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Perface

The twenty-first century is a period in which migration movements have become a central issue, not only in terms of humanitarian and socioeconomic concerns but also in terms of security, identity, authority, and international relations. In the current global situation, marked by global crises, the increasing influence of non-state actors, fragile regimes, and populist waves, migration has been placed at the center of security politics, both as a result and a cause. This book examines the multidimensional transformations shaped around the axis of "International Migration and Security Policies" through an interdisciplinary approach, casting a critical lens on various aspects of the field.

In the first section, Aykut Karahan discusses how migration intersects with knowledge regimes and crises of belonging through the concepts of ontological security and epistemic violence in his study titled "Immigration, Epistemic Violence, and Ontological Security: The Crisis of Knowledge and Belonging." This section provides a theoretical ground that examines the philosophical and social dimensions of the migration phenomenon in depth.

In the second section, Sibel Yanık Aslan, with her study titled "From State Collapse to Chaos: Security Vacuum and Migration Dynamics in Libya," examines the relationship between state collapse, security vacuum, and migration in Libya and shows how regional security is disintegrating and how this affects migration flows.

In the third section, Erkan Yılmaz, in his study titled "Religion as a Security Issue in Azerbaijan-Iran Relations," analyzes the cross-border effects of religious identities as a security issue in Iran-Azerbaijan relations. The impact of sectarian differences on foreign policy and security perceptions is addressed remarkably in this section.

In the fourth section, Gülşah Özdemir's study titled "Anti-Immigration, Populism and Security Discourses: The Rising Far-Right in Europe" demonstrates examples of how the rising right-wing populism throughout Europe constructs securitizing discourses through anti-immigration sentiment. This analysis is significant in explaining the influence of political discourse on security policies.

In the fifth chapter, Gülşah Özdemir and Bedri Şahin, in their study titled "The Evaluation of Germany's Immigration Policies in Terms of Securitization," evaluate Germany's migration policies based on Barry Buzan's securitization theory, analyzing the security-centered transformations, especially in the post-2015 period.

The sixth and final chapter includes Bedri Şahin's study titled "The Impact of Migration from Conflict Zones to Germany on the Rise of Anti-Immigrant Political Parties: An Analytical Review of AfD and BSW". In this chapter, the impact of migration from crisis regions, such as Syria and Ukraine, on far-right parties in Germany is analyzed in an analytical manner, and the political and social effects are evaluated through the examples of the AfD and BSW.

This work reveals that migration is not only a "mobility" phenomenon but also a "security politics" issue. The book is a comprehensive resource, covering both theoretical and practical aspects, for academics, policymakers, students, and all researchers working in the field of migration security. While each chapter prompts the reader to rethink the relationship between migration and security in a different context, when evaluated holistically, it successfully demonstrates the analytical depth and critical approach that are the book's primary goals. I would like to thank all the authors who contributed to the creation of the book, as well as our academic advisors who supported the evaluation process. I hope that it will provide new intellectual perspectives to our readers.

Contents

Chapter 1

Immigration, Epistemic Violence and Ontological Security: The Crisis of Knowledge and Belonging

Aykut Karahan[1]

Abstract

Throughout history, people have demonstrated various forms of mobility. One of these is migration. Today, it is estimated that over 100 million people in the world are migrants. However, if we take the Turks as an example, they live thousands of kilometres away from their first homeland. The same phenomenon is also valid for many nationalities and societies that give names to the geography they live in today. The most frightening thing for an immigrant is the feeling of uncertainty. For example, the French Protestants who immigrated to Geneva and London in the 16th century turned these two cities into the world's leading clock manufacturing centres, while the Germans had the same influence in the United States in optics and piano making. A similar example can be seen in the fact that the community called Malakan, who were settled in and around Kars during the occupation years between 1877 and 1914 by the Russians, taught the local people especially in the production of kashar cheese and today Kars Kashar has a brand value. When it comes to migration, only physical migration comes to mind. However, for a long time, especially with the framework of thought called Eurocentrism, non-Western societies have been subjected to migration and even deportation, so to speak, from the history of civilisation. In a period often described today as 'an age of anxiety, anger and nonsense', migration has become a reflection of the contemporary crisis. Migration is not only a physical act, but also an epistemic, ontological and psychological upheaval. The experience of migration causes individuals to be cut off from their knowledge systems, cultural meaning frames and identity continuities, while in host societies it leads to the questioning of collective belonging and identity integrity. While the process of modernisation has created an effect that can be

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called a civilisational leap for the West, it has caused an intellectual deportation and psychological collapse in non-Western societies. For this reason, it has been like a drug with serious side effects in non-Western societies, and the question of what these side effects are is still a problem among the intellectuals of these societies. In these societies, which have entered an existential crisis in the history of civilisation, ontological security has become the main problem. This constant tension has become a traumatic process in many non-Western societies, including Turkey. This situation has turned into a crisis of meaning, a crisis of identity and above all a crisis of belonging.

Introduction

Throughout history, people have demonstrated various forms of mobility. One of these is migration. Today, it is estimated that over 100 million people worldwide are immigrants. However, Turks live thousands of kilometers away from their original homelands. The same phenomenon applies to many nations that have given their names to the geography they live in today. The most frightening thing for an immigrant is the feeling of uncertainty. However, according to Sowell (2020), not every immigrant becomes a burden to the place they go to. Sometimes, immigrants manage to add value to the place they go to. For example, the French Protestants who migrated to Geneva and London in the 16th century turned these two cities into the world's leading watch production centers; while the Germans had the same influence in the United States in terms of optics and piano production. A similar example can be seen in the community called Malakan, who were settled in Kars and its surroundings by the Russians during the occupation years between 1877 and 1914, teaching the local people how to produce kashar cheese, and today, Kars kashar has a brand value. When we talk about migration, only physical migration comes to mind. However, for a long time, especially with the framework of thought called Eurocentrism, it has caused non-Western societies to migrate or even be deported from the history of civilization. In a period frequently described today as the "age of anxiety, anger, and absurdity", migration reflects the contemporary crisis. In addition to being a physical act, it is also necessary to see that migration is also a shock at the epistemic, ontological, and psychological levels (Lados et al., 2023). While the experience of migration causes individuals to be separated from their knowledge systems, cultural meaning frameworks, and identity continuity, it also leads to the questioning of collective belonging and identity integrity in host societies. While the modernization process created an effect that can be called a civilizational leap for the West, it caused an intellectual deportation and psychological collapse in non-Western societies. Therefore, it has had effects like a drug with serious side effects in

non-Western societies, and the question of what these side effects are still a problem to be solved among the intellectuals of these societies. In these societies that have entered an existential crisis in the history of civilization, ontological security has become a fundamental problem. This constant tension has become a traumatic process in many non-Western societies, including Türkiye. This situation has become a crisis of meaning, an identity crisis, and above all, a crisis of belonging.

Eurocentrism, the most advanced example of evaluating societies based on their set norms, like going back and forth, is an issue of excessive self-confidence and a narcissistic approach for the Western world. In contrast, for other societies, it is a loss of confidence in the opposite direction, and it has become schizophrenic based on doubting one's past. For this reason, the world order has evolved into a world dominated by narcissistic and schizophrenic individual and social characteristics. Today, similar characteristics are seen in people and societies, as well as the leaders who emerge from those societies. Today, the statements of US President Trump are the best example of this. It has gone so far that it is seen that there are parallels between the healthy mental and mental states in the DSM (American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), which sets out diagnostic provisions between healthy mental states and unhealthy mental states in psychiatry, and the Eurocentric frame of mind. The most obvious parallel to this is that the confession mechanism made to priests within the church institution in the Middle Ages in Europe, which was also considered a relief from sin and alleviation, was replaced by the confession mechanism in the modern period in front of psychologists/psychiatrists, indicating a similar process. Indeed, Kristeva (1985), Richter (1980), and Teoman Duralı (1999) have identical observations on how Christianity and Judaism contribute to this narcissistic and theological background lying in the subconscious of Western civilization (Kristeva, 1985; Richter, 1980). Although in a more secular tone, we can see that both philosophers and writers continue the culture of confession in many names, especially J.J. Rousseau (Capra 1989, Watson 2014). Again, in another work by Watson (2012), there are psycho-philosophical analyses on how human nature and the understanding of history produced by that nature have changed with the dominance of Western civilization (Watson, 2012). All of these, the modernization centered on Western civilization that emerged with the idea of establishing a paradise on earth and technology at the end, the comfort of a minority world population leads to a loss of meaning and identity/crisis for the vast majority of the world and even further to an existential crisis and ontological security anxiety. The world has become a hell for the vast

majority, including those who cannot even find clean water and has become a paradise for minority group. Moreover, this becomes more difficult with the heavy traumas of displacement and the migration phenomenon. It is necessary to see the biggest mistake made regarding the issue of security as being free from these concerns.

1. Ontological Security and Its Psycho-Philosophical Framework

Ontological security is related to individuals' and societies' continuous sense of identity and worldview. In this context, migration is a demographic issue and a deep questioning of national identity, cultural belonging, and social continuity. Rumelili & Adisonmez (2020) emphasize that ontological security has become an increasingly prominent field of study in international relations in recent years. Ontological security has a content that draws attention to individuals and societies outside of non-state actors and military security, and it focuses on a psycho-sociological background (Rumelili & Adisonmez, 2020). The issue of ensuring the social continuity of a society, especially cultural belonging, has become the central issue of all civilized and state-formed societies. This issue of social continuity is not only the existence of a formal state but also institutional formations. This would be an incomplete definition. The continuity of societies, in other words, their ontological continuity/existence in more philosophical terms, is also the worldview of which social and cultural memory is the carrier. According to Kalın (2018), the continuity of a civilization is the product of the whole, which includes the metaphysical framework we call a worldview and the political and economic systems we call the conception of existence. Any discontinuity here causes societies to face an identity crisis or a crisis of belonging, and in a broader context, an existential crisis. The fact that Western civilization sees itself as separate from other civilization frameworks and outside and above the Great Chain of Being, as Lovejoy (2023) calls it, also indicates a major rupture. The fact that the West sees itself above human existence gives important clues in reflecting a kind of narcissistic psychology. Indeed, as Karen Horney (2013) puts it, narcissism is not an expression of self-love but of self-alienation (Horney, 2013). Or, as Kristeva (1985) puts it, the West acts within a projection psychology by attributing the negative characteristics it does not want to see in itself and sees as disgusting to the other (Kristeva, 1985).

This psycho-philosophical analysis framework can help us better understand why we live in a more unequal world today than the old one. Constantly seeing the other as degrading or even disgusting not only has moral problems but also helps to establish a kind of mental-psychological

domination relationship. Making civilization a tool of domination, including the history of thought and science, involves the material exploitation of other civilizations and societies by modern Western civilization and the exploitation of the other as an object. Indeed, colonization, one of the most essential concepts of colonialism, remains incomplete if understood only in an economic sense. Cultural colonization was also put into place here. Here, the other is constantly exploited for one's own existence. The other is seen here as a kind of psychological food provider. Indeed, orientalist studies show this. The most typical examples of these cultural colonization efforts are the perception of the East and Islam as the topography of backwardness in many areas, from history to politics, and the writing of history in a way that almost gives today's modern West. The fact that the other is constantly seen as a place of backwardness based on race, gender, language, religion, and values , and is continuously constructed as an object of humiliation, has been the most decisive element in the West-East relations of the last 300 years. This can be evaluated as intolerance to living with others in space and the history of thought and civilization. For this reason, the historical fiction in many social sciences, especially history, has been designed accordingly. Indeed, Hegel clearly states that even if Eastern societies and Muslims have contributed to civilization, this is minimal and can be ignored (Hegel, 2016). Indeed, in the history of philosophy and the history of civilization, books written in the West until the end of the 18th century, the West perceives itself as a continuation of world history and even as a part of the great chain of existence, to the extent of starting the modern era with Islam. However, starting in the 18th century, knowledge began to gain a public and formal status. Moreover, Humboldt's university reform and the establishment of a new educational institution began to reverse this process. As can be understood from the expression "knowledge is power as a principle", knowledge has ceased to be a tool for understanding the universe and the world, and has now begun to be seen as a tool for changing the world and even intervening in line with one's wishes and desires. As a result of all these determinations, dichotomies such as advanced-backward, barbarian - civilized have begun to be re-established. Over time, these dichotomies have turned into epistemic violence and have started to be used as the sword of Damocles on other societies. The formal knowledge, rules, and institutions established by the West have turned into elements of domination and even violence, almost as immutable divine commands.

