici and Acar (2021) analysed the election manifestos of incumbent and main opposition political parties, namely the AKP and the CHP, respectively, concentrating on how they perceive the concepts of gender inequality and women. They found that, among other differences, while the headscarf issue appeared literally in the AKP's election manifesto for the first time in 2011, it did not appear in the CHP's election manifesto between 2002 and 2018. However, while the issue of sexual orientation did not appear in the AKP's election manifestos during this period, it appeared in the CHP's 2011 and so on election manifestos. Furthermore, Kan and Kan (2022) analyse the perspectives of political parties regarding the employment issues of women through the 2018 election manifestos of political parties that have chairs in the parliament. They found that although there are some discrepancies, all political parties support encouraging women entrepreneurs, increasing women's employment level and providing equal opportunities. Similarly, Şahin (2021) analyse the policies and promises regarding the issue of women, taking the election manifestos of the 2018 general election.

Political parties' perspectives on the issue of the environment have also been examined considering the election manifestos. For instance, Şeşen and Özkan Ertürk (2017) analyse the environmental policies of political parties mainly through their election manifestos taking years between 1991 and 2015. In a similar vein, Uzun and Özkan (2019) analyse to what extent the issue of the environment is mentioned within the election manifestos for the 2018 general elections. The 2023 election manifestos of the AKP and the CHP have been analysed from a slightly different perspective. Taking both political parties' election manifestos, İkiel and Bekleviş (2024) investigated the concept of national identity. They claim that national identity is addressed in more detail in the election manifesto of the People's Alliance than in the Nation Alliance. Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that the issue of forestry has been analysed through the election manifestos, at the 2011 general election (Atmış ve Günşen, 2011), at the 2015 general election (Atmış ve Günşen, 2016) and the 2018 general election (Atmiş ve Günşen, 2019).

As can be seen from the aforementioned studies, election manifestos have been examined from different perspectives in Türkiye. For instance, policy priorities, foreign policy, gender issues etc. Considering the 2023 general election, it might be argued how much importance political parties give to foreign policy in their election manifestos and what the key issues raised about the foreign policy in Türkiye still remain unanswered. This study briefly aims to accomplish this challenge.

Data and Methodology

As it is clear from the above, the data of interest in this study are election manifestos. Four election manifestos are included, they are the election manifesto of the AKP which is titled The Right Steps for Türkiye's Century (AKP, 2023), the election manifesto of the Nation Alliance which is titled Common Policies Memorandum of Understanding (Millet İttifakı, 2023), the election manifesto of the Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP) which is titled Approaching Turkish Century, Türkiye, the Power of the Future (MHP, 2023), and lastly the election manifesto of the Green Left Party (Yeşil Sol Parti, 2023) which is titled We are Here, We will Change it Together. All election manifestos are related to the 2023 General and Presidential elections in Türkiye, and they can be accessed from the political party websites.

The data consists of documents, and it is examined through content analysis. Bowen (2009: 28) states that program proposals can be considered as documents, so there is no doubt that election manifestos are documents. Since election manifestos are documents, the document analysis technique is used to address the questions aforementioned above. Content analysis is used here in more detail. It is claimed that one of the most common uses of content analysis is "to describe the relative frequency and importance of certain topics" (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998: 109). Through content analysis, it is possible to determine the message of the text (Cohen et al., 2007: 475). Therefore, content analysis is used to address the questions raised above.

However, it is worth stressing that the results presented here should be cautiously considered. It might be claimed that, in general, rather than used solely, content analysis is used together with other qualitative research methods (Bowen, 2009: 28) to enhance the robustness of the findings. As election manifestos are not the only source of understanding the foreign policy of a political party, other sources, such as public speeches, interviews, etc., might be considered as well. However, it should be kept in mind that since they are written documents, election manifestos are likely to provide the institutional perspective of a political party (Şeşen and Özkan Ertürk, 2017: 194-195).

As mentioned before, this study addresses two main questions: 1) How much importance do political parties give to foreign policy in their election manifestos? 2) What are the key issues raised in foreign policy through the election manifestos? Regarding the first question, the number of pages of an election manifesto and the number of pages related to foreign policy is considered. Moreover, the content order of the election manifesto is analysed, and the location of the foreign policy appears is researched. About the second question, the most ten used words within the foreign policy section are examined as well, and the words cloud are presented. It is worth stressing that while analysing the most used ten words, consistent with the earlier studies (Kan, 2023: 6-7), some words, such as conjunctions, prepositions and verbs, are not included[2] in the findings.

Findings and Discussion

It might be argued that to understand "how much importance do political parties give to the issue of foreign policy in their election manifestos?" content analysis can be applied. The election manifestos of political parties analysed here are, in general, similar in the subjects that they take into account. However, they differ in terms of the number of pages and the structure of the content order. Regarding the issue of foreign policy, the way how political parties consider it differs from each other. In terms of content order, some political parties give priority to the issue of foreign policy, which appears in the early pages of an election manifesto. In addition, some political parties devote more pages to the issue of foreign policy in their election manifestos than others.

Starting with the election manifesto of the AKP, the first thing to say is that they have the longest election manifesto in terms of the number of pages. The election manifesto of the AKP consists of six

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[2] Words such as and, one, this, for, with, more, to enable, and continuation are the words that are not included in word counts.

main chapters, including a separate chapter on foreign policy. The issue of the foreign policy chapter is titled "Türkiye Axis," and it appears in chapter five. This chapter has only one sub-chapter that is titled "Effective Foreign Policy". The effective Foreign Policy section is also divided into seventeen headings directly related to foreign policy issues.

The Nation Alliance comprises six political parties including the Republican People's Party (CHP), Good Party (İYİ), Democracy and Progress Party (DEVA), Future Party (GP) Felicity Party (SP), and Democrat Party (DP). In January 2023, the Nation Alliance announced the Common Policies Memorandum of Understanding to the public. Following the earlier literature, this document is considered the election manifesto of the Nation Alliance (İkiel and Bekleviş, 2024; Apak et al., 2023). The election manifesto of the Nation Alliance consists of nine main chapters. Foreign policy partly appears in the last section of the election manifesto named "Foreign Policy, Defence, Security and Migration Policies". This main chapter is divided into five sub-chapters and within that, the first one is titled "Foreign Policy".

The election manifesto of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) comprises thirteen chapters. Neither of these chapters is solely allocated to the issue of foreign policy. Foreign policy is mentioned in chapter eleven, titled "Policies". Under the Policies chapter, there are twenty-seven sub-chapters, and the issue of foreign policy comes up twenty-fifth, titled "Foreign Policy". The Foreign Policy sub-chapter is also divided into three parts; the first one is titled "Our Fundamental Principles and Essentials," the middle one is titled "Versatile and Multidimensional Foreign Policy," and the last one is titled "Turkish World".

Taking the election manifesto of the Green Left Party into account, it is worth stressing at first glance it looks different from the others. For instance, it does not have a content page. Furthermore, it consists of only two main chapters, whereas others have at least six. In addition, issues related to foreign policy are slightly mentioned in both sections. In more detail, in the first section, there is a heading titled "Peaceful Foreign Policy," which consists of only four small paragraphs, nearly half a page long. Moreover, in the second section, two headings are also related to foreign policy. While the former is titled "For a Peaceful Foreign Policy We will Change Together," the latter is titled "We will Solve the Problems of Citizens Abroad".

It is clear that, in comparison to others, the AKP is the only political party that devotes its main chapter to the issue of foreign policy in its election manifestos. In addition, it might be claimed that compared to others, the issue of foreign policy appears in earlier pages of the AKP's election manifesto. Based on this, it might be argued that the AKP gives more importance to the issue of foreign policy in their election manifesto than others.

Table 1: Descriptives of Election Manifestos of Political Parties

	Justice and Development Party	Nation Alliance	Nationalist Movement Party	Green Left Party
Number of main chapters	6	9	13	2
Where does foreign policy appear	5	9	11	1-2
Number of pages	463	216	252	72
Number of pages of foreign policy	48	4	12	4
Foreign policy in election manifesto (ratio)	%10,37	%1,85	%4,76	%5,56

Table 1 above demonstrates the basic information about the content of the election manifestos, the number of pages of the election manifestos[3] , and how much space is devoted to the issue of foreign policy. The first row shows the political parties, the second row provides information about the number of the main chapters of the election manifestos, the third row shows where the issue of foreign policy appears. The fourth row provides the number of pages of their election manifestos, and the fifth row is about the number of pages of foreign policy in their election manifestos, and the last row provides information about the ratio of foreign policy within the election manifesto. For instance, the election manifesto of the AKP consists of six main chapters, and the issue of foreign policy appears in chapter five. Furthermore, it is 463 pages of which 48 are related to the issue of foreign policy.

In terms of the number of pages, the election manifestos are in a different length. First of all, it is clear that the election manifesto of the AKP is the largest, and what is more it is almost as big as twice than the second one, 463 and 216, respectively. Moreover, while the election manifesto of the MHP and the Nation Alliance is quite similar to each other, the election manifesto of the Green Left Party is clearly the shortest one.

Regarding the issue of foreign policy, not only the number of pages devoted to it but also the ratio of it is the highest in the election manifesto of the AKP. From this, it might be claimed that compared to others, the AKP gives much more importance to the issue of foreign policy in their election manifesto. Moreover, in terms of the number of pages devoted to foreign policy, although it is the shortest in the Green Left Party, they are second regarding to the ratio of it. In addition, although the number of pages of the election manifesto of the MHP and the National Alliance is similar to each other, pages devoted to the issue of foreign policy are apparently different, and they are twelve and four pages, respectively. Therefore, it might be argued the issue of foreign policy takes more place in the election manifesto of the MHP than the Nation Alliance.

It might be argued that to understand "what the key issues raised in foreign policy within the election manifestos" are, word count might be the appropriate way of searching for it. Table 2 provides information about the most frequently used top ten words related to the issue of foreign policy in the election manifestos. Looking at the similarities and differences in the most frequently used words, at first glance, it might be claimed that although there are some similarities, political parties are likely to pinpoint different issues. Starting with similarities, it seems that there is only one word that is common among political parties. It is the "foreign policy". Furthermore, "Türkiye" is one of the most frequently used words among political parties' election manifestos, except the Green Left Party. In addition, apart from the "Türkiye", one more word, namely, "international," is common among political parties, again except the Green Left Party. Moreover, four words are common between the AKP and the MHP. Similarly, four words are common between the AKP and the Nation Alliance. Apart from the aforementioned common three words, "Turkish" is one of the most used common words between the AKP and the MHP and "cooperation" is one of the most used common words between the AKP and the Nation Alliance within the foreign policy section. What is more, there are two more common words, namely "national" and "peace" between the MHP and the Nation Alliance, other than those mentioned above.

Table 2 below provides information about the most frequently used words in the election manifestos. The first row is about the election manifesto of the related political party or the alliance. The first column provides the most frequently used words in order. Since the documents are written in

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[3] While the number of pages of an election manifesto is determined, book cover pages, content pages and blank pages are not included.

Turkish, the most used words are sorted in Turkish and then translated to English[4]. Hence, the most used words are also given in Turkish in parentheses and italics. The second column gives information about the percentage of the related words within the foreign policy section.

Table 2: Top ten words (terms) used in the foreign policy section

AKP		Nation Allience		MHP		Green Left Party	
Word	% in FP	Word	% in FP	Word	% in FP	Word	% in FP
Türkiye (*Türkiye*)	0,87	Foreign Policy (*Dış Politika*)	1,42	Türkiye (*Türkiye*)	2,50	Diplomacy (*Diplomasi*)	1,4
Global (*Küresel*)	0,65	Türkiye (*Türkiye*)	1,42	Turkish (*Türk*)	1,38	Foreign Policy (*Dış politika*)	1,4
International (*Uluslararası*)	0,65	Relation (*İlişki*)	1,18	International (*Uluslararası*)	1,12	Resolution (*Çözüm*)	1,2
Foreign Policy (*Dış politika*)	0,50	International (*Uluslararası*)	0,83	Economic (*Ekonomik*)	0,67	Overseas (*Yurt dışı*)	1,01
Security (*Güvenlik*)	0,51	Over again (*Yeniden*)	0,71	Foreign Policy (*Dış Politika*)	0,63	Peaceful (*Barışçı*)	0,80
Overseas (*Yurt dışı*)	0,45	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Dışişleri Bakanlığı*)	0,59	National (*Millî*)	0,54	Democratic (*Demokratik*)	0,80
Turkish (*Türk*)	0,43	National (*Ulusal*)	0,59	Significant (*Önemli*)	0,49	Middle East (*Ortadoğu*)	0,80
UN (*BM*)	0,42	Peace (*Barış*)	0,59	Political (*Siyasî*)	0,49	War (*Savaş*)	0,80
Effective (*Etkin*)	0,37	Dialogue (*Diyalog*)	0,47	Strategic (*Stratejik*)	0,49	Political (*Siyasi*)	0,80
Cooperation (*İş birliği*)	0,32	Cooperation) (*İşbirliği*)	0,47	Peace (*Barış*)	0,45	Syria (*Suriye*)	0,80

In terms of differences, it can be seen from Table 2 that eight words only appear in the Green Left Party's election manifesto. These are "diplomacy", "resolution", "peaceful", "democratic", "Middle East", "war", "political" and "Syria". It is worth stressing that the Middle East and Syria are the words that only appear in the Green Left Party's most used top ten words. Based on this it might be claimed that the Green Left Party puts more emphasis on this issue compared to others. Furthermore, four words only appear in the AKP's election manifesto. These are "global", "security", "UN" and "effective". It is worth recalling that global and the UN only appear in the AKP's most used top ten words. Thus, it seems that regarding the collaboration with global actors, the AKP gives more importance than others. In addition, throughout the ten most used words in the election manifesto of the Nation Alliance, four of them namely "relation", "over again", "Ministry of Foreign Affairs", and "dialogue" appears does not appear others the most used. Moreover, among the most used ten words, three of them namely "economic", "significant" and "strategic" only appear in the MHP's election manifesto.

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[4] Turkish is an agglutinating language. Therefore, in the process of counting, words close to each other both in writing and meaning are considered the same. For instance, foreign policy (dış politika), in foreign policy (dış politikada) both are considered as one term.

Figure 1: Words cloud of the foreign policy parts of the election manifestos

Conclusion

Political parties are one of the most important components of modern society, especially when governed by representative democracy. Political parties are likely to stand in different positions regarding domestic and foreign policies compared to their counterparts. To understand the domestic or foreign policy perspective of a political party, it might be argued that election manifestos are likely to provide sufficient information. In this study, taking the 2023 general elections in Türkiye, the election manifestos of political parties were analysed twofold. Firstly, how much political parties value the issue of foreign policy is examined, and secondly, the most used words in the foreign policy sections are analysed. Results suggest that the AKP puts more emphasis on the issue of foreign policy than others. In more detail, in terms of content order, the issue of foreign policy appears earlier, and more space is devoted to it in the AKP's election manifesto than others. Regarding the most used top ten words within the foreign policy section, results suggest that only one word appears among all. That is "foreign policy". Therefore, it is possible to argue that regarding the most used top ten words rather than similarities, differences seem higher among the political parties. In other words, political parties seem to have different perspectives on foreign policy issues. For instance, based on this, it seems that while the AKP puts more emphasis on collaboration with global actors, the Green Left Party puts more importance on the issues in the Middle East.

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An Analysis of Egyptian and Israeli Discourse on Israel's Control of the Philadelphi Corridor during the 2023 Gaza War

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
	This study investigates the interplay between sovereignty discourse and national security through an analysis of Israeli and Egyptian discourses during Israel's control over the Philadelphi Corridor following the 2023 Gaza War. Employing critical discourse analysis, the research examines official statements and media coverage from both nations, highlighting how sovereignty is mobilised to legitimize military actions and secure strategic advantages. The findings reveal contrasting approaches. Israel framed its actions as essential to national security and counterterrorism, using symbolic language to justify its occupation. On the other hand, Egypt sought to balance sovereignty discourse with regional stability and international obligations. However, both discourses displayed inconsistencies between rhetoric and practice, with significant implications for human security and regional stability. This study contributes to understanding the role of sovereignty discourse in shaping geopolitical conflicts and offers insights into the challenges of aligning security imperatives with legal and ethical norms.

Introduction

In the Middle East, sovereignty has political significance, and it is shaped by historical conflicts, national identities, and regional alliances. The media has a strong guiding influence in shaping public perceptions and political debates on sovereignty, especially in times of conflict. The 2023 Gaza War, marked by Israel's control of the Philadelphi Corridor, exemplifies a geopolitical event where media coverage profoundly affected public understanding and state narratives regarding sovereignty. This study aims to conduct a political discourse analysis to examine how Egypt and Israel addressed the issue of sovereignty in the context of the Philadelphi Corridor and the political interactions between the two states following Israel's control over the area during its 2023 war on Gaza. It seeks to explore the impact of military conflict on the orientations and positions of each party regarding sovereignty in the region, identifying potential shifts in the political stances reflected in official or media discourses. By comparing the Egyptian and Israeli discourses, the study investigates differences in

their sovereign visions, approaches to defending borders and national interests, and use of sovereignty and international legitimacy in their language.

Additionally, the study delves into the role of sovereignty within regional dynamics, examining how these statements and discourses influence regional and global relations, including international reactions and their potential effects on regional stability. The role of media is also analysed, focusing on how various outlets shape public opinion about Israel's control over the Philadelphi Corridor and contribute to the portrayal of sovereignty in Egyptian and Israeli media narratives. Finally, the study assesses the broader implications of this conflict on the future of peace dynamics, truces between Egypt and Israel, and the region's political trajectory.

The study faced challenges in obtaining comprehensive and accurate data on political and media discourses issued by governments or media institutions in Egypt and Israel. This difficulty stemmed from the sensitivity of the topic and the lack of complete or reliable information at times. Additionally, the analysis was limited to official or media discourse, which did not account for popular responses or protests that could reflect other opinions and dimensions of sovereignty. Local political and economic conditions in Egypt and Israel also influenced the interpretation of discourses, making it challenging to determine the real reasons or motivations behind some political positions.

Furthermore, the study's focus on a limited time period, particularly the period following the 2023 Gaza War, restricted a comprehensive analysis of the conflict's dynamics and sovereignty in other times or geographical contexts. Egypt's relationship with Israel added another layer of complexity due to its multifaceted political and historical factors, complicating efforts to isolate discourse related to the Philadelphi Corridor from the broader context of the Arab-Israeli conflict or issues such as the Palestinian file or Egypt's relations with other regional powers. Challenges in accurately translating speeches from Hebrew or Arabic also posed potential risks to the precision of text or message analyses extracted from these speeches. Additionally, bias in selecting speeches or specific interpretations could influence the analysis results, especially in a sensitive area such as sovereignty and regional conflict. By focusing solely on textual analysis, the study did not account for the real-world impacts of these discourses, such as troop movements or political interventions, nor did it predict how these speeches might shape the long-term trajectory of the conflict amidst the region's evolving international situation.

In relation to the literature on the topic of this study, Samantha Besson's work (Besson, 2004) examines conceptual shifts in sovereignty and its adaptability to political and legal transformations in both national and international contexts. Focusing on cases where multiple sovereign structures, such as the European Union, overlap, Besson reflects on the tension between traditional and cooperative sovereignty. She proposes a framework that views sovereignty as an "essentially contestable concept," highlighting its dynamic nature and potential for reshaping to address the complexities of the modern world order. Besson's study significantly contributes to the academic debate on sovereignty by positioning it as a flexible and evolving construct. However, while her study provides a rich theoretical framework for understanding sovereignty as a dynamic process, its reliance on the European context raises questions about the broader applicability of its findings to other regions.

Building on this discussion, Mustafa Menshawy's (Menshawy 2018) study explores how sovereignty is employed as a discursive and political tool to reshape the state and its borders during the Syrian conflict. Menshawy presents sovereignty as a multidimensional concept that is adaptable to support various narratives in national and international conflicts. By linking theoretical discourse with practical applications of sovereignty, Menshawy's work underscores how political and geographical contexts can redefine the concept to serve specific agendas. It also emphasises the role of sovereign

discourse in enhancing state legitimacy and justifying repressive policies. However, Menshawy's analysis primarily focuses on the Syrian regime and its allies, offering limited insight into counter-narratives from opposition forces or other actors, which may restrict the applicability of the findings to conflicts between two sovereign states.

These studies provide valuable perspectives on the dynamic and context-dependent nature of sovereignty. They illustrate how sovereign discourse can be reshaped to align with political, legal, and geographical imperatives and offer insights into its role in regional and international conflicts. However, this study tries to highlight the importance of sovereignty discourse and how it is used to achieve national security purposes by addressing significant research questions, including how the Israeli and Egyptian sovereign discourse on Israel's control over the Philadelphi Corridor reflects national security issues, and how Egypt balances its relationship with Israel while maintaining its national sovereignty and security. It anticipates providing a deeper understanding of political discourse and its role in building sovereignty and legitimising military presence, analysing the mutual influences between Egypt and Israel, and examining how political discourses affect relations between the two countries. Moreover, it seeks to explore how declarations of sovereignty influence military decisions and security policies. The study critically examines the interplay between Israeli and Egyptian official statements regarding the Philadelphi Corridor by employing political discourse and political analysis methodologies. It contributes to a broader understanding of sovereignty discourse and international relations in this complex regional context.

Conceptual Framework

National sovereignty is the supreme authority of a state to exercise rule over its territory and people without external interference (Krasner, 1999). This authority encompasses political, economic, and military decision-making. In this study, sovereignty is employed to examine how Israel and Egypt invoked this principle during the conflict over the Philadelphi Corridor and to assess the influence of security and geopolitical challenges on the sovereignty of both parties. Originating from the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), traditional sovereignty is characterised by the state's supreme authority within its borders, prohibition of external interference, and territorial integrity, encompassing control over resources and people (Krasner, 1999). However, globalisation has significantly transformed traditional sovereignty, introducing constraints through economic interdependence, international organisations, cultural exchange, and global media (Held & McGrew, 2007; Beck, 2006). Furthermore, the international community's emphasis on human rights and concepts like Responsibility to Protect (R2P) has redefined sovereignty as conditional upon adherence to global norms (Keohane, 2003; Kaldor, 2007).

While sovereignty today represents a balance between national independence and international obligations, states adapt their principles to suit their interests. This reflects a shift from an absolute Westphalian model to one influenced by globalisation and interconnectedness (Krasner, 2001). This evolving nature of sovereignty underpins the ongoing tension between the need for national independence and international cooperation in addressing global challenges. National security, defined as protecting a state from internal and external threats, is another pivotal concept in this study. It involves defending borders, safeguarding national interests, and addressing security risks (Buzan, 1991). This study highlights the intersection of sovereignty and national security in the region by analysing Israel's justifications for controlling the Philadelphi Corridor and Egypt's concerns about its security implications. Border conflicts, such as disagreements over controlling territories adjacent to state borders, provide further context for understanding the Philadelphi Corridor dispute (Prescott, 1987). This conflict reflects broader geopolitical dynamics, influenced by historical agreements such as the Camp David and Oslo Accords, which left Gaza in a precarious geographical and political position. The tunnels beneath the Philadelphi Corridor exemplify the challenges of closed borders and their role in fueling smuggling activities and regional tensions.

Security and social challenges arising from the conflict further illustrate the impact on local populations and regional stability. The Philadelphi Corridor has become a focal point of security vulnerabilities, with tunnels serving as conduits for smuggling weapons and goods, exacerbating tensions between Israel, Egypt, and Hamas. Simultaneously, humanitarian crises in Gaza, stemming from restricted freedom of movement and deteriorating social cohesion, underscore the broader implications of the conflict. Diplomatic and military efforts to manage border disputes have yet to fully address these challenges, emphasising the need for comprehensive strategies that balance security, humanitarian, and political considerations. Public diplomacy, the strategic use of media and public discourse to influence international public opinion, is critical in shaping narratives surrounding the Philadelphi Corridor (Nye, 2004). Israel and Egypt have employed public diplomacy to justify their positions and garner local and international support. This underscores the power of media and discourse in framing conflicts and advancing political objectives on the regional and global stages.

Methodology

The study relies on a descriptive-analytical and critical discourse analysis methodology, integrating political analysis to review official statements from Israeli and Egyptian sides regarding Israel's control over the Philadelphi Corridor. This approach enables examining the relationship between official discourses and national sovereignty while providing insights into the political contexts related to the topic. The descriptive-analytical approach aims to describe and analyse official statements from Israeli and Egyptian officials regarding the Philadelphi Corridor. This involves collecting these statements from the media and official reports, performing detailed text analyses to identify the main messages and their meanings, and comparing Israeli and Egyptian statements to highlight differences and similarities in their discourses. Complementing this, critical discourse analysis (CDA) critically examines political discourses to understand how power and sovereignty are constructed through language. This involves applying CDA tools to analyse relationships between language, power, and sovereignty, studying how language reinforces or undermines sovereignty in statements, and considering the factors influencing the discourse, such as political identity, legitimacy, and security threats.

A temporal contextual analysis methodology addresses changes over time, studying the development of political discourse and statement changes during specific periods, such as May through September 2024. This approach tracks statements issued during these months. It examines their temporal context, analysing changes in political positions in response to variables like military developments in Gaza, political negotiations, and regional or international pressures. The study utilises tools such as text analysis, where official statements are analysed and compared, and qualitative analysis methods, which examine the frequency of different themes and messages within the statements. Data sources include official statements by Israeli and Egyptian officials through media outlets like newspapers and satellite channels, government reports, excerpts from leaked or media-reported conversations and negotiations, and previous research on sovereignty, discourse analysis, and Israeli and Egyptian policy.

Practically, the research involves several steps. First, data is collected, gathering statements and information from diverse sources, including media, government reports, and articles. This is followed by data analysis, where texts are analysed using specific methodological tools. Finally, the findings are compiled into a report that clearly explains Israeli and Egyptian positions and policies based on the analysis. Regarding the theoretical framework, this study employs a theoretical framework that synthesises critical discourse analysis (CDA), constructivist discourse theory, and the concept of sovereignty discourse to investigate Israeli and Egyptian discourses surrounding

control of the Philadelphi Corridor. The framework facilitates an in-depth examination of how language, sovereignty, and political objectives intersect, uncovering the implicit goals and strategies embedded in official statements and policy rhetoric.

Discourse analysis serves as the foundation of this research, offering tools to deconstruct texts and understand how language shapes ideas, behaviours, and power relations in political contexts (Fairclough, 2003). This methodology enables the study of the Egyptian and Israeli sovereignty discourses surrounding the Philadelphi Corridor, revealing how states use language to legitimise power and policy decisions. While critical discourse analysis (CDA) is central to this study, emphasising the relationship between language and power dynamics. By analysing key terms such as "total control" and "cooperation with Egypt," the research uncovers how Israeli discourse constructs narratives to reinforce political and security dominance. CDA examines how sovereignty is framed as a mechanism for maintaining security and control, illustrating how language legitimises actions that might otherwise provoke criticism. As Fairclough (2003) highlights, language is a tool of power used to shape perceptions, justify policies, and assert dominance in conflicts.

This approach complements CDA by exploring how discourse shapes national identity and interests. The research analyses how Israeli rhetoric frames the Philadelphi Corridor within a broader national security and sovereignty narrative, reinforcing national and political identities. Constructivist discourse theory posits that framing issues reflects existing realities and actively constructs them. By portraying control of the corridor as essential to national security, Israeli discourse influences both domestic and international perceptions of its sovereignty claims. Sovereignty discourse is a core concept intertwined in this study. It represents a state's supreme authority over its territory. The research investigates how sovereignty is invoked as a legal or territorial claim and reconstructed through language to address contemporary geopolitical and security challenges. By combining CDA and constructivist discourse theory, this research provides a nuanced understanding of the Philadelphi Corridor conflict as a site of linguistic and political contestation. The framework reveals:

1. How language serves as a tool for constructing and legitimising sovereignty claims.

2. The role of discourse in shaping national identity and security strategies.

3. The interplay between power, language, and sovereignty discourse in regional dynamics.

Through this integrated theoretical lens, the study demonstrates how discourse is not merely a reflection of political reality but an active force in constructing and negotiating sovereignty, power, and identity in the context of the Philadelphi Corridor conflict.

Historical Background: What is Area D? Why is the Philadelphi Corridor sensitive to Egyptian National Security?

The Camp David Accords[1] between Egypt and Israel stipulated the identification of 4 areas on the border between Egypt and Israel as follows: Sinai, where the Egyptian army is based, is divided into zones A, B, and C. Area D is on the Palestinian side, and Israel is present in it; the Philadelphi Corridor is part of this area. Area A is the closest to the Suez Canal. It allows the presence of an Egyptian mechanised infantry division with a total of 22 thousand soldiers with military equipment, only 230 tanks, and a few hundred armoured vehicles. Area B: in the middle: it allows the presence

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[1] The Camp David Accords were signed by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin on September 17, 1978, following 12 days of secret negotiations at Camp David. Both framework agreements were signed at the White House and witnessed by President Jimmy Carter. The second of these frameworks (a framework for concluding a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel) led directly to the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty for which Sadat and Begin shared the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize.

of 4 border guard battalions, with the presence of the Egyptian police, and no tanks are allowed. Area C is adjacent to the Egyptian border with Gaza, which allows the presence of only lightly armed Egyptian police forces.

Area D was under Israeli control until Israel withdrew from Gaza during the Sharon era in 2005. After Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in 2007, the area came under Palestinian administration. Area D contains four lightly armed infantry battalions, consisting of a maximum of 4 thousand Israeli soldiers, with light and limited weapons "carried on the shoulder" without any tanks, armoured vehicles, or air defence systems except missiles shoulder mounted. According to the agreement, only a limited number of forces with light weapons exist in these areas. Any presence of forces in these four areas without an agreement between Egypt and Israel is a violation of the agreement and a threat to it. Launching a military invasion in Area D, which includes tanks and heavy weapons, also violates the agreement. The agreement stipulates that any military presence in this area must be in consultation and agreement between the two countries.

During the comprehensive military operation carried out by the Egyptian army in Sinai in 2018, Egypt brought in military forces of up to 40,000 soldiers, which is double the number agreed upon in the Camp David Accords, to Area B and Area C on the border to confront the armed groups in Sinai, which was with Israel's approval, and Israel at the time provided reconnaissance support and air strikes carried out by the Egyptian army. As for Area D, When Israel wanted to start the military operation in Rafah, the Israeli media reported that the Israeli Chief of Staff, Halevi, and Ronen Bar, the director of the Shin Bet, went to Egypt to meet with the Egyptian Chief of Staff and the head of Egyptian intelligence. They reached an understanding regarding the expected military operation in Egypt. The Egyptian media or government did not respond to or deny these statements.

Sovereignty and Security: Using Sovereignty to Strengthen Control over Strategic Areas

Sovereignty is the supreme authority exercised by a state over its territory and population, embodied in political, legal, and administrative control (Krasner, 1999). Security guarantees the state's protection from internal and external threats, whether military, economic, or political (Buzan, 1991). Sovereignty and security intersect when states seek to secure their territories or expand their influence over strategic areas to advance their national interests. Strategic areas, such as borders or vital gateways, represent points of strength or weakness for the state. The control of these instruments allows for enhancing national security by preventing external interference or activities that threaten security, establishing geopolitical dominance by establishing influence in conflict zones or borders of military importance, and controlling economic resources if the region contains natural resources or logistics sites. In this sense, the Philadelphi Corridor stands out as a model for the exercise of sovereignty in ensuring security for both Egypt and Israel.

The Philadelphi Corridor, which extends along the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, is considered a highly sensitive strategic area, as it constitutes an artery for smuggling weapons and goods. Controlling it is an Israeli tool to enhance its concept of sovereignty linked to security. In this case, we can understand sovereignty as a means to achieve military security, which is what we notice from the intense military presence, as Israel focused on deploying its forces and security control in the Philadelphi Corridor to ensure that weapons smuggling into Gaza is prevented. Statements by Israeli officials also indicated the destruction of hundreds of tunnels located in the Gaza Strip, reflecting an attempt to establish complete security control over the area (BBC, 2024). Here, we notice the establishment of sovereignty to impose geopolitical influence by strengthening regional influence. Control of the Philadelphi Corridor shows Israel's desire to assert its sovereignty over the border areas with Egypt and the Gaza Strip, which reflects the connection between the concept of sovereignty and the desire for geopolitical hegemony.

Naturally, cooperation or conflict with Egypt over control of this area reflects the balance of sovereignty between the two states, ensuring the protection of each country's national interests (Alhurra, 2024). We cannot ignore linking sovereignty to economic and political dimensions and its role in redrawing economic geography, which is evident in the construction of roads such as the "David's Corridor," which shows how control of the Philadelphi Corridor is used as a means to change the geographical and political reality in the region, enhancing the permanent Israeli presence (Al Mayadeen, 2024). In border disputes, such as the case of the Philadelphi Corridor, sovereignty is used to justify military and political actions. This is evident in the security discourse associated with sovereignty, which appears in Netanyahu's description of the corridor as "Hamas' oxygen tube," making control over it a strategic necessity (Alhurra, 2024). Control over strategic areas is also portrayed as a condition for ensuring national security, which justifies military interventions or regional expansion, reflecting the state of combining security and sovereignty.

Although using sovereignty to enhance control over strategic areas may enhance national security, problems are associated with this. These include regional conflicts that often lead to the exacerbation of tensions with neighbouring countries. With these international legal challenges, absolute sovereignty may clash with international laws that prohibit long-term occupation or the use of disproportionate force, as well as with social and political costs such as internal conflicts and popular resistance, as in the case of Gaza. Sovereignty is not a static concept but rather a tool that can be used to achieve security, especially in strategic areas. However, this use carries geopolitical and moral implications. In the case of the Philadelphi Corridor, sovereignty represents an Israeli tool to enhance national security and impose regional influence. Still, it raises questions about its legitimacy and its implications for regional stability.

Analysis of ideas: Language as a tool of power, media, and political framing, symbolism, and ideology

As mentioned, language is a fundamental tool for enhancing power and legitimising policies by constructing perceptions that facilitate public acceptance of specific political or military actions. In political and security discourse, policies are justified using vocabulary and frames that enhance the legitimacy of political action. Examples from security and military policy: In conflict contexts, language frames the enemy as an existential threat. For example, Israel used strong language to describe the Philadelphi corridor as "Hamas' oxygen tube," reinforcing the importance of military control over it to ensure national security (RT Arabic, 2024). This language transforms a geographical issue into an existential security issue, suggesting that controlling the axis is not just a security measure but an existential necessity. The Egyptian discourse focused on a balanced discourse through the use of terms such as "respect for international agreements" and "self-restraint," reflecting an attempt to balance national sovereignty with regional and international obligations (Al Mayadeen, 2024), which aims to affirm Egyptian sovereignty while avoiding direct escalation.

The language used here is not neutral; instead, it is a tool for reshaping social and political reality. Security policies are viewed as necessary measures that are not open to debate. Using escalators or moderate language also directs public debate toward specific positions. Media framing refers to how events are presented to guide the public's understanding, as media and political framing is a tool for shaping how the public understands events and conflicts. This is done by selecting information, highlighting certain aspects, and ignoring others (Entman, 1993). Framing contributes to presenting narratives that highlight the actors' positions and enhance their public support. Here, we can stand on different types of framing, such as conflict framing, which highlights the other party as an enemy that threatens security; solution framing, which highlights diplomatic or military initiatives as a means to achieve stability; and legitimacy framing, which shows policies as part of legal and moral

obligations. Here, we can compare the framing of events in the Egyptian and Israeli discourse as follows:

The Israeli media focused on broadcasting scenes showing complete military control of the Philadelphi corridor, reinforcing the image of power and control (RT Arabic, 2024). Gaza was also framed as a continuing source of threat, justifying any military escalation, with an emphasis on destroying the tunnels to prevent arms smuggling and harm Israel's security. (BBC, 2024).

The media focused on Egypt's role as a mediator to achieve regional stability. Any developments were also framed as part of Egypt's international obligations, reflecting a discourse that balances sovereignty with maintaining stable international relations (Alhurra, 2024). Terms such as "diplomatic solutions" and "respect for treaties" framed the Egyptian position as moderate and responsible. Symbolism and ideology contribute to shaping political and social meanings and justifying political decisions, as symbols and ideological vocabulary are used to promote concepts such as security and sovereignty, making them central to political discourse. Symbolism simplifies complex issues and makes them understandable to the general public. The impact of symbolism and ideology is reflected in several axes, such as strengthening national identity through symbols that enhance feelings of belonging and loyalty, framing actions as a necessity through the use of symbolism that makes policies appear as part of a national or religious commitment, and legitimising actions through the use of symbols to convince local and international audiences of the legitimacy of actions.

Israel has used powerful symbols such as the "lifeline" and the "oxygen tube" to describe the Philadelphi Corridor, reflecting strategic importance beyond the geographical dimension and employing symbolism that emphasises that controlling it is not just a military decision but a matter of national survival. The nationalist and religious language was also employed to enhance the legitimacy of control, as Israeli discourse used vocabulary with religious or nationalist connotations to enhance the legitimacy of discourse, such as using expressions such as "the Land of Israel" to link political actions to historical and religious ideologies (RT Arabic, 2024). Meanwhile, Egypt focused on the symbolism of "regional stability," "Arab national security," and the "Camp David Accords" as a framework that strengthens its diplomatic and political position and confirms its commitment to international legitimacy and sovereignty. This symbolism enhances Egypt's role as a protector of stability in the region (Al Mayadeen, 2024). In the conflict over the Philadelphi Corridor, complex interactions between language, framing, and symbolism appear to enhance sovereignty, justify their positions, and enhance their legitimacy, as both sides used language that legitimises their actions and presents the other as a threat. Israeli media focused on military success, while Egyptian media presented a consensual position that balances between preserving sovereignty and appeasement. On the other hand, Israel emphasised the centrality of the Axis to national security, while Egypt focused on its role in preserving regional stability. The dispute over the Philadelphi Axis highlights the role of discourse in enshrining sovereignty and security, but it also raises questions about the impact of these narratives on regional relations.

Analysis of ideas: Transnational security challenges, the balance between security and sovereignty, human security versus traditional security

Transnational security challenges are among states' most prominent issues in light of increasing global interconnectedness. As Buzan (1991) explains, these challenges include threats such as arms smuggling, terrorism, and organised crime that transcend the sovereignty of a single state and affect regional stability. The Philadelphi Corridor, a strategic corridor between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, has emerged as a major theatre for transnational security challenges for Israel, as reports show that the tunnels extending through the corridor are used to smuggle weapons and goods, which poses a direct threat to Israel and its internal stability according to Israeli statements (Al Mayadeen, 2024).

The Israeli discourse justified the Israeli military intervention in the Philadelphi Corridor by focusing on the need to destroy the tunnels to stop the flow of weapons to Hamas, describing the tunnels as an "oxygen pipe" that feeds Hamas's military capabilities (RT Arabic, 2024). This discourse reflects an attempt to justify the military intervention based on a cross-border security threat. For Egypt, the tunnels threatened Sinai's security, as they were also used to transport armed elements, prompting Egypt to emphasise the importance of combating smuggling to enhance its regional stability (Alhurra, 2024). At the same time, the Philadelphi Corridor is a regional security issue. The Egyptian discourse emphasised the importance of stopping illegal activities in the tunnels to prevent destabilisation in Sinai and maintain national security (Al Mayadeen, 2024).

The balance between security and sovereignty is a central dilemma in the modern context. Sovereignty is traditionally defined as the absolute right of a state to control its territory without external interference. Still, security imperatives justify military interventions in the face of security threats. As Holsti (1996) points out, security can be used as an argument to reduce or redefine sovereignty to suit current threats. States face pressure to achieve national security while maintaining respect for territorial sovereignty. According to Heumann (1995), security imperatives often justify military interventions, but this can diminish national sovereignty.

When analysing Israeli discourse, we find that Israel has adopted a discourse that justifies its control of the Philadelphi Corridor on the pretext of preventing security threats posed by tunnels. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu used expressions such as "security above all else," stressing that control of the corridor is necessary to protect the Israeli population from security threats resulting from arms smuggling (BBC, 2024). In the case of Egyptian discourse, We note Egypt's efforts to reconcile the necessities of national security and respect for its sovereignty, as it stressed its commitment to international agreements, such as the Camp David Accords, while strengthening security measures in Sinai (Al Mayadeen, 2024), and stressed the importance of adhering to international agreements while highlighting its sovereign position in the face of any escalation (Alhurra, 2024). In this case, the dilemmas resulting from this balance between security and sovereignty appear about the legitimacy of military interventions that raise questions about their compatibility with international law and respect for the sovereignty of neighbouring countries, in addition to the risks to regional stability, as excessive focus on security may exacerbate regional conflicts rather than resolve them.

While traditional security focuses on protecting the state from external threats, human security prioritises the protection of individuals from direct threats that affect their lives and well-being, including poverty, hunger, and economic insecurity (UNDP, 1994). Israeli control of the Philadelphi Corridor has directly affected Gazans, who rely on tunnels as a means of mitigating the effects of the blockade. According to human rights reports, the destruction of the tunnels has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis, with unemployment and poverty rates rising sharply (Human Rights Watch, 2024). This exacerbates the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, which has been suffering from an ongoing war since October 2023 until the time of writing this study in January 2025.

While Israel focused on traditional security by preventing the smuggling of weapons so that Hamas would not use them to confront Israel during the war, this undermined the human security of the people of Gaza and affected the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, which suffers from a shortage of basic foodstuffs as Israel's war on the Gaza Strip continues, closing all crossings and preventing humanitarian aid from entering Gaza. In contrast, Egypt called for restraint and searching for solutions that balance traditional security requirements and the local population's humanitarian needs (Alhurra, 2024). Here, the Egyptian position seems confused. While Egypt calls for achieving a balance between security and humanitarian needs, we find that Egypt closes the Rafah land crossing on the Egyptian border with the Gaza Strip and prevents the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

Therefore, the Egyptian statements contradict Egypt's ability to contribute to alleviating the humanitarian situation of the people of Gaza. This results in narrowing the economic options for local populations and putting them in a predicament in obtaining basic food needs. On the other hand, this situation enhances the increase in polarisation, as the tensions resulting from the intensive security policies reinforce anger and resentment among the affected populations.

The Role of Legitimacy in Disputes: Political Discourse as a Tool to Enhance Military Control

In the case of the Philadelphi Corridor, Israel and Egypt used a political discourse focused on national security and sovereignty to enhance the legitimacy of their control over the corridor. Israel linked the legitimacy of its presence in the Philadelphi Corridor to the need to prevent arms smuggling to Hamas, which presents its discourse as protecting its citizens. At the same time, Egypt, for its part, justified the heightened security measures as necessary to protect its borders and prevent terrorist threats. Here, we note that political discourses relied on national symbols and vocabulary that enhance the sense of external danger to justify military actions. Legitimacy was also used to reduce opposition by relying on political discourse that links control to security and sovereignty, which helps governments reduce domestic and international opposition by showing that the measures taken are not only legal but also necessary. 2. The Relationship between Legitimacy and Security: The Impact of Control of the Philadelphi Corridor on the Legitimacy of Governments in the Eyes of Their People.

Legitimacy and security are often closely linked, with governments' ability to achieve security being seen as an indicator of their legitimacy. As Beetham (1991) points out, the erosion of security weakens governments' legitimacy, while security successes enhance it. For Israel, control of the Philadelphi Corridor has been presented as a means of enhancing national security. By controlling the corridor and destroying the tunnels, the Israeli government seeks to enhance its legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens by presenting itself as a protector of security and stability. However, failure to return detainees or deal with ongoing threats undermines the legitimacy of the Israeli leadership in the eyes of its public. On the Egyptian side, controlling the border with Gaza is part of a broader strategy to enhance the government's legitimacy by combating terrorism and protecting national security. However, the humanitarian challenges facing Gazans sometimes lead to international criticism that may undermine Egypt's international legitimacy, primarily since it controls the Rafah crossing, which is the main conduit for humanitarian aid entering the Gaza Strip and the only exit for Gazans who want to leave the Strip.

International legitimacy depends on how much states' actions conform to international laws and standards. In the Philadelphi Corridor context, Israel and Egypt face challenges in maintaining their international legitimacy. Israel's practices of military control of the corridor and destruction of tunnels are considered justified in terms of its domestic legitimacy. Still, they face international criticism for violating human rights and international humanitarian law. The international community, including the United Nations and human rights organisations, often opposes Israel's policies in Gaza and sees them as exacerbating the humanitarian crisis, which undermines Israel's legitimacy in the international arena. Although Egypt presents its security discourse as a justification for controlling the border, international criticism of the increasing humanitarian blockade on Gaza poses a challenge to its international legitimacy. Egypt is seen as a mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which enhances its international role. Still, its border policies with Gaza may undermine this role if they violate international standards. Based on the above, Political legitimacy is a key element in border disputes, as political discourses enhance the legitimacy of military and security policies. In the case of the Philadelphi Corridor, Israel, and Egypt sought to achieve legitimacy for their actions by focusing on security and sovereignty. Still, they faced challenges in reconciling

domestic and international legitimacy. This highlights the importance of balancing security with respect for international laws and norms to enhance legitimacy at all levels.

Public Diplomacy and Its Impact on Political Discourse on the Philadelphi Corridor

Public diplomacy plays a pivotal role in influencing international public opinion, especially in conflicts involving political and security complexities such as control of the Philadelphi Corridor. According to Nye (2004), public diplomacy relies on delivering messages highlighting the state's goals and enhancing its international image. In Israeli statements, Benjamin Netanyahu used rhetoric linking the control of the Philadelphi Corridor to the fight against terrorism, stressing that the corridor represents "Hamas' oxygen pipe that must be cut" (Alhurra, 2024). These statements aim to gain the international community's support by linking the issue to the fight against terrorism, a framework that resonates positively globally. Official Egyptian statements focused on portraying Israeli intervention as a threat to national sovereignty and regional stability. For example, in July 2024, the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticised continued Israeli control and stressed the need to respect Palestinian and Egyptian sovereignty in the region (RT Arabic, 2024). This speech sought to direct international public opinion toward pressuring Israel to reconsider its policies. However, she quickly stopped making these statements.

According to Nye (2004), soft power is used to influence through cultural appeal and moral values, while hard power relies on military and political pressure. In the conflict over the Philadelphi Corridor, Israel relied on hard power by taking military control of the axis. Still, it justified this move using soft power by promoting security and moral justifications through the media and statements by officials, such as Itamar Ben-Gvir, who described taking control of the axis as a step to ensure "victory in the war" against Hamas (CNN Arabic, 2024). It can be said that Israel used media and diplomatic tools to market its control of the Philadelphi Corridor as a necessary step to protect security and stability in the region, and it also sought to promote positions that confine its axis within the context of the "war on terror" and combating arms smuggling. It also used rhetoric highlighting humanitarian efforts through attempts to deliver humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, adding a moral dimension to this military operation.

In contrast, Egypt has used soft power tools to strengthen its position internationally, insisting on the need for peaceful solutions and respect for international law, as stated by Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, who called for "de-escalation" and "respect for international agreements related to borders" (RT Arabic, 2024). As for hard power, Israel relies heavily on its military might to ensure control over vital areas such as the Philadelphi Corridor. Meanwhile, Egypt uses hard power through direct interaction with Israel on the security and political levels to ensure that its interests in the region are not harmed. Ethical challenges are an essential part of analysing public diplomacy in such conflicts. Israel, despite its emphasis on the need to enhance security, has faced international criticism regarding the humanitarian impact of military operations in the region. Global media outlets have highlighted concerns about the extent of destruction and human losses in the Gaza Strip. On the other hand, Israel has used a discourse that emphasises "self-defence" and the need to "achieve security" for its citizens, creating justification for its military practices in this context.

Egypt had to balance maintaining its international relations, especially with major powers, with confronting challenges related to its sovereignty over its territory and protecting the Sinai population from any repercussions of the expansion of the Israeli military footprint in the region. Egyptian sovereignty over the Philadelphi Corridor has been portrayed in Egyptian discourse as protecting national security and maintaining regional stability. From the above, public diplomacy emerges as a strategic tool in international conflicts, where states use soft and hard power to strengthen their positions. In the conflict over the Philadelphi Axis, both sides have resorted to public diplomacy to

justify their actions and steer international public opinion. However, the ethical challenge remains in balancing security interests and respect for human rights.

Conclusion

This study has analysed Egypt's and Israel's sovereignty discourses in the context of Israel's control over the Philadelphi Corridor during the 2023 Gaza War. The findings illustrate the evolving relationship between sovereignty discourse and security, emphasising its use as a strategic tool for national security goals, especially in geopolitically sensitive regions. Both Israel and Egypt utilised sovereignty discourse to justify their actions. Israel framed its control of the Philadelphi Corridor as essential for counterterrorism and border security, emphasising terms like oxygen pipe for Hamas to legitimise military measures. These narratives reflect sovereignty discourse to reinforce territorial control and safeguard national interests. Conversely, Egypt balanced national security needs with adherence to international agreements, projecting a commitment to regional stability. However, its practices, such as the closure of the Rafah crossing, revealed contradictions between political rhetoric and actions on the ground.

A critical tension emerged between protecting state-centric traditional security and addressing human security concerns. Israel's military measures to secure its borders aggravated humanitarian crises in Gaza, undermining the human security of its population. Similarly, Egypt's restrictive policies, while aimed at maintaining stability, failed to mitigate the suffering of Gaza residents, highlighting the limitations of traditional security approaches in addressing modern humanitarian challenges. The study underscores the symbolic and political dimensions of discourse. Israel legitimised its policies using strategic language tied to nationalist and religious ideologies, while Egypt maintained its diplomatic stance using terms like "regional stability" and "international legitimacy." These discourses shaped perceptions of sovereignty, framing it as both a political claim and a justification for action.

While Egypt's discourse often advocated for stability and international norms, its restrictive actions, such as blocking humanitarian aid, contradicted these principles. This disconnect between rhetoric and practice underscores the complexities in aligning policy narratives with ground realities. Using sovereignty discourse to justify security measures raises significant legal and ethical questions. Actions that undermine human security and exacerbate regional tensions highlight the need for frameworks that align state sovereignty with international law and human rights principles. This research concludes that sovereignty is not a fixed concept but a dynamic and contested tool. Its employment in the Philadelphi Corridor conflict demonstrates its dual role in justifying military interventions and fostering diplomatic cooperation. However, these uses often conflict with humanitarian needs and international norms, complicating efforts to achieve sustainable regional stability. Future policies should integrate security objectives concerning human rights and international standards to address these challenges. By balancing sovereignty with considerations for human security, regional actors can move toward a more stable and cooperative framework that supports national and human interests.

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The Impact of Energy Security on Inter-Relations between the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries

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ABSTRACT

The concept of energy security in the Arabian Gulf region refers to the ability to meet the energy needs of countries in the region without interruption in a way that guarantees the economic, social, and political stability of these countries. The concept of energy security in the Arabian Gulf includes several aspects: Ensuring strategic supplies. This relates to ensuring the continuous availability of oil and gas to producing and consuming countries in the region and beyond, avoiding any disturbances in the global market, and ensuring price stability. Energy diversification means diversifying energy sources and relying on them. Diverse energy, such as renewable energy, reduces total dependence on oil and gas and provides future economic opportunities. Strengthening energy independence: This includes developing national capabilities in the energy sectors, including developing the infrastructure and technologies necessary to extract and refine oil and gas and generate renewable energy. Achieving environmental sustainability: This requires achieving a balance between meeting energy needs, protecting the environment, and reducing harmful emissions. Regional and international cooperation Energy security also consists of enhancing cooperation between countries in the region and other countries in the field of energy, whether in exchanging knowledge and technology or in developing joint projects for generating and transmitting energy. This paper adopts a comparative methodology between Gulf countries to measure their ability to confront energy security in light of climate change. This paper reaches the most prominent conclusion, which is that the Gulf countries' varying capabilities in achieving future energy security will play a major role in reshaping the inter-relations between the Gulf countries.

Introduction

Energy security within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries is a central concern due to the region's significant reliance on hydrocarbons for economic and social stability. The GCC states, comprising Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain, possess substantial hydrocarbon reserves that have historically underpinned their economies and funded public welfare and infrastructure. The oil and gas sectors contribute notably to national revenues, making these economies susceptible to global energy market fluctuations and geopolitical

pressures. In light of increased volatility in oil prices, shifting climate policies, and advancing renewable technologies, the GCC countries have initiated efforts to reassess their long-term energy security and economic diversification strategies. Energy diversification, particularly through the integration of renewable energy, has become an essential pillar in these national strategies. Initiatives such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's Energy Strategy 2050 reflect efforts to diversify energy sources, primarily through solar, wind, and nuclear projects, thereby reducing dependency on fossil fuels. These initiatives also represent broader commitments to global sustainability goals, recognising the economic and environmental risks associated with a continued reliance on hydrocarbons. By investing in renewable energy, the GCC countries aim to enhance economic resilience, promote sustainable growth, and adapt to the increasing global demand for greener energy solutions (Cherp, 2012).

The GCC countries' varying approaches to energy diversification, influenced by distinct national priorities and resource capacities, raise questions about the interconnected nature of energy security and regional dynamics. Differences in each country's energy policies impact their ability to collaborate on regional energy security initiatives while also introducing competitive elements that shape economic and political relations within the GCC (Mouraviev & Koulouri, 2018). Examining these diverse strategies provides insight into the ways energy security and policy interdependence influence the GCC's internal stability and international standing.

This study examines how differing energy security strategies within the GCC impact inter-relations among member countries, focusing on both collaborative and competitive dynamics that emerge from these policies. Specifically, it seeks to identify the comparative strengths and weaknesses within the energy sectors of each GCC state, with an emphasis on how varied levels of energy diversification and sustainability initiatives affect their respective roles and alignments within the region. By addressing these aspects, the study aims to clarify the ways in which energy security policies shape not only the stability and economic resilience of individual countries but also the broader relationships and policy alignments within the GCC.

Literature Review

Energy security is a critical and multifaceted concept that has been defined and refined over decades. At its core, energy security refers to the availability of energy at all times in various forms, in sufficient quantities, and at affordable prices. However, this definition expands considerably when considering geopolitical, economic, and environmental dimensions (Cherp, 2012). Initially, the focus was on the uninterrupted supply of energy, particularly oil, especially during times of geopolitical conflict or economic instability, as seen during the oil crises of the 1970s. Modern theoretical frameworks now emphasise four major components often referred to as the "Four As" of energy security: availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability (Cherp, 2014). Availability refers to the physical supply of energy resources; accessibility involves the geopolitical and economic ease of acquiring energy; affordability focuses on the cost of energy to consumers and economies; and acceptability pertains to the environmental and societal impacts of energy use. As the global energy landscape changes, these components help evaluate how secure a nation's energy framework is (Ciută, 2010).