2. Epistemic Violence and Epistemic Injustice

Epistemic violence manifests itself in the form of blocking access to information, exclusion from knowledge production processes, and devaluation of a group's knowledge. This concept describes environments where immigrants are politically and cognitively marginalized. One of the best examples of this is the educational problems experienced by Turkish children in Germany and the claims that they are pedagogically backward. Syrian children in our country experienced similar issues. Of course, here, epistemic violence contains a domination mentality and colonial ideology. Such domination-making mentalities have a very harsh attitude towards the other. They include a definite judgment that nothing can be learned from the other. The secular worldview is also one of the main factors of this framework. As such, ethics replaces morality, and an instrumental understanding of morality prevails. As such, the framework of knowledge and morality that would legitimize even cutting off people's limbs in Gaza in its current form and earlier periods in the American continent or Africa begins to prevail.

A secular worldview, an instrumental moral understanding, and a political mentality that sees its nation as entitled to dominate other countries, and a mental background that sees no harm in seizing all kinds of resources economically, will now see both humans and nature as objects to be exploited, and will begin to see nature and societies outside its civilization as tools, goods, and commodities to be subjugated. In nature, humans are now subject to all kinds of measurements, forms, and classifications, and can be occupied, used, and conquered. Moreover, presenting this as a humanist ideology appears to be a completely different level of domination. This domination has caused a profound transformation in humanity's perception of common sense and reality for thousands of years, and perhaps even a metamorphosis in the history of humankind. Because if we do not include the differences in style and paint between the picture of a cow drawn on a cave wall thousands of years ago and the Renaissance, there is an almost unchanging continuity (Taftalı, 2017). However, with the process that began with the scientific revolution, humanity's objective natural perspective, based on common sense and in a philosophical sense, quickly began to give way to a subjective natural perspective. This meant the beginning of a break from humanity's thousands of years of common sense and experience.

The idea that humans do not come into the world with any innate knowledge, but rather as a blank slate, which began with the British thinker J. Locke, has become a defining framework. Human knowledge is based

solely on experience and is constantly in flux and formation. It has to be continuously redefined within every moment and formation. In such a case, there was neither a first cause, a founding logos, nor an idea of a first example behind what was seen. Such a framework would not grant life to religion or religious ideologies because it would not need God as a first cause, nor a Prophet or thinker as an example (Messiri, 2021). A de-godified, commodified, and egocentric structure that provokes human pleasure, lust, violence, and ambition on a human basis, and when this provocation is successful, this is evaluated as a "success". At the center of this egocenter is the European man. Douglas and Isherwood (1999) describe this constantly fluid understanding of life not as a decision-making process, even from an economic perspective, but as a feeling of being dragged by events. Even though man is seen as a rational being in financial terms, he is actually under the pressure of the irrational.

According to Özel (2021), one of the most important examples of this irrationality is the character of Captain Ahab in Herman Melville's novel Moby Dick. Although Ahab, as a ship captain, established a very rational ship order and caught successful hunts, he lost his life in pursuit of a very irrational ambition, such as taking revenge on the blue whale. The irrational ambition behind this rational fiction later affected and continues to impact the world order with the Western domination mentality. There are profound parallels between Trump's statements and ambitions and Captain Ahab's behavior. Or, it is necessary to consider the genocide that Israel implemented on Gaza within this irrational framework.

The idea that a person is a blank slate/board from birth, which began to gain importance with Locke, is today famous primarily for his studies on learning psychology and whose theories on this subject have made a worldwide impact, according to J. Piaget (1992), the idea that knowledge is based only on sensations is an empty tale. According to him, knowledge does not occur with small sensations, because it can only be meaningful by forming specific conceptual networks and schemes in our minds, which we call knowledge. For example, there are many trees and tree species worldwide, but with the concept of a tree, we can gather millions of trees under a single tree. With this style, also called the Gestalt method, the human brain does not know existence one by one through sensations and senses, but knows them by giving them meaning according to some templates that exist in the mind in a way that will create an unquestionable integrity.

We also encounter the view that Piaget put forward in psychology and presented as a new epistemology idea in Ahmet Davutoğlu's ideas within the

political and civilization history plane. According to him, there is an essence that transcends institutional structures in the background of the existence of civilizations. This essence determines the view of that civilization on existence, humans, and nature (Davutoğlu, 2018). He talks about a kind of civilizational scheme. To support this view, he thinks that orientalists, especially Huntington's and Fukuyama's ideas, cannot make sense of the civilization-based revival in the Islamic world. Indeed, many Western researchers working on Islamic civilization, especially these two thinkers, are concerned that this civilizational revival is taking place despite all the institutional/formal weight of modernity and its claim that it is universal worldwide. According to them, the end of history has come. Humanity has now come under the dominance of Western civilization, and other civilizations will either adapt to it or be erased from history. Robert B. Marks (2022), who uses the term "great deviation" for such a change in Western epistemology, says that Europeans, Americans, and Japanese have instrumentalized knowledge and put forward some racist arguments to conceal their own superiority and colonial policies. The best example of this can be seen in Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden", which tells the story of the mission of the white man, and says that the white man has taken on an onerous burden, such as civilizing the world. In short, scientific knowledge and the framework it determines, which has changed with rationality in Western thought, have caused a kind of epistemological knowledge migration not only in the field of science but also in art, literature, politics and even in every area of social life, and have tried to invalidate the knowledge frameworks produced by other civilizations. While presenting itself as the sole and universal criterion of innovation and advancement, it has reduced the other to a metaphysical category of nothingness (Erdem, 2019). Because the construction of the other in Western metaphysics has been based on certain ontological and metaphysical assumptions since ancient Greece, for this very reason, Western epistemology, which is what almost all of us do business with today, is almost violent towards other civilizations, to some extent. **Table 1** shows the classification of violence based on Western epistemological views;

Table 1 Classification of Violence

Type	Example
Cognitive Violence	The only way of knowing is the Western way of thinking, which has a universal quality.
Cultural Violence	Arguments that the cultures of non-Western societies are backward or even primitive
Epistemic Injustice	Unjust practices against the knowing subject capacity of a person or society.

Although the concept of epistemic injustice was first used by Kusch (2007), the 1944 film Gaslight also addresses this issue and tells how a healthy woman is tried to be convinced by a man that she has abnormal behaviors. What happens is that the protagonist in the film doubts all of his actions, reasoning, and even his memories, causing a scattered mind structure like those named by Adam Gazzaley and Larry O. Rosen (2018). Kusch defines epistemic injustice in two important dimensions. Injustice regarding testimony is particularly evident in prejudices against a person or a society that are more visible daily. In more subtle hermeneutic injustice, a person or a society is deprived of channels to express themselves in many areas, from education to culture, from art to literature. In other words, it is the total disadvantage of a person, a society, or even a civilization (Kusch, 2009). When interpreting this situation, hermeneutic injustice already means being left away from the efforts of interpretation, understanding, and making sense; it can also be interpreted as the meaninglessness of the concepts of a person or a society or even a civilization basin and being deprived of the ability to express itself. This meaning is also seen in the fact that the nation state, in the political sense, has an important function in the establishment of Western dominance, as well as the fact that the political organizations produced by other civilization basins throughout history have been characterized with names such as backward and outdated. The nation state has been introduced as the indispensable part of scientific knowledge, almost like a divine command. In this sense, the nation state has almost revealed itself as a general belief that it has an exceptional place in world political history. Again, in this sense, it has almost taken the place of God and has emerged as a structure with strict restrictions that can even interfere with private life.

3. The New Order of the Political Scene: The Nation State and the Politicization of the Other

The modern nation-state establishes itself as an exceptional entity. This exceptionalism developed with the West pushing God out of the center and eventually transformed into an ontological center. This transformation leads to the state being seen as the ultimate source of all meaning systems. In religions based on monotheism, the idea of a creator God is above everything and has an impenetrable hierarchy. We come across this in religious dictionaries as the idea of istiğna. In other words, it is a hierarchy of being whose essence we cannot have knowledge of and whose essence cannot be penetrated. Here, in the classical period, the medieval political understanding, which based its political legitimacy on receiving it from God, gradually became the main axis of the secular and anthropocentric framework, and God ceased to be the determinant not only of nature but also in the political field, and the nation-state structure entered its hierarchical void.

This area, which the modern state understanding began to cover and encompass in a hierarchical plane in this sense, has also been instrumental in the emergence of the concept of sovereignty as a phenomenon. Although sovereignty as a phenomenon is as old as human history, it is also new in the sense of orientation, along with the modern state. Sovereignty may differ at a certain point in history and according to the characteristics of cultures. However, according to Beriş (2014), the concept of sovereignty as a phenomenon is an indispensable condition of the modern state. At this point, Carl Schmitt (2002) claimed that the concepts of the modern state are secularized theological concepts in the sense of a kind of secular theology. Aniveas and Nişsancıoğlu (2019) evaluate this issue of conceptual transformation as an effort by European ideologists to legitimize the genocide committed by the European colonialist mentality in the American continent. According to them, Christianity could not meet the needs of this new colonialist capitalist mentality, and therefore its elimination was inevitable. Christianity's claim of universality did not work in the new world and also led to competition among European states. Therefore, there was a need for a new universality that would pave the way for a new type of capitalism and colonialism. This universality should not be of divine origin but of a secular character parallel to the scientific revolution. In the New World, a fundamental question in the relations with the natives who were unaware of the universality of Christianity would later become the fundamental determinant in the West's relations with the other. That question was whether the nature of the natives was human. Just like Israel today, for the Gazans or Trump's theopolitical discourses. In response to

this question, the Spanish claimed that the natives were human but that they were primitive and backward due to their own cultural codes and therefore could not comprehend the Spanish values. In the next stage, the negative characteristics of this absolute other would begin to be defined and they claimed that the natives had characteristic features such as "savage", "barbarian", "devil" and that they were deprived of any religious belief due to their nakedness, that they did not know how to cultivate the land, that is, that they were deprived of an economic and political system. The attempt to establish a new European Self with these negative qualities also gave birth to the process of constructing the other as the absolute other and caused them to see them as creatures that needed to be domesticated. This perspective was not only a specific perspective of the Spanish towards the American natives, but also a valid framework for the average European intellectual and even the people's perspective on the Islamic and Eastern world. Because Thierry Hentsch (1996) also presents similar frameworks from the West's perspective on the Mediterranean East. There, too, the idea that the East is a world of rulers and people who are lustful and in pursuit of pleasure finds a wide audience.So much so that the description and definition of the Harem in the Ottoman Palace, which is almost entirely based on fiction and personal fantasies, are shared as if they were truths. This issue is still understood this way today. Again, many European philosophers and thinkers, especially Hegel, have not gone beyond a completely instrumental political view of the Eastern world. Of course, there are exceptional views, such as those of Vico and Herder, but the main framework thinks the opposite. So much so that the views that the Eastern and Islamic worlds are incapable of establishing civilization have had serious buyers. In terms of political order, while the West's first contact with the Eastern and Islamic world was positive, especially with Dante and Montesquieu, and even though there are some views that Hanafi jurisprudence forms the basis of Hobbes' understanding of the state and the idea of contract, with the scientific revolution and the capitalist-colonialist order, this view began to be considered almost entirely negative. While the qualitative positive features in the political field were completely under the responsibility of the West, all negative features were attributed to the Eastern-Islamic world. So much so that while the West was the cradle of personal freedom, intellectual vitality, political order, and democracy, the East-Islamic world began to be seen as an autocratic political order abandoned to the fate of a ruler. This situation has caused the West to see its own thoughts as a political liberation prescription to be exported to the other, but the other has been exiled from history and even entered an ontological existential crisis. Because societies that are stuck

between their own traditional values and Western values, as emphasized by Deleuze and Guattari (2014), establish the connection between capitalism and schizophrenia as a kind of anti-Oedipal attitude, causing other societies to become alienated from themselves and to develop hostile attitudes and political attitudes towards their founding fathers or values (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009). If they want to integrate into the Western political and economic system, they must abandon their barbaric, savage, and primitive attitudes and hold Western values in high regard. For this, they must open themselves up to Western systems and close themselves off. In other words, a one-way domination relationship is established in this way. A self-centered West that has closed itself off from the intellectual, political, literary, etc., richness of the other and sees itself as the only absolute and universal truth is born in this way. This points to periods in history that can be called intellectual contraction, and economically, it means that the majority of humanity has to live in difficult conditions for the happiness of a minority.

4. Information Migration and Intellectual Contraction: Comparison Between the Periods of Intellectual Mobility and the Periods of Closure and Collapse from Open Civilization to a Single Civilization There is a beautiful saying attributed to Ibn Sina that knowledge leaves a place where it is not valued. As can be seen in the table below, a comparison has been made between the mobility of knowledge and human mobility based on certain periods of history. This comparison is not limited to the mobility of knowledge and thought systems; it is also directly related to human migration. Throughout history, during the period of open civilizations, people have had the opportunity to move in different geographies, and these migrations have paved the way for new syntheses and cultural riches. For example, during the Abbasid period, scientists were able to move freely in a wide geography from Central Asia to Andalusia, and thus a great intellectual synergy was created. Similarly, in the Ottoman Empire, the migrations of people from different ethnicities and beliefs kept the exchange of knowledge and culture alive.