In recent years, the shift towards renewable energy sources has added another layer of complexity to energy security. Traditional energy sources like oil and gas are finite, and their extraction and use contribute to environmental degradation. As a result, renewable energy alternatives such as wind, solar, and nuclear are gaining traction, but these sources present their own set of challenges in terms of reliability and infrastructure (Florini & Sovacool, 2009). This transition complicates the task of ensuring stable and affordable energy supplies, especially in regions heavily reliant on hydrocarbons for economic security, such as the GCC. In the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, energy

security has long been associated with the ability to maintain stable oil exports. The GCC countries Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain are rich in hydrocarbon reserves and have built their economies around the extraction and export of oil and gas. However, the volatile nature of the global oil market and the growing shift towards renewable energy have forced the GCC countries to rethink their energy security strategies. For the GCC, energy security is not just about ensuring a domestic supply but also about safeguarding export routes and maintaining political stability in a region prone to conflict (Goldthau, 2010). Given the reliance on energy exports for economic survival, the traditional interpretation of energy security in the region has focused primarily on availability and accessibility. The physical presence of vast oil and gas reserves ensures availability, while geopolitical relationships, particularly with major global powers such as the United States and China, ensure accessibility.

However, the GCC countries face increasing pressure to diversify their energy sources, not only to meet global sustainability goals but also to mitigate the risks associated with over-reliance on oil exports (Florini & Sovacool, 2009). Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's investment in nuclear and solar energy are examples of efforts to broaden their energy portfolios and enhance long-term energy security. These initiatives reflect a shift towards considering affordability and acceptability, ensuring that energy remains affordable while minimising environmental impacts. The region's geopolitical context also plays a significant role in shaping its approach to energy security. The vulnerability of energy infrastructure to attacks, such as the 2019 strikes on Saudi Aramco facilities, underscores the importance of securing energy supply chains against both physical and cyber threats. Furthermore, regional conflicts and tensions, including those between Iran and Saudi Arabia, heighten the risks to the region's energy exports and overall stability. Climate change is another growing concern for the GCC, as rising temperatures and water scarcity could disrupt traditional energy production and consumption patterns. The transition to renewable energy, while necessary, presents its own set of challenges, particularly in terms of infrastructure and technological development (Goldthau, 2010). Nevertheless, the shift is essential for the region to maintain its energy security in the long term.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have been progressively integrating renewable energy as a strategy to diversify their energy resources. Historically reliant on hydrocarbons, these countries recognise the economic and environmental risks of depending solely on fossil fuels. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's Energy Strategy 2050 are examples of long-term plans aiming to increase the share of renewable energy in their national grids, particularly through solar and wind projects. Solar energy, due to the region's high solar irradiance, has gained momentum, especially in projects like the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park in Dubai (Reiche, 2021). The benefits of energy diversification in the Gulf are clear: reduced dependency on fluctuating oil markets, enhanced energy security, and a more sustainable environmental footprint.

However, despite the abundant potential for renewable energy, challenges remain. For example, Qatar's energy diversification has been slower due to its reliance on natural gas, and Oman's renewable initiatives face governance and financial constraints (MEI, 2021). Overall, the push for renewable energy in the GCC is part of a larger global trend of reducing carbon emissions and aligning with sustainability goals. Research indicates that the GCC countries' push towards sustainability is increasingly evident in their energy policies. A report by the Middle East Institute highlighted that sustainability has become a key priority, particularly as nations seek to reduce carbon emissions and align with global agreements like the Paris Agreement. In Saudi Arabia, renewable energy plays a central role in Vision 2030, which seeks to achieve 50% renewable energy generation by 2030. This is not just about energy security but also about reducing the nation's carbon footprint and ensuring long-term economic stability in a decarbonising world (REN21, 2021).

The UAE has been particularly successful in integrating sustainability into its energy policies. Its 2050 energy strategy aims to produce 44% of energy from clean sources by mid-century. Early investments in solar energy, driven by both environmental concerns and energy security needs, have positioned the UAE as a leader in the region's renewable energy space. These efforts have led to substantial investments in solar power infrastructure and the promotion of public-private partnerships to further enhance renewable energy adoption (MEI, 2021). Overall, the role of sustainability in energy policies across the GCC is becoming increasingly prominent, with clear goals set for renewable energy penetration. However, as multiple studies have shown, achieving these ambitious goals will require continued investment in infrastructure, stronger governance, and regional collaboration. The energy policies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain have undergone significant transformations in recent years as they shift towards more sustainable practices. Saudi Arabia, with its Vision 2030, leads the region in efforts to diversify its energy sources. The country aims to derive 50% of its energy from renewable sources by 2030, focusing heavily on solar energy through large-scale projects like the Sakaka solar plant. Similarly, the UAE's Energy Strategy 2050 outlines a target of 44% clean energy, with solar playing a prominent role. The UAE has been a pioneer in deploying solar energy technologies, including the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park, one of the world's largest solar projects.

Qatar's energy policy is also influenced by its natural gas reserves, though the country has set renewable energy targets, such as aiming for 20% of its electricity to come from renewables by 2030. While Kuwait and Oman have been slower in adopting renewable energy initiatives, both have announced plans to increase renewable energy in their national grids. Kuwait, for instance, has set targets to produce 15% of its energy from renewables by 2030 (IMF, 2023). Oman aims for 30% by the same year, focusing on solar and wind projects (World Bank, 2023). Bahrain has also launched renewable energy programs, though at a smaller scale compared to its neighbours, aiming for 5% renewable energy by 2025 (Reiche, 2021).

Key Studies Comparing Gulf Energy Infrastructure and National Policies

Research comparing the energy policies and infrastructure across the GCC reveals key differences and shared challenges. Saudi Arabia and the UAE lead the region in renewable energy investments, largely driven by long-term national strategies and substantial financial commitments. Both countries have made significant strides in building solar and wind power infrastructure, with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's Energy Strategy 2050 setting the pace for regional energy transitions (MEI, 2021). These nations have also established state-owned entities like Masdar in the UAE and ACWA Power in Saudi Arabia to spearhead renewable energy projects at home and abroad (Reiche, 2021).

In contrast, Qatar's energy policy remains largely centred around natural gas, although it has started investing in solar energy as part of its National Vision 2030. The country's focus on liquefied natural gas (LNG) has positioned it as a global leader in gas exports, but this reliance on hydrocarbons presents challenges as global markets shift toward renewables (World Bank, 2023). Studies indicate that Qatar is taking a cautious approach to renewable energy integration, prioritising its gas revenues while gradually investing in solar technologies (IMF, 2023).

Kuwait and Oman, though lagging behind Saudi Arabia and the UAE in renewable energy deployment, have shown a commitment to diversifying their energy sources. Oman's Renewable Energy Development Plan outlines targets for solar and wind power, while Kuwait's Shagaya Renewable Energy Park is the country's primary renewable energy project (World Bank, 2023). Both countries face challenges related to governance and financing, but studies suggest that regional cooperation and knowledge sharing could accelerate progress.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries play an unparalleled role in global energy markets due to their large reserves of oil and natural gas. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE are among the world's top exporters of hydrocarbons, making them crucial for maintaining global energy supply stability (Cordesman, 2017). The Gulf region controls key oil routes, such as the Strait of Hormuz, through which approximately 20% of the world's oil passes, adding to its strategic importance (Hammad et al., 2021). Historically, the Gulf's role in energy has gone beyond mere exports. These countries have used their energy dominance to establish sovereign wealth funds and economic security. However, the volatility of oil prices and the growing global transition toward renewable energy presents both challenges and opportunities for the region. As global economies push for decarbonisation, GCC states must rethink their energy strategies to remain relevant in a more diverse and sustainable energy market. Energy independence in the GCC is a complex and evolving concept. Traditionally, these countries have been energy-independent in terms of their reliance on hydrocarbons for domestic consumption and export. However, with the increasing push toward renewable energy and a potential decrease in global demand for oil, energy independence now extends to ensuring a sustainable and diversified energy portfolio. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's Energy Strategy 2050 are key examples of national efforts to diversify their energy sources. Saudi Arabia aims to have 50% of its energy come from renewable sources, primarily solar, by 2030 (Bahgat, 2015). Similarly, the UAE is focusing on solar and nuclear power, aiming to produce 44% of its energy from clean sources by 2050 (Bahgat, 2015). The implications of this shift are significant. Economically, diversification will reduce the GCC's dependence on oil exports, making their economies less vulnerable to oil price shocks. Environmentally, it will help the region contribute to global sustainability goals by reducing carbon emissions. Politically, reducing reliance on hydrocarbons will allow GCC countries to maintain their geopolitical influence even as global energy dynamics change. However, achieving these goals will require large investments in infrastructure and technology (Hammad et al., 2021).

Oil and gas have been the backbone of the global energy system for decades, especially in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, where economies heavily rely on hydrocarbon exports. Despite the growing push for renewable energy, oil and gas remain integral to global energy security due to their reliability, infrastructure, and economic importance. Even as many countries, including those in the GCC, move toward decarbonisation, natural gas, in particular, is seen as a "bridge fuel" in the transition to cleaner energy, providing stability during periods of fluctuating renewable energy production (IEA, 2021). The oil and gas industry faces increasing pressure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate goals, such as those outlined in the Paris Agreement. Some major oil companies are making strides toward lowering their carbon footprint through technological innovations like carbon capture and storage (CCS) and increasing investments in cleaner energy technologies (McKinsey, 2023). However, these efforts are still nascent compared to the overall contribution of fossil fuels to global energy production. As of 2021, the majority of energy consumption worldwide was still derived from oil and gas (IEA, 2021). Countries within the GCC have adopted different approaches to energy diversification in response to the global energy transition. Saudi Arabia and the UAE, for example, have been at the forefront of renewable energy development, with large-scale investments in solar and wind power. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 aims to diversify its energy mix, reducing reliance on oil by integrating renewable energy, with a target of generating 50% of its energy from renewables by 2030 (Blazquez et al., 2017). The UAE's Energy Strategy 2050 similarly focuses on generating 44% of its energy from clean sources by mid-century, leveraging its geographical advantage in solar energy (Reiche, 2021). In contrast, countries like Qatar, which is highly dependent on natural gas, are taking a more gradual approach. Qatar remains focused on maximising its natural gas production, particularly liquefied natural gas (LNG), while gradually incorporating solar energy projects into its energy mix. This strategy allows Qatar to maintain its economic reliance on hydrocarbons while also beginning the shift toward cleaner energy (IEA, 2021). Other GCC countries, such as Kuwait and Oman, are still in the early stages of energy diversification. Oman has announced plans to develop solar and wind projects, aiming for 30% of its

energy to come from renewables by 2030. Kuwait, on the other hand, has set a more modest target of 15% renewable energy by the same year, focusing on the Shagaya Renewable Energy Park to lead this effort (World Bank, 2023).

Importance of Environmental Sustainability in the Region

Environmental sustainability has become a critical priority for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, especially given their historical dependence on oil and gas, which has significantly contributed to global carbon emissions. Countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar have been under increasing scrutiny due to their high per capita emissions, and there is a growing recognition within the region of the need to shift toward more sustainable energy practices (Middle East Institute, 2021). Sustainability in the GCC is not only about reducing emissions but also about securing long-term economic stability as the global energy market transitions towards cleaner sources. Environmental sustainability initiatives in the region include large-scale investments in renewable energy projects such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's Energy Strategy 2050, which both focus on decreasing dependence on hydrocarbons and increasing the share of solar and wind energy (MEI, 2023). These projects are part of broader strategies to align with international agreements like the Paris Climate Accord, signalling the GCC's commitment to reducing their carbon footprints. Climate change poses a significant threat to the energy security of the GCC, as the region is already experiencing rising temperatures, more frequent heat waves, and increased water scarcity. These environmental changes affect not only the domestic energy systems but also the broader geopolitical dynamics of the region. For instance, the reliance on desalination plants for water, which are energy-intensive, underscores the region's vulnerability to disruptions in energy supplies. The intersection of water security and energy demands makes climate adaptation critical for the survival of key sectors in the region. The shift towards renewable energy is also seen as a means to enhance regional energy security by reducing dependence on fossil fuel exports. By investing in clean energy technologies, the GCC countries aim to diversify their economies and build resilience against fluctuating oil prices, which have long been a destabilising factor (Middle East Institute, 2021). Moreover, climate change mitigation initiatives, such as carbon capture and storage (CCS), are expected to play an increasingly important role in maintaining energy security while contributing to global emissions reduction goals (MEI, 2023). The broader implications of climate change on international relations are also becoming evident. As GCC countries transition to renewable energy, there is potential for both cooperation and competition within the region. Countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which are leading in solar and hydrogen projects, may develop new alliances based on energy exports while also facing challenges from traditional hydrocarbon-based economies like Kuwait and Oman, which are slower in adopting clean energy solutions (MEI, 2021).

Role of Regional Cooperation in Promoting Energy Security

Regional cooperation plays a crucial role in promoting energy security within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. One of the key aspects of regional cooperation is the development of integrated energy strategies aimed at reducing dependency on external energy markets while optimising shared resources. The GCC countries have established joint initiatives, such as the GCC Interconnection Authority (GCCIA), which connects the power grids of member states, allowing for efficient energy exchange and enhanced energy security across the region (Albudaiwi, 2023). By sharing electricity generated from renewable sources like solar and wind, GCC nations can reduce their dependency on imported energy and stabilise their power supplies. Additionally, collective efforts towards renewable energy development and technological innovation have been a priority for the GCC. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Oman are investing in joint research and development projects, fostering collaboration in areas like hydrogen production and carbon capture technology. This collective regional effort is crucial for addressing the growing demands for sustainable energy while mitigating the risks posed by fluctuating oil prices (Middle East Institute, 2021). International

partnerships have also had a significant impact on the GCC's energy sector. The region has increasingly engaged with global powers like China, the European Union, and the United States, forming strategic alliances that facilitate the transfer of technology, capital, and expertise. For instance, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has deepened its ties with the Gulf, focusing on energy investments that contribute to both the development of the region's energy infrastructure and China's energy security. International collaborations extend beyond traditional oil and gas sectors, increasingly incorporating renewable energy projects. For example, the UAE has collaborated with European partners to develop large-scale solar and wind farms, demonstrating the region's commitment to the global energy transition. These partnerships also ensure that the GCC remains a key player in global energy markets, even as the world shifts towards decarbonisation and renewable energy.

Comparative Analysis of GCC Energy Strategies and Interconnected Profiles

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain each pursue unique strategies for energy security and diversification, shaped by their respective natural resources, economic goals, and climate commitments. However, these individual strategies also highlight significant interdependencies and shared challenges across the region, including reliance on oil and gas exports, initiatives to reduce carbon emissions, and efforts to integrate renewable energy. This comparative analysis focuses on their interconnected profiles by categorising the GCC countries' approaches into core themes: *Leading Diversification Initiatives*, *Natural Gas Reliance and Limited Diversification*, and *Emerging Diversification and Dependency*, exploring how these categories reflect both individual and collective goals.

Saudi Arabia's energy policy is largely guided by its Vision 2030, a comprehensive initiative aimed at reducing dependency on oil revenues and diversifying its economic base. Saudi Arabia controls approximately 17% of the world's proven oil reserves, and its energy policy has historically been tied to its role in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), where it plays a significant role in global oil price stabilisation (IEA, 2021). However, the volatility of oil markets and global pressure to reduce carbon emissions have driven the country's shift toward renewable energy. Under the National Renewable Energy Program (NREP), Saudi Arabia aims to generate 50% of its energy from renewables by 2030, with a focus on solar and hydrogen (Al-Sulami et al., 2022). This initiative includes the development of projects like the Sakaka solar plant and ambitious targets for green hydrogen, which is expected to position Saudi Arabia as a global leader in the production and export of hydrogen energy (Al-Fattah & Reiche, 2022). The UAE, similarly committed to economic diversification, has made considerable strides in renewable energy through its Energy Strategy 2050, which targets 44% of energy generation from clean sources by mid-century. The UAE's investments in solar energy, including the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park, one of the largest solar facilities in the world, underscore its leadership in renewable energy in the region. Nuclear energy is also a significant component of the UAE's strategy, with the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant providing an additional 25% of the country's electricity needs, positioning the UAE as a pioneer in nuclear energy among GCC countries (Al-Monitor, 2023; World Nuclear Association, 2022). This dual focus on nuclear and solar energy aligns with the UAE's commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and enhances energy security by reducing reliance on imported natural gas. Saudi Arabia and the UAE's leadership in renewable energy investments has not only positioned them at the forefront of regional diversification efforts but has also set a benchmark for other GCC countries. Their large-scale renewable projects contribute to the broader regional sustainability goals, such as those outlined by the GCC Interconnection Authority (GCCIA), which supports energy exchange among member states to enhance energy stability and security (Reiche, 2021). By advancing renewable projects and reducing dependency on fossil fuels, both countries contribute to a more resilient GCC

energy market and foster regional cooperation by sharing expertise and resources in sustainable energy development.

In contrast to the ambitious diversification programs of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, Qatar and Oman continue to rely significantly on natural gas, albeit with efforts toward gradual integration of renewable energy. Qatar's energy policy is anchored in its vast natural gas reserves, which have positioned it as the world's leading exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Qatar's North Field Expansion project, expected to increase LNG production to 126 million tons annually by 2027, highlights the country's commitment to maximising its natural gas assets (Oxford Business Group, 2022). While LNG remains a primary energy source for Qatar, the government has outlined diversification goals within the Qatar National Vision 2030, aiming for a 20% contribution from solar energy by the end of the decade. This shift reflects Qatar's cautious approach to renewable energy, where it leverages its natural gas revenues to gradually invest in cleaner energy sources without disrupting its economic stability (The Peninsula, 2024). Similarly, Oman's energy sector is heavily dependent on natural gas, although the country has begun investing in renewable energy as part of its Vision 2040. With plans to generate 30% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030, Oman is developing solar and wind projects like the Ibri II Solar Project and the Duqm Wind Power Project (Oman Observer, 2024). These renewable energy initiatives are bolstered by Oman's strategic location and wind resources, which support the potential for future green hydrogen production. Oman's use of natural gas as a bridge fuel allows it to pursue a measured transition toward renewables while strengthening its economic base through foreign investments in the energy sector (Oxford Business Group, 2023). The reliance on natural gas as a transition resource in Qatar and Oman illustrates the flexibility within the GCC's collective energy strategy. Both countries contribute to regional energy stability by maintaining a steady supply of natural gas, which supports energy demands across the GCC and serves as a foundation for incremental renewable integration. By balancing natural gas reliance with renewable initiatives, Qatar and Oman demonstrate a complementary approach to Saudi Arabia and the UAE's aggressive diversification strategies. This balance reinforces the region's overall resilience to global energy market fluctuations and strengthens the interconnectedness of GCC energy strategies.

Kuwait and Bahrain, while not as advanced in renewable energy as Saudi Arabia or the UAE, have taken steps toward diversification amid challenges related to governance, financing, and resource constraints. Kuwait's energy policy remains heavily reliant on oil, with more than 90% of its export revenue stemming from hydrocarbons. However, political challenges and delays have impeded the country's renewable energy projects, leaving less than 1% of Kuwait's power generation from renewables as of 2023 (Oxford Business Group, 2022). Efforts such as the Kuwait National Energy Outlook, which aims to reduce reliance on oil through energy efficiency and renewable integration, reflect the country's recognition of the need for diversification (SEI, 2020). Kuwait's participation in the GCCIA, which enables power sharing among GCC countries, is also critical for addressing domestic energy demands, especially during periods of high consumption. Bahrain faces similar challenges, with limited natural resources and a reliance on imported crude oil, particularly from Saudi Arabia. The country has focused on international partnerships to facilitate its energy transition, such as collaborations with Yellow Door Energy for solar power projects and strategic alliances with China to enhance renewable energy capabilities. Bahrain's National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) aims to meet 5% of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2025, demonstrating a commitment to reducing its carbon footprint despite its limited domestic resources (IRENA, 2023). Through participation in the GCCIA and modernisation initiatives like the Bapco Refinery, Bahrain bolsters its energy security and contributes to the GCC's collective energy stability (Oxford Business Group, 2023). Kuwait and Bahrain's emerging diversification strategies underscore the importance of regional cooperation within the GCC, particularly as these countries rely on shared infrastructure and energy support from neighbours like Saudi Arabia. The interconnected grid provided by the GCCIA is vital for Kuwait and Bahrain, allowing them to stabilise

their power supplies and manage peak demands without excessive reliance on foreign energy imports. This interdependence is critical for the GCC's energy security, as it reinforces economic stability across member states and reduces vulnerability to external shocks.

Climate change poses a significant threat to the GCC, with rising temperatures and water scarcity adding to the urgency of sustainable energy policies. To address these issues, GCC countries have committed to global climate goals under the Paris Agreement, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE setting ambitious targets for carbon neutrality by 2060 and 2050, respectively. The Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) framework adopted by Saudi Arabia and Qatar's investments in carbon capture and storage (CCS) reflects a shared regional effort to mitigate emissions while balancing economic interests in hydrocarbons (Middle East Institute, 2021). The collective climate initiatives within the GCC emphasise sustainability as a core component of regional energy policy. Through investments in solar energy, green hydrogen, and nuclear energy, the GCC countries aim to create a diversified energy landscape that aligns with their economic and environmental objectives. This cooperative approach extends to international partnerships, with the UAE hosting the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in Abu Dhabi and participating in initiatives with global leaders like South Korea to advance nuclear and solar technologies (World Nuclear Association, 2022).

The GCC's integrated approach to energy security, shaped by both individual country strategies and regional collaboration, underscores the region's collective resilience in the face of economic and environmental challenges as Saudi Arabia and the UAE spearhead renewable energy development, Qatar and Oman's reliance on natural gas provides a balanced approach to the GCC's transition toward sustainable energy. Meanwhile, Kuwait and Bahrain's participation in shared infrastructure initiatives like the GCCIA highlights the importance of interconnected resources for regional energy stability.

Climate Change Challenges in the GCC and Strategic Adaptations

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries face pronounced vulnerabilities to climate change impacts. Rising temperatures, frequent heatwaves, and water scarcity pose substantial risks in this arid region. Projections from the Middle East Institute (2021) indicate that GCC countries could experience temperature increases of up to 4°C by the century's end if global carbon emissions are not controlled. This scenario exacerbates critical concerns, such as diminished agricultural yields, heightened demand for cooling, and significant risks to both human health and infrastructure resilience. Water security remains a particularly pressing issue. As freshwater resources are scarce, the GCC relies heavily on energy-intensive desalination processes. Climate change threatens these plants, elevating energy costs and worsening environmental degradation, thus affecting both water and energy security (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2024). Additionally, rising sea levels jeopardise key coastal infrastructures, notably in Dubai, Doha, and Manama, where critical economic and financial centres are situated. In response, GCC countries are revising energy policies with a focus on sustainability and renewable energy. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 includes substantial investments in solar and wind power, which is integral to the kingdom's strategy to diversify its energy mix and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Middle East Institute, 2021). Parallel initiatives in the UAE, including the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park and Oman's exploration of hydrogen production, underscore a region-wide shift towards renewables (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2024). Notably, Qatar is advancing its leadership in carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology, with an aim to capture 7 million tons of CO_2 annually by 2030, marking a significant move to balance hydrocarbon dependence with emission reduction (Middle East Institute, 2021).

As signatories to the Paris Agreement, GCC countries are committed to the global goal of limiting temperature increases to below 2°C. This commitment has catalysed changes in national energy

policies, with each country introducing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Saudi Arabia has pledged to reach net-zero emissions by 2060, while the UAE aims for the same target by 2050. These commitments have accelerated the GCC's shift toward renewable energy, providing a dual benefit of sustaining energy security while contributing to climate goals (Middle East Institute, 2021). Sustainability has become a cornerstone of the GCC's energy strategies, motivated by global climate obligations and an awareness of the need for economic diversification. By 2050, the UAE aims to derive 44% of its energy from renewables, while Saudi Arabia's Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) initiative advocates for carbon reduction, recycling, and storage to mitigate emissions (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2024). Such initiatives underscore a long-term vision of sustainability woven into energy policies, reinforcing resilience in the face of climate-related threats. Renewable energy projects across the GCC not only reduce emissions but also enhance energy security by lowering dependency on imported natural gas. This is especially relevant for countries like Kuwait and Oman, which still rely on external sources (Middle East Institute, 2021). These renewable projects reflect each country's strategic efforts to address environmental concerns without compromising energy availability and security.

The GCC's energy security and regional relations will likely experience lasting effects from climate change. As the world transitions from hydrocarbons to cleaner energy, GCC leaders, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, who are investing heavily in renewables, are poised to assume dominant roles. This shift is expected to redefine regional influence, promoting energy cooperation yet introducing competition among member states. Smaller countries like Bahrain and Oman, with limited resources for renewable investments, may depend increasingly on regional partnerships to achieve sustainable energy security. The GCC Interconnection Authority (GCCIA), which supports electricity sharing, is anticipated to play a growing role in maintaining grid stability, enabling each country to optimise energy sources efficiently and reduce vulnerabilities (Middle East Institute, 2021). Water scarcity and extreme weather events associated with climate change are likely to drive GCC countries toward collaborative adaptation strategies, including shared desalination facilities and comprehensive water management initiatives. These projects, coordinated by institutions like the GCCIA, facilitate resource-sharing, which strengthens each country's climate resilience and mitigates the potential for resource-based tensions (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2024).

Dynamics of Cooperation and Competition in GCC Energy Markets

Energy security remains a pivotal concern in the GCC, shaping both cooperation and competition among member states. Collaborative initiatives, such as the GCCIA, have proven valuable in stabilising regional energy supply, allowing member countries to manage demand effectively during peak periods. For example, countries like Kuwait and Bahrain benefit from being able to draw electricity from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, ensuring stability during shortages (Baker Institute, 2023). However, competition arises as GCC members vie to become leaders in emerging renewable markets. Saudi Arabia and the UAE, for example, are advancing ambitious renewable energy goals, aiming to establish themselves as global pioneers in solar and wind technology. This rivalry fosters technological advancements and attracts foreign investments, but it also underscores regional competition for dominance in clean energy (Middle East Institute, 2021). Despite competitive dynamics, joint energy projects remain central to regional strategy, as evidenced by the GCC-Iraq Electrical Interconnection Project. This project not only supports Iraq's energy stability but also deepens GCC integration with neighbouring states, highlighting the potential for cooperation to support broader energy security objectives (Gulf International Forum, 2023).

Energy security has profound implications for political cohesion within the GCC. For instance, Qatar's reliance on LNG has facilitated alliances with key Asian and European markets, yet its

independent energy strategy has, at times, strained intra-GCC relations, as seen during the 2017-2021 Gulf diplomatic crisis. Renewed alliances post-crisis demonstrate an awareness within the GCC of energy security's role in fostering political unity (Gulf International Forum, 2023). Economic interdependence within the GCC is rooted in shared energy resources, with smaller states like Kuwait and Bahrain reliant on energy imports and cooperative projects led by wealthier neighbours. The GCCIA exemplifies this interdependence, providing a framework for smaller states to access electricity from more resource-abundant members like Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Strategic collaborations with major global powers, including China and the United States, further reinforce these connections, positioning GCC countries as essential energy players while bolstering mutual security (Baker Institute, 2023). Energy security fosters stability in the geopolitically sensitive Gulf region. Through joint energy ventures, GCC countries can bolster peaceful relations, reducing the likelihood of resource-based conflicts. The GCC-Iraq Electrical Interconnection Project demonstrates how energy cooperation can extend beyond the GCC to support stability in nearby regions. This project not only stabilises Iraq's energy grid but also decreases its dependence on sensitive imports, contributing to a balanced regional energy landscape (Gulf International Forum, 2023) as the region pivots toward renewables, shared ambitions for sustainable energy transition are likely to serve as a foundation for continued cooperation, underscoring the role of energy security in reinforcing peacebuilding efforts (Middle East Institute, 2021).

Conclusion

This study has examined the intricate dynamics of energy security in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, emphasising the dual forces of cooperation and competition that shape the region's energy landscape. Energy security acts as a central driver of regional cohesion, exemplified by collaborative ventures like the GCC Interconnection Authority (GCCIA), which facilitates resilience and resource-sharing among member states. However, competition is also a defining factor, particularly in the renewable energy sector, where Saudi Arabia and the UAE are positioning themselves as regional leaders. Additionally, the implications of energy security extend to political alignments and economic interdependencies within the GCC, influencing both intra-regional relations and strategic engagements with global powers. The collective shift towards renewable energy fueled by climate commitments and the need for economic diversification presents an array of challenges and prospects for the GCC. While certain member states demonstrate notable advancements in renewable initiatives, others encounter structural obstacles, underscoring the need for more synchronised regional energy strategies. Ultimately, energy security remains not only essential to the economic sustainability of the Gulf but also pivotal to its broader geopolitical standing.

Policy Recommendations

1. *Enhance Regional Energy Cooperation:* To optimize regional energy resilience, policymakers should broaden initiatives under the GCCIA, deepening grid interconnectivity and energy-sharing frameworks. These mechanisms can bolster collective energy security by mitigating shortages and diversifying supply sources, thereby reducing the vulnerability of any single member state to external disruptions.

2. *Accelerate Renewable Energy Investments:* Expanding renewable energy projects, particularly in the solar and hydrogen sectors, is crucial. Policymakers are encouraged to cultivate a supportive environment for public-private partnerships and international collaborations, establishing clear regulatory frameworks and incentivizing foreign investment to bolster long-term sustainability.

3. *Prioritize Energy Source Diversification:* Reducing reliance on oil and gas is essential for economic and environmental resilience. Policymakers should pursue diversification strategies that incorporate renewables alongside advanced technologies such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) and green hydrogen. This diversification will help stabilise GCC economies amid fluctuating oil prices and strengthen alignment with international climate objectives.

4. *Integrate Climate Resilience into Energy Policies:* The GCC's energy security is increasingly interconnected with climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. Policymakers should integrate these strategies into national energy agendas, aligning with frameworks such as the Paris Agreement. Such integration is vital for ensuring a sustainable, low-carbon economic future while retaining the GCC's competitive standing in global energy markets.

5. *Promote Regional Stability through Energy Diplomacy:* Energy diplomacy can be a strategic instrument for peace and stability. Collaborative energy projects, like the GCC-Iraq Electrical Interconnection Project, exemplify how shared energy interests can reinforce economic and geopolitical stability within and beyond the GCC. By diversifying energy supply partnerships, GCC countries can enhance both energy security and diplomatic leverage, supporting a stable regional order.

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The Political Process Involved in Formulating Healthcare Policy in Japan: With a Particular Focus on Advisory Councils, Interest Groups and Medical Officers

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ABSTRACT

Japan's healthcare policy is defined by a universal health insurance system that guarantees affordable healthcare for all citizens at any time and in any location. The system was established in 1961 and has since undergone a process of evolution through the implementation of national healthcare policies. Despite the existence of conflicts and issues, the mechanism of the Central Social Insurance Medical Council ("Chuikyo") has continued to advance national healthcare interests. Nevertheless, this resulted in the commencement of criminal proceedings in 2004. The current demographic shifts present a challenge to the long-term sustainability of the national health insurance system, the long-term care insurance system, and the public pension system. This is occurring against a backdrop of rising costs associated with healthcare and long-term care, as well as an unsustainable national budget. The Chuikyo system is confronted with a multitude of challenges. This paper analyses the roles of three key actors in the Japanese national healthcare policy-making process. These actors include advisory councils such as Chuikyo, interest groups such as the Japan Medical Agency, and medical officers of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, who play a pivotal role in the policy-making process. The incremental improvements that Chuikyo produces are insufficient to address the long-term challenges facing the national healthcare policy. Japan's healthcare model requires reconstruction to align it with the needs of an ageing society with a declining birthrate. Prior to embarking on this important policy work, it is essential to determine who should lead it. It is recommended that the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Office spearhead a study on radical reform, with strong political leadership and a capable technocrat team to facilitate collaboration with the National Diet and the public. Furthermore, it would be crucial to achieve a consensus through national forums on the fundamental concepts that citizens, as consumers, desire and are prepared to forego from a bottom-up approach. It is essential that the governance structure of the national healthcare system is changed to a decentralised structure so that citizens can be proactively involved in healthcare issues and make autonomous decisions.

Introduction

The national health policy in Japan has been shaped through a complex political process based on the national health insurance system for all nationals. The Japanese healthcare system is distinguished by three fundamental characteristics: universal health insurance, free access to medical institutions, and in-kind payment for medical services (Shimazaki, 2020). The national health insurance system provides coverage for healthcare services that are explicitly outlined in the insurance policy, including select dental procedures. Furthermore, the costs associated with pharmaceuticals covered under the public health insurance scheme are determined at the official level. In a free-market economy, healthcare is the sole exception, being based on the national insurance system and governed by medical fees and pharmaceutical price standards set by the government. It is a special public sector that is located outside the market economy.

The Japanese healthcare system is characterised by a mixed system of public and private healthcare service providers based on the national healthcare system. Large-scale medical institutions are those operated by public entities, including universities and governments, which collectively account for approximately 20 per cent of the total healthcare provision capacity. Private medical institutions, which include clinics and small and medium-sized hospitals operated by individuals or medical corporations, account for a total of 80 per cent of the healthcare provision capacity.

A comparative analysis of the Japanese healthcare system with that of other countries reveals the distinctive features of the former (Shimazaki, 2013/2020: 29; Seaton, 2023). National health insurance systems like Japan, Germany, and France are distinguished by a higher proportion of public healthcare institutions within their healthcare delivery systems. In contrast, the United Kingdom and Sweden have a tax-based healthcare system, with healthcare provided by public healthcare institutions that serve as gatekeepers.

In the United States, the provision of healthcare is primarily the responsibility of private healthcare institutions, which operate under private health insurance schemes as defined by the terms of their insurance policy. Notable exceptions to this are Medicare, which provides healthcare for the elderly and persons with disabilities under a social insurance scheme, and Medicaid, which provides healthcare for low-income individuals under a tax scheme.

The objective of the national healthcare policy in Japan is to guarantee that all citizens have equitable access to quality healthcare at the lowest possible cost. This requires three fundamental considerations: the quality of medicine, equality of healthcare access, and a minimal cost burden (Shimazaki, 2020: 20). It is evident that the Japanese national healthcare system has successfully achieved all three of these objectives. However, this has resulted in a notable increase in national healthcare expenditure as the population has aged.

In the year 2021, Japan's healthcare expenditure increased by 4.8 per cent in comparison to the previous year (Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare of Japan, 2023). The mean expenditure per capita was ¥358,800 (based on an exchange rate of US$1 to ¥150, this equates to US$2,392), representing a 5.3 per cent increase. Healthcare spending constituted 8.18 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), representing an increase from the previous year's figure of 7.99 per cent. The expenditure data, disaggregated by age group, yielded the following figures: The expenditure for individuals aged 0-14 was ¥2.42 trillion (US$16.13 billion); for those aged 15-44, it was ¥5.37 trillion (US$35.80 billion), for those aged 45-64 it was ¥9.94 trillion (US$66.27 billion), and for those aged 65 and above it was ¥27.30 trillion (US$182.00 billion). The mean expenditure for individuals below the age of 65 was ¥198,600 (equivalent to US$1,324), while those aged 65 and above spent, on average, ¥754,000 (equivalent to US$5,027).

As illustrated by the figures, the ageing of the population is exerting a considerable influence on the growth in healthcare expenditure, which gives rise to a potential intergenerational conflict of interest. The ageing population is being countered by a rapid decline in the birth rate, which gives rise to questions regarding the long-term viability of the national health insurance system. The aged care insurance system for the care of the elderly has become a significant challenge due to rising care costs and a shortage of caregivers. It can be argued that the Japanese healthcare system, which was developed in the post-war era, is now on the verge of crisis.

The aim of this paper is to examine the role of three key actors in the Japanese healthcare policy-making process regarding the reimbursement mechanism of the national health insurance system. These are advisory councils, interest groups, and medical officers. The rationale for addressing this subject is that an understanding of the processes through which healthcare policy is formulated is indispensable for the analysis of the Japanese healthcare system. This paper aims to respond to the research question, "What is the political process involved in formulating healthcare policy in Japan? How is this process evaluated? Moreover, how should the healthcare policy in Japan be reformed?"

Methodology

A substantial corpus of literature in Japanese exists on the specific subject of Japanese healthcare policy. Some studies of Japanese healthcare policy adopt a social security law perspective (Kikuchi, 2019), while others employ administrative policy science (Fujita, 1999; Shimazaki, 2013/2020; Ryu, 2018), historical analysis (Somae, 2020), studies of Japanese healthcare politics (Campbell and Masuyama, 1994; Ikegami and Campbell, 1996; Talcott, 2001; Yuki, 2004/2006; Yamaguchi, 2016), or the role of healthcare administration (Mizuno, 2005; Murashige, 2010; Morita 2013/2014; Morita, 2016; Sato, 2018), and other related fields. Moreover, a corpus of English literature has been produced about Japanese healthcare policy (Sams, 1986; Ogura et al., 2019; Rand and Kesselheim, 2020; Yamagishi, 2022).

Nevertheless, few articles adopt a macro-level perspective and examine the processes through which the national healthcare policy is formulated, its structural components, and the key actors involved (Ikegami and Campbell, 1996). This article takes a macro-level view of Japan's healthcare policy through the lens of consumers, focusing on the mechanisms for determining reimbursement in the national health insurance system and analyses the mechanisms and major actors in the decision-making process.

The article presents the findings of a comprehensive literature survey of interdisciplinary studies in Japanese and English. These sources are subjected to critical analysis through the lens of the discipline of political science. The author conducted research on the topics of this article at the Graduate School of the Institute of Science Tokyo (formerly Tokyo Medical and Dental University) from April 2023 to March 2025 from a medical policy studies perspective. The findings of this research have been published (Sakurai, 2024ab).

The following section will provide an overview of the historical background of Japan's healthcare policy and the main actors, with a particular focus on the public councils, interest groups, and medical officers. Subsequently, the advantages and disadvantages of the existing healthcare policy-making process will be analysed through the reimbursement of the national health insurance system. Furthermore, the potential avenues for reforming the healthcare policy in Japan to ensure long-term sustainability will be discussed. Finally, a conclusion will be reached.

A Historical Review of Japan's Healthcare Policy

The historical development of Japan's healthcare policy can be traced back to the Meiji era (1868–1912) when Western medical systems were first adopted in the modernisation of Japan. Japan sought to emulate the German model of healthcare, striving to implement a contemporary medical infrastructure and enhance social health. In the post-war period, the universal health insurance system was established in 1961, thereby guaranteeing that all citizens had access to medical services. This development was made possible by the collaboration of the government, medical institutions, healthcare professionals, and the public in the process of restoration of the national economy and improvement of quality of life.

The historical evolution of universal health insurance coverage in Japan can be delineated into three distinct periods (Shimazaki, 2020). The initial period, spanning from 1922 to 1945, encompasses the establishment of the foundational framework in the aftermath of Japan's defeat in World War II. During this period, two pivotal programs were established: the Employees' Health Insurance Act (1922) and the Community-based Health Insurance Act (1938). The objective of these programs was to extend health insurance coverage to the private sector, including farmers.

The second period, spanning from 1945 to 1955, is characterized by recovery and reconstruction efforts. These efforts were concentrated on the restoration and reconstruction of the health insurance system, which had been severely disrupted by the war. In 1948, the role of insurer for Community-based Health Insurance was assumed by municipalities with the objective of reinforcing the administrative foundations. Moreover, in 1953, the government introduced a subsidy program for benefit payments.

The third period, spanning from approximately 1955 to 1961, is characterised by the planning and implementation of universal health insurance coverage in Japan. During this period, Japan was experiencing a rapid economic recovery, yet a persistent social issue remained: poverty among those lacking health insurance, who were forced to bear the full financial burden of medical expenses. In this context, achieving universal coverage became a pivotal political objective. The 1958 revision of the Community-based Health Insurance Act facilitated the nationwide implementation of the insurance program in all municipalities by April 1961, thereby achieving the objective of universal health insurance coverage.

Significant developments in healthcare can be attributed to the establishment of local-level health administration during wartime, the introduction of post-war national health insurance, and a notable shift in disease patterns, with a decline in tuberculosis and an increase in surgical procedures in the post-war period (Somae, 2020). Since the introduction of universal health coverage in 1961, the Japanese healthcare policy has been designed with the objective of guaranteeing that all nationals have access to quality healthcare at any time, in any location, and at a low cost. During the period of high economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s, the ratio of healthcare expenditure to GDP was reported to have remained relatively low in comparison to other major industrialised countries (Sato, 2018).

Since the 1980s, the Japanese government has employed a range of strategies with the objective of regulating national healthcare expenditure. In the 2000s, while significant reductions in medical fees and pharmaceutical prices were enacted, the depletion of the medical frontline (hospitals) and the influx of emergency patients became a pressing concern, given the lack of resources to cope with the increased demand. The quality of medical care was called into question.

Moreover, the rise in the co-payment rate for patients to 30 per cent and the subsequent focus on the shortage of medical doctors has led to a heightened awareness of the difficulties in accessing medical facilities. The understanding of the relatively low cost of healthcare to GDP has been

demonstrated to be erroneous (Sato, 2018). The term "medical fees" is used to describe the fees paid to medical institutions and pharmacies as compensation for the provision of medical care.

For individuals of working age, the patient is liable for a co-payment of 30 per cent, while the insurer is responsible for the remaining 70 per cent of the fee to the medical institution. The co-payment rate is subject to variation according to age and income bracket. Preschool children are liable to pay 20 per cent, while those aged between 70 and 75 are subject to a rate of either 20 per cent or 30 per cent, depending on their income. Individuals aged 75 and above are required to pay 10 per cent or 30 per cent, depending on their income.

There are numerous issues that require resolution in Japan's healthcare policy. The long-term sustainability of the national health insurance system is currently regarded as a significant challenge, largely due to the demographic shifts associated with a declining and ageing population (Kikuchi, 2019). The cost of national health insurance premiums for the insured continues to rise. When the burden of long-term care insurance, income tax, and consumption tax is added, it could be argued that the public is approaching the limit of its ability to bear the burden. Japanese workers have their taxes and social security contributions deducted from their salaries by their employers, so non-payment is extremely rare. However, their take-home pay is falling.

Regarding the provision of healthcare, the uneven distribution of medical professionals across regions has emerged as a social concern. There is a growing need to address the pressing issue of improving the challenging working environment for medical doctors and other healthcare workers. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of cases where patients and their families have lodged complaints about the way healthcare professionals have treated them, as well as instances of inappropriate harassment or inconvenience.

In response to the spread of the novel coronavirus in 2020-2022, the provision system for medical care was severely strained in some regions, resulting in patients being unable to receive the medical care they required. This was regarded as a significant problem, as the Japanese government was unable to intervene with private healthcare providers through policy. The perception of quality healthcare as inexpensive and accessible at any time and in any location has unfortunately collapsed.

The field of medical technology, exemplified by genome medical research, is developing at a rapid pace with the objective of attaining precision medicine tailored to the individual. This has resulted in an increased focus on the early detection of cancer, which was previously considered an incurable disease. However, there is a fundamental problem in that medical policy has not been able to keep pace with these changes in the social environment and advances in medical technology, which are occurring at a rapid pace.

Three Key Actors in the National Healthcare Policy-Making Process

Advisory Councils: Chuikyo

Advisory councils provide a forum for the gathering of opinions from a range of experts and stakeholders during the planning and revision of national healthcare policies. They function as forums for aggregating opinions from experts and stakeholders, guiding the direction of policies. This process guarantees that the policies reflect a multiplicity of perspectives. The advisory councils facilitate the discussion of salient issues pertaining to national healthcare policy, and their findings are subsequently integrated into the policy formulation process. A system for the deliberation and determination of medical fees and pharmaceutical prices has been established.

This system is operated by three advisory councils that have been established within the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare ("MHLW"; Shimazaki, 2020). These are the (a) Medical Care Section of the Social Security Council (社会保障審議会医療部会), (b) Health Coverage Section of the Social Security Council (社会保障審議会医療保険部会), and (c) Central Social Insurance Medical Council (中央社会保険医療協議会、中医協). The responsibilities of the councils are distributed among the following entities: (a) the healthcare delivery system and healthcare planning (Secretariat: Medical Policy Bureau, MHLW), (b) the health insurance system (Secretariat: Insurance Bureau, MHLW), and (c) the revision of medical fees (Secretariat: Medical Division, Insurance Bureau, MHLW).

These three advisory councils engage in deliberations pertaining to the national healthcare policy, national health insurance policy, and reimbursement and are vested with the authority to determine policy. Consequently, in the absence of legislative action pertaining to healthcare policy, the policy and pricing mechanism functions are conducted under the purview of the administrative body rather than the National Diet. This paper particularly focuses on the Central Social Insurance Medical Council, which is commonly referred to as the "*Chuikyo*" (中医協), to examine its system and relevant stakeholders in greater detail (Ogura et al., 2019; Rand and Kesselheim, 2020).

The *Chuikyo* is the entity charged with conducting public deliberations on the revisions. This is an obligation enshrined in the pertinent legislation, and the *Chuikyo* is further tasked with providing advisory services to the Minister of Health, Labour, and Welfare. In accordance with the "revision rate" determined by the government and the "basic policy" established by the Social Security Council, the *Chuikyo* engages in deliberations pertaining to specific points and calculation requirements. Based on these discussions, the *Chuikyo* presents a report to the Minister for their consideration. The *Chuikyo*'s report is particularly focused on the management of medical institutions.

The council is constituted of tripartite representatives, comprising seven insurers, seven healthcare practitioners, and six public interest representatives (Sato, 2018). The council is chaired by an academic scholar. In accordance with the pertinent legislation, the appointment of the chair and public interest representatives is subject to the prior consent of both Houses of the National Diet. The term of office for each member is two years, with half of them being appointed each year. In addition to the members, up to ten expert members will be appointed on each occasion.

In *Chuikyo*, those deemed capable of adequately representing the position of those who bear the financial burden of healthcare include Directors of the National Health Insurance Association and the National Federation of Health Insurance Societies, among others (Sato, 2018). Those healthcare practitioners who are recognised as being able to adequately represent the position of those who provide local medical care consist of the Vice Chair and Directors from the Japan Medical Association (JMA), Japan Hospital Association (JHA), the Japan Dental Association (JDA), the Japanese Nursing Association (JNA), and the Japan Pharmaceutical Association (JPA). The public interest representatives comprise academic scholars or representatives of public corporations.

The *Chuikyo* organisation is structured according to a multilayered council system. In accordance with the *Chuikyo* General Assembly, five specialised committees have been constituted to address issues pertaining to pharmaceutical prices, insured medical materials, cost-effectiveness assessment, a joint committee of these three issues, and the verification of the results of the revision of medical fees (Sato, 2018). Furthermore, two subcommittees have been established to oversee the revision of medical fees and to conduct research surveys. The findings of these subcommittees are presented to the *Chuikyo* General Assembly for consideration. The *Chuikyo* General Assembly solicits input from specialised organisations engaged in the production of medical reports and surveys, as well as those involved in the calculation of pharmaceutical costs.

The *Chuikyo* will demonstrate its healthcare policy through the implementation of remuneration and pricing mechanisms, which will provide incentives for medical price inducement. One illustrative example of the *Chuikyo* decision is the proposal to augment the additional points allotted to guarantee the regional healthcare system from 100 to 120. The amount payable is calculated by adding together the number of points allocated to each medical treatment. In addition to the basic medical fees, such as those for an initial consultation, there are special medical fees for approximately 5,000 medical procedures. The medical fees are calculated based on the assumption that one point equates to 10 yen, and these points are the same throughout the country.

It can be argued that the *Chuikyo* system provides a platform for public debate among representatives of various stakeholders in accordance with the law. It seeks to balance conflicting interests to adjust the national healthcare policy in a moderate manner, particularly through the revision of medical fees and associated matters (Ikegami and Campbell, 1996). This system may substitute the private market mechanism in the healthcare industry and thus has limitations in terms of its ability to contribute to the real demand and supply.

Interest groups: Japan Medical Association

The evolution of the Japanese health system can be viewed as a series of conflicts between competing interests among stakeholders (Campbell and Masuyama, 1994). It has been observed that interest groups representing various sectors of the healthcare industry engage in lobbying activities with the intention of influencing the formation and implementation of healthcare policies. Notable examples include the Japan Medical Association (JMA) and other relevant groups mentioned above. These groups have been identified as playing a significant role in the policy-making process, exerting considerable influence over the direction of healthcare policy while protecting their respective interests. These groups engage in conflict with one another regarding medical issues and divergent interests.

The present paper focuses on the Japan Medical Association (JMA). The JMA is a private, academic and professional association with 176,000 members (as of 1 December 2023), representing 51 per cent of the registered medical doctors in Japan (JMA, 2024). The JMA is comprised of members from 47 prefectural medical associations, each of which is an autonomous legal entity. The membership is comprised of two distinct categories of medical doctors: those who are employed and those who are independent. The latter are typically engaged in the operation of clinics or the management of medical corporations.

The JMA was established in 1916 by Shibasaburo Kitasato (1853–1931) and other pioneers in the field. It was formally recognised as an incorporated association in 1947 and subsequently designated as a public interest incorporated association in 2013 (JMA, 2024). The JMA's activities are diverse, encompassing the advancement of the medical profession, the enhancement of medical education, the promotion of general medical and related scientific progress, and lifelong education. The JMA operates a research institute, the Japan Medical Association Research Institute (JMARI).

From the 1960s to the early 1980s, the JMA exercised considerable political influence under the powerful leadership of Taro Takemi (1904–1983), who served as president for 25 years from 1957 onwards. During this period, the JMA severely conflicted with the Ministry of Health and Welfare but fostered close ties with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has been the ruling party since 1955 (Ikegami and Campbell, 1996).

The JMA's political role was continued under the tenure of subsequent chairmen. While the JMA has consistently aligned itself with the LDP, there have been instances where the two parties have held divergent views on specific aspects of healthcare policy. The JMA's defensive stance in the

context of the novel coronavirus infection, which involved clinics and small and medium-sized hospitals of the JMA members refusing to see patients, was met with disappointment from both the LDP and the public.

It can be argued that the JMA is engaged in political activities, operating as both a policy institution representing the interests of medical professionals and a political pressure group (Yamaguchi, 2016). Indeed, the JMA has established political institutions, including the Japan Medical Federation ("*Nichi-Iren*"), which have made donations to the LDP political fund management entity and the political fund institutions of healthcare-related LDP lawmakers. In 2021, the *Nichi-Iren* made donations amounting to 14 million yen (US$ 93,300) to former Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and 11 million yen (US$ 73,300) to former Minister Keizo Takemi (Tokyo Shimbun, 2023).

Similarly, other healthcare practitioner institutions, including the Japan Hospital Association (JHA), the Japan Dental Association (JDA), and the Japan Pharmaceutical Association (JPA), exhibit structures and functions comparable to those of the JMA. These institutions can be considered interest groups that exert pressure on the Japanese government, both within the *Chuikyo* roundtable and beyond. Other relevant actors involved in the *Chuikyo* dialogue include the Ministry of Finance, which plays a role in national budgetary decisions, as well as healthcare-related LDP and Komento lawmakers, who together form a leading political party.

It is relevant to note that an investigation into criminal activities was eventually conducted in relation to the *Chuikyo*. This case concerns allegations of corruption by the JDA's political funding body, the Japan Dental Federation (JDF), in relation to dental fee revisions. Furthermore, the investigation encompasses allegations of embezzlement connected to the election of the JDA president, as well as the solicitation and acceptance of illicit donations related to politics. The initial revelation of these allegations occurred in April 2004.

A total of 16 individuals were indicted, comprising six executives of the JDA, two members of the *Chuikyo*, two LDP lawmakers, the LDP faction treasurer, and five local assembly members, all of whom were subsequently convicted. The two members of *Chuikyo* are a former director-general of the Social Insurance Agency who previously held the roles of medical officer in the MHLW and a vice-president of the Federation of Trade Unions.

The incident prompted a re-evaluation of the *Chuikyo* composition, leading to an increase in the number of public interest members. Furthermore, measures to enhance transparency were implemented, including the public disclosure of proceedings and amendments to the Political Funding Regulation Act (Sato, 2018). Despite the absence of criminal cases since that time, it is evident that the *Chuikyo* system has the potential risk for corruption. Indeed, there is evidence that political funding and profiteering are occurring in a manner that is not in violation of the law. This is evidenced by the continued donations made by interest groups to the funding entities of the LDP and its members.

It can be argued that the *Chuikyo* system is based on a combination of an administrative-driven public market system and a profit-driven political system. Profit-driven politics has the potential to distort healthcare remuneration revisions by introducing artificial considerations into the realisation of fair and equitable national healthcare policy. While healthcare is a high-profile public interest business that is not suited to private market-based price adjustments, it is nevertheless concerning when profit inducements are made by healthcare providers as interest groups (Shimazaki, 2020). This mechanism introduces complications into the discussion on healthcare policy.

Medical Officers: Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare

Medical officers of the MHLW are specialists tasked with the planning, drafting, and implementation of healthcare policies within governmental bodies and associated institutions (Mizuno, 2005). Medical officers play a pivotal role in formulating policies based on medical knowledge and the realities of the field, ensuring scientific validity and alignment with international standards. The medical officer serves as the *Chuikyo* secretariat, facilitating the deliberations. Although the duties of bureaucrats are defined by law, medical officers are required to maintain relationships with the Ministry of Finance, ruling party politicians, and medical interest groups due to the vast national budgets they manage and their significant social influence.

Japanese nationals who possess a medical or dental license and have successfully completed the requisite national qualification examinations are eligible to be employed as medical officers if they apply and subsequently pass the recruitment examination offered by the MHLW (Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare of Japan, 2024). While national civil servants are required to take the National Personnel Authority's National Civil Service Examination, medical officers are exceptionally recruited by the MHLW outside of the system. This distinctive recruitment policy has been adopted to meet the specific requirements of medical officers with specialised expertise.

Other examples of technical officers with similar qualifications include those working in the fields of construction engineering in the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport, agricultural and civil engineering in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and nuclear engineering in the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. All these individuals have completed the examination (Mizuno, 2018). These groups are engaged in public works projects and are allocated a considerable budget despite their relatively modest personnel numbers.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the rationale behind the establishment of this distinctive recruitment system, it is essential to conduct thorough historical research, tracing its origins back to the national bureaucratic system and, ultimately, to the Meiji era. Subsequently, during the period of US occupation between 1945 and 1951, the current system for the employment of medical officers was established and developed based on the US public health and healthcare personnel system. Brigadier General Crawford F. Sams, a US Army officer and medical doctor, was a key figure in promoting this system (Sams, 1986: 214–215).