On the other hand, during periods of introversion, both physical human mobility and cultural permeability were suppressed. In the modern nation-state era, the understanding that borders have become rigid and immigrants are seen as potential threats has led to epistemic standardization and weakened both knowledge production and social harmony. Today's refugee crisis and the xenophobia that accompanies it historically indicate a course contrary to the principle of an open society.

Table 2 Civilization Across Different Time Periods

Period Civilization	Information and Human Mobility	Epistemic Environment	The State of Civilization
Abbasids (8th–10th centuries)	Travel of scholars, translation activities	Open and pluralistic	The rise of science and philosophy, a cosmopolitan structure
Andalusian Islamic Civilization	Cultural pluralism, transfer of knowledge to the West	Open to interaction	The transfer that formed the basis of the Renaissance
Ottoman Classical Period	Multilingual education, the Balkans, and Iranian influence	Flexible and wise	Political and cultural stability
Western Modernity (17th–19th centuries)	Scientific revolution, encyclopedism, diffusion	Secular and centrist	The rise and exclusionary global spread
Post-Cold War (2000+)	Migration, information monopolization, and national lockdowns	Polarized and stereotyping	Epistemic crisis, conflict, and alienation

Table 2 shows how open information exchange and human mobility encouraged civilization development in different periods of history; on the other hand, it shows how closure, exclusion, and epistemic standardization led to collapse and crisis environments. While communication and interaction between different information basins increased in open civilization periods, both individual and collective meaning production were interrupted in periods that tended to be introverted. Although modernity and the Western worldview have established an unprecedented communication channel in terms of opening themselves to the world, what is actually happening is that they are imposing their own worldview and lifestyle in an unprecedented way. Moreover, they do this by incorporating it into technological products with a kind of encryption. Technique and technology have played a very important role in the West spreading its own cultural values around the world. In other words, using a technological device is not just a simple technical issue but also means transferring value. According to Metin (2018), the mind that produces the object also transfers cultural codes to the object as a coding process, and the buyer, on the other hand, has to comply with the patterns required by that object while using it and is in a passive participation in the process. As Norbert Elias (2000) stated in his work The Process of Civilization, the spread of the Western lifestyle to the world began with the socio-psycho behavioral changes of the upper classes, then with the concrete functions of daily life such as eating, clothing and finery, and then

spread to the wider public, and this spread to the entire world as a civilizing project. The progress of the process in this way began not only within the daily social rock, but also began to be built on the more subtle imitation and consumption values of the classical civilized-barbarian distinction. In other words, a new typology of world citizens who could imitate and consume the Western lifestyle began to emerge. Economic capitalism, the idea of democracy in politics, and the secular view of life in individual life have now begun to become almost the entire world's way of life, and those who claimed otherwise were classified as reactionary-primitive. Not only individuals but also states, as Chul Han puts it in some of his works (2023; 2019; 2020b), are no longer becoming a disciplinary society as in Foucault's theory, but a performance society and subject under the mask of freedom. One of the most important steps in this area is the stage of teaching the Western lifestyle and worldview to the masses through various pedagogical patterns in education. As Adem İnce (2021) emphasizes, the production of today's techno-human typology and the fact that humanity has become a zombified structure is an event that can only be achieved through education. Whether at the primary school level or undergraduate level, the structure is made entirely by focusing on the Western way of life and Western historiography in many fields, especially the history of civilization and thought.

In this way, societies that have been epistemically and culturally alienated from the history of civilization tend to emulate the powerful center. However, this tendency is not only an adaptation strategy; it is also the trigger of a deep identity crisis and search for meaning. As Victor Frankl states in his work Man's Search for Meaning (2023), man needs a sense of meaning to sustain his life; when this meaning is lost, existential emptiness becomes inevitable. Similar approaches are also important in Marcuse's work, One-Dimensional Man (2016). The individual's capacity to produce singular and plural meaning is suppressed within the capitalist social structure and reduced to standardized behavioral patterns. This causes both the individual and society to lose their depth of meaning.

In Oliver Roy's The Flattening of the World, the Crisis of Culture and the Domination of Norms (2024), he explains how the normative pressures brought about by globalization suppress cultural pluralities, especially the cultural identity conflicts experienced by immigrants as they integrate into new societies. In Thomas Bauer's The Uniformization of the World and the Loss of Ambiguity and Diversity (2024) and The Culture of Ambiguity and Islam (2020), it is stated that the epistemology of Western modernity, based on the search for certainty, threatens the historical ambiguity and pluralism of the Islamic world. This deepens the ontological security crisis.

McGilchrist's studies on the Split Brain and the Search for Meaning examine how the human brain's right and left hemispheres process meaning. The left brain focuses on order, repetition, and control; the right brain processes meaning, context, and relational information. The fact that modern cultures settle on a left-brain-dominant plane disrupts both individual and collective meaning production; thus, the epistemic and ontological ruptures that emerge with migration deepen (McGilchrist, 2012). This epistemological rupture and its ontological reflections are demonstrated below in **table 3**.

Table 3 Epistemological Rupture and its Ontological Reflections

The Western Stage	Represented Periodic Power	Its Impact on Eastern Civilizations
Reformation and Renaissance	Questioning religious authority	Western-centric interpretation of classical texts related to Islamic thought.
Scientific Revolution	Discovery of the laws of nature	Internalization of Islamic science without showing its origins
Enlightenment	Rationalism and individualism	Presentation of Islamic, Indian, and Chinese ideas as irrational or traditional
Industrial revolution	Mechanization and technology	Non-Western societies are considered backward and primitive.
Imperial Period & Modern World System	Capitalist center-periphery structure	Establishing economic, political, and epistemic dependency relations

The rise of Western civilization through stages such as the Reformation, Renaissance, scientific revolution, Enlightenment, and Industrial Age has brought about its internal development and the displacement of great civilizations such as Islam, India, and China in the world system. This process can be read as a "displacement between civilizations." Samuel Huntington points out the inevitability of the clash of civilizations and emphasizes that this transformation means suppression and domination at the level of cultural codes. On the other hand, Fukuyama positions Western liberalism as the peak of human history with the claim of the end of history, while describing other civilizations as either outside this process or as copies of it.

Arnold Toynbee argues that internal creativity, not external pressures, is the determining factor in the dynamics of the rise and fall of civilizations. He states that the introversion of the East in the face of the rise of the West has led to an epistemic crisis. The world historical transformation that Fernand Braudel reads through long-term structures shows that a "geo-intellectual" vacuum has emerged as Islamic civilization has lost its economic

and intellectual dominance in the Mediterranean region. According to Wallerstein's world systems theory, the West has maintained its central position through the financial and cultural exploitation it has applied to the periphery. At the same time, it has also monopolized the processes of knowledge production.

In this context, epistemic violence has become operational not only at the individual or cultural level, but also as a form of suppression and exclusion between civilizations. The West's imposition of its history as universal history either ignores other knowledge systems or renders them dysfunctional by transforming them within its hegemony. Below, an attempt is made to show how specific historical periods have led to ruptures in the history of civilization. For example, the banning of the ideas of Ibn Rushd, an Andalusian thinker, by the papacy in the last quarter of the 12th century constituted a turning point in terms of European thought, and Ibn Rushdist European thinkers emerged and, according to some claims, paved the way for reform and Renaissance in Europe. If we look at them in items;

1. **The Fall of Andalusia (1492)**After Andalusia, one of the Islamic scientific bases that laid the foundations for scientific developments in the West, was destroyed by the Catholic Kingdom, hundreds of scientists were exiled to Europe. This migration of knowledge formed the epistemological infrastructure of the Western Renaissance (Braudel, 1984).
2. **Transformation of the Education System in the Indian Subcontinent (19th century)**During the British colonial period, with Macaulay's declaration "Minute on Indian Education", traditional Indian education systems were devalued and British knowledge systems became dominant. This situation created an epistemic fracture, and knowledge production in Indian society was disrupted (Spivak, 2023).
3. **Suppression of Confucianism in China (mid-20th century).** In line with Western modernization policies, traditional knowledge systems were suppressed in China with the Cultural Revolution and replaced by a materialist understanding of knowledge. This caused China to experience an epistemic alienation from its knowledge systems (Wallerstein, 1991).
4. **University Reforms in the Middle East (20th century)**: The educational reforms implemented during the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic and other Arab countries resulted

> in the marginalization of Islamic sciences and the centralization of positivist knowledge systems. This process weakened Islamic civilization's internal knowledge production capabilities (Davutoğlu, 1994).

According to Davutoğlu (2018), the world system has been in a crisis for almost a century because an order could not be established, and this situation has caused the feeling of ontological insecurity to strengthen in non-Western societies. Because civilizational revivals depend on the eclectic relationship that each society establishes between its values and the values of the other, as well as the representation of its values through social and political institutions. Similarly, according to Şentürk (2018), a new discourse must be created to reach a multi-layered civilization framework again. For this, a transition should be made from a closed understanding of science to an open understanding of civilization and science, and a transition should be made to a relational metaphysics instead of the metaphysics of the absolute and hostile other. As will be shown below, the historiography of the Enlightenment period drew a framework based on the rejection of the contributions of other civilizations. It virtually imposed a framework based on Western metaphysics as the sole source of knowledge and truth.

With the Enlightenment, European-centered historiography began constructing the narrative of universal knowledge and progress as solely the product of Western civilization. This approach excluded many Eastern societies, especially Islamic civilization, from history, and their contributions were either ignored or evaluated as merely a means of transfer to the West. For example, the medicine of Ibn Sina, the political philosophy of Farabi, or the astronomy and mathematics studies developed in Andalusia were systematically marginalized in 18th and 19th century historiography. This situation meant not only the forgetting of scientific contributions, but also the blunting of a civilization's capacity to reinterpret its existence. One of the roots of the epistemic violence experienced today lies in this historical exclusion. The idea that knowledge belongs only to the West suppresses the potential of both immigrants and non-Western societies to produce knowledge; it fundamentally weakens epistemic pluralism.

Throughout history, civilizations have risen in periods of high information and human mobility, and disintegrated in periods of introversion. Migration is not only demographic, but also the migration of information systems.

5. Recommendations

The world's emergence from the framework of a single, uniform civilization and the state of depression, constant crisis, and conflict it creates depends not only on economic-political reasons but also on a revolution in mentality. Every civilization should be able to write its own story based on its resources. Epistemologically, the way should be opened for each culture to make a new periodization by taking into account its civilization basin, in addition to the periodization of history by Western historians. If necessary, serious budgets, including the UN, should be allocated for this issue. Regional cooperation-based organizations should take encouraging steps in this regard. For example, the Organization of Turkic States should allocate funds and resources to study the civilization history centered on the Turkic peoples and support projects in this field. Again, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation should allocate resources to create a new mental framework centered on the Islamic world and reflect the common identity of each nation without denying cultural differences. It should also open the way for researchers in this regard. Steps taken solely in line with the interests of the nation state will hinder this process. However, the example of the European Union has shown us very well that significant compromises bring great gains.

In this sense, in recent years, studies such as Comparative Culture, Comparative Political Theory and Philosophy, and Intercultural Philosophy have been instrumental in encouraging steps in this field. Cohabitation as a new cultural framework and connectivity as a new scientific understanding by Kılıç (2020) provide important clues. We can say that the philosophical infrastructure is ready on this subject through some concepts. Comparative Political Theory and Philosophy, which started in the early 1990s and has essential representatives in the world today, has tried to address each civilization basin's political theory and philosophy within its conditions by subjecting the Eurocentric framework to serious criticism. At the same time, there is an effort to spread this to the curriculum and content of political science departments. According to Wimmer (2009), Roxanne Euben's concept of Intercultural Learning and Gadamer's proposal for the Fusion of Horizons contain essential expansions. While both thinkers point out that human thought and social memory exist within a specific cultural environment and that, for this reason, a perspective independent of individual or social memory can only exist at the level of discourse, what needs to be done is for individuals, societies and even states and civilizations to open themselves up to the other and be open to learning from and integrating with the other.

6. Conclusion

World history is not the history of a single civilization but of civilizations. The efforts of a single civilization to conquer the entire world have failed. However, today, there is a structurally different situation in relations between civilizations than in the past. The dimension of relations between civilizations is not only between civilizations that are geographically bordering each other, but also between different geographies. All civilizational basins have increasingly begun to establish relations. In other words, no civilization is isolated. Again, even if they share the same civilizational basin, a new form of relationship has emerged in which different social and physical spaces manifest. Because neither the USA nor Europe represents a single cultural structure, neither Islam nor Asian powers. In today's world, where geographical distance has disappeared and even become meaningless, the most important point to be developed is the awareness that humanity is part of a common life as a culture. The recent pandemic has reminded humanity of this most clearly. The virus knows no borders. Environmental problems, the influx of refugees, or economic weakness are not a burden to be shouldered by only certain countries or at a level where sacrifices are required. What needs to be done is to spread the idea of coexistence as a new culture and the idea of connectivity/relationalism as a new scientific method. Otherwise, the crisis in the world will continue, and conflicts will never leave humanity's agenda. When migration and information closure are evaluated together, the emerging picture is not only a social but also an epistemic and ontological challenge. The set of values proposed in this study focuses on seeing migrants as carriers of information, establishing the principle of coexistence, and ensuring epistemic justice. It will also have some negative consequences in world politics, as stated below.

- It strengthens the ontological security obsession of nation-states.
- It undermines global awareness of immigrants' cultural, epistemic and economic contributions.
- It discourages epistemic pluralism. Instead, it encourages cultural standardization.
- Principles of cohabitation and the epistemic vision of justice are damaged.

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Chapter 2

From State Collapse to Chaos: Security Vacuum and Migration Dynamics in Libya

Sibel Yanık Aslan[1]

Abstract

The African continent, endowed with substantial potential due to its rich natural resources and vibrant youth demographic, concurrently confronts significant structural challenges stemming from security issues and large-scale migration movements. Armed conflicts, terrorist activities, and persistent political instability have led to the displacement of millions, while these extensive migration flows further complicate existing security dynamics and introduce new threats. This study examines the interdependent relationship between security challenges and African migration phenomena. In this context, post-2011 Libya is utilized as a case study. Following the ousting of Muammar Gaddafi's regime, the nation entered a phase characterized by political instability, armed conflict, and the erosion of central governance. This power vacuum has rendered Libya a pivotal transit point along irregular migration routes from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe. Consequently, this study explores how Libya's security issues cause regional instability and how migration pressures exacerbate the precarious security environment.

Introduction

The popular uprising that began in 2011 under the influence of the Arab Spring led to the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in Libya. Nevertheless, this upheaval has precipitated long-term political instability and a security vacuum in the country. The collapse of central authority, compounded by the ongoing power struggle among various militia groups, tribes, and armed gangs, has effectively fragmented the country. This ongoing security crisis in Libya has had far-reaching consequences, not only for the local population but also for migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa. Thousands of individuals from eastern and western Africa embark

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on perilous journeys to Europe via Libya and the Mediterranean, seeking opportunities for a better life. However, the absence of effective governance in Libya has transformed the country into a focal point for egregious crimes, including human trafficking, modern slavery, forced labour, and sexual exploitation. Irregular migrants in Libya are often detained in camps overseen by militias and armed groups, where they are subjected to severe violations of their fundamental human rights and have extremely limited access to humanitarian aid. Furthermore, every year, thousands of people lose their lives during sea voyages from Libya's shores to the European coast.

This case study highlights the intricate and often delicate relationship. In states where the authority of a state is weak, migrants become victims of the security vacuum, and the migration phenomenon can lead to larger regional instabilities. The Libyan scenario underscores the imperative for security policies to be addressed not only within national boundaries but also within the broader regional context.

In this study, the initial section will present a comprehensive overview of Libya's historical context, examining the political and social landscape of the country before the Arab Spring. The subsequent section will evaluate the fundamental causes and extensive repercussions of the collapse of the Gaddafi regime, with particular emphasis on migration-related challenges and the ensuing power vacuum. The final section will analyze intersections of insecurity and migration from the humanitarian perspective and both regional and international responses to the Libyan crisis, exploring the roles and strategies of various state and non-state actors.

1. Historical Background: The Libyan State Before the Collapse

Following the Italo-Ottoman War, Libya came under Italian control with the signing of the Treaty of Ouchy (also known as the Treaty of Lausanne) in 1912. From that point until 1951, Libya was governed by Italy through a system of seven provincial governors (Khalidi, 1952: 221-228). During World War II, the country was divided into three separate regions: the Emirate of Cyrenaica, the British-occupied zone, and the French-occupied zone (Acet, 2018: 253). In the post-war period, Libya was placed under the temporary administration of a United Nations commission and ultimately declared its independence on December 24, 1951. Thus, Libya became the first country to gain independence through a United Nations mandate (Anderson, 1982: 516-534). Following independence, the first general elections were held on February 19, 1952, and a federal constitution based on a monarchical system was adopted. The discovery and

extraction of oil in 1959 led to profound changes in the country's political and economic structures. Significant improvements were made, particularly in infrastructure, communication, and transportation networks. However, the monarchy under King Idris struggled to maintain effective control over the rapid social transformation. Eventually, on September 1, 1969, a military coup brought an end to the monarchy, marking the beginning of a new political era in Libya (Otman and Kalberg, 2007: 474). Free Officers Movement, under the leadership of Muammar Gaddafi, successfully executed a military coup that deposed the Libyan government and terminated King Idris's monarchy, signifying a pivotal moment in Libyan history (Anderson, 1982: 520). Under Gaddafi's regime, the Libyan Arab Republic was founded on the tenets of "freedom, socialism, and unity." The post-revolutionary agenda prioritized the promotion of Arab-Islamic ideology, resistance to Western influence, and the expansion of trade. Furthermore, the closure of foreign military bases contributed to an increase in Gaddafi's popularity among the Libyan populace (Prashad, 2021: 255).

Muammar Gaddafi's Pan-Arabist policy facilitated the strengthening of relations between Libya and other Arab states during the 1970s and 1980s. Notably, Libya's ties with neighboring Egypt were particularly robust, with unification efforts emerging through discussions between Gaddafi and Gamal Abdel Nasser. Subsequently, Syria joined this initiative. Conversely, Libya's relations with Western nations deteriorated under Gaddafi's leadership. The nationalization of Libyan oil in 1971 and Gaddafi's advocacy for an oil embargo during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War -prompted by Western support for Israel- exacerbated tensions. The embargo resulted in a rapid doubling of oil prices, bringing Libya's relations with Western countries to the brink of collapse (Ronen, 2013: 675).

The transformation in Libya's foreign policy initiated under the Gaddafi administration, coupled with prolonged United Nations embargoes, led Libya to fortify its relations with Sub-Saharan Africa. Consequently, as part of its Pan-African policy, Libya welcomed thousands of Sub-Saharan Africans, becoming a significant destination for individuals from Sudan, Niger, Mali, and Chad. However, the civil war in Libya and the subsequent collapse of the Gaddafi regime in 2011 fundamentally altered migration dynamics. Africans fleeing unrest in other regions of Africa and those deported by Libya began seeking new safe havens in Europe. It is estimated that between 2002 and 2013, approximately 7,000 African migrants perished or went missing en route to Europe. Specifically, between 2002 and 2005, 1,292 individuals were reported dead or missing; between 2006 and 2009, this

number rose to 2,557; and between 2010 and 2013, 2,436 individuals were reported missing (IOM, 2015).

2. The Collapse of the Libyan State: Causes and Consequences

The Arab Spring, a political movement that began in Tunisia in 2010 with demands for freedom and democracy, rapidly disseminated and evolved into a significant event in the region. This process ultimately led to the collapse of autocratic regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. In Libya, Muammar Gaddafi was killed during the Arab Spring, and NATO's intervention played a crucial role in the success of the revolution. Conversely, the Arab Spring movement encountered setbacks in neighbouring countries (Erdağ, 2017: 85).

The events in Libya have directly impacted Middle Eastern security and occupy a distinct position within the Arab Spring. While NATO's intervention led to the overthrow of Gaddafi's regime, Libya subsequently faced significant issues, including a security vacuum, political instability, and the rise of terrorist organizations (Yetim, 2014: 391-410). After Gaddafi's death, uncertainties emerged regarding the true purpose of the Libya Operation, and the conflicts were classified as international armed conflicts (Kobo and Zamir, 2012: 403-436).

Following the fall of the Gaddafi regime in 2011, Libya held its first democratic elections in July 2012. However, a power struggle emerged between political Islamist groups and secular-liberal factions. These tensions quickly escalated into violence, leading to the outbreak of the Second Libyan Civil War. Although a ceasefire was signed on August 21, 2020, lasting peace has not been achieved. The country remains divided between two rival administrations, and armed groups continue to operate as a major threat to national security and stability (Yeşilyurt, 2023: 1-21). In the context of the 2014 elections and the establishment of a new government, Libya was effectively partitioned into three principal regions: the Tobruk Government, headquartered in Benghazi and supported by the Libyan National Army; the United Nations-endorsed Government of National Accord, based in Tripoli; and the Berber tribes in the southwestern deserts, led by Tuareg and Tebu families. The Tuaregs, proponents of traditional Berber tribalism, were reluctant to cede their authority to a centralized government following the conflict (Cantürk and Şengül, 2018: 45-69).

The success of the civil war can be attributed to three primary factors: the active support from the United Nations and NATO, the establishment of the National Transitional Council by the opposition with international

endorsement, and the unification of all opposition groups. Nevertheless, the victory in the war did not result in enduring peace for Libya. Following the collapse of the Gaddafi regime, internal conflicts arose among the opposition factions. One of the most pressing challenges in post-Gaddafi Libya is the influence of tribal structures. The tribalism that was subtly perpetuated during Gaddafi's regime continues to exert significant influence on Libyan society today. Prominent tribes, including the Tuareg, Warfela, Migraha, and Kazazife, occasionally engage in conflicts, particularly concerning the control of oil fields (Cantürk and Şengül, 2018: 45-69).

An interview with a Nigerian woman in Italy revealed a significant shift in her perception of Libya following a violent shooting incident. Initially attracted by the prospect of improved employment opportunities, she became increasingly concerned for her safety after witnessing the death of a young boy who received no assistance. In response, she concealed herself in fear and sought divine protection, ultimately accumulating sufficient funds to flee to Italy. However, not all migrants have experienced similar fortune (Kuschminder, 2020).

In 2018, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that 600,000 migrants in Libya were vulnerable to abuse and human rights violations. By 2020, 71% of migrants reported having limited or no access to healthcare, a particularly concerning issue during the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis exacerbated their circumstances, with many losing employment and facing escalating food prices due to disrupted supply chains (Kuschminder, 2020).

2.1. Migration Dynamics in Libya

Libya has historically been a crucial point for migration routes from Africa and the Middle East to Europe, primarily due to its geographical position. The country's western coastline is only 350 km away from Europe's southernmost territories, Malta and the Italian island of Lampedusa, making it a natural transit point for migrants traveling through the Mediterranean. Furthermore, Libya has long served as a gateway between the Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa due to its central location in North Africa. Libya has functioned as both a destination and a transit country for migrants from Africa and Asia. 2009 and hosted 2.5 million migrants and assumed responsibility for migration control through its 2008 Friendship Treaty with Italy. This arrangement exemplifies the externalization of European border security to non-EU states (Toaldo, 2015).

After the Cold War, the number of irregular migrants attempting to reach Italy by sea increased. Between 2008 and 2014, the number of migrants, particularly from countries affected by the Arab Spring, was notably high. Political instability and internal conflicts directly influenced migration, making it difficult to distinguish between forced migration and economic migration. This created challenges for European Union countries (Massari, 2015: 12-37).

During Gaddafi's regime, the implementation of an open-door policy and visa waivers starting in the 1990s transformed Libya from merely a transit point to a final destination for many migrants seeking employment opportunities. Libya's relatively higher level of economic development compared to other African nations made it an attractive destination for migrants looking for work. Migrants contributed to Libya's illicit economy in various ways. First, they paid for their journey to, within, and from Libya to Europe, with each stage of the journey carrying its own set of costs. Second, many migrants were forced to work illegally or under duress in border regions or main coastal cities, providing low-wage or unpaid labor that was crucial to both the illegal and legal economies. Third, both official and unofficial detention facilities across Libya effectively became part of a system of migrant and asylum-seeker kidnapping, where release could only occur upon payment of a ransom by their families. These payments benefited not only human traffickers but also government officials nominally in charge of the detention centers. Moreover, human trafficking was an important part of the social contract between the regime and the country's peripheral areas. The security apparatus turned a blind eye to illegal trade in exchange for political support. After the revolution in Libya, this social contract was liberalized, with a more open market for illegal activities and a more direct relationship between those running the illegal business and political figures (Toaldo, 2015).

The agreement between Italy and Libya in 2008 led to a significant decrease in irregular migration. Strict border controls, pushback policies, and deportation measures reduced the number of irregular migrants crossing from Libya to Italy. However, the violence and conflict caused by the Arab Spring forced many people to migrate. Libya became the primary point for irregular migration from Africa to Europe, with many migrants losing their lives in the desert before reaching Libya. Afterward, most attempts to cross the sea ended in deportation back to Libya, where migrants faced poor conditions in detention centers before being sent back to their countries (Massari, 2015).