The appointment of medical and dental doctors to medical administration is a practice observed in other countries, and this is not a system unique to Japan (Wilsford, 1991). Rather, they were heavily employed during the US occupation as personnel to improve public health and healthcare at an early stage. After 80 years, this personnel system for medical officers remains unchanged and takes administrative responsibility in a broader area related to public health and healthcare as time passes.

The mean number of medical officers recruited annually is approximately 10, resulting in a total of between 250 and 300. This constitutes a relatively modest cohort within the broader population of national civil servants. Medical officers possess a distinctive set of professional skills and experience, drawing on the expertise of medical and dental doctors. This background informs their approach to their role as technocrats. A relatively small number of medical officers are deployed in public health and healthcare-related positions that are considered important. Consequently, they are perceived as elites, and they must adapt their performance to comply with the requirements of the various positions for which they are responsible. In fact, they are frequently transferred between positions every two years.

They are employed in a variety of roles within the public health sector, including research into the prevention of infectious diseases, public health departments, and the WHO. They are engaged in a range of healthcare-related activities, including dentistry, national health insurance, aged care insurance, and medical equipment. Approximately 170 medical officers at the MHLW are

responsible for public health and healthcare-related roles, including the Medical Policy Bureau and the Medical Insurance Bureau. This also applies to other ministries, local governments, public health and healthcare institutions, and so forth (Fujita, 1999).

It is a common practice among medical officers to resign from their civil service roles and transfer their employment to medical institutions or universities. This enables them to utilize their licenses as medical or dental doctors. In such cases, there is a notable increase in the annual income. In other words, medical officers receive the lowest remuneration as licensed doctors but can make a valuable contribution to the public sector with a missionary mindset.

The diversity of their professional backgrounds means that medical officers are perceived as a unified group. It is observed that a certain degree of distance exists between administrative officers and technical officers, including medical officers, within the MHLW (Nakajima, 2017). The delicate balance between administrative officers and technical officers, including medical officers, represents a challenge to the formation of a unified institutional identity within the MHLW.

Since 2014, the Cabinet of Japan has collectively administered the personnel affairs of each ministry through the Cabinet Personnel Management Agency. This system was established during the tenure of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (1954–2022). It enables the Cabinet to exercise control over each ministry or public agency, thereby allowing the Prime Minister to assume the role of a President (Kamikawa, 2018). However, medical officers seem to have continued to pursue their personnel initiatives.

In July 2017, the MHLW established a new vice-ministerial-level position, the Chief Medical and Global Health Officer, through legislative reform (Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare of Japan, 2024). This position is intended for medical officers. This officer represents the third vice-ministerial-level position within the MHLW, situated beneath the administrative vice-minister and the counsellor for health, labour, and welfare. This position oversees a diverse range of medical matters and is positioned to play a pivotal role in the international advancement of health and medical policies.

Despite the enhancement of the status of medical officers, the shortcomings eventually became evident in the context of the novel coronavirus pandemic. Medical officers, in collaboration with officers from the MHLW, allocated considerable national resources and made a series of missteps in their response to the outbreak. Suspicions have been raised that medical officers are a group of specialised technical officers so obsessed with their position that they do not necessarily contribute to the welfare of the public (Murashige, 2010).

Discussion

Contributions and Limitations of the Chuikyo System

The most noteworthy feature of Japan's healthcare policy is its universal health insurance system, which ensures the provision of affordable healthcare services to citizens at any time and in any location. However, this advantage is confronted with numerous challenges. The total annual cost of healthcare in Japan reached \45 trillion (US$300 billion) in 2023 and is projected to rise in the coming years. The most significant challenge is to ensure the long-term sustainability of the health insurance system. Moreover, there is a concern regarding the sustainability of long-term care insurance and public pensions. These issues are interlinked with the unsustainable national budget.

The objective of the *Chuikyo* system is to facilitate the balancing of the interests of stakeholders in the healthcare sector by conducting a review of the reimbursement and related healthcare policy options for its operation. The scheme is a public business led by the government that is in accordance with legal requirements and with a view to maintaining consistency in healthcare administration. The existing *Chuikyo* system will be capable of maintaining the status quo and implementing incremental improvements. Nevertheless, a comprehensive reassessment of the national healthcare system will be imperative in the longer term.

It can be posited that in forums of public administration, a variety of interest-based coordination occurs in informal settings. The designation of the policy in question has resulted in the extension of policy preferences to healthcare providers, with political intervention contributing to this outcome. For example, when intractable disagreements arise during the process of coordinating opinions with interest groups, political intervention may be employed as a means of reaching a political settlement.

It is possible to resolve the conflict in a manner that does not constitute an illicit act and to address the compensation through the legal avenue of a political donation. This is illustrative of interest-aligned politics. For example, Hanako Jimi, a medical doctor, and member of the House of Councillors, who requested an increase in the revision of medical fees (Tokyo Shimbun, 2023), is the daughter of Shozaburo Jimi, a medical doctor and former member of the House of Representatives who served as Minister of Posts and Telecommunications. It has been documented that Jimi's political fund receives substantial financial contributions from the medical industry (Tokyo Shimbun, 2023).

It is notable that a considerable number of LDP members have inherited their political status through hereditary succession (Sakurai, 2024). It is not uncommon for LDP politicians to be affiliated with the interests of specific industries across generations despite the obligations of public office to represent the people in a fair and impartial manner. Furthermore, those engaged in the political sphere tend to direct their attention towards the financial implications of healthcare for the elderly within their respective constituencies rather than towards the broader economic health of the health insurance system (Talcott, 2001).

It appears reasonable to conclude that the democratic process, particularly in relation to the voting system, has failed to implement the necessary reforms to these significant national healthcare systems. This represents part of the failure of democracy. The current voting system functions to advance politics driven by self-interest rather than facilitating national consensus-building procedures (Yuki, 2004/2006).

The views of citizens are represented by the *Chuikyo* members, who are tasked with upholding the public interest. It is open to question whether these members are the most appropriate representatives of the public's views, although they are recognized by the National Diet. The effective management of an advisory council in accordance with the ministry's objectives is indicative of its exemplary bureaucratic performance (Morita, 2016). There is no avenue for citizens to challenge a public forum of stakeholders and experts convened within the framework of the *Chuikyo* system.

Japan Needs to Review Its Healthcare System

The Japanese healthcare system emerged within a socio-economic context shaped by a conscription system and a regulated economy under the wartime regime. Meanwhile, Japan's demographic structure is undergoing a significant transformation, which gives rise to important questions about the long-term sustainability of the current healthcare system. The United Nations and the Japanese government have published detailed projections of future demographic change up to the year 2070.

It is, therefore, imperative to consider prospective healthcare policy, including the objectives and the projected alterations to the population structure up to 2070.

In contrast, the issue of hereditary succession among medical doctors and dentists and the commercialization of healthcare to maintain this present a significant challenge to the rationalization of superfluous medical costs. It is crucial to examine the phenomenon of hereditary succession among politicians who espouse this ideology and secure electoral support. It can be reasonably argued that both the medical profession and politicians dedicate a significant amount of effort to maintaining hereditary succession as a family-run business (Sakurai, 2024a), which serves to maintain the existing system in a state of equilibrium.

One might posit that healthcare has become a political issue driven by the pursuit of economic benefits by medical professionals and the acquisition of voting power by politicians. There is a pressing need to transition away from a healthcare system that prioritises the interests of the medical profession and towards one that is truly patient-centric. The Japanese healthcare model needs reconstruction to align it with the democratic values of fairness, freedom, and equality as perceived from the citizenry's perspective.

The case of Yubari City, Hokkaido, where medical resources were eventually restricted due to financial considerations, offers a potential insight that may inform the future of healthcare (Morita, 2013/2014). The following context is provided for reference. Yubari City was a prosperous municipality, with a significant proportion of its economy dependent on coal mining. However, following the closure of the coal mines in 1990, the city experienced a rapid decline in economic activity.

In 2007, the Japanese government designated Yubari City, with a population of 10,000 (now 6,500), as a financial reconstruction organisation by law. This decision effectively recognised the city's financial default. Consequently, Yubari City was placed under state control, public facilities were abolished or downsized, and city hall staff had their salaries cut. The city's general hospital, which had 171 beds, was replaced by a clinic with 19 beds. At the time, it was predicted that the collapse of healthcare in Yubari City would be imminent.

However, subsequent events have demonstrated that life expectancy has not declined, and the quality of medical care has not deteriorated. It has been observed that elderly individuals who previously spent their final days in general hospitals are receiving home healthcare and dying at home. Additionally, the proportion of deaths attributed to senility has increased. The constrained availability of healthcare resources prompted a significant shift in mindset among medical professionals and the citizens of Yubari, who took the initiative to adapt their practices in response to the circumstances.

To gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the proposed approach, it would be beneficial for other municipalities to engage in similar experiments. It is imperative that the results of these experiments be subjected to rigorous scientific analysis, and those outcomes may be used with a view to establishing a new approach to healthcare provision that is more economical and effective.

The prevailing approach to healthcare policy has been shaped in a centralised manner and implemented uniformly across the country, with minimal consideration for the diverse local characteristics. It is evident that municipalities' expectations of self-help efforts are misguided. To facilitate the ingenuity of local governments and medical institutions, it is necessary to devolve a certain authority to local governments and establish a system to provide efficient medical care suited to the region. It is crucial to address the question of who should spearhead such challenging policy work.

Proposal for the National Formation of Healthcare Reform

It is time to openly develop and deliberate on these fundamental policy scenarios. Should the current national health insurance system be maintained, it is necessary to determine what changes will have to be made to the system in the future. Conversely, should the current national health insurance system be changed, it is essential to ascertain what changes are possible and what health services will be provided to the public. Therefore, these fundamental policy scenarios must be developed and deliberated on by the public.

The formation of a capable cabinet and the collaboration with the National Diet based on the leading political parties to prioritize the necessary legislative amendments are prerequisites for the success of the reform. Such a formation requires the presence of a robust leadership structure with a clearly defined mission to achieve the desired outcome. It would be prudent to appoint an individual in the Cabinet Office who is suitably qualified and experienced to assume the role of head of the project team and who would be able to develop scenarios for national healthcare system reform.

It would be advantageous to appoint a Minister of State for Healthcare Reform to assume the role of Minister in charge, with the establishment of a Healthcare Reform Study Promotion Headquarters headed by the Prime Minister. The rationale behind the Cabinet Office's designation as the headquarters is to ensure the supervision of reforms by individuals with expertise in national budgetary matters or national economics. This contrasts with the involvement of medical officers of the MHLW, who would be required to assume a prominent role.

It is recommended that a special task force team be constituted within the Cabinet Office rather than within the MHLW, with the objective of overseeing the implementation of national healthcare reform. The MHLW is ill-suited to the management of national health reform for three principal reasons. Firstly, it is perceived that the organisation of MHLW lacks the requisite authority to effectively manage health policy at the national level. Instead, responsibility is distributed between the Chief Medical and Global Health Officer, the Director General of the Medical Policy Bureau, and other Bureaus, and health policy is dispersed across various departments, with routine work being allocated to those departments most suited to such tasks.

Secondly, the MHLW is responsible for managing a considerable national budget yet lacks the capacity to develop long-term policy strategies. The MHLW bears responsibility for the operation of social systems that have a significant impact on the lives of citizens, including healthcare, long-term care and public pensions. On occasion, a legal administrator was appointed as Director General of the Medical Policy Bureau to address a perceived deficiency. However, this appointment proved to be short-lived, and the position is currently held by a medical officer (Mizuno, 2005).

Moreover, the MHLW workforce is comprised of a diverse cohort of professionals, including legal, administrative, and technical officers with specialisations in fields such as medicine, pharmacy, nursing, and others. It is noteworthy that there is a lack of unified purpose across the MHLW. In this context, medical officers are required to assume the role of administrative officers, yet the full extent of their expertise is not fully utilised. This information was obtained from an interview with a former medical officer conducted in July 2024.

Thirdly, it is a common practice in business to separate the unit responsible for initiating the reform process from the unit responsible for implementing the resulting changes. It is typical for professionals in any business field to be protective of their area of expertise and reluctant to concede or lose their competitive advantage in the future. Consequently, they may lack the motivation to implement reforms, even when they are at risk.

The establishment of national forums comprising citizens will be instrumental in achieving a consensus on the fundamental concepts that citizens, in their capacity as consumers, desire and are prepared to forego. It is recommended that the national forum should include representatives of medical associations, academia, trade unions, and community associations. The objective of the national forums is to facilitate multilayered and multidimensional consensus-building dialogues, including various voluntary forums, with the aim of strengthening consensus-building channels based on a bottom-up approach (Tanaka, 2004).

This challenge may result in a reconciliation of top-down and bottom-up approaches, with the latter serving to complement the former. It would be beneficial to utilise information technology for the periodic reflection of public opinion on health reform and the examination of the national discourse. It is essential that the governance structure of the national healthcare system is changed to a decentralised structure so that citizens can be proactively involved in healthcare issues and make autonomous decisions (Shimazaki, 2020: 501). It is vital that the public is fully informed about this recognition.

Conclusion

This paper analyses the roles of three key actors in the Japanese national healthcare policy-making process. These actors include advisory councils such as *Chuikyo*, interest groups such as the Japan Medical Agency, and medical officers of the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, who play a pivotal role in the policy-making process. The incremental improvements that *Chuikyo* produces are inadequate to address the long-term challenges facing Japan's national healthcare policy. It is recommended that the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Office spearhead a study on radical reform, with robust political leadership and a capable technocrat team to guarantee collaboration with the National Diet and the public. Moreover, it would be imperative to attain a consensus through national forums on the fundamental concepts that citizens, as consumers, desire and are prepared to forego from a bottom-up approach. It is recommended that the governance structure of the national healthcare system be changed to a decentralised structure so that citizens can be proactively involved in healthcare issues and make autonomous decisions. However, it should be noted that this study is a literature analysis of overviews and does not include a detailed survey or interview to investigate the advisory council members, interest group members, and medical officers. Consequently, the study does not offer a comprehensive examination of each individual actor. Nevertheless, this limitation does not negate the importance of academic analysis of the research question. The present paper does not address the specific substances of healthcare reform policy and guiding principles, which require further systematic study. These issues will be discussed in a subsequent task.

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The Role of Mass Media Propaganda in Shaping American Culture: A Study on the Torches of Freedom

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the profound impact of mass media propaganda on American culture, with a particular focus on the iconic Torches of Freedom campaign. Originating in the late 19th century and led by Edward Bernays, this campaign aimed to reshape social norms surrounding women and smoking. Initially, a societal taboo prevailed, suggesting that respectable women did not smoke. Although tobacco consumption was common in America during the late 19th century, women were neither expected nor permitted to partake in the consumption of tobacco products until 1929. Women were eventually allowed the option to smoke discreetly, but even then, it was considered taboo by American society due to its perceived unfeminine nature. Particularly in North America and Europe, women's smoking had long been associated with immorality and questionable sexual behaviour. Through the analysis of historical documents, media artefacts, and scholarly literature, this research examines the multifaceted impact of the Torches of Freedom campaign on American culture. It explores how mass media, through carefully crafted messages and imagery, played a significant and influential role in shaping public perceptions and behaviour. By examining the campaign's relationship with dominant cultural ideologies and its effects on gender roles, the research aims to illuminate the complex interplay between propaganda, cultural values, and social change. The study focuses on advertising, consumerism, and cultural practices in the United States by examining the strategies employed in the Torches of Freedom campaign through the lens of propaganda.

Introduction

Propaganda refers to a series of activities carried out by states, power holders, or interest groups in various fields, such as politics, culture, art, and religion, aimed at promoting themselves, disseminating their ideas, and influencing society. Propaganda has played a significant role in many aspects of life from the past to the present. Historically, paintings, sculptures, reliefs, and written texts have served as tools for propaganda. It has been employed to disseminate various thoughts and ideas, adapting to the political, cultural, and technological developments of society across different

historical periods. The primary objective of propaganda has been to compel individuals within society to accept ideas or beliefs without questioning them, ensuring their long-term effectiveness by embedding them widely within the population.

The development of humanity over time and the increase in population necessitated the formation of societies. As individuals lived in close proximity within these societies, the establishment of cities and states became essential, along with the creation of shared ideas and rules to maintain social order. To ensure the adoption of these ideas and rules by society, political powers or administrations employed propaganda as a means of persuasion, utilising various tools. Technological advancements throughout history further enhanced the dissemination of these ideas. With the invention of the printing press, newspapers, magazines, and books emerged as key tools of propaganda. As technology advanced, radio, television, and other communication mediums further facilitated the spread of propaganda, increasing its frequency and effectiveness. Throughout history, propaganda methods and tools have played a critical role in reshaping ideas related to politics, culture, and religion, often breaking societal taboos and driving social change.

One historical example that illustrates the impact of propaganda on societies and cultures is Edward Bernays' "Torches of Freedom" campaign, conducted on behalf of cigarette manufacturers in the United States during the 1920s. At that time, public smoking by women was culturally stigmatised in the United States. To increase sales and encourage women to smoke, cigarette companies sought Edward Bernays' expertise. Bernays challenged these cultural taboos by initiating advertising and promotional campaigns that depicted smoking as a symbol of women's freedom and empowerment. Utilising traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, and television, his campaign had a profound impact, successfully breaking cultural taboos. As a result, during the 1920s, many women began smoking, leading to a significant increase in cigarette sales.

This study aims to explore how society and culture evolved and how cultural taboos shifted by examining Edward Bernays' "Torches of Freedom" campaign in the United States during the 1920s. The study focuses on the mass media tools Bernays utilised, particularly the advertising and promotional activities he conducted through these channels.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to explore and analyse the multifaceted role of mass media propaganda in shaping cultures. Mass media, including television, radio, newspapers, the internet, and social media, play a significant role in shaping public perceptions and attitudes. Propaganda, defined as the systematic dissemination of biased or misleading information, is typically employed to manipulate public opinion and influence social behaviour and cultural values. It has been used throughout history to shape the opinions of the masses and influence societal behaviour across various fields. In the United States prior to the 20th century, smoking was perceived as inappropriate and immoral behaviour for women, with laws enacted in some states to prohibit women from smoking. Edward Bernays challenged these norms and significantly increased cigarette sales through his Torches of Freedom propaganda campaign, employing advertising and promotional activities to encourage women to smoke.

Importance of Research

This research provides valuable historical insights into early mass media propaganda by examining the *Torches of Freedom* campaign organised by Edward Bernays in the 1920s to promote smoking among women. This historical context sheds light on the evolution of propaganda techniques and their long-term societal impact. Understanding the cultural taboo of women smoking, as exemplified by the *Torches of Freedom* campaign, and analysing how the manipulation of this taboo through

propaganda influenced culture offers critical insights into the psychology behind societal influence and manipulation.

The study underscores the significant role of mass media in shaping public perceptions, desires, and behaviours. The *Torches of Freedom* campaign demonstrates the power of mass media to influence consumer preferences and behaviours, showcasing how effectively media strategies can reshape societal norms and cultural taboos. By examining historical propaganda campaigns such as *Torches of Freedom*, this research provides a framework for understanding how similar techniques can be employed in the modern era to shape public opinion, influence behaviour, and cultivate followers around specific cultures or ideologies.

Moreover, by examining the role of propaganda in shaping consumer preferences, this study highlights the importance of fostering informed decision-making and consumer awareness. The insights gained from this research contribute to a broader understanding of how propaganda operates, enabling individuals to assess media messages and become more conscious consumers critically. As such, the study has implications for understanding the interplay between media, culture, and consumer behaviour in both historical and contemporary contexts.

Universe and Sampling

The population of this research consists of the campaigns designed by Edward Bernays for the Torches of Freedom initiative aimed at promoting smoking among women during the 1920s. The sample for this study includes five notable posters prominently associated with the propaganda efforts led by Bernays. These posters were selected based on their historical significance, visual prominence, strategic messaging, and alignment with the campaign's objectives of influencing societal perceptions and consumer behaviour among women.

Limitations of the Study

This research is focused on the advertising posters created for the *Torches of Freedom* campaign, organised by Edward Bernays in the 1920s, to encourage smoking among women. Due to challenges in accessing all propaganda posters from this campaign, five posters, selected based on their representativeness and prominence, were analysed using the purposive sampling method.

Research Methodology

This study employs semiotic analysis, a qualitative research method, to examine the posters produced as part of Edward Bernays' *Torches of Freedom* campaign in the 1920s.

Propaganda and Its Historical Process

Throughout history, individuals have sought to persuade others or entire societies regarding specific ideas or ideologies. They have attempted to achieve this through the communication tools available during their respective eras. Propaganda efforts, which initially began with speech and writing, have evolved to leverage various means of communication enabled by technological advancements. The influence of propaganda has progressively expanded alongside the development of mass media and the growing number of media users.

In the modern era, the reach of propaganda has extended globally, owing to the advancement of mass communication technologies. The Turkish Language Association defines propaganda as "efforts or purposes aimed at introducing, adopting, and spreading a doctrine, thought, or belief to others through verbal, written, or similar means" (TDK, 2023).

Propaganda, as a concept, has been defined in various ways by scholars. Cantrill described it as a set of deliberate actions or activities undertaken by individuals or groups to influence the thoughts of society or individuals (Cantrill, 1938, cited in Çelik, 2020:45). Jacques Ellul characterised propaganda as a series of activities conducted by an organised group employing psychological tools to ensure the participation of society or individuals in a psychologically integrated and systematically executed action (Topan, 1983, cited in Erlevent, 2012:72).

Jean-Marie Domenach referred to propaganda as an activity designed to guide the ideas and thoughts of society, creating an environment conducive to supporting a specific idea. This environment is shaped by disseminating these ideas through mediums such as radio, cinema, and the press, ultimately influencing public opinion (Domenach, 1969, cited in Karaaslan, 2023:9). Similarly, Edward Bernays defined propaganda as a consistent and continuous effort to shape public opinion or events, with the goal of influencing society's relationship with an initiative, idea, or occurrence (Petekoğlu, 1998, cited in Güllüoğlu, 2009:506).

Examining the historical evolution of propaganda, its primary objectives have been to manage society, shape public opinion, influence behaviours, impose various ideas and thoughts on individuals, and ensure the acceptance of these ideas. These activities often employ persuasion techniques, particularly those targeting human psychology (Bektaş, 2002, cited in Karakuş, 2021:466).

Historically, propaganda has generally been utilised by those in power within the political sphere to maintain their authority. The invention of the printing press marked a significant turning point. The subsequent spread of education and the development of written media, including newspapers, books, and magazines, facilitated the creation of a more democratic environment. This shift transformed propaganda from being exclusively a tool used by clergymen into a widely adopted method employed by political authorities (Öymen, 2002, cited in Karakuş, 2021:467)

Although the history of propaganda activities dates back to ancient times, the methods and conceptual foundations of propaganda were developed in the early 20th century. During the First World War, propaganda activities, particularly those disseminated through mass media, garnered significant attention from scholars. The works of Walter Lippmann in 1922 and Harold Lasswell in 1927 made substantial contributions to the theoretical foundations of propaganda. In addition to these studies, companies and foundations funded by the United States and some European countries supported propaganda activities across various fields (Güngör, 2018, cited in Sorgun, 2023:67).

At the beginning of the 20th century, propaganda techniques were applied to scientific endeavors by Walter Lippmann and Edward Bernays. During the First World War, Edward Bernays and Walter Lippmann were invited by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson to join the Creel Commission, which aimed to gain public support for entering the war on the side of Britain (Aydemir, 2011, cited in Erlevent, 2012:75).

Continuing with different definitions of propaganda, Harold Lasswell defines it as an effort to control thoughts by utilising meaningful symbols or social communication tools such as stories, rumours, news, and images (Lasswell, 1927, cited in Baban, 2005:67). Examining the definitions of propaganda reveals that it aims to impose a particular thought or idea on societies in alignment with specific wishes and desires, without resorting to hard power. As a result, these ideas and thoughts disseminate throughout society and retain their influence for many years.

Jowett and O'Donnell identified propaganda as a phenomenon of the modern era and argued that this period is based on three key elements. First, the rise of nation-states and the need to dominate the minds of people; second, the ease of transmitting propaganda messages to society through new

mass media; and third, the combination of these factors with psychological and behavioural disciplines (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012, cited in Çetinkaya, 2021:10). Propaganda has been actively utilised throughout history. For instance, during World War I and World War II, traditional media tools such as newspapers, radio, cinema, and television were employed for propaganda purposes (Yüksel & Dingin, 2020, cited in Karakuş, 2021:468). Cantril noted that propaganda texts dropped from aeroplanes during World War I was referred to as "paper bullets" and emphasised that these texts were as impactful as actual bullets in the final stages of the war (Cantril, 1938, cited in Çelik, 2022:45).

The earliest examples of propaganda in history are traced back to the Ancient Greek civilisation. During the Ancient Greek period, particularly before 500 BCE, rulers of the time used various propaganda techniques to support wars and to encourage the public to participate in religious ceremonies and adopt certain ideas. During this period, oratory -commonly referred to as "rhetoric"- political debates in city squares and theatre were used as tools to influence public opinion (Bektaş, 2002, cited in Çetinkaya, 2021:11). Propaganda activities were also prevalent during the Roman Empire. For example, during the reign of Nero, an organisation called "Augustales" was established, which gathered young people to propagate and glorify the empire's victories through demagoguery in public squares. This organisation also incited public support for the persecution of Christians during wartime (Clews, 1972, cited in Karaaslan, 2023:12).

The concept of propaganda was first introduced by the Papacy to describe missionary efforts aimed at spreading the Catholic faith and later evolved to be used in various other fields (Ker, 1998:270). The first documented use of the term "propaganda" in history occurred in 1622 when Pope Gregory XV established the *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith). The Catholic Church had previously engaged in wars to promote missionary activities; however, Pope Gregory recognised the ineffectiveness of this approach and established the papal propaganda office to encourage people to willingly adopt these ideas (Pratkanis and Aronson, 2008, cited in Erlevent, 2012:74). The term "propaganda" originates from Latin and is derived from the word *propagate,* which refers to the act of planting cuttings or shoots from one plant into the ground to cultivate a new plant (Brown, 1992, cited in Yılmaz, 1995:4).

Throughout history, propaganda methods have been actively employed, including during the French Revolution, when numerous ideas of that era were promoted to gain public acceptance. During the French Revolution, philosophers such as Rousseau and Montesquieu disseminated concepts like "Freedom and the Acquisition of Rights" among the populace, ensuring these ideas were embraced by society. Their efforts were instrumental in defending the revolution and the ideologies of the revolutionaries (Çetinkaya, 2021:14).

One prominent figure who recognised the power of propaganda at that time was Napoleon. While serving in the army, Napoleon not only managed military operations but also issued directives to the palace and disseminated newspapers within and outside France. Highlighting the influence of the press, Napoleon remarked, "Four enemy newspapers can do more damage than an army of a hundred thousand men" (Okya, 1957, cited in Yılmaz, 1995:11).

The concept of propaganda was primarily utilized for religious purposes prior to World War I. However, during World War I, propaganda activities such as the dissemination of claims that Germans were cutting off the hands of children in Belgium were conducted. These activities proved effective in fostering widespread hatred against Germans within society (Bektaş, 2018, cited in Tekdoğan, 2021:6).

One of the countries that successfully organised propaganda during World War I was the British Empire. In 1917, Britain established the Ministry of Information under the leadership of Lord

Beaverbrook and an enemy propaganda department known as "Crewe House," led by Lord Northcliffe (Cull & Cullbert, 2003, cited in Kurum, 2020:25). These institutions undertook various initiatives to maintain public support for the war, boost societal morale, and create negative perceptions and images of enemy states (Çakı, 2018, cited in Kurum, 2020:25).