During the regime of Gaddafi, Libya maintained a centralized authority capable of managing migration on behalf of Europe. However, the collapse of this regime resulted in the absence of effective state institutions, leading to the disintegration of migration governance, particularly post-2014. Human smuggling through Libya should be conceptualized as a criminal activity not only perpetrated by local criminal networks but also facilitated through their connections with formal state structures. The escalation of migration flows from Libya across the Mediterranean is attributed not only to the limited efficacy of European—especially Italian—policies but also to a range of critical factors: the robustness of human trafficking networks, Libya's fluctuating policies toward sub-Saharan Africa, the country's economic appeal, its internal security conditions, and the conflicts and humanitarian crises in the countries of origin of migrants and asylum seekers (Toaldo, 2015).

The humanitarian intervention in Libya in 2011, while ostensibly aimed at addressing humanitarian concerns, resulted in the emergence of other issues. The ongoing instability in Libya has led to an increase in the number of irregular migrants seeking to cross into European territories. Consequently, there was an increase in the number of migrants attempting to reach Libya's shores and subsequently cross the Mediterranean to reach Italian islands, resulting in a rise in fatalities. The death rate of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean increased from 0.4% between 1998 and 2002 to 2.1% from 2003 to 2014. In 2014 alone, more than 3,000 lives were lost. Even during the Gaddafi regime, Libya was a pivotal transit point for migration to Europe, particularly due to its status as a significant oil exporter (Baldwin-Edwards, 2006).

The strategic importance of Libya's geographical position has rendered it a pivotal transit point for irregular migrants seeking to travel from various regions of Africa to Europe. In the early stages of the Arab Spring, the European Union's response was deemed inadequate, and the 2008 Libya-Italy Friendship Agreement was utilised to impede illegal migration from Libya. However, Italy's practice of returning migrants was found to violate European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) law, and Italy was ordered to pay compensation. After the agreement, there was a marked decline in irregular migration from Libya to Italy via sea, indicating that when the Libyan government demonstrated the requisite political determination, irregular migration could be averted despite its extensive coastline (Koka and Veshi, 2019: 26-52).

2.2. Effects of Security Vacuum on Migration in Libya

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Gaddafi regime, Libya experienced a period of profound instability, leading to a mass exodus of over a million individuals seeking refuge elsewhere. Between the years 2014 and 2016, there was a notable increase in irregular migration from Libya to Europe, with 170,000 in 2014, 154,000 in 2015, and 180,000 in 2016. The prevailing uncertainty in Libya has been identified as a contributing factor to the escalation in human trafficking, rendering the nation an attractive target for armed groups (Shaw and Mangan, 2014). The economic collapse of Libya has pushed its coastal residents, who are unemployed, into human trafficking. Most migrants attempting to cross from Libya to Europe do not meet the criteria set by the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, which defines migrants as those fleeing life-threatening situations. Many migrants, especially women and children, face various dangers such as a lack of food, access to healthcare, and exposure to violence in search of better economic conditions. Italy's policy of pushing back migrants, sending them back to Libya, detaining them in detention centers, and returning them to their countries is considered problematic and only partially successful.

Following the fall of Gaddafi, the Toubou ethnic group established and maintained dominance in southeastern Libya, exerting control over the movement of people, financial resources, and goods. This control has been monetized through the kidnapping and extortion of Eritrean and East African migrants. Moreover, the southwestern region has experienced persistent power struggles, particularly between the Toubou and Tuareg tribes. This area, serving as a critical entry point for West African migrants, has gained notoriety for reports of slave markets and human trafficking. After the Gaddafi regime, migration through Libya increased due to the lack of governmental oversight. During the period of regime, human trafficking and extortion emerged as significant sources of income for numerous Libyan communities, often to the detriment of vulnerable migrants. Between 2014 and 2017, approximately 625,000 migrants arrived in Italy by sea, predominantly departing from Libya, with a peak of 181,000 arrivals in 2016, as reported by the UNHCR. Following the Italy-Libya agreement, the number of arrivals significantly decreased to 23,000 in 2018 and further declined to 11,000 in 2019. In the first half of 2020, around 7,200 migrants reached Europe via the Central Mediterranean route (Kuschminder, 2020).

The post-Gaddafi transition in Libya has faced significant challenges from the outset. With the collapse of the regime's security apparatus, this vacuum has largely been filled by a hybrid system composed of

"revolutionary" brigades (militias) that had fought against Gaddafi. These groups, integrated into either the Ministry of Interior or the Ministry of Defense, have formed uneasy alliances with the remnants of the old army that defected from the regime in 2011. This hybrid security structure is also evident in the management of migration control. While detention centers were once entirely under the Directorate for Combating Illegal Migration of the Ministry of Interior, in the civil war period, only six out of twenty were managed by this institution, with the rest either fully under militia control or subject to mixed governance (Toaldo, 2015).

Several Nigerian individuals have been employed in Libya for extended periods. Among them, a man named Abu operated a clothing store in Tripoli, where he resided for seven years. Following the onset of the civil war, he returned to Nigeria but subsequently returned to Libya when the situation appeared to stabilize. Due to deteriorating conditions in Nigeria, his wife and children later joined him. However, the death of Gaddafi resulted in a power vacuum, leading to violent confrontations among various factions. Abu, who sought refuge in Italy in 2016, reported that the emergence of ISIS in Libya exacerbated the situation. He recounted that his daughter was tragically killed by a stray bullet during the conflict (Kuschminder, 2020).

3. Intersections of Insecurity and Migration: A Humanitarian Perspective

The significant migration flows in the early 2000s were strategically utilized by the Gaddafi regime as a tool to strengthen its relations with Europe. In this context, the first bilateral agreement between Libya and Italy was signed in 2000, aiming to foster cooperation in combating irregular migration, terrorism, and organized crime. This agreement laid the foundation for a broader diplomatic rapprochement, culminating in the 2008 Libya-Italy Friendship Treaty. The cooperation on migration management was structured around three main pillars: joint maritime patrols in the Mediterranean, the implementation of electronic surveillance systems on Libya's southern borders by Italian companies, and Italy's diplomatic mediation on Libya's behalf within the European Union (Toaldo, 2015).

Migration routes from Nigeria to Libya have historically existed since the precolonial era and were institutionalized through the transatlantic slave trade. Over the past fifty years, these routes have continued to be utilized by individuals seeking employment opportunities in North Africa or Europe, including low-skilled agricultural laborers and, subsequently, trafficked sex workers. However, following the collapse of the Libyan state in 2011, these

networks became significantly more organized and widespread, leading to a substantial increase in human mobility. This shift has marked a significant transformation in regional migration Dynamics. Simultaneously, a so-called "anti-smuggling" market emerged along Libya's northwestern coast. In the summer of 2017, armed groups previously engaged in human smuggling began to rebrand themselves as anti-smuggling actors to avoid United Nations sanctions. This strategic repositioning culminated in a 19-day armed conflict in the coastal city of Sabratha. The ambiguous roles played by these actors complicated the security landscape and contributed to the reconfiguration of smuggling networks (Eaton, 2025).

Search and Rescue (SAR) operations mitigate the risk factor by reducing the mortality rate at sea. Consequently, Italy has been held accountable for the rise in migration flows, as these operations are often perceived as a contributing factor to the increased number of migrants attempting the journey. This situation has contributed to the emergence of xenophobic and anti-immigration political parties. Historically, the number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean from Libya was typically below 40,000 annually; however, in 2014, this figure escalated to 120,000. This surge is frequently associated with the Italian Navy's Mare Nostrum Operation. Notably, 2014 became the deadliest year in the Mediterranean, with 3,419 lives lost (Toaldo, 2015).

The Triton operation had a much more limited scope compared to Mare Nostrum, operating only near EU shores, whereas Mare Nostrum extended as far as the Libyan coast. The increase in migration is mainly driven by two key "push" factors. First, the rapid deterioration of security in Libya led migrants who would have otherwise remained there to attempt crossing the sea to Europe. Second, the migration flows into Libya originate from three main regions: West Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Syria. The Syrian civil war triggered a more recent wave, with West Africans entering Libya from the southwest, migrants from the Horn of Africa through the southeast, and Syrians and Palestinians often traveling via Egypt before reaching eastern Libya by sea (Toaldo, 2015). In addition, the EU's Operation Sophia, which had rescued approximately 48,000 migrants in the Mediterranean between 2015 and 2018, was replaced by Operation Irini in 2020. However, Irini refrained from deploying naval assets and relied exclusively on unmanned aerial vehicles, which were not equipped to carry out sea rescues. This shift raised substantial concerns regarding the safety and protection of migrants at sea (Eaton, 2025).

As a result of these developments, the number of irregular migrants arriving in Italy from Libya sharply declined—from 162,895 in 2016 to 108,409 in 2017, and further down to 12,977 in 2018. However, this reduction in sea arrivals did not immediately translate into a decrease in the overall number of migrants transiting through Libya. A large migrant population was already present in the country, and several smuggling routes remained unaffected by the external interventions. Consequently, Libya experienced an internal surge in migrant numbers and a corresponding increase in migrant detention practices. These outcomes have intensified critical debates surrounding the humanitarian implications of the EU's externalized border management strategies (Eaton, 2025).

Although European policymakers and the media focus on the migrants' boats, an important aspect of human smuggling is the safe houses where migrants and asylum-seekers are often held for weeks. In these safe-houses and on the boats, they are deprived of necessities like water, food, and life jackets. Additionally, they are usually given very little information about their intermediate and final destinations or the means of transport (Toaldo, 2015).

3.1. Regional and International Responses to the Libyan Crisis

The European Union is implementing economic strategies to address the current situation. In 2014, the EU established the "Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund," which is set to distribute 3 billion Euros regionally for seven years. A substantial portion of this fund is designated for national programs aimed at enhancing the asylum systems of member states. These national states utilize the fund exclusively to fulfill the basic needs of migrants, including food, health, and education. The Italian government, for instance, provides migrants with free accommodation, mobile phones, 3 Euros per day in envelopes, and education within migrant reception centers, where migrants reside voluntarily (Farrel, 2015). Additionally, the Trintex program was initiated under the auspices of Frontex in 2014 to support the Italian government. Triton operations, another initiative based in the Mediterranean, focus on migrant rescue efforts to assist the EU in meeting its international obligations (EC, 2014).

The European Union responded to the Libyan crisis through both diplomatic efforts and humanitarian aid focused on civilian protection. A total of €154.5 million was allocated, most of which was transferred to international organizations to address irregular migration. While Italy bore the primary responsibility for managing migration flows through Libya, the

2013 Lampedusa tragedy, where over 200 migrants died at sea, negatively impacted both Italy's and the EU's human rights records. The UN Human Rights Committee presented direct evidence against Italy regarding these deaths (Övgü, 2021). Following the tragic incidents in Lampedusa in 2015, where over 700 migrants lost their lives and many others were at risk, the European Union was compelled to adopt new measures regarding the migration crisis. With Council Decision 2015/778, the EU launched a military naval operation initially called the European Union Naval Force – Mediterranean. It was later renamed Operation Sophia, after a baby born aboard one of the mission's ships in September 2015. The operation aimed to train personnel from the Libyan Navy and Coast Guard, as well as to enforce the UN arms embargo along Libya's coast. A Task Force was established and granted the authority to monitor, search, and seize vessels suspected of smuggling, under international law (EUNAVFOR, 2020).

The European Union signed a new bilateral agreement with the Fayez al-Sarraj government of Libya in 2017 to curb irregular migration, following the 2008 Friendship Treaty with the Gaddafi regime. Additionally, the EU cooperated with Central African countries like Niger and Mali to prevent migration at its source. In 2018, the EU provided a total of €291 million in aid to Libya, using these funds to deliver medical and humanitarian assistance to tens of thousands of migrants. While 27 official refugee camps were reported to be active in Libya, the actual number is believed to be higher, with additional illegal camps reportedly run by armed groups. Furthermore, it has been observed that some migrants were abandoned without water in the deserts between Libya, Chad, and Sudan (Nielsen, 2022). The European Union has implemented an externalization policy in its migration and security relations with Libya, successfully reducing irregular migration from Libya to Italy. The aggressive and sometimes unlawful behavior of the Libyan Coast Guard toward migrants has been cited as a factor in this reduction. However, the EU's informal approach to managing migration relations with Libya has led to covert and extra-legal practices in preventing irregular migration. Instead of formal agreements, temporary arrangements have been used to facilitate the return of migrants, with the most significant negative impact felt in Libya (Baldwin-Edwards and Lutterbeck, 2018: 15).

In 2017, agreements signed between the European Union, Italy, and Libya marked a significant shift in the dynamics of human smuggling across the Central Mediterranean migration route. On 2 February 2017, Italy signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord, followed by the Malta Declaration endorsed by EU leaders in Valletta on 3 February. Within this framework, the Libyan Coast

Guard assumed responsibility for search and rescue (SAR) operations near the Libyan coastline during the 2017–2018 period. Concurrently, European state-led rescue missions gradually withdrew from Libyan territorial waters, and non-governmental organizations conducting SAR operations faced increasing restrictions on their activities in the region (Eaton, 2025).

Conclusion

Since the 1990s, international sanctions have substantially weakened the agricultural sector in southern Libya. This economic downturn has created conditions conducive to the expansion of cross-border trade and, more prominently, smuggling activities. The fall of the Gaddafi regime, along with enduring political instability, has positioned Libya as a pivotal transit hub on migration routes to Europe. During this period, smuggling networks facilitating maritime passage for migrants to Europe expanded rapidly; between 2011 and 2016, the number of irregular migrants arriving in Italy via the Mediterranean increased from 28,500 to approximately 163,000. The ensuing power vacuum has fueled clashes among rival armed groups vying for control over strategic transportation routes, critical infrastructure, and state institutions. This complex conflict environment has enabled the rapid expansion of Libya's informal economy, with illicit activities, particularly migrant smuggling and human trafficking, emerging as primary sources of revenue (Eaton, 2025). Furthermore, the ongoing migrant crisis underscores the significant humanitarian challenges confronting vulnerable populations, which are intensified by limited access to essential services and increasing violence.

The international community's response to the Libyan migration crisis has developed into a multifaceted framework characterized by security-driven, financially supported, yet ethically contentious strategies. Although the substantial decrease in irregular sea crossings since 2017 may be perceived as a policy success, it has incurred a humanitarian cost, including increased migrant detention, abuse in unofficial camps, and reliance on non-state actors of questionable legitimacy. The dependence on informal arrangements, rather than binding international agreements, has further compromised transparency and accountability. The European Union's evolving response to the Libyan crisis indicates a transition from a focus on humanitarian concerns to a securitized approach to migration management. Initially, efforts prioritized the protection of migrants and collaboration with Libyan authorities. However, subsequent strategies increasingly emphasized externalization, military operations, and support for the Libyan Coast Guard. Although these measures have led to a reduction in irregular arrivals, they

have also raised significant human rights concerns, particularly regarding the treatment of migrants in detention and at sea. The lack of formal legal frameworks and the reliance on ad hoc agreements further complicate the ethical and legal accountability of EU migration policies in Libya.

The relationship between security issues and migration on the African continent should be understood as a complex, mutually reinforcing dynamic rather than a linear connection. The case of Libya exemplifies how the collapse of state authority and the emergence of a security vacuum can accelerate migration flows, which, in turn, further destabilize an already fragile security environment. In the post-Gaddafi era, Libya has emerged as a critical zone of risk, affecting not only its internal security but also broader regional stability. Irregular migration flows, coupled with Libya's weak governance structures, have facilitated the empowerment of armed groups within the country while simultaneously intensifying migratory pressures toward Europe, thereby influencing the international security agenda.

Consequently, ensuring lasting security in Africa and effectively managing migration are not only humanitarian imperatives but also strategic necessities for both regional and global stability. The Libyan case underscores the urgent need to strengthen state capacity, enhance international cooperation, and implement comprehensive policies that address the root causes of migration in a multidimensional manner.

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Chapter 3

Religion as a Security Issue in Azerbaijan-Iran Relations

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Abstract

This article examines the impact of the religious factor on Azerbaijan-Iran relations. Azerbaijan and Iran have historically been in the same cultural and religious basin. This situation continued until the Turkmenchay Treaty of 1828. However, after this process, the two countries went through different political processes, and Azerbaijan has been culturally different since the Tsarist Russian period. This difference reached its highest level during the Soviet Union period, and the state and society gained a secular structure. In Iran, which is in the south, religious understanding gradually became dominant and peaked with the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution. These processes prevented both states from becoming a unifying element despite the similarity of religion and sect, and on the contrary, continued to exist as an area of conflict. This situation was reflected in both countries' domestic and foreign policies. Azerbaijan's close relations with Israel, in contrast to Iran's developing relations with Armenia, are developments that confirm this hypothesis. Thus, it is seen that the similarity of religion and sect has emerged as a security problem in the relations between the two countries.

1. Introduction

Azerbaijan and Iran, two states with a shared historical and geographical context, present a complex relationship. The concept of Azerbaijan, historically political, has evolved into a geographical location and a state. Azerbaijan encompasses a significant part of Iranian territory, leading to occasional tensions between the two.

The division of the Azerbaijan region between Iran and Russia, with the Aras River as the border between the 1813 Gulistan and 1828 Turkmenchay Treaties, has led to what can be termed as a 'syndrome of division' in

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Azerbaijan and Iran. This syndrome, characterized by a sense of loss and disunity, was exacerbated by the establishment of the Republic of Azadistan in the region under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Khiyabani in 1918 (Hasanlı, 2005, p. 35) and the Azerbaijan People's Government (21 Azeri Movement) under the leadership of Seyit Jafar Pishawari in 1945-46 (Bayır, 2019, p. 140-141). These events have caused the region to be viewed with suspicion in Iranian historical memory. The occupation and division of Iran in both world wars, which led to the reorganization of the international system, have further entrenched this syndrome in Iran's historical memory.

The emergence of Azerbaijan as an independent state after the collapse of the USSR has increased the uneasiness in Iran due to the reasons listed above. The fact that they historically shared the same geographical location and the existence of common religious and cultural factors did not turn into a unifying effect on the relations between the two countries. This situation constitutes the starting point of the study. Contrary to the hypothesis that the system consists of common thoughts, beliefs, and values, claimed by constructivists, it has structural features and affects social and political actions. These structural features, such as power dynamics, historical legacies, and geopolitical considerations, are seen to be practical in the relations between the two countries. This situation reveals the need to know which factor is effective in forming the ties between the two countries in the context of determining the main problem of the study. The study sought an answer to the main problem in light of the hypothesis that 'the structure of the international system is effective on Azerbaijan-Iran relations.' To understand this, the relations between the two countries will be examined in light of the hypotheses of neorealism, which has an essential place in the discipline of international relations.

2. Conceptual Discussion

Realism, a cornerstone in the conceptual development of International Relations, has maintained its relevance from the late 1930s to the mid-1980s, earning the 'theory of international relations' (Aydın, 2004 p. 33). Its enduring significance is rooted in its connection to issues that humanity faces. The realist theory encompasses all political, economic, military, and social issues that have been and will continue to be part of the history of civilization, transcending time and space (Ersoy, 2014, p. 159).

Factors such as the fact that power and force, which are the basis of realism, are elements that cannot be measured, the excessive emphasis on the state by not including non-state actors in the balance of power policy

and analyses, the confusion regarding the definition of national interest, and the negative treatment of human nature have led to the criticism of realism. However, realism has managed to continue its existence in the discipline by adding new additions and methodological changes, taking into account the changes in the international system in response to the criticisms directed at it. Realists insist on the hypothesis that the formation of the balance of power is based on human nature and the interaction of units. However, while realists ignore economic factors and focus on political and military issues, the increasing importance of economic factors, as in the oil crisis of 1974, has increased the criticisms against realism and led to a new approach. This new approach is Neorealism, which Kenneth Waltz laid the foundations for and called systemic theory.

Neorealism draws a structural framework based on the view that the international system consists of sovereign states and that these states have similar structures in terms of function. However, it is argued that the factor that differentiates these states is power distribution. Unlike the idea that the formation of the distribution of power is based on the interaction of human nature and units, Waltz based the distribution of power on the anarchic structure of the international system. Thus, neorealism has created a philosophy of international politics by adding system analysis to the unit-level analysis of classical realism (Çıtak, 2014, pp. 46-47).

Neorealism has three basic principles. First, the organizing principle of the system is anarchy, which in this context means the absence of a central authority that can enforce rules and decisions. Second, security-oriented behavior patterns make states similar to each other; finally, power distribution determines the actors' positions in the system (Waltz, 2015, p. 118). Although Waltz has similar views to classical realists in that the organizing principle of the system is anarchy, Waltz, unlike them, claims that states do not act with a rational decision-making process that they make alone. The decisions made by states emerge due to the interaction they create in proportion to their own and their opponents' positions in the system. In other words, neorealism claims that international politics and the search for security are produced by the positions of states in the system. In this process, states are interested in their positions and gains, and the gains and positions of states they see as rivals (Balcı & Kardaş, 2014, p. 127). According to Waltz, all states must protect their security, but this situation is limited by the anarchy that dominates the system because everyone's strategy depends on other states. The balance of power emerges as a product of this strategy.

In the 1990s, the Constructivist theory of international relations emerged due to the increasing criticism of positivist theories and the inadequacy of the dominant theories of international relations in predicting the end of the Cold War. According to Nicholas Onuf, one of the important representatives of the movement, an essential reason for this inadequacy is that theorists interested in politics accept the view that anarchy prevails instead of order in the international arena (Özev, 2013, p. 483). Constructivism argues that the international structure belongs to the international society formed by states and accepts that this structure gains its existence and functionality based on a set of values, rules, and institutions widely accepted by states, ensuring the system's functionality. These values, rules, and institutions shape state behavior and interactions in the international system (Özev, 2013, pp. 484-485).

Constructivism has increasingly become a part of the field, as demonstrated by the contributions of Alexander Went. An attempt has been made to reveal a direct relationship between social factors such as identity, culture, and foreign policy. One of the important works of the post-Cold War period is Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations". Huntington stated that the determining factor in international conflicts and alliances would not be political or economic factors, but rather between different cultures and religions, and that this would continue in the 21st century.

Went tried to establish a theoretical basis for the relationship between identity and foreign policy. Went's structural constructivist approach assumed that identity and international social structures were mutually constructed and that these affected the interests. Therefore, states' foreign policies had a different content from the structuralism of neorealism. According to neorealism, the anarchic feature of the international structure without a central authority causes security concerns for states, and states pursue policies based on power. Therefore, the material-based explanations of neorealism turn into social relations in Wendt; the international structure, defined as the absence of a central authority, turns into a socially constructed structure (Arı, 2013, p. 499).

Constructivists argue that the system of common thoughts, beliefs and values has structural characteristics and affects social and political actions (Arı, 2013, p. 507). The focus of the study is religion, which is an important element of the social structure and is inherent to society. Although it is in line with the hypotheses of constructivist theory, the neorealist theory was chosen for this study. Despite the Muslim identity of both Azerbaijan and Iran, it has not become a unifying or influential element in foreign policy

outputs. As will be seen in the later parts of the study, the developing relations of Azerbaijan with Israel and Iran with Christian Armenia strengthen this idea. Therefore, the hypotheses of constructivist theory are insufficient to explain the relations between the two countries. The fact that the relations between Azerbaijan and Iran continue in a conflict-oriented manner gives the impression that a more decisive factor is effective in their foreign policies. This effect is thought to be anarchy, which dominates the system. Therefore, the study will be explained using the hypotheses of neorealist theory.

In the later stages of the study, the focus will be on whether religion affects the development of Azerbaijan-Iran relations. In this context, the main problem of the article will be revealed.

3. The Place of Religion in International Politics

Religion, an important factor in international politics from the end of the Roman Empire until the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, lost its influence after this date and was not considered a factor in foreign policy analyses. Scientific developments in Europe caused an approach based on the nation and national interest to prevail instead of religion. During the reign of Louis XIII (1610-1643), Richelieu, the king's prime minister and the cardinal of the Church, considered France's national interests separately from the interests of the Papacy (Sander, 2011, p. 98). The disappearance of religious wars centered in Europe also manifested itself in other parts of the geography but did not eliminate the fact that religion was a factor, and religion lost its fundamental determinant feature in international politics with the Westphalia. After this process, states began to pursue policies based on their national interests.

Religion gradually began to show itself in international politics in events such as the establishment of the state of Israel on religious grounds in 1948, the dominance of religion in the state with the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, and the establishment of the US's religious-based "Green Belt" project against the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Following the establishment of Israel, the failure of Arab nationalism in the Middle East against Israel led to the establishment of religious-based organizations (Şahin, 2009, p. 10). During the Soviet Union period, religion was restricted in the states within the union due to the ideological structure of the regime. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Islam began to revive in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and Christianity in Russia and Eastern European states. While there was a significant increase in the number of places of worship in these regions, religion began to make its presence felt in social life.

Along with this process, an increase in religious radicalism was observed in many countries of the world in parallel with religious and sectarian diversity. However, a development that is sharper than these examples and will overshadow all discussions was the religious-based terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the USA on September 11, 2001. With these attacks, religion, which had been pushed to the background in international politics since Westphalia in 1648, came to the fore again in 2001.