Hitler and Lenin both recognised the importance of propaganda and implemented extensive propaganda campaigns. Lenin remarked on propaganda, stating, "The important thing is to create turmoil among society and to make propaganda." Similarly, Hitler emphasised its significance, saying, "It enabled us to hold on to power, and propaganda will give us the opportunity to conquer the world." Hitler further underscored the power of propaganda with the statement: "With a skillfully ambitious propaganda work, it is possible to make people believe that the most miserable life is lived in heaven" (Baban, 2005:71).

During World War II, propaganda was actively employed for military purposes. Russia and Spain established "propaganda divisions" specifically for this purpose (Domenach, 1969, cited in Gümüşboğa, 2017:41). In the early years of the Cold War, the United States, under the leadership of President Harry Truman, conducted a negative propaganda campaign against the Soviet Union. This campaign declared the perception of the "Red Danger of Communism" as the greatest threat to the capitalist system, utilising the mass media of that era to spread the message (Çetinkaya, 2021:20).

The United States is one of the most active countries in the world in conducting propaganda activities. During the Vietnam War, the United States extensively used cinema as a propaganda tool, producing numerous films. These films aimed to garner public support for the war and portray the Soviet Union in a negative light while presenting the United States as the defender of freedom and democracy (Çetinkayara, 2021:21).

The first instance of propaganda conducted over the Internet occurred during the 1998-1999 Kosovo War. Both the Federal Army of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Liberation Army attempted to manipulate online news to serve their own interests and justify their actions during the conflict (Cull, Culbert, Welch, 2003, cited in Kurum, 2022:27).

In general, sources categorise propaganda into three types: white, grey, and black propaganda;

- **White Propaganda**: The source of the propaganda is clear and official. The key aspect of this type of propaganda is to appear reliable. In this method, the most effective and pre-selected information is presented transparently to the target audience in a one-way manner (Karaca & Çakı, 2018:77). For example, during World War II, the BBC, a British press organisation, was considered a reliable source of white propaganda, even by Adolf Hitler. Regarding the BBC, Hitler stated, "It says what it wants, but it tells the truth" (Tortop & Özer, 2013, cited in Karaca & Çakır, 2018:78). White propaganda activities are commonly observed in mediums such as news, radio, movies, music, books, and television (Karaca & Çakı, 2018:77).
- **Black Propaganda**: In stark contrast to white propaganda, black propaganda is the most covert type of propaganda. In black propaganda, the original source is always concealed, and the information is deliberately presented as originating from another source. Its objective is to fabricate an unreal event by distorting the truth with fake or falsified documents (İnce, 2016:30). For example, during the Gulf War, six hundred thousand people fled their homes and moved toward the Turkish border due to black propaganda claims that Saddam Hussein would massacre all people living in Iraq immediately after the U.S. operation began (Kumkale, 2006, cited in Yaman, 2007:42).
- **Gray Propaganda**: This type of propaganda creates uncertainty by circulating within society as gossip, as the source of information is not entirely clear, making it difficult to

determine whether the source is true or false. For example, Lawrence, a British intelligence officer, exaggerated the mistakes made by the Unionists in the Arabian Peninsula using various Arabic dialects. He portrayed the army's power as weak, heightened Arab nationalism, and incited the Arabs to revolt against the Ottoman Empire (Tarhan, 2013, cited in Ünalan, 2016:30). Gray propaganda activities are often secretly supported—financially and morally—by various political parties, media outlets, advertising agencies, corporations, organisations, or countries to achieve

Torches of Freedom

In 1920s America, smoking among women was considered shameful and a bad habit. American cigarette companies approached Edward Bernays to run a campaign to increase their sales. To encourage women to smoke, Bernays decided to design a campaign targeting their most sensitive emotions (Baghli, 2021:2). During this time, he employed various methods and propaganda techniques to promote smoking among women.

In 1928, George Washington Hill, president of the American Tobacco Company, sought to create a campaign to encourage women to smoke, particularly Lucky Strike cigarettes. Hill initially contacted Albert Lasker, a prominent advertising executive. Lasker proposed an advertising strategy that associated cigarettes with weight loss and youth (Baghli, 2021:3). This campaign proved effective, leading to increased cigarette sales. However, Hill wanted women to feel comfortable smoking outdoors (Baghli, 2021:3).

To fulfil Hill's objective, Edward Bernays reframed what was considered taboo at the time into a women's liberation movement (Baghli, 2021:4). This approach allowed the campaign to spread more quickly and effectively within society, particularly among women. Images of women's emancipation were often explicitly depicted in cigarette advertisements. For instance, a Lucky Strike advertisement featuring the headline *"Women are Free, an old prejudice is gone"* aimed to equate women's right to smoke with the significant issue of women's suffrage, thereby minimising public backlash (Belyk, 2020:5).

George Washington Hill, the president of American Tobacco, used the slogan *"A lean way to satisfy hunger"* to market cigarettes to women. Lucky Strike's 1925 campaign, *"Reach for a Lucky instead of Dessert,"* was one of the first media campaigns specifically targeting women. This message proved highly effective, increasing Lucky Strike's market share by over 200%. With Edward Bernays' assistance, American Tobacco made Lucky Strike the best-selling cigarette brand for two consecutive years (Amos & Haglund, 2000:4).

Thanks to its advertising efforts, Lucky Strike's sales skyrocketed from $13.7 billion in 1920 to $43.2 billion in 1925 (Tennant, 1965, cited in Cragi, 1999:8). Bernays employed various strategies to encourage smoking in all areas of life. For example, he attempted to change people's eating habits to promote cigarette consumption. He encouraged hotels to add cigarettes to their dessert menus. By designing alternative menus for hotels, Bernays propagated the idea that *"you can smoke instead of dessert to save yourself from the dangers of overeating"* (Burns, 2007:180). Through this campaign, he fostered the perception that smoking could help people lose weight.

Another goal of the cigarette companies was to enable women to smoke freely in public spaces. They aimed to challenge the prevailing taboo that *"women cannot smoke"* and to increase the smoking rate among women. Edward Bernays devised an effective method to normalise women smoking in public. In 1929, during the Easter Sunday parade in New York City, the Great American Tobacco Company hired several young women to smoke *"freedom torches"* (Lucky Strikes) as they marched down Fifth Avenue to protest inequality. The event was designed to attract significant public

attention. By leveraging the power of the press, Bernays ensured that this idea reached and was embraced by a wider audience.

Edward Bernays remarked, *"I learned how old traditions can be overthrown by a dramatic call spread by the media network"* (Amos & Haglund, 2000:4). In these campaigns, Bernays linked women's smoking to the perception of equality with men in society, promoting the idea that women could achieve the same social status as men by smoking (Baban, 2005:123).

These studies demonstrate how effective propaganda can be when implemented with the right tools. For men, cigarettes evoked images of power, authority, and intelligence, while for women, they came to symbolise glamour, rebellion, and the onset of a new era of modernity and independence. As Brandt points out, smoking carries contradictory meanings: *"Smoking symbolised rebellion against social conventions, but also conformity to the principles of a growing consumer culture"* (Brandt, 1996, cited in Lea, Filho, & Rocha, 2016:56).

Another issue faced by Lucky Strike, one of the cigarette companies, was the colour scheme of its packaging. George Washington Hill felt that Lucky's dark green packaging with bright red accents was perceived as unfashionable by many women. However, Hill was unwilling to change Lucky Strike's highly recognisable colour scheme. To address this, Edward Bernays devised a strategy to make green fashionable. He organised an all-green charity ball, hosted a luncheon with a green theme for New York fashion editors, and arranged a series of performances. These included lectures by an art professor on the use of green in art and a psychologist on the effects of green on the subconscious (Craig, 1999:8). By doing so, Bernays sought to alter public perception and associate the colour green with fashion, thereby mitigating the notion that the cigarette packaging was outdated.

Thanks to these efforts, cigarette consumption among women increased. During that time, the lack of knowledge among women on how to smoke cigarettes became a subject of ridicule for men. Cigarette companies addressed this issue to some extent by featuring images of women smoking in their advertisements. Additionally, they supplied cigarettes to Hollywood stars and worked to have them appear in cigarette advertisements. The Philip Morris cigarette company even organised courses for women titled "How to Smoke" (Amos, 2000:4).

However, as medical research began to reveal that cigarettes caused lung cancer and other diseases, news of these findings started to appear in the press. In response, some brands in the cigarette industry attempted to mitigate the situation by advertising cigarettes as being less harsh and irritating. To further alleviate smokers' health concerns, some companies began producing filtered cigarettes (Craig, 1999:9).

Before starting this campaign, Edward Bernays conducted research on women to understand how to persuade them to smoke. He consulted with psychoanalyst A. Brill, believing it was appropriate to approach the campaign from a psychological perspective (Erlevent, 2012:127). Through these consultations, he discovered that, in the subconscious of women, cigarettes symbolised male power and sexual dominance. To challenge this taboo, Bernays crafted his campaign around the discourse of "Torches of Freedom," framing smoking as an act of defiance against male domination and a symbol of freedom (Erlevent, 2012:127). This narrative and movement proved effective among women, leading many to take up smoking.

Poster-1:

- Text elements: Women and Freedom
- The main character in the visual: Luck Strike Cigarette

- Supporting elements in the visual: emphasising that an ancient prejudice has been removed, and Women were freed from the legal, political, and social chains that bound them.

Poster-1, References:https://omeka.uottawa.ca/jmccutcheon/exhibits/show/american-women-in-tobacco-adve/torches-of-freedom-campaign

Poster 1 features a title emphasising women's liberation, with content that highlights the idea of women achieving freedom. The main headline reads, "Women are Free, Old Prejudice is Eliminated." The poster asserts that women have been liberated legally, politically, and socially from the chains that once bound them. Additionally, the statement, "When we removed the harmful substances in tobacco, we also removed the prejudices against smoking," is included. The imagery of a hand holding broken chains reinforces the idea of women being freed from their restrictions, which is prominently conveyed in the foreground.

In the image, a whip is depicted in the man's hand, symbolising the bullying and oppression of women. The accompanying text highlights the superior quality of Lucky Strike cigarettes. It references past prejudices against all cigarettes, which were criticised for being produced without the aid of modern science. However, the advertisement asserts that these criticisms and prejudices no longer apply. Lucky Strike is described as the best cigarette available, made from carefully selected tobacco. It is further emphasised that the product does not irritate the throat or cause coughing. Produced using modern systems, Lucky Strike is promoted as being free from harmful and irritating substances.

In general, Poster 1 initially highlights women's freedom and the significant role cigarettes played in achieving this freedom. It then emphasises the high quality and harmless nature of the cigarettes. The inclusion of a statue depicting a holy woman holding a baby in her arms is undoubtedly part of the perception management effort. It conveys the notion that a woman smoking will not interfere with her sacred role as a mother.

The first title in Poster-2 is written in red to draw attention. The poster features a black-coloured female figure followed by an image of a thinner, healthier, happier, and more vibrant woman. The first title reads, "Is this you five years from now?" followed by the statement, "When you want to indulge yourself in overeating, buy Lucky Strike cigarettes instead," with the word *Lucky* underlined

in this sentence. The positive connotation is reinforced by emphasising the word *lucky*. The poster conveys the message that cigarettes can prevent weight gain and help you appear thinner and more attractive.

Poster-2:

- Text elements: Women,
- Main character in the visual: Luck Strike Cigarette
- Supporting elements in the visual: emphasising health and good looks, weight loss

Poster-2, References: https://prettysweet.com/lucky-strike-ads-smoking-diet/

The text within the poster includes sentences promoting and praising the cigarette, such as "Lucky Strike cigarettes are the best cigarettes you can smoke and are made from the finest tobacco" and "a special and secret tobacco blend is crafted." It is stated that the tobacco used in cigarette production is roasted, making it healthier. Additionally, the claim is made that "20,679 doctors have stated that Lucky Strike cigarettes irritate the throat less than other cigarettes," attempting to create the perception that smoking these cigarettes does not negatively impact health. The slogan emphasises: "Roasted cigarettes protect your throat—against irritation, against coughing."

Poster-3:

- Text elements: Women,
- The main character in the visual: Luck Strike Cigarette

- Supporting elements in the visual: emphasising that smoking is better than sweets and cigarettes increased appetite

Poster-3, References: https://omeka.uottawa.ca/jmccutcheon/items/show/562

The first headline on Poster-3, *"I smoke Lucky Strike cigarettes instead of eating sweets,"* emphasises weight loss, suggesting that smoking cigarettes instead of consuming sweets can help women lose weight. The poster features a prominent image of Lady Grace Drummond, a famous woman of the time and the first and only woman to fly across the Atlantic to Europe in a Graf airship. To highlight this accomplishment, a large image of the airship is prominently displayed at the top of the poster.

In the poster, Lady Grace Drummond states: *"The fact that we were not allowed to smoke until we got off the Graf airship did nothing but increase my appetite for cigarettes. How good the first one tasted. I am really very fond of cigarettes. Roasted tobacco is delicious, and instead of eating sweets, I smoke Lucky Strike, as many men have been doing for many years. As women, it's time for us to correct our body lines by smoking cigarettes."*

She expresses her fondness for Lucky Strike cigarettes and emphasises that smoking can serve as an alternative to dessert for maintaining a slimmer figure. The poster portrays an influential and strong female figure, emphasising her preference for cigarettes and the association of smoking with strength and empowerment.

Overall, the slogans featured in the posters include straightforward expressions such as *"It's toasted, no throat irritation, no cough."*

Poster-4:

- Text elements: Doctor
- Main character in the visual: Luck Strike Cigarette
- Supporting elements in the visual: emphasising that smoking does not harm health through the doctor

Poster-4, References:https://tobacco-img.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/cigarettes/doctors-smoking/lucky_20679.jpg

Poster 4 features a picture of a happy, smiling doctor set against a red background to draw attention. The poster prominently displays a statement in capital letters: *"20,679 doctors say that Lucky Strike cigarettes are less irritating than other cigarettes,"* written in yellow and white for emphasis. A picture of a cigarette pack held by the smiling doctor is included to build trust and reinforce the message that cigarettes are harmless and do not pose risks to human health. The slogan used on the poster is: *"Roasted cigarette: your throat protection, against irritation, against coughing."*

Poster-:

- Text elements: Celebrity
- The main character in the visual: Luck Strike Cigarette
- Supporting elements in the visual: Emphasizing through a famous singer that smoking does not harm the throat

Poster-5,
References:https://omeka.uottawa.ca/jmccutcheon/files/original/6c0f6445697f9e3c35d5661af42
9d222.jpg

Poster 5 features a picture of Carole Lombard, a famous actress of the time. In this poster, not only the physical attributes of women but also their facial expressions are designed to appeal to the public. Women are depicted as calm and relaxed, with the emphasis that Lucky Strike cigarettes provide relaxation and stress relief.

The title of the poster reads, *"Singing coach advises her to smoke a light cigarette,"* conveying the message that smoking does not harm the voice. The image of Carole Lombard confidently and casually holding a cigarette reinforces the idea that women can exude confidence and relaxation through smoking.

In the poster, Carole Lombard explains why she smokes a lighter cigarette. She states: *"I recently had to sing in a movie, and I was considering quitting smoking. However, my voice teacher told*

me I didn't need to quit smoking; I could simply switch to a lighter cigarette. I soon realised that I could smoke as many Lucky Strikes as I wanted without the slightest throat irritation, even when I was singing and acting for 12 hours a day."

This statement is used to convey that smoking is not harmful and to build trust by suggesting that voice or music teachers endorse smoking lighter cigarettes as harmless. Additionally, the actress claims that despite long hours of acting and singing, her throat remained unaffected, and her performance was not impacted. The poster emphasises the message that smoking does not harm the throat, using the credibility of a famous actress to reinforce this idea. It even features the slogan, *"Light cigarettes, toasted tobacco are good for your throat."*

Evaluation of Findings

The analysis of the five posters reveals recurring elements and consistent themes that reflect the strategic messaging of the "Torches of Freedom" campaign. These shared characteristics and emphasised themes illustrate the deliberate use of propaganda techniques designed to influence women and reshape societal attitudes toward smoking.

Use of Trusted Assertions

The posters frequently incorporate endorsements from reputable figures or groups to lend credibility to the campaign's messaging. For instance, Poster 4 employs the image of a smiling doctor to validate claims that Lucky Strike cigarettes are less irritating, leveraging the perceived authority of the medical profession. Similarly, Poster-5 capitalizes on the celebrity status of Carole Lombard to suggest that smoking is not only harmless but also sophisticated and desirable.

Emphasis on Health and Harmlessness

Health-related assurances are a central component of the campaign. Nearly all posters highlight the purported safety of Lucky Strike cigarettes, with recurring statements such as "no throat irritation, no cough" (Poster-3) and claims of healthier tobacco due to roasting methods (Poster-2). These assertions aim to mitigate concerns about the health risks associated with smoking and position the product as a safe choice.

Visual Appeal and Symbolism

The posters employ visually striking elements, including bold colour schemes, prominent text, and symbolic imagery, to captivate the audience. For example, Poster-1 features a hand holding broken chains to visually convey themes of freedom, while Poster-4 uses a vibrant red background to draw attention to the doctor's endorsement. Such visual strategies enhance the effectiveness of the campaign's messaging.

Targeting Women's Aspirations

The posters are tailored to appeal to women's aspirations for beauty, health, and modernity. Posters 2 and -3 link smoking to weight management, presenting it as an alternative to sweets and a means of achieving a slimmer, more attractive figure. This messaging reflects societal pressures on women to conform to specific beauty ideals while positioning smoking as a tool for self-improvement.

Positive Connotations with Modernity and Science

The campaign frequently associates smoking with progress and scientific advancement. For example, Poster-4 highlights the involvement of "20,679 doctors" to suggest scientific validation of the product's safety, while Poster-2 emphasizes the use of advanced roasting techniques to align Lucky Strike cigarettes with modern production standards. These references to science and innovation aim to frame smoking as a contemporary and rational choice.

The posters consistently employ themes of freedom, health, and modernity while leveraging endorsements and visual strategies to reinforce their messages. By appealing to women's aspirations and aligning smoking with progress and empowerment, the "Torches of Freedom" campaign exemplifies the strategic use of propaganda to influence cultural norms and consumer behaviour.

Conclusion

Propaganda has been used throughout history to influence societies—religiously, politically, and culturally—by persuading people to adopt new ideas and ensuring their acceptance. Edward Bernays is one of the most prominent figures in the active use of propaganda.

At the beginning of the twentieth century in America, few could have envisioned how a cultural taboo, such as women smoking, could be transformed into a socially acceptable and desirable practice through strategic marketing and propaganda. However, Edward Bernays, through his research, use of psychological methods, and public propaganda campaigns, succeeded in framing women's smoking as a "freedom movement."

In his research, Edward Bernays discovered that men symbolised smoking as a representation of authority and dominance, which led women to aspire to these characteristics as well. Leveraging women's desire for equality with men, he launched women's smoking as a movement tied to feminism and freedom. Edward Bernays structured his propaganda efforts to break societal and cultural taboos by promoting the idea of women smoking safely in outdoor spaces. The propaganda campaign successfully convinced women to smoke, as it appealed to their desire to challenge traditional gender stereotypes imposed by men and to assert equal rights.

Through Edward Bernays' campaign, cigarettes, which in the 19th century were predominantly associated with men and symbolised masculinity, became redefined in the 20th century as a symbol of women's liberation. Many young girls and women began smoking during this period. Although research highlighting the health hazards of smoking was made available to the public, it had limited impact. The propaganda was so effective that women continued to smoke, disregarding the harm it caused to their bodies. Cigarette companies further reinforced this behaviour by using various advertisements to convince women that cigarettes were not harmful and even promoted them as a means to lose weight.

Edward Bernay's propaganda campaign in the United States significantly contributed to breaking numerous cultural taboos and increasing cigarette sales by aligning with the women's liberation movement. This campaign serves as a compelling demonstration of the effectiveness and power of propaganda.

The case of Edward Bernays' cigarette campaign exemplifies the dual-edged nature of propaganda. While it can be a powerful tool for driving societal change, it also raises ethical questions about its capacity to manipulate public behaviour, often at the expense of individual well-being. Future research could explore how modern-day propaganda, particularly through digital platforms, continues to influence societal norms, with implications for public health and social ethics.

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The Yemeni Civil War: Territorial Partition as the Path to Peace

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
    	The Yemeni Civil War is a conflict that bears crucial regional significance due to its destabilising effect on the Middle East, with the country also being home to one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The conflict is characterised by a complex web of regional rivalries, sectarian tensions, and international interventions. This research paper offers a comprehensive assessment of the conflict by outlining its background, key actors and main conflict drivers, and hence proposes a theoretically, historically and contextually informed strategy for resolution- the peaceful territorial partition of Yemen into the historical entities of North Yemen and South Yemen. The paper outlines short-term, medium-term and long-term priorities that the ideal territorial partition plan would focus on, including and accounting for relevant primary, secondary and tertiary actors. The paper aims to showcase that through a nuanced understanding of Yemen's demographic dynamics and history, a roadmap to ending the conflict focused on territorial partition can be charted out in collaboration with regional actors and the international community, hence leading to stable Yemens that can heal from the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the conflict.

Introduction

The Yemeni Civil War is a conflict characterised by religious sectarian tensions, holding crucial regional significance due to its role in perpetuating rivalries in the Middle East. Although direct hostilities between the main warring parties, the internationally recognised Yemeni government (Presidential Leadership Council) and the Houthi movement (Supreme Political Council) have reduced, a catastrophic humanitarian crisis is still ravaging the country, and a severe lack of food and supplies for basic survival is affecting at least 18.2 million people, half of which are children (UNICEF, 2024).

There have been multiple attempts at peace, but none of these measures have succeeded in stopping the fighting or alleviating the plight of civilians (Council on Foreign Relations, 2024). With peace nowhere in sight and a humanitarian crisis that continues to worsen, the urgency to find a viable solution to the conflict grows by the day, particularly considering Yemen's geostrategic significance as a crossroads of global trade routes, specifically the Red Sea, the Bab Al Mandab Strait and the Gulf of Aden.

This paper seeks to assess the Yemeni Civil War by understanding its roots, delving into key actors and their stakes in the conflict, and identifying the main drivers of the conflict. At the heart of this

paper lies a proposed solution to the Yemeni Civil War supported by a theoretical framework- the partition of Yemen to the pre-1990 borders of North and South Yemen, with necessary adjustments to account for large-scale community displacement as well as approximately equal distribution of oil reserves. The short-term, medium-term, and long-term measures required to successfully undertake and establish this partition will be explored, and any potential challenges and obstacles will be identified.

Contextualising the Conflict

1) Background

The roots of the Yemeni Civil War stretch back decades, being based on the unification of North and South Yemen in 1990, two independent nations, as seen in Figure 1. The two former states had contrasting political systems, with North Yemen establishing a republic government inspired by Nasserism- the ideology espoused by former Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser- while South Yemen was the only vocally communist nation in the Middle East at the time. Both countries dealt with unstable domestic political environments, but for the most part, reflected the market economy versus socialist economy dynamics that characterised the Cold War (Wenner & Burrowes, 2024).
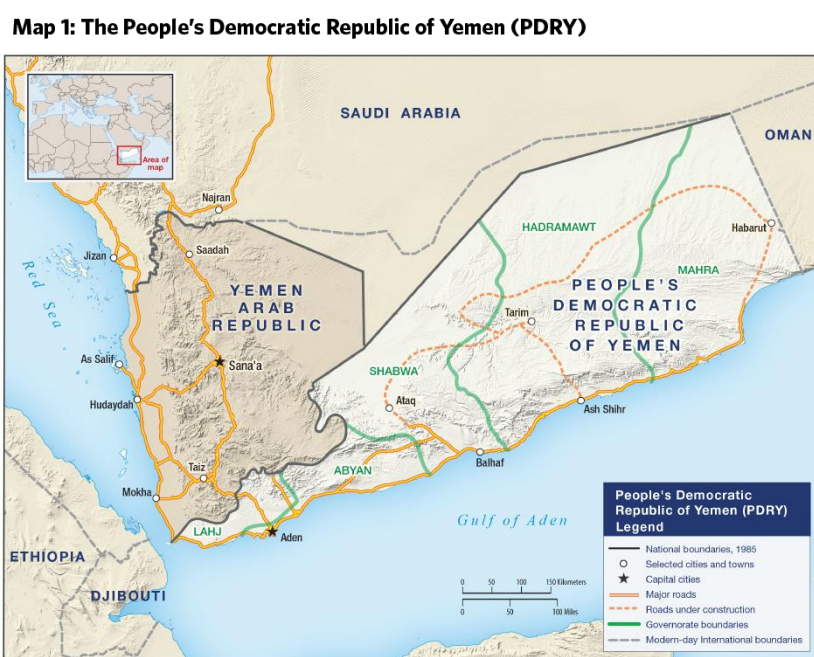
Figure 1: North Yemen (Yemen Arab Republic) and South Yemen (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) prior to unification in 1990 (Nagi, 2022)

These political differences also led to border disputes between the two Yemens in the 1970s, exacerbated by the internal divisions of both nations and oil discovery on the border (Wenner & Burrowes, 2024). The discovery of oil, combined with the collapse of the Soviet Union and communist regimes globally, incentivised North Yemen and South Yemen to consider unification to share the profits of oil rather than engage in costly conflict. This led to the merger of the two nations on May 22, 1990, with the terms calling for a multiparty democratic system and the declaration of North Yemen's Sanaa as the political capital and South Yemen's Aden as the economic capital (Wenner & Burrowes, 2024)

The main conflict began in September 2014 when Houthi forces took over Sanaa, which was followed by a rapid takeover of the government. In 2015, the Houthi-led Supreme Revolutionary Committee declared a general mobilisation to overthrow then-president Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi and expand into southern provinces. Allied with the military forces who were loyal to the former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh, the successful Houthi offensive led to Hadi's resignation (Council on Foreign Relations, 2024).

A Saudi-led coalition intervened in 2015 to support the internationally recognised government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, using economic isolation tactics such as blockades as well as direct force through air strikes. It included countries like the UAE, Senegal, Sudan, Bahrain and temporarily Morocco, Qatar and the USA through the military contractor Academi/Blackwater, now acting as mercenaries in the conflict (Issa, 2022). This intervention was triggered by fears of Iranian influence in Yemen through support for the Houthi rebels, hence setting up Yemen as a proxy conflict between Saudi Arabia and its allies against Iran, as well as along the greater Shia-Sunni religious divide (Council on Foreign Relations, 2024).

2) Humanitarian impact

Yemeni civilians have been subject to high food prices, import restrictions and fuel shortages. These were worsened dramatically by two cyclones in 2015, locust swarms in 2016, a cholera outbreak in 2017, the COVID-19 pandemic and skyrocketing global food prices as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Between 18.5 and 21 million people in Yemen need humanitarian aid, with 4.5 million people being internally displaced and approximately 17 million people struggling with hunger (World Food Program USA, 2024). Additionally, the United Nations has yet to officially declare the situation in Yemen as a famine despite the fact that it bears all the markers of one (Sarkar et al., 2022). The blockades imposed by the Saudi-led coalition, which have resulted in restrictions on the flow of humanitarian aid and essential goods, have played a significant role in worsening the current catastrophe (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

3) Key actors

Primary Actors:

A. Houthi movement (Ansar Allah)

The Houthi movement, officially known as Ansar Allah or Supporters of God, was named in honour of a religious leader from the Houthi clan and was established in the late 1980s as a Zaydi Shia revivalist movement in North Yemen. The Zaydi Shias are a Muslim minority in Yemen but bear a majority presence in most parts of former North Yemen. Claiming their Supreme Political Council headed by Mahdi al-Mashat to be the legitimate government of Yemen, the Houthis essentially seek greater autonomy and political representation in the country, advocating against foreign interference in Yemeni affairs and opting for direct military force as a means of achieving their goal (Robinson, 2023).