Kenneth Waltz states that neorealism is based on two fundamental principles, and religion regains importance at this point. The first of these principles is that states are in constant competition. Another vital element that allows realist theory to develop in a different field is "socialization". Socialization means accepting competition between states, learning the social structures of rival states, and developing behaviors accordingly. The international system emerges due to these behaviors of states, and in an anarchic system, a balance of power is formed and their interests increase. States have to analyze the social systems of their rivals well, even in their competitive situation. Because states behave according to their social structures, in this case, religion, one of the critical elements of social structure and the role that religion can play, comes to the fore again in international relations. The fact that states know each other's religious structures and perspectives well and behave accordingly shows that neorealism, a behavioral theory, has an essential dimension regarding religion (Arı v& Arslan, 2005, p. 33).

4. The Religion Factor in Azerbaijan-Iran Relations

During the USSR period, religion was a factor in Azerbaijan-Iran relations. Iran was the first country where religion was used in foreign policy in Azerbaijan, where the majority of the population was Shiite. Stalin, who had been pursuing an expansionist policy against Iran since 1941, benefited from the clergy in Azerbaijan to implement this policy. In the decision taken in March 1944, "On the preparations to increase economic and cultural assistance to the people of South Azerbaijan," the Soviet administration wanted to give special importance to religion and the clergy to influence the people. In line with this plan, a delegation consisting of the Head of the Religious Administration of Transcaucasian Muslims, Sheikhulislam Akhund Agha Alizade, Akhund Abdurrahim Akhunzade, Akhund Molla Muzaffer Mirzacanzade, and Ali Samedov was sent to the South Azerbaijan region and Tehran in May 1945. Stalin aimed to influence the Azerbaijanis in Iran in this way (Hasanov, 2011, p. 125). The Soviets carried out their

anti-Western stance against Muslim countries through their clergy. The head of the Religious Administration of Transcaucasian Muslims, Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade, declared at the international religious symposium in Dushambe in September 1979, at the Islamic Conference in Tashkent in May 1980, at the conference of religious scholars from all over the world held in Moscow in May 1982, and at the Islamic Conference in Baku in October 1986 that the Muslim states within the Union should support the Soviets against imperialism (Ehedov, 1991, pp. 181-183). The Sheikh-ul-Islam in Azerbaijan continued to hold talks with religious leaders in Iran. He negotiated with Ayatollah Shariatmadari, who significantly influenced South Azerbaijan and the Islamic Revolution but was later punished by Khomeini. The Sheikh-ul-Islam did this with the support of Moscow. Sheikh al-Islam traveled several times from Baku to Qom, an essential religious center in Iran, to meet Shariatmadari. However, according to Shaffer, Shariatmadari overestimated the official Islam that Moscow was trying to establish and the religious sensitivities of the people there (Shaffer, 2008, p. 121).

The official understanding of religion established in Soviet Azerbaijan and the significant secularization of society caused fractures in Azerbaijan's relations with Iran in the post-Soviet period. The political process experienced by Soviet Azerbaijan and the differences in the political processes experienced in Iran after the 1979 Islamic Revolution did not positively affect the relations between the two societies, despite the similarities in religion and sect. The influence of religion, both in its official and societal forms, continued to shape the dynamics of Azerbaijan-Iran relations, underscoring its enduring significance.

After the Islamic Revolution, discussions began about the place of religion in international politics when Iran began to use religious discourse in foreign policy. Although religion declined against the nation-state with the Westphalian settlement in 1648, it maintained its place in the Middle East, the birthplace of monotheistic religions. After the revolution in Iran, those who carried out the revolution began to use religious discourse in domestic and foreign policy. The revolution's leaders declared that the revolution would not be limited to Iran and would continue in all geographies where Muslims lived. The religious regime in Iran included the declaration that they were "the defender of the rights of all Muslims in the world" in the Iranian constitution (article 3/16) (Iranonline, 2017). Based on this article, the new regime considered itself responsible for protecting the rights of all Muslims in the world. Thus, this responsibility became the most fundamental basis of the "exporting the regime" policy to other states.

After the Islamic Revolution, all the instruments of the revolution were used to ensure the security and survival of the state. Religious rhetoric is just one of them. With the policy of 'exporting the regime,' the revolution leaders aimed to extend the state's external security boundaries beyond its borders. In this way, the country's security expanded to cover a vast geography. Iran's crises in Iraq, Yemen, and Syria and its relations with the Lebanese Shiites are essential in terms of showing the limits of Iran's security. With this regime's export policy implemented in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, Iran has created a lebensraum (living space). It has sought to counter threats directed at it far beyond its borders. In the post-Khomeini period, Iran has tried to form its' regime export' policy to fulfill its national interests and strategic calculations, demonstrating the depth of its geopolitical considerations.

In Soviet Azerbaijan, the number of religious education and places of worship was limited. For this reason, in the post-Soviet period, entering the country under the guise of religion became possible to fill the gap in this area (İsmayılov, 2016, p. 154). Until 1992, 54 religious societies were registered in Azerbaijan. Seventeen of these were mosque associations. There were a total of 162 religious officials, 100 of whom were imams, in officially operating mosques, churches, and synagogues. Until 1990, the number of people with higher religious education in Azerbaijan was 16. All these people who received education at the Mir Arap Madrasah in Bukhara and the Tashkent Islamic Institute worked in the Religious Administration of Caucasian Muslims or mosques in Baku (Abasov, 2014, p. 151). With the law "On Freedom of Religious Belief" issued on August 20, 1992, the activities of religious institutions and societies were made independent of the state. According to Article 18 of the law, the economic resources of religious institutions and societies would be donations and aid made in addition to their assets. The removal of the obstacle to the spread of religious views with this law paved the way for foreigners and citizens of the country to carry out religious activities in Azerbaijan. Article 8 of the law allowed religious societies to connect to centers outside Azerbaijan, while Article 24 allowed students to be sent to educational institutions abroad to receive religious education (Hasanov, 2011, p. 201). According to Gündüz İsmayılov, Deputy Minister of the State Committee for Religious Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan[2], this law later became the source of many problems in Azerbaijan. In the early years of independence, religious propaganda was

2 It was established by President Heydar Aliyev in 2001. The Committee's main field of activity, headquartered in Baku, is to establish an appropriate framework for protecting freedom of religious belief according to Article 48 of the Constitution (Samedov, 2014).

carried out by people who went from Azerbaijan to Mashhad and Karbala for religious visits. In addition, many religious publications were smuggled into the country illegally. Since the infrastructure to train clergy was insufficient in the country, people went abroad for religious education.

Iran is still the leading country among these countries. Students who went to the Qom region of Iran would return to their countries with the religious education they received and provide religious services. Students who receive education in Qom madrasahs reach the highest religious authority in Iran, the Ayatollah rank. This rank has political authority in addition to religious matters. When we look at the Guidance (Velayeti Fakih) (Ramazani, 1988, pp. 19-20), the most authoritative authority in Iran, elected from among the Ayatollahs in Iran, the importance of the Ayatollah rank is seen. The clergy who returned to Azerbaijan from these centers were not only concerned with religious affairs but also acquired a politicized religious understanding and worldview. This understanding contradicts both the social structure of Azerbaijan and the national interests of Azerbaijan. It has also been determined that these people who received education in the religious centers of Iran later had political ties with the Iranian administration. These will be discussed shortly.

The religious movement experienced in Azerbaijan in the 1990s also impacted civil society organizations and political parties. In 1991, a group from the AHP founded the Azerbaijan Islamic Party (AİP), a religious party inclined to public values in Iran. This party was the only "ideological" party among the religious organizations operating in Azerbaijan (Abasov, 2014, p. 147). In 1994, with the Treaty of the Century, Azerbaijan turned its face to the West. The AİP, which determined pro-Iran, anti-Israeli, and anti-Western policies, was prevented from participating in the parliamentary elections to be held in the autumn of 1995 (Yunusov, 2004, pp. 193-194; Hüseyinli, 2001: 170). Nine party members were detained after twenty people sent to Iran by the AİP to receive political and military training were caught at the border by Azerbaijan. Iran increased its activities against Azerbaijan during this period. Thirteen people working on behalf of Iran were caught by April 1997. In April 1997, when the AİP senior executives were tried, the court announced that the party leaders had attempted to spy for Iran, which caused a crisis in Azerbaijani-Iranian relations (Aslanlı & Hesenov, 2005, p. 235). According to İmambeyli, contrary to expectations, the arrest of the party leaders did not cause a reaction in society. According to some sources, the AİP was a political force with 50 thousand supporters and sympathizers (Hasanov, 2011, p. 198). This lack of reaction in society revealed that the party did not impact Azerbaijani society as expected. The

fact that the opposition in Azerbaijan is generally anti-Iranian causes the government's activities to be supported. Iran's position in the international system is another factor that facilitates the policies Azerbaijan implements against Iran.

In Azerbaijan, religious activities have been transformed into a tool for the power struggle of states. Sunnism and Shiism, two different interpretations of Islam, have become an instrument of the rivalry between Turkey and Iran. Turkey was also sending clergy to counter Iran's activities in Azerbaijan through its clergy. The conflict between the Sunni imams sent from Turkey and the Caucasus Muslims Religious Administration (KMDİ) has occasionally manifested itself. The recall of Abdulkadir Sezgin, the Religious Services Counselor of the Baku Embassy in 1995, from Baku has been accepted as a success of the KMDİ (Abasov, 2014, p. 152). The increasing influence of the Sunni sect and the Wahhabis in the northern regions of Azerbaijan, such as Shamakhi, is a positive development for the US, as Iran's influence has been limited. When US-Iran relations are considered, this situation is evaluated as a limitation of the Shiite hinterland that Iran is trying to create.

In 1996, the Azerbaijani press began to increasingly show its discomfort with the activities of foreign religious organizations in the country. Sheikhulislam Allahshukur Pashazade met with Aliyev to have their activities monitored. Since such activities of foreigners were considered dangerous within the state, taking measures in this area was not difficult. In 1992, an article was added to the law that paved the way for foreigners to carry out religious activities in the country, prohibiting the religious activities of foreign nationals in Azerbaijan. In addition, it was made mandatory for religious communities in the country to carry out all their activities under the auspices of the Sheikhulislam (Yunusov, 2004, p. 198). After this change in the law, the official registration of religious societies was again made to the Ministry of Justice. During the registration, many structures under the control of foreigners were closed and deported. According to official statements, before registration renewal in 1996, the number of Islamic societies was 178, but this number dropped to 120 in 1998 (Yunusov, 2004, p. 198). Although some of the religious groups with foreign roots were deported, they gained many supporters and representatives as a result of their activities in the country since the 1990s. The statements of Tofik Babayev, a high-level official of the Ministry of National Security, at the meeting held in May 2001 regarding religious groups in the country revealed the seriousness of the situation. Babayev stated that radical groups under the protection of Iran and some other states were trying to take over the state by operating under the name of religion and that the Wahhabis were also increasing their

influence in the country (Hasanov, 2011, p. 204). These developments in Azerbaijan showed that the influence of the Sheikh-ul-Islamate on religious communities was weak. For this reason, a state institution called the "State Committee on Work with Religious Institutions" was established in 2001 to deal with religious societies (Samedov, 2014, p. 205).

Religious and cultural issues have continued to be problematic in Azerbaijan-Iran relations. Since Iran failed in its policy of influencing the regime and social life it considered for the whole country in the first years of independence, it seems to have shifted this policy to a regional level. It has started communicating with the social segments it can reach, especially in the southern regions close to its borders and the Absheron Peninsula. Because the Tehran administration's failure in this area is evident, Iran lost its positive influence on Azerbaijan in the first years of Azerbaijan's independence, especially due to its stance on the side of Armenia in the Karabakh war. The fact that the Karabakh war increased nationalist feelings in Azerbaijani society and its developing relations with Christian Armenia, despite its Muslim identity, caused the Tehran administration's statements to lose credibility.

According to the foreign policy approach established after independence, while Azerbaijan's relations with the US and Israel are developing, there are problems in its relations with Iran. Parallel to this situation, measures against Iran are being increased in Azerbaijan. In 2002, twenty-two out of thirty madrasahs were closed in Azerbaijan, most of which belonged to Iran. In statements made by official representatives, it was reported that the closed madrasahs had not been operating in accordance with the law for more than six years and were dangerous to the country's security. Iran's activities in Azerbaijan are not limited to madrasahs. Many students from the southern regions of Azerbaijan are provided with educational opportunities in Qom, one of Iran's religious centers. In January 2003, the Chairman of the State Committee on Work with Religious Institutions, Rafik Aliyev, stated that he met with 200 students receiving education in Qom during his visit to Iran (Hasanov, 2011, p. 210).