B. Internationally recognised Yemeni government

The internationally recognised Yemeni government mainly refers to the Hadi administration and its successors. Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi was sworn into a two-year presidency in 2012, wherein he ran unopposed, leading to criticisms of his election being undemocratic and his power being illegitimate (Haedelt et al., 2021). His mandate was extended by a year, citing security challenges because of the Houthis as well as delays in Yemen's democratic transition. Hadi stayed in power- albeit with

questionable authority- until 2022, when he finally resigned and transferred the role of president to Rashad al-Alimi, the former minister of interior (Haedelt et al., 2021).

Their main goals are essentially to regain control of the country, reestablish their domestic legitimacy, and maintain the status quo in terms of majority Sunni Muslim influence (Robinson, 2023). Figure 2 below shows the territorial control dynamics of the Yemeni Civil War, also including some secondary and tertiary actors that will be detailed in further sections.
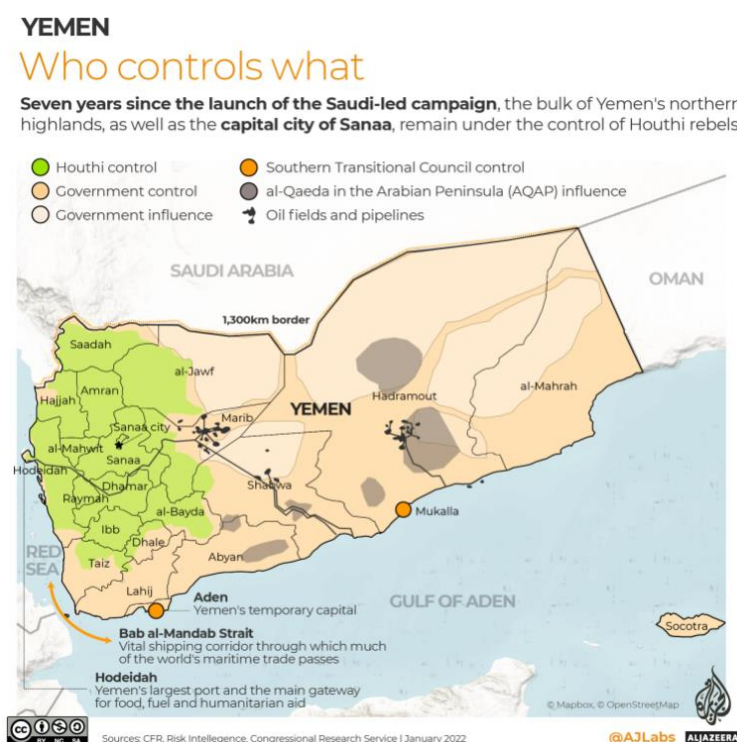

Figure 2: Yemen territorial control map (Haddad, 2022)

Secondary Actors:

A. Southern Transitional Council

Established in 2017, the Southern Transitional Council started as a secessionist organisation in South Yemen, seeking the revival of South Yemen as an independent state but with a secular, non-theocratic government. It opposes the Houthis and briefly controls territory in Yemen on its own, but in 2022, it combined forces with the internationally recognised Yemeni government to promote a united front against the military activities of the Houthis. It still has main control over the port city of Aden as well as the city of Mukalla (ACLED, 2024b).

B. Saudi Arabia-Led Coalition

Saudi Arabia perceives the Houthi rebellion as a threat to its national security, fearing Iranian influence in its backyard and hence solidifying Yemen's role as a proxy conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia (Robinson, 2023). The coalition aims to restore the Yemeni government and contain Iranian influence in the region. The Saudi-led coalition has conducted airstrikes against Houthi

targets and provided military support to Yemeni government forces (ACLED, 2024a). It also enforces a naval blockade to prevent arms shipments to the Houthis, which has contributed to the famine and worsened the country's humanitarian crisis. The effort in 2015 was initially named Operation Decisive Storm and was named that for three weeks until it was renamed Operation Restoring Hope (ACLED, 2024a).

The coalition has internal struggles, ranging from the suspension of Qatar in 2017 in the wake of its diplomatic crisis with Saudi Arabia and the UAE to periodically heightened tensions between Saudi Arabia and the UAE. This was particularly considered the UAE's military support of the STC even before its integration with the internationally recognised Yemeni government (ACLED, 2024a).

   C. Iran

Iran is the main backer of the Houthi movement, being the only major country to recognise the Houthi's Supreme Political Council as the government of Yemen. They have provided the Houthis with direct military support, hence feeding into the Saudi-led perception of the Houthis as an Iranian proxy seeking Shia Muslim dominance in the Middle East (Robinson, 2023). However, it is worth noting that although Iran has been vocal about their political support of the Houthis, they deny sending them military aid (Brouillette, 2022), although adequate evidence exists to prove the same, such as the USA's seizure of Iranian weapons en route to the Houthis (Lee, 2024). Regardless, it is difficult to assess the exact degree of influence that Iran has over the Houthis or in Yemen in general.

Tertiary Actors:

   A. Ansar al Sharia (AQAP- Al Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula)

   B. Islamic State- Yemen Province (ISIL-YP)

   C. United States of America

4) Main drivers

   A. Political instability- Yemen has long grappled with political instability, exacerbated by tribal, ethnic and religious rivalries, economic challenges, and weak governance.

   B. Sectarian tensions- The conflict has taken on sectarian dimensions, with the Houthi rebels, belonging to the Zaydi Shia sect, pitted against the Sunni-majority government and its Saudi-backed coalition.

   C. Regional power struggles- The involvement of regional powers, particularly Saudi Arabia and Iran, has fueled the conflict, reflecting broader geopolitical tensions in the Middle East

   D. Humanitarian catastrophe- The war has led to one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with millions facing food insecurity, displacement, and damage to critical infrastructure, which has dramatically reduced access to healthcare and clean water.

Partition as a Solution- Theoretical Framework and Core Justifications

So far, peace negotiations have made little to no progress in enacting ground-level change, with the terms of peace agreements such as the 2018 Stockholm Agreement seeing little success in the actual implementation of their provisions. Additionally, it can be argued that the friction between regional actors has worsened the conflict and hampered peace progress, partly due to Yemen's position as a

Saudi-Iran proxy conflict and partly due to the fact that Saudi Arabia's attempts at mediating the conflict were bound to be unsuccessful due to evident bias (Robinson, 2023).

The failure of peace negotiations and the disastrous ramifications of military activities evidently call for a change in approach and the consideration of a potentially more drastic solution. Upon closer inspection of Figures 1 and 2 (combined side by side below into Figure 3 for ease of access), it can be observed that the areas majorly controlled by the Houthis and those controlled by the internationally recognised Yemeni government closely resemble the territories that once used to be North Yemen and South Yemen.
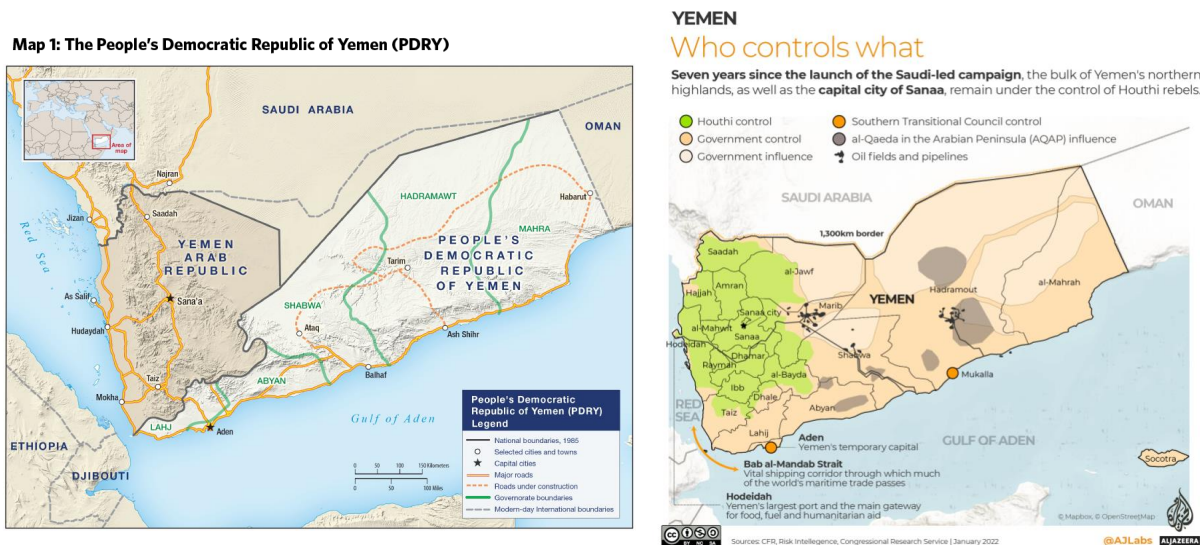

Figure 3: Figure 1 and Figure 2 Side by Side

By no means is this a coincidence- the information provided thus far has shown that the distribution of religious sects across Yemen is such that Shia Muslim communities are prevalent in the North, whereas Sunni Muslim communities are prevalent in the larger South. Given the current status of the conflict and the fact that there is not adequate common ground between the main warring parties, it is highly unlikely that typical diplomacy would lend a significant solution, only stalling a few Houthi attacks at best and potentially expanding the internationally recognised government's authority into a few more areas.

Considering the factors at hand, it may be time to consider a drastic yet potentially highly effective solution to the problem- the partition of Yemen back to North and South Yemen, adhering to some semblance of the pre-1990 borders accounting for demographic shifts in some areas along the old border, as well as accounting for an attempted equal distribution of oil resources in the region. Yemen would not be a stranger to this concept- the existence of former North and South Yemen serves as historical precedent, and the very presence of the STC, combined with its support from the UAE, showcases the desire amongst some parts of the Yemeni populace to return to this state of being.

Partition has been used as a tool for conflict resolution in significant cases- the most popular being the partition of 1947 that carved a new Muslim nation out of India, now known as Pakistan. While it is no secret that the 1947 partition resulted in a loss of lives on both sides, as well as stark questions of identity, the result in the modern day is two independent nations whose populace and leadership

would scorn the idea of ever being unified again. The fact that partition had to be resorted to is considered, especially in South Asia, as a failure of communities to live in mutual respect for one another, let alone harmony (Manchanda, 2008).

However, this is not to say that peaceful partitions have not taken place- some scholars cite the separation of the Czech Republic from Slovakia. Regardless of these cases, however, partition as a tool for conflict resolution can be considered an option that is eyed warily by the international community (Manchanda, 2008). Additionally, inconsiderate partitions, such as those of Palestine, Ireland, and Cyprus, have left these places in a conflict that continues to this day. While this may deter policymakers from considering partition as a tool, it is worth noting that in these cases, the partitions were largely imposed with little to no consideration for the communities who would be impacted by it (Manchanda, 2008). It is evident that unification has not served Yemen well- leaders from the North and the South had been unable to integrate themselves sufficiently to create a strong state apparatus, resulting in a weak, corrupt government and a forced democracy that the country's new, larger populace was not ready for or entirely accepting of (Naqvi, 2019).

It has been argued that partitioning a war-torn multi-ethnic state can save more lives than attempting to restore it (Manchanda, 2008)- as seen so far in the case of Yemen, no substantial peace progress has been made, and while a gradual reduction in hostilities spells an improvement, it only reflects a stalemate, not a resolution. A stalemate does give breathing room to civilians from the fear of being bombed or attacked, but it does not necessarily translate to fewer people going hungry. The theory of partition hence suggests that if the main warring groups are given autonomy over a certain amount of territory, then the security dilemma is resolved, and the main militarised part of the conflict ends (Rose et al., 2003).

The following proposal for a partition of Yemen will begin with short-term priorities immediately upon the signing of a peaceful partition agreement between the Houthis and the internationally recognised Yemeni government- such an agreement would likely be accepted by both parties if it were to create a border that gives each side a portion of the oil resources in the area. Additionally, it is crucial that the agreement be mediated either by international organisations or by countries considered neutral parties to the conflict by the main warring actors themselves with only a humanitarian interest. This would completely rule out any mediation by Saudi Arabia or other regional actors with an active stake in the conflict, although they do bear the right to be observers in the mediation and peace agreement drafting processes if they wish to do so.

Furthermore, the agreement would use the official names of former North and South Yemen- unless any party favours a name change for stronger distinction or in order to revamp regional identity, in which case such a desire ought to be respected and upheld. The agreement would also ideally stipulate confidence and security-building measures that both parties could follow, such as prisoner exchanges, and pave the way for the establishment of direct lines of communication between the two new nations.

Short-term Priorities

Priorities concerning the first 6 months after a peaceful partition agreement should be mainly minimalist in nature. This period would be extremely delicate for a new North Yemen and South Yemen- they would emerge from the agreement as fragile states that need significant international and regional support to stay afloat in the initial period.

First and foremost, international organisations need to involve themselves in the new Yemens to ensure the safe flow of humanitarian aid. The Saudi-led coalition's blockade needs to be lifted completely to allow for the unfettered flow of emergency humanitarian aid into the region, with a

focus on food supplies, clean water, and medical resources, particularly those concerning emergency care and disease control. Both Yemens would also need assistance with their fuel shortages and misallocations. Houthi forces have made up to US$1.14 billion from fuel and oil distribution on the black market, and they are also using imported fuel for military purposes. Greater oversight into this aspect would allow for more careful allocation of fuel usage, focusing on its importance in pumping clean water, running hospital equipment, and safely storing vaccines (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

AQAP and ISIL-YP would jump at an opportunity to seize power from either party, but it is crucial that the international community, including regional actors, be involved in assessing these threats and monitoring their movements, considering that newly independent North Yemen and South Yemen would not have the resources or capability to do so on their own at this stage. The current internationally recognised Yemeni government would form an interim government in the South, while the Houthis would form an interim government in the North. Both these governments would lack a solid economic foundation- hence the importance of international economic assistance, particularly from organisations such as the World Bank, so as to prevent both governments from resorting to overtaxing their poor and hungry populations (Johnsen, 2023).

At this stage, there ought to be the establishment of a joint border committee, including government representatives from both countries with knowledge or experience regarding territorial conflict, border control, and natural resource distribution along the border, with potential representatives from neutral countries or international organisations acting as observers. However, the actual control of the border in the short term ought to be maintained and observed by UN peacekeeping patrol forces, whose sole responsibility will be to maintain security in this particular aspect and ensure that the details of the peace agreement are being followed.

Medium-term Priorities

The medium-term refers to a period of approximately 2-5 years from the date of partition. During this period, it would be beneficial for North Yemen and South Yemen themselves to step up and create joint forces to deal with threats such as Al-Qaeda and ISIL-YP, considering that both sides would be against them. Considering that they are likely to still be struggling states at this stage, they will continue to require international assistance in this regard, but the gradual shift in control would enhance the sovereignty of the respective Yemens.

International actors, particularly the Western world, must restrain themselves from forcing countries to adopt democratic forms of governance if they want to prevent the country from spiralling into chaos again. After the short-term interim, both countries must adopt respective forms of governance that are suitable for their stability and economic progress- the North would most likely end up as a Muslim theocracy, while the South would attempt a secular democracy of their own will, although majority Sunni influence is unlikely to fade. During this stage, it would be important for North Yemen and South Yemen's joint border committee to revisit their border and identify solutions to any contested areas of control, as well as evaluate the positioning of smaller communities along the border and their protection. Assuming that there is unlikely to be an escalation of any violent clashes at the border, the UN peacekeeping patrol forces ought to consider a phased withdrawal from the region, with the timeline depending on assessments of the North and South Yemens' state capabilities.

Long-term Priorities

In the long term, both North Yemen and South Yemen must focus on building themselves up as independent states, gradually decreasing their reliance on international assistance. The countries must develop models for developing national technical expertise and financial stability, and ideally,

they ought to move from focusing solely on survival to focusing on sustainable development and prosperity, emphasising investments in education, healthcare, agriculture, and other key sectors. At this point, a joint border committee would ideally not be necessary but should not be disbanded without adequate evaluations of the degree of border tension between the two countries.

Potential Challenges and Obstacles

A major potential challenge would be border discontent- it is possible that one side, or both, could disapprove of the border arrangements and seek more land or oil reserves, hence prompting border skirmishes or territorial occupation similar to the Pakistani occupation of a section of Kashmir in India now known as Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) and the Chinese occupation of a part of Kashmir known as Aksai Chin. This threat hence amplifies the importance of rigorous border patrol assisted by international troops, preferably UN peacekeeping forces or those provided by a country capable of acting as a neutral party.

It is possible that one nation, or both, could struggle to stay afloat as independent, functioning states- a challenge that is expected in the short and medium term, but with the right international economic support and a stable government, ought to be more or less mitigated in the long term. South Yemen would likely receive support from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and their allies, while North Yemen would receive support from Iran. This would likely still brew tensions between the Saudi bloc and Iran as Saudi Arabia would perceive North Yemen as an Iran-controlled state (Harb, 2019). Resolving this perception would be difficult; hence, it should only be observed by the international community with caution to ensure that those tensions do not escalate into armed conflict.

Conclusion

Historical precedents show that partition is never easy, but it is important to remember that in Yemen's specific case, the idea of North Yemen and South Yemen isn't novel. Furthermore, Yemen has only been a unified country since 1990. These facts make Yemen drastically different from other popular cases of partition.

Although such a measure would be undoubtedly challenging to implement and would come with a myriad of complexities, a peaceful partition of the country serves as a pragmatic and realistic solution given the distribution of territory between the main warring parties at the current stage, as well as the sectarian demographics of the region. Through the careful and thought-out involvement of regional and international actors, North Yemen and South Yemen can develop into self-sufficient states with minimal internal conflict, hence contributing to the overall stabilisation of the Middle East.

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Transnational Government: A Faster Path to Developing Underdeveloped Nations

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces the concept of transnational government as a potential solution for underdeveloped states to develop themselves and overcome issues such as systemic corruption, maladministration, and dysfunctionality. The introduction defines the central problem and discusses the main idea. Subsequently, theories of development and the problems of accommodating them into the underdeveloped states will be reviewed. The article then presents a non-political inspirational model as a foundation for the discussion. This is followed by an examination of the proposed model's theoretical underpinnings and its implementation. Finally, the article addresses the significant challenges and obstacles associated with the proposed model.

Introduction

Like many other ambiguous sociopolitical concepts, there is no universally accepted definition for the term "underdeveloped state". Thus, states/societies may differ from each other in underdevelopment criteria and so all may not fit into the context of the present article. Hence, I refrain from labelling any specific country as "underdeveloped," as the characteristics of underdevelopment can vary in dimension, scale, and degree. In general, this text defines underdevelopment as a condition in which countries endure persistent political and economic instability, undermining their legitimacy and authority. Factors such as corruption, weak institutions, human rights violations, and brain drain contribute to a vulnerability to coups and subversions, further exacerbating underdevelopment in these states.

The article argues that leaders and politicians in underdeveloped states have been largely unsuccessful in fostering development due to various factors. These include imperialistic policies, traditional and sociocultural barriers, corruption, maladministration, disunity among elites, and prioritising other interests [personal, familial, tribal, ethnic, organisational, and ideological] over national interests. Development theories may be unsuitable for such local contexts due to the complex social structures of these countries; ingrained cultural beliefs, practices, and resistance to change often hinder the successful implementation of development strategies.

The present article is of the opinion that, since underdeveloped states require a challenging and tiresome long route to reach the level of development witnessed in today's developed states, they should explore a shorter and different route for development. Drawing inspiration from a non-political field - football coaching - the article suggests that just as proper training can lead a weak

football team to victory, a similar approach could be applied to "governance" in underdeveloped states. The concept is in the same manner that a foreign football coach takes over a weak team from another country and prepares it for competition or victory; underdeveloped states should employ qualified foreign administrators to execute policies and focus on developmental plans aimed at improving the living standards of their citizens. This article, however, recognises the theoretical and practical challenges that an underdeveloped state may face in implementing this model, yet it does not rule out the possibility of transnational government.

Development: Theories and Their Setbacks

There are some major theories for development which have failed to adequately address the challenges faced by underdeveloped states. These theories, along with their limitations, are briefly discussed below.

Modernisation

It believes that economic wealth, which accompanies industrialisation, results in a growing middle class that begins to participate more in politics and make demands on government. The resulting changes in mass political behaviour make the emergence and survival of democratic governments more likely (Sokhey, 2011, p. 82). Modernisation leads to progressivism, which believes that advancements in science, technology, economic development and social organisation are vital to the improvement of the human condition (Harold, 2003, p. 157). However, modernisation has its own setbacks. Huntington (1968), for example, has challenged the modernisation process, stating that "economic development and the rapid social changes accompanying it are as likely to result in the political decay of societies as in their development. Instability is most likely to occur in the early stages of modernisation" (Fukuyama, 2006, p. xiii). Besides, since most underdeveloped societies are religious or traditional, they hardly welcome modernisation because, as it is believed, the values and social institutions that result from modernisation can be in conflict with religious or traditional values. In modernisation, knowledge, ideas, and beliefs cannot be considered absolute. Thus, a parochial society may not tolerate the presence of inclusive institutions or any belief which can lead to the emergence of democratic institutions. Most of the underdeveloped states are either conservative or reactionary. These states do not welcome new changes because new changes may bring about new institutions. In some cases, traditional rulers or governing elites may appear as pro-development figures, but when it comes to practice, they become reluctant, mainly because modernisation can undermine the centuries-old traditions and the traditional elites' hold of power.

System-Building

Huntington argues that political institutionalisation is the key to stability. He notes that the first issue for the Third World societies is the formation of national identity. The second priority is system building. Since there is widespread corruption in Third World societies, a system is required to manage the problems. The third is political participation. Political participation before the formation of an institutionalised state causes chaos (1968). Yet, this theory cannot be put into practice simply in every underdeveloped society. Some states have not been successful in the formation of their national identity. In other states, the first phase [national identity formation] has not led to the second phase [system-building]. Or, for that matter, "system building" has not been founded effectively in many underdeveloped states. Due to tribal, ethnic, or religious prejudices, some states have been unable to cultivate a strong sense of nationalism among their citizens. Corruption is another major problem that has been instrumental in keeping the fragility of the systems intact. When elites attempt to build a system, they may not prioritise "inclusiveness", as doing so could lead to instability or harm their own interests. To build a system, governing elites usually need absolute power. But, in many cases, absolutism does not lead to the third phase

[political participation]. Hossein Bashirieh, an Iranian intellectual, is of the opinion that "Absolute power is not only based on personal power relations, but also such power building leads to the emergence of power-seeking gangs and groups around decision-making centres or powerful personalities. Such gangs usually support the interests of their members. Thus, instead of institutional participation/competition, a network of personal relationships would be established which personalises political life and makes politics informal" (2008, p. 105). The gist of the issue is that this process may not always lead to system-building.

Dependency

Although radical dependency theorists such as A. G Frank, J Cockcroft, and D Johnson, emphasise that the limitations imposed by the global powers have caused fundamental distortions that have continued to thwart development in unstable states (1966 & 1972), moderate theorists, such as F H Cardoso has considered some level of development to be possible within this system (Munro, 2018). They believe that dependency has not always been against development. Still, religious figures in the Islamic states or societies disagree with the idea of dependency, especially when it comes to dependency on Western powers. For instance, both Iran under the Islamic Republic and Afghanistan under Taliban control have rejected Western developmental models, such as capitalism and liberalism, due to their opposition to Western influence and perceived cultural or ideological threats. Religious and political elites in these states believe that Islam has its own pattern of governance and development and that Western ideologies do not fit into Islamic societies.

Globalisation

It emerges from the global mechanisms of greater integration with emphasis on the sphere of economic transactions. This perspective, in a way, is similar to the modernisation approach. However, a key characteristic of globalisation is its focus on cultural aspects and their communications worldwide. In cultural communication, one of the most important factors is the increasing flexibility of technology to connect people around the world (Kaplan, 1993). However, globalisation may present unique challenges and threats to underdeveloped societies. In this regard, Benjamin Barber believes that globalisation generates conflict between forces of global integration and those of tribal, national, or religious identity. It generates cultural tensions and challenges due to the rapid spread of globalised Western culture (1995). In underdeveloped states, globalisation poses a threat to both state sovereignty and local culture. The driving forces of globalisation, including increased economic interconnectedness and cultural exchanges, have the potential to erode political authority and destabilise traditional values and practices. Consequently, traditional or religious leaders may oppose integration into the global economy or the adoption of international cultural standards, perceiving these changes as harmful to their nation's identity and independence. As global technology primarily caters to non-traditional factors, such as modernism, postmodernism and liberalism, it can disrupt the status quo and create cultural and political challenges for underdeveloped states.

World Systems Theory

It argues about three types of states: the core, the periphery, and the semi-periphery. The belief is that periphery countries can enjoy minimal benefits. Such hierarchy practically would lead to unequal relations among the states where wealth is taken from semi-periphery or periphery states to the core states. Under this system, the developed states exploit the poor states for labour and raw materials, which strengthens the dominance of developed states (Wallerstein, I. M, 2004). As a result, less affluent states are likely to remain reliant on developed nations. Such dependency often hampers the underdeveloped states' capacity to close the developmental gap with more advanced

nations. This complex web of challenges can perpetuate a cycle of dependency and underdevelopment, as these hurdles obstruct the growth and advancement necessary for attaining economic and political parity with developed countries.

Good Politics

In their book *Why Nations Fail* (2012), D Acemoglu and J Robinson explain the concept of good politics. They argue that a nation's prosperity and success is primarily determined by the quality of its institutions, including political, economic, and cultural. While acknowledging the importance of other elements, such as culture, geography, and economics, the authors contend that these are not the primary determinants of development. In essence, good politics is vital for development. They identify two types of institutions: inclusive and extractive. Extractive institutions, which concentrate power and wealth in the hands of a few, can cause stagnation and decline. In contrast, inclusive institutions that promote innovation, investment, talent, and accountability are crucial for long-term success. Acemoglu and Robinson emphasise that establishing and maintaining inclusive institutions requires a robust political system (good politics) capable of representing diverse interests without being dominated by any single group or elite. While this theory is well-articulated, its implementation seems to be highly complex. The statesmen in underdeveloped states may face practical challenges when attempting to transition to inclusive institutions. The primary obstacle is the need to prioritise national interests over competing non-national interests, which is often a significant and deeply-rooted problem in such states. Consequently, implementing this theory becomes complex and time-consuming, rendering it difficult to achieve within a short period.

To sum up, the applicability of different development theories varies across underdeveloped societies. For example, modernisation theory might be effective in one society but fail to achieve the desired results in another. Additionally, economic development does not always lead to political development in all cases. In some societies, the development of political systems may not inherently lead to political pluralism. The success of system building and the emergence of pluralistic politics depend largely on various factors unique to each state and society. These factors include historical events, the nature of the institutions, the type of turning points, critical situations, and the outcome of the interactions that eventuate in a given society.

Inspirational Model

An alternative approach to development for underdeveloped states is inspired by a non-political model - football coaching. Numerous examples demonstrate the significant impact of seasoned head coaches in reshaping and leading weaker football teams to success. One such example is the Iranian national football team, which witnessed considerable improvements under the guidance of Carlos Manuel Queiroz, a Portuguese football coach. Queiroz's leadership and strategic guidance played a pivotal role in revitalising the team's performance, demonstrating the transformative power of effective leadership in elevating a struggling team's potential. Carlos Queiroz's coaching career has seen him manage several national teams, including Portugal, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Colombia, and Iran. Under his leadership, South Africa (2002), Portugal (2010), and Iran (2014 and 2018) successfully qualified for the FIFA World Cup. Queiroz is the only head coach in Iranian football history to have led the national team to two consecutive World Cups. Under his leadership, the Iranian national football team reached a historic milestone by maintaining the top spot in the Asian team rankings for 17 consecutive months. Additionally, Queiroz holds the distinction of being the longest-serving head coach in Iran's football history; his tenure spanned nearly eight years (2011-2019). In September 2022, the Football Federation's Board of Directors reappointed Queiroz as the head coach of Iran's national football team, leading the squad to the Qatar World Cup (2022). This marks Queiroz's third tenure as Iran's head coach for the World

Cup. Although Queiroz's coaching methods were not flawless and his management faced criticisms, his overall success with Iran's football team raises an interesting question: *If effective management in sports can elevate a weak team, why not apply a similar model to an underdeveloped state's administration*?!

Drawing inspiration from the success of Carlos Queiroz in leading Iran's national football team, it is argued that underdeveloped states should consider hiring a team of highly skilled foreign administrators to address their domestic challenges. By harnessing the expertise and strategic insights of such professionals, these nations can usher transformative impact and, thereby, foster development. This approach could potentially bring innovative ideas, expertise, and global perspectives to address complex governance challenges and accelerate development. Such highly qualified teams should devise and implement policies to improve the living standards of underdeveloped societies, concentrating on developmental projects encompassing cultural, economic, and political domains.

Though this analogy might appear unusual at first glance, it might be worth considering when examining underdeveloped societies in regions of Africa and Asia, where corruption, stagnation, and economic challenges continue to hinder progress. The development theories have often fallen short of fostering meaningful change in these states. Therefore, exploring alternative models, such as "transnational government", may uncover solutions to persistent issues. However, I acknowledge that implementing this model may involve significant challenges, which will be addressed in the concluding sections. But, before delving into these concerns, we must establish a theoretical basis for our proposed approach.

Theoretical Ground: A New Fictional Reality

All social, economic, and political realities, such as tradition, money, nationalism, and capitalism, are human constructs born from intellectual thought. Throughout history, these constructs have had both positive and negative implications for humankind, from fostering peace and prosperity to contributing to war and misery. It is undeniable that these fictional realities stem from the social dialectic of "thesis," "antithesis," and "synthesis" within societies, which continuously shapes and reshapes our world. Throughout history, intellectuals, politicians, and leaders have played crucial roles in shaping and refining societal constructs that greatly influence our lives. In light of the profound impact of these fictional realities, it becomes essential to consider the creation of a new fictional reality using the same processes of construction, indoctrination, cultivation, and experimentation that were used to establish previous societal paradigms. Let's take an example of the way Christianity is constructed. We can observe the development and spread of Christianity, which followed similar mechanisms to become a dominant force in shaping culture and values. In his book, History of Political Philosophy, Bahaoddin Pazargaad writes:

"In ancient Greece, during the peak of the city-state of Athens, Athenians were deeply invested in the city-state institution. Due to their preoccupation with city-state affairs, they saw no need to focus on other institutions like religion. However, when the city-state system crumbled, Athenians felt a sense of disorientation. People couldn't find another institution to replace the city-state system, so they turned to religion. The idea of a celestial city with perfect laws, called the City of God, captivated the people's imagination, ultimately leading to the birth of a new religion. Philosophies that emerged after Aristotle began to lean toward religious themes, further increasing people's interest in religion and paving the way for the rise of Christianity" (2003, p. 208, 253).

So, as a new fictional reality, under this system, political power derived its authority from religion, and as history narrates, "Kings required new concepts to lend legitimacy to their actions; thus politics merged with religion because there was no more powerful and persuasive sanction for

kingship than that of divine will" (Rodee et al, 1983, p. 22). However, centuries later, modern nationalism was constructed. This made national consciousness a reality which replaced the divine right theory. Today, the divine right theory has largely lost its relevance in politics. Any sociopolitical reality that arose during a specific period was, in fact, a reaction to the prevailing unfavourable conditions of that time.

This historical example suggests that if we aim to establish a new fictional reality to support the "transnational government" model, underdeveloped societies must wait for their own critical turning points to manifest. However, the issue is that it may take centuries for an underdeveloped nation to experience sudden, significant leaps. Moreover, we cannot be certain if such critical leaps will ultimately lead a backward nation toward the path of development. A critical situation does not always lead to development in a given society. This article argues that the concept of "transnational government" should not be shaped by the dialectic process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Instead, it should be constructed proactively before its due time. Therefore, politicians and leaders with strong popular support should be encouraged to endorse and popularise the notion of transnational government. This new reality should embody ideological characteristics, including a list of specific goals and a focus on the masses, for example.

Hypothetical Model: Implementation

In a way, transnationalism at the nongovernmental level is already practised around the world; multinational corporations in various fields can be taken as an example. Moreover, a review of history reveals that some different examples have existed in the past. In the Roman Empire, for instance, capable foreigners were occasionally granted citizenship and assigned military or administrative roles (Maxfield, 1979). Similarly, the Byzantine Empire had several foreign-born emperors and court officials (Herrin, 2007). The Ottoman Empire also employed foreigners in key government positions, such as grand viziers and military commanders (Maurits, 2018). The same was true with the British Empire, where foreign citizens were often given high-ranking roles in administration and military (Dimitriadis, 2015).

However, while considering the aforementioned examples, four points should be noted. First, although foreign experts were often employed in various government or military roles, they were rarely appointed to the highest leadership positions, which were typically held by citizens of those empires. Second, despite a tradition of employing foreign citizens in high-ranking positions, these empires lacked comprehensive mechanisms to regulate the responsibilities and actions of foreign administrators, enabling the kings' interests to override the interests of the general public. Third, foreign expert appointments were usually made without public input, resulting in a lack of efforts to construct a theoretical foundation and, at times, causing tensions and conflicts within the empire. Fourth, the role of foreign experts may have contributed to the functioning of the empire, and managing day-to-day affairs was prioritised over the question of development. Consequently, a "transnational authority" involving the entire government [at the state level] has not been implemented. In contrast, our proposed model appoints foreign experts as heads of state to prioritise and promote development in underdeveloped societies. By doing so, it emphasises the importance of building a theoretical framework to address potential challenges effectively.

Whatsoever, once the "transnational government" established its legitimacy, its first task should be to construct a system that transcends parochial or ideological barriers. The experience of underdeveloped states demonstrates that government organisations in these societies often face issues of dysfunction and maladministration, presenting challenges to effective governance; the native [ruling] elites have been unable to create systems effectively. The second objective of a transnational government is to foster internal cohesion among the intellectual and instrumental (executive, political, economic) elites (Sariolghalam, 2011). Since establishing such cohesion is

challenging and complex, a transnational government must utilise all available resources and means to facilitate it. Once this process is accomplished, the focus should shift to the administration of the state. The transnational government --- by the treaty that it had already signed with the representatives of an underdeveloped society --- should proceed in the direction of development without jeopardising the sovereignty of the state in question. Full authority and discretion should be granted to the 'transnational government,' free from any traditional, religious, ideological or national constraints. This does not mean eliminating traditional values, religious practices, or local and national cultures but rather ensuring that these sociocultural institutions do not impede or interfere with the development process. In the event of failures or shortcomings, the 'transnational government' must be held accountable. The actions and performance of the transnational government should be thoroughly monitored and evaluated by independent international organisations that operate under the United Nations; these organisations should not be subject to another country's authority. The presence of these international organisations, equipped with adequate discretionary and executive powers, could ensure the successful implementation of this hypothesis. If executed effectively, this approach may relatively establish more efficient systems in underdeveloped states, approximately similar to those found in Western countries. Western nations first established efficient systems and then cultivated inclusive ideas and institutions. In the Western states, "non-native" individuals were officially recognised as citizens, granted equal rights to participate in society, and given opportunities to assume leadership roles. In the United States and Britain, for example, "non-native" citizens play important roles in politics. This indicates that if a country has a stable political system, its leadership's ancestral background may not be a significant concern. In fact, the stability of the political system is more important than the background of its leaders. However, attaining such experiences, like those in Western systems, is complex and requires considerable time and effort. The present article posits that underdeveloped nations could achieve rapid development by adopting the "transnational model." Within this framework, the envisioned transnational government's political culture would progressively shape and enhance the local elites' political culture. This transformative influence would foster an environment conducive to growth and advancement, helping these countries accelerate their journey toward sustainable development.

Transnational Government: Challenges

Many constructed realities, particularly sociopolitical ones, have encountered significant challenges during their development. However, over time, they established themselves and evolved into recognised realities. Thus, every fictional reality has encountered challenges at first. So, it sounds naive if we presume that one can craft a political reality overnight and replace it with a former one without considering society's reactions or interactions. Thus, the process of laying the theoretical foundations for "transnational government" will likely be contested and challenged by various groups, including leaders, heads of states, politicians, nationalists, religious fundamentalists and even liberals, who collectively represent significant portions of today's societies. There appear to be five major impediments to constructing a transnational government in an underdeveloped state: Nationalism, Ethno-Nationalism, Islamism, Time Factor, and the world's Anarchic System.

First, while nationalism has played an important role in the development of many states, it has failed to effectively accommodate itself into underdeveloped societies. This is largely due to the prevalence of parochial interests, such as tribal, ethnic, religious, and ideological affiliations, which often supersede national interests in these contexts. Nevertheless, with the rise of modern nationalism and contemporary political systems, hiring foreign figures as heads of state is highly uncommon. Even in an underdeveloped society, national sovereignty and identity are represented by heads of state, and thus, most modern constitutions and legal frameworks stipulate that only natural-born citizens can hold these positions. Hence, nationalist sentiments can be easily manipulated to create waves of nationalistic movements against a "transnational system of

governance" by appealing to the patriotic emotions of the masses. Second, in many underdeveloped societies, ethno-nationalism is perceived as a significant threat. This is because ethno-nationalism generates divisions within society and hinders successful integration by promoting ideologies that foster prejudice. The ethno-nationalistic ideologies can result in social unrest, ultimately undermining the integrity of the society or state. Third, Islamism presents another challenge, particularly in Muslim societies where political Islam is dominant. As a matter of fact, certain characteristics inherent in Islamic beliefs, such as fatalism and divine determinism (which are not exclusive to Islam), have been emphasised more than Islam's progressive aspects. This can be recognised as one of the factors hindering development in many Muslim societies. However, in a society where Islam is rigorously politicised, toying with the religious sentiments of the people may flare up public outrage. Religious fanatics, hardliners, and some Muslim scholars insist on Islam's own form of governance. Fourth, the time factor also plays a crucial role. Generally, every idea is a product of its time, and it is challenging to implement a social or political theory before its appropriate time. This principle might also apply to our model. The fifth obstacle is the anarchic nature of the global system. The impact of this anarchy cannot be disregarded, as underdeveloped states may not receive genuine support from ostensibly independent international organisations within such a framework.

Conclusions

This final section aims to demonstrate that despite the challenges our model faces, these obstacles can be managed. Among the aforementioned barriers, "nationalism" poses the most significant challenge to our model. The threats posed by ethno-nationalism can be minimised by those socio-economic and political strategies that can foster the integration of diverse ethnic groups within a society's political framework. Even if ethno-nationalism results in the fragmentation of a nation, the transnational government model retains its applicability and can be employed in the newly formed states. This ensures that the model remains relevant across diverse [underdeveloped] societies and political contexts. Islamism appears less formidable. Currently, there are countries where Islam is the predominant religion, but its influence on governance is limited; in these societies, Islam primarily functions as a social force rather than a political one. The time factor also seems less significant than nationalism. Western states, for instance, already benefit from the leadership of "non-native" individuals. This Western example can, at the very least, mentally prepare the elites of the underdeveloped nations to consider such a model (transnational government). Alternatively, for that matter, the anarchic nature of the global system is not absolute anarchy, as law and order are maintained to a significant extent. However, implementing our governance model requires addressing challenges, especially nationalism, through establishing prerequisites and theoretical foundations. Without deliberate planning and laying the groundwork for the idea of a "transnational government," these challenges will undoubtedly persist.

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Impact of Trieste Port on China-Italy Geoeconomics Relations

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
          	The key role of the Trieste Port in Sino-Italian geoeconomics relations and its impact on the prospects of future Sino-Italian cooperation are examined. The strategic position and significance of the Trieste Port within both the Italian economy and global trade are based on its geographical and historical advantages as a crucial hub facilitating trade between Europe and Asia. Furthermore, a comprehensive exploration delves into the multifaceted geoeconomics relationship between China and Italy, unveiling the evolution from mere trade collaboration to encompassing technological advancements and cultural exchanges. Particularly in light of China's economic ascent and globalisation, China-Italy relations encounter novel opportunities for development alongside challenges that must be adeptly addressed when expanding cooperation. The research offers a fresh perspective on comprehending current international political and economic dynamics while providing insights to anticipate global economic trends.

Introduction

With the development of globalisation, the increasing interplay between international trade and geopolitics among major powers is expected to increasingly shape public consciousness in the future (Lizza, 2021). The rapid ascent of China's economy and its expanding global influence have drawn significant attention from the international community, particularly regarding economic and political relations with Italy. Uncertainties persist in the evolution and interconnection of these geographical relationships. Geoeconomics represents a transnational and cross-border regional phenomenon. Its development is influenced not only by contemporary trends and the international environment but also by each member state's economic and social conditions, interest realisation, national security concepts, value orientations, as well as historical foreign exchange traditions (Li Zheng, 2017).

The relationship between Italy and China is deeply rooted in history, with both nations establishing connections through trade and cultural exchange since the era of the ancient Silk Road. As modern global economies integrate and international political dynamics evolve, economic cooperation between China and Italy has progressively expanded. The Trieste Port serves as a crucial gateway for

Italian engagement with the world, facilitating not only trade with China but also acting as a significant platform for cultural exchange between the two countries. The development of Sino-Italian relations transcends mere economic collaboration; it is also shaped by various factors, including domestic policies, the international political landscape, and Sino-US relations. In this intricate global context, understanding and analysing the dynamic shifts in Sino-Italian relations holds substantial importance for forecasting future trends in international politics and economics.

Carta di Laura Canali-2020

The status of the Trieste Port in Italy

The Port of Trieste in Italy holds a strategic position as the centre of the Mediterranean and serves as an ideal location for the New Silk Road, functioning as a pivotal hub for global trade. This advantageous positioning facilitates concentrated exports to China, thereby enhancing Sino-European exchanges and shifting the centre of gravity southward. Nestled in the heart of Europe, Trieste port provides a natural gateway to the Suez Canal. The primary objective of the Trieste port is to establish an industrial logistics platform aimed at importing Italian products into China. It represents one of the most significant transport corridors globally, with both trans-Pacific and trans-Atlantic routes playing crucial roles in terms of value, tonnage, and vessel traffic. A maritime route connects Asia to Europe via the Adriatic Sea. The port links important Italian cities such as Padua, Milan, and Novara. If Italy pursues Western expansion, it will not be competing against its Central European neighbours but rather against ports from other nations. Trieste has already established robust connections with countries including Malaysia, Texas, and Greece while garnering attention from various nations around the Adriatic.

Italy's collaboration with the United States, alongside the geopolitical revisionism exhibited by

Russia and China, coupled with the ascendance of BRIC nations and the initiation of the Belt and Road Initiative, underscores Italy's growing geoeconomics significance. As South-South relations strengthen, new dynamics in the Indo-Pacific are reshaping extensive economic and strategic challenges globally. The competition between the United States and China, characterised by their respective spheres of influence, divergent political systems, and competing economic models, is intensifying not only within economic domains and global value chains but also increasingly at military levels, extending into space as a future geopolitical frontier. The heightened importance of the Mediterranean region signifies a bolstering of NATO's southern flank. Italy serves as a natural logistical hub for this area. As the EU's second-largest trading partner after France and its fastest-growing economy on the continent, Italy is well-positioned to collaborate with the United States in stabilising this region while potentially transitioning towards Africa as the next factory of the future and establishing new value chains to supplant those currently situated in East Asia. In response to mounting pressure from a US-led bloc, China has successfully cultivated its sphere of influence along with regional allies. The strategies employed by geopolitical actors do not adhere to abstract laws but rather emerge from distinct historical and cultural contexts. It is noteworthy that China has not developed a genuine network of alliances; indeed, concepts such as balance-of-power reflect Western perspectives that have seldom been mirrored throughout China's millennia-long history rooted in central unity principles. Given China's vast territory, sparsely populated yet more stable than Italy's, it provides Chinese geopolitical representatives with unique internal leverage, no nation can pose a threat to China so long as order is preserved within its borders.

Geoeconomics relations between Italy and China

In the late 1950s and 1960s, China sought to establish economic and trade relations with "middle zone" countries, achieving some progress. It missed a crucial period of rapid economic development due to the prevailing domestic revolutionary ideology. Following the Cold War, peace and development emerged as dominant themes within the international community, while geoeconomics, serving as both an extension and complement to geopolitics, gained significance. Geoeconomics represents the transformation of international geographical space brought by globalisation, offering external opportunities for China's ascent. The global landscape has shifted from a "bipolar system" to one characterised by "one superpower and multiple powers" The United States perceives China's rise as a threat to its hegemonic status in both the Asia-Pacific region and globally. And Japan harbours concerns that this rise may undermine its self-image as East Asia's sole civilised nation; meanwhile, European nations are strategically limiting their economic exchanges with China in pursuit of benefits stemming from China's growth, a matter of paramount concern for them (Li Xiao & Li Junjiu, 2015). Italian ports, which directly compete with other European ports, facilitate the transportation of goods from Genoa to Rotterdam. They account for 55% of total Italian non-EU exports, amounting to approximately $100 billion in Euro cargoes shipped from Italian ports in 2012. Furthermore, these ports represent 30% of Italy's overall exports globally, equivalent to around $150 billion. Notably, China and India comprise between 65% and 80% of Italian port

exports destined for the US and Brazil (Assoporti, 2013). Italy is endeavouring to enhance the 'resilience' of its economic operations across various domains, including technological research and development, product manufacturing, material supply, and cross-border trade. This initiative aims to mitigate acute shortages of resources and energy or specific products while avoiding significant price fluctuations. Such measures are intended to ensure that the economy can withstand geopolitical shocks and maintain a stable performance (Xin Hua, 2024). Meanwhile, China is committed to upholding the guiding principles of globalisation, embedding the concept of a community with a shared future for humanity within its advocacy for global integration (Liu Xuelian, 2023). There exists substantial potential for collaboration in advancing green development and digital transformation as well as promoting high-level openness—these efforts will create new opportunities for cooperation between China and Italy.

Prospects for China and Italy

Italian ports engage in direct competition with other European ports, particularly those located in the Mediterranean region, and indirectly with Northern European ports through intermodal transport connections that facilitate the movement of goods from Genoa to Rotterdam. If Italian ports maintain their competitiveness, both China and Italy can effectively capture the direct demand from Northern Europe and fulfil it via multimodal transport. Conversely, should they face competition from Northern European ports, potential direct traffic to Northern Italy's territory and economic zone may be diverted via alternative routes? In contemporary geoeconomics relations, we must consider not only geoeconomics but also cultural factors, energy dynamics, geodemographics, etc., as long as these concepts are sufficiently tangible to be realistic. Ports thus integrate multiple strategic dimensions into a single framework, enhancing employment opportunities within seaports and surrounding regions while ensuring greater accessibility for development (Simone Pasquazzi, 2014). China plays a systemically significant role in globalisation and its partial realignment. Currently, notable advancements have been made in the evolution of China's growth model. Bottlenecks can only be surmounted through challenging structural reforms, which may necessitate some adjustments within the political system itself. Italy's ongoing reliance on global markets, despite China's competitive strength and influence, constrains China's exports among Chinese enterprises and investors alike. The Chinese government's extensive application of 'interdependence' and competition with commercial rivals, particularly regarding technology vis-a-vis the United States, has shaped Europe's decisions; Europe appears to be charting its own course aimed at risk mitigation while striving to maintain access to the Chinese market.

In previous instances, this situation is not influenced by trends in the international economic cycle; rather, it pertains to the strategic significance of interdependence and reflects a desire to mitigate China's vulnerabilities (MAECI, 2023). Geography tends to overlook the institutional and cultural influences across various scales and levels, thereby shifting the focus towards the interactions between enterprises and governmental entities within a multiscale institutional framework (Liu Yi, 2020). The spatial dimensions remain insufficiently defined, the evolution primarily focuses on

enterprises as the central entity, while the roles of other stakeholders are inadequately addressed, and the comprehension of the system is overly simplistic (MacKinnon at. al., 2009).

In recent years, research in relational geoeconomics, exemplified by global production networks, and evolutionary geoeconomics, characterised by path creation, has increasingly demonstrated a trend of cross-integration. Relational geoeconomics aims to elucidate the causal relationships between the structure of economic organisations and regional disparities in development by expanding upon the theory of global production networks. The field also encompasses national, financial, environmental, and developmental issues that are intricately linked to the transformation brought about by economic globalisation (Coe, 2019).

The collaboration between China and Italy seeks to facilitate the unrestricted flow of economic factors, ensure efficient regional resources, and foster deeper market integration. It aims to enhance economic policy coordination between countries along the Belt and Road Initiative and engage in regional cooperation on a broader scale and with greater depth. Together, they aspire to construct an open, inclusive, and balanced framework for regional economic cooperation that benefits all parties involved (The People's Daily, 2015). China-Italy cooperation traverses the Eurasian continent. Within the developed European economic sphere, we should collaboratively enhance connectivity among the continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa, as well as their adjacent seas. This involves improving regional infrastructure to achieve a new level of interconnection, expanding the common economic space across Eurasia, and fostering stability in the overall development of the entire Eurasian region (Li Xin, 2023).

The future of geoeconomics is unlikely to be characterised by abundance. It will embody a principle of intentional scarcity. Local production will be tailored to meet the requirements of both nations. The Haushofer school of economic policy thought fundamentally rests on a pessimistic worldview. According to Haushofer, in approximately 300 years, Earth will reach a critical saturation point regarding habitable space (Andreas Dorpalen, 2023). The primary maritime route for trade between China and Italy, as well as the European Union, is the Strait of Malacca. The balance of power remains critical for nations that perceive China as a threat. Coastal regions in Asia possess greater geographical advantages compared to sea lines of communication, which can be either obstructed or safeguarded. In recent years, there has been a notable shift in the global centre of gravity from military considerations to national economic interests and international security strategies. This transition is likely to foster an international consensus aimed at ensuring the right of all merchant vessels to navigate freely along these vital sea lanes. As economic development increasingly unites countries and regions, addressing issues such as ecological challenges and illegal immigration, efforts to protect Asia's maritime routes for economic purposes are poised for success (Shultz, 2014).

Chinese demand is predominant, with less advanced production relocating to China to cater to the local market and other markets that require competitively priced products, while high-end international clientele continues to be served by Italian offerings. Even for certain products

traditionally associated with Italy, such as clothing and furniture, China is rapidly emerging as a viable option for producing mid-range items at more competitive costs that can subsequently be marketed in other regions, including Europe and the United States. Contrary to data related to international trade, accurately quantifying the number of Italian companies (or those from any other country) operating in China proves challenging. The majority of foreign direct investment (FDI) in China occurs in Hong Kong, with many European firms opting to invest via holding companies registered in jurisdictions like the Netherlands or Luxembourg, both recognised as tax-preferential centres (Andornino, 2012).

Italian investment constitutes approximately one-fifth of German investment and one-third of French investment. However, when examining the number of investments, the disparity becomes less pronounced. Consequently, the average scale of personal investments is smaller than that in France and Germany, which aligns with the characteristics of Italy's manufacturing sector, predominantly driven by small and medium-sized enterprises. The decade following Italy's accession to the WTO has been marked by a series of opportunities that have not always been fully capitalised upon, as well as challenges that have frequently gone unaddressed. Indeed, during this period, Chinese exports have increasingly supplanted Italian production (Giorgio Prodi, 2020).

The "Made in China 2025" initiative is relatively less recognised in Italy; however, it may exert a more significant influence on bilateral relations than the Belt and Road Initiative (China Manufacturing, 2025). Indeed, it is crucial for the national development objectives of the macro-industrial sector. Certain sectors, such as advanced machinery and agricultural machinery, are competing in real-time with Italian production. The aim is to enhance the local content of strategic industrial output and improve its efficiency. This encompasses a range of measures from subsidies to more or less obligatory technology transfers, as well as preferential terms for companies operating within China. Consequently, this presents a dual challenge for Italian firms. Transitioning from Europe and Asia to North America illustrates that, unlike China's relative dominance in Asia, the United States holds an unequivocal geopolitical supremacy in North America. This endows the United States with a geographical advantage that neither Europe nor Asia can replicate for their own development and expansion (Wenmu, 2013).

5. Conclusion

Considering the vast population, resources, and economic activities of Eurasia, any regional hegemony on the continent would amass sufficient power to pose a significant threat to critical U.S. interests. Consequently, it has always been imperative for U.S. interests to foster a balance of power in Europe and Asia, thereby preventing any single nation or coalition from becoming excessively powerful and jeopardising U.S. dominance (Du Debin, 2021). China is currently at a pivotal juncture in its economic model, characterised by the quality of growth, the mechanisms driving that growth, a reassessment of certain identity decisions made over the past three years, and its interactions with Western economies. The concept of 'trust' between China and Italy can be analysed not only through

the lens of Chinese consumer behaviour and its impact on the national economy but also from foreign investors' perceptions towards China. Aiming for progress and stability, the Chinese government fosters growth through investment, particularly emphasising manufacturing. In light of the pandemic and regulatory changes in the real estate sector, China has curtailed real estate investments to concentrate efforts on manufacturing. Consequently, China's export surge has more than doubled Europe's trade deficit with China to 400 billion euros in 2023 (ISPI, 2023).

The Eurasian plain is reestablishing its natural role as a bilateral conduit between East and West; however, infrastructure deficiencies, existing bottlenecks along transport routes, national political instability, enduring border controls, tariffs, and inter-country mistrust continue to impede the comprehensive development of land and maritime traffic. The New Silk Road aims to enhance cooperation with nations along the route while integrating land and sea pathways, ultimately contributing to regional stability and development. Although African countries such as Egypt, Sudan, and Kenya have thus far played a peripheral role in this ongoing process, they possess the opportunity to engage in international exchanges and secure the necessary tools and financing for initiating socio-economic development projects within their territories. This includes establishing leading industries, promoting optimisation and upgrading of industrial structures, enhancing employment opportunities, safeguarding ecological environments, fostering small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), advancing infrastructure construction efforts, and emphasising the importance of developing non-profit organisations (Wang Qian, 2008).

Sino-Italian cooperation prioritises trade considerations for Italy. And Italy appears to seek a degree of separation between trade and security, aligning with the de-risking principles established by the G7, NATO, and the EU. Italy aims to cultivate more than merely positive relations with China, viewing it as a market rich in opportunities. China is expected to increase imports of Italian products and implement specific measures to facilitate investments from Italian companies interested in entering the Chinese market. On the Chinese side, enterprises operating in Italy are treated equitably and have benefited from several labour market reforms that positively impact job creation. Adhering to the principle of non-infringement on national interests will foster national economic growth while pursuing sustainable development.

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