Iran continues its religious propaganda activities against Azerbaijan through television. It carries out such activities, primarily through the Seher TV channel established in 1992. According to the information on the official website of Seher TV, it reports that it broadcasts to "Azerbaijani" citizens living outside Iran and to citizens in Azerbaijan. The channel's primary purpose is to carry the influence of the Iranian Islamic Revolution beyond its borders and strengthen relations between Muslims in Iran and Azerbaijan

(Seher TV, 2017). However, Iran makes accusations through the channel that Azerbaijan is committing ethnic discrimination. The channel claimed that the editor-in-chief of the Talysh'ın Sesi (Tolişi Sedo) Newspaper, Novruzeli Mammadov, and one of the newspaper's employees, Elman Quliyev, were sentenced to 10 and 6 years in prison for treason and spying for Iran and that the Azerbaijani government discriminated against the Talysh[3] and that the individuals above were arrested because they were Talysh (Günaz TV, 2017).

Azerbaijan's hosting of the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest caused a new crisis in Azerbaijan-Iran relations. Iran recalled its ambassador from Baku, accusing Azerbaijan of humiliating Islam and allowing a gay march (Deutsche Welle, 2018). According to Resmiye Rzalı from the Azerbaijan Newspaper, the real reason behind Iran's stance is that Azerbaijan's continuous friendship with Western countries, in particular, bothers Iran. Another reason is that the isolations regarding Iran's nuclear issue make Iran aggressive in its foreign policy (Azərbaycan Qəzeti, 2012). The Baku administration detained Recep Abbasov, who led a group of forty people, because the groups that would carry out terrorist activities in centers such as Qax, Zaqatala, Sheki, and Quba were affiliated with SEPAH. They are still in prison (Musavat, 2018).

One of the groups operating in the Absheron Peninsula of Azerbaijan with Iranian support is the Imamites. When this group realized that the Azerbaijani intelligence was following them, they crossed to the Iranian side and continued their activities there. They started broadcasting a program called "Imams Consult" (Imams Talk) on a radio broadcast from Ardabil to the Absheron Peninsula. One of the leaders of the Imamites, Evezagha Imanullayev, stated in his statements about the organization's goals that they aimed to establish an Islamic society in the southern regions of Azerbaijan and that they did not recognize any authority other than Islam there (Hasanov, 2011, p. 224). Considering the influence of the Iranian central government on domestic politics, it is not possible to assume that it is unaware of such activities within its borders. Other groups similar to the Imamites also operate in the southern regions of Azerbaijan. One of these is the armed group called the Northern Army of Imam Mehdi (North

3 The Talysh ethnic group lives south of Azerbaijan, on the Iranian border. All of the Talysh are Shiite and speak a language close to Persian. In the 1990s, with the support of Iran, they declared the Talysh-Mughan Republic under the leadership of Alikram Hummatov. However, when Heydar Aliyev came to power in Azerbaijan, Hummatov was arrested, and the separatist uprising was suppressed. Their population is 76 thousand. Iran is intensifying its activities in this region and using them as a threat to its relations with Azerbaijan.

Imam Mehti Army), led by Seid Dadashbeyli, who was captured in January 2007. This organization aims to seize power by force and establish a regime based on Sharia. The common point of these organizations that carry out destructive activities in Azerbaijan is their relations with Iranian intelligence. The organization is financed by the "Əl Qüds" (El Quds) organization, and its members go to Qom to receive technical and military training from the Iranian intelligence SEPAH in order to carry out their activities more effectively (Şabanov, 2010, p. 28). According to Gündüz Şabanov, a researcher at the Azerbaijan Strategic Research Center, the Iranian factor should always be considered when investigating the problem of religious radicalism in Azerbaijan.

The incident that brought Iran's religion-based policy towards Azerbaijan to its highest point was the Nardaran town, 29 km from Baku, where religion has been increasingly politicized and Shiite rituals have become widespread since the early 2000s, and the fatal incidents that took place there. Nardaran, where religious Shiites live and have a population of 8,000, has been a place where attention has been drawn to the eventful demonstrations that have lasted for eight months since June 2002. Although the events were initially organized with demands for social services, the religious slogans used in the demonstrations revealed the nature of the demonstrations. However, the demonstrations ended when government officials promised to solve all social service problems in the town (Hasanov, 2011, p. 224).

Iran's activities in the society continue in the southern regions of Azerbaijan, such as Nardaran. The social life in these regions is similar to the Iranian lifestyle. The black chador, which is not generally used in Azerbaijan, is widely used by women here. The mosque where Nardaran Piri is located, which is located near the entrance of the town, is used as an important visitor center. There is also a grave under the mosque that is said to be of Rahime, the daughter of the seventh Imam Kazim. This place is considered an important place for Shiites to visit[4].

The fatal events that took place on November 26, 2015, in Nardaran, Azerbaijan, were a turning point in Azerbaijan-Iran relations. The head of the "Muslim Unity Operation" Hacı Taleh Bakirzade, who is responsible for the events, studied in Qom for ten years and later lived in Najaf, strengthening the idea that Iran was influential in the events. Taleh's statements targeting the government and the system in many places caused the events to escalate. In an operation conducted by the police in Nardaran on November 26,

4 Observations I made in Nardaran during my research in Azerbaijan in June 2017.

2 police officers and four civilians were killed. After the operation, Taleh Bakirzade and 14 of his supporters were arrested. After the events, the Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, Ali Larijani, said, "Iran has nothing to do with the events, and our relations with Baku are based on friendship. The Nardaran events are Azerbaijan's internal affairs." However, the regional developments and Bakirzade's relations with Iran leave Larijani's statements hanging in the air (Trend, 2018). In an interview he gave to Sputnik on October 18, 2016, regarding religious extremism in Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev said, "For us, the main problem is to protect ourselves from negative external influences, namely the influences of religious extremism" (Sputnik, 2017). The expression "external influence" is striking in Ilham Aliyev's statements. Iran is seen as the source of religious external influences and conflicts in Azerbaijan. Not mentioning the name Iran does not eliminate this situation; moreover, the expression "external influence" points to Iran.

Efforts are being made to eliminate problems in Azerbaijan-Iran relations at the official level. The Azerbaijani delegation, which visited Tehran under the leadership of the President of the Caucasus Muslim Administration, Sheikhulislam Allahshukur Pashazade, on August 6-7, 2017, met with the President of Iran's Organization of Civilization and Islamic Affairs, Abuzer Ibrahimi Turkmen. Turkmen stated that the course of relations between the two countries is pleasing. Turkmen, who said that the days of Azerbaijani civilization were held in Tehran last month, emphasized the shared values between the people of the two countries. The year 2017 was declared the "Year of Islamic Solidarity" (Year of Islamic Brotherhood) in Azerbaijan (Kətanov, 2017). The same year, the "Islamic Solidarity Games" were held in Baku (Veliyev, 2018, p. 31).

Regarding the relations between the two countries, Pashazade said that those who try to sow discord between the two brotherly countries will be unable to do so. Ilham Aliyev made a similar statement at the Extraordinary Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on the Jerusalem Issue in Istanbul on 13.12.2017. Aliyev expressed the negative impact of third parties on Azerbaijan-Iran relations and said, "Armenia wants to establish friendly relations with various Muslim countries. This is the greatest hypocrisy. Muslims around the world should know that Armenia, which destroyed our holy mosques, cannot be a friend of Muslim countries" (Rehimov, 2017). As everyone knows, Armenia-Iran relations are rapidly developing in many areas, especially economic ones. Armenia, which has become a problematic area for Azerbaijan-Iran relations, is expelling many Muslim Turks from their homelands during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and is also destroying their historical and cultural heritage. This approach,

which aims to erase cultural traces, is systematically continued by Armenia. Ilham Aliyev's statement that "Muslim countries cannot be friends of Armenia" refers to Iran. This Muslim country has developed relations with Armenia in the region and has helped Armenia escape isolation.

The most critical issue in Baku-Tehran relations is Iran's religious and cultural expansion activities towards Azerbaijan. It is possible to see this in the thoughts of every official or civilian citizen in Azerbaijan. In particular, the Nardaran incidents in 2015 strengthened this idea. However, after the assassination of General Qasem Soleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, one of the leaders of the Hashd al-Shaabi, by the US on January 3, 2020 (Anadolu Agency, 2020), the discussions in the Azerbaijani public opinion signaled that Iran was influential in its policies towards Azerbaijan. Despite the widespread coverage of news that Soleimani supported Armenia in the Karabakh War (Türküstan Info, 2020), the fact that many Azerbaijani social media users made Soleimani their profile picture can be seen as a sign that Iran's influence on Azerbaijani society is increasing.

The continuous development of Iran-Armenia relations has the potential to cause continuous fractures in Azerbaijan-Iran relations. On February 26, 2019, the anniversary of the massacre of 613 Azerbaijani people by Armenians in Khojaly on February 26, 1992, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan paid an official visit to Iran. The visit date and the interest shown to Pashinyan were important in showing the level of relations between the two countries. Pashinyan met with the Armenian community at Tehran's "Ararat" Sports Club. After the meeting, the photograph Pashinyan took with the group had a banner in Armenian that read "Karabakh is Armenia's and the End" in the background, and Iran's failure to intervene in this situation increased Baku's suspicions towards Iran (Axar, 2019).

TractorSazi fans hung a banner reading "Karabakh belongs to Azerbaijan" in the stadium on March 1, 2019, in response to what happened during Pashinyan's trip. However, Iranian officials intervened in the banner, and the intervention failed when the fans resisted (Aslanlı, 2019). Following the reactions shown in both Azerbaijan and South Azerbaijan to the photo Pashinyan shared, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Behram Kasimi was forced to make a statement that it was normal for Pashinyan to meet with Armenians living in Iran at the "Ararat" sports club, but that it was unacceptable to open a banner in Armenian about the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

Despite the statements of the Foreign Ministry spokesman, the sincerity that emerged during Pashinyan's meetings with both President Hassan Rouhani and Guide Ali Khamenei in Iran was widely covered in both the northern and southern media. Hadi Bahadiri, MP for Urmia in Iran, said in his statements, "Karabakh is an Islamic and Azerbaijani land. We will ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the parliament why such an incident, which is against the official policy of the country, was allowed to take place within the borders of Iran." South Azerbaijani MPs Ruhullah Hazretpur Talaiyye and Nadir Gazipur also submitted a parliamentary question to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In a statement to the Azerbaijani Embassy, the Ministry announced that they "condemned the banner that was opened and supported the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan" (Aslanlı, 2019). Even though a profound statement was made at the official level, the situation that emerged in both countries is important in showing the problem's existence. The relations between Armenia and Iran are not limited to the political and economic fields; cooperation between the two countries also continues in cultural areas. Iranian companies restore historical artifacts in the lands occupied by Armenia. While doing this, Azerbaijani traces of the artifacts are erased, and an attempt is made to present them as Persian and Armenian. Pashinyan, in an interview with Iran's IRNA news agency, emphasized the historical bonds of friendship between Armenia and Iran and said that relations with Iran are the basis of Armenian politics, that they want to develop relations, especially in economic areas, and that the agreement to be made between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union will increase relations between Iran and Armenia in this context (Azadlıq, 2019). Rouhani also said at the signing ceremony of the agreements between the two countries, alluding to the US, that other states should not interfere in Iran-Armenia relations. Before Pashinyan visited Iran, it was announced that they would cooperate in transporting Iranian natural gas from Armenia to Georgia and Europe via the Black Sea (Aslanlı, 2019).

The fundamental factor underlying the problem in Azerbaijan-Iran relations requires a much broader perspective. The national interests and security of both countries are incompatible. Iran's regional security concerns and interests, and Azerbaijan's US/Israel-oriented foreign policy approach, which positions itself, cause problems in its relations with Iran. For this reason, Iran is trying to take action against Azerbaijan's weak points in its Azerbaijan policy. A similar situation applies to Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan occasionally makes statements about South Azerbaijan, one of Iran's most important problems, with nationalist rhetoric, causing Iran to be uneasy.

On December 15, 2019, a conference titled "Indigenous Peoples of the Caucasus-Caspian Region in Light of Scientific Facts and Falsifications" was held in Armenia with the participation of forty-five experts from Armenia, Russia, Iran, and Georgia. The statements made by Iranian expert Salar Seyfoddini regarding Karabakh and Iran's interests in the region were important in terms of showing the content of Iran-Armenia relations. Seyfoddini stated that although there are various areas of conflict among the countries in the region, Iran is the only country with good relations with all the states. He also stated that there is a prevailing mistrust towards Azerbaijan in Iran and that most Iranian officials do not trust the promises made by Azerbaijan despite strong bilateral relations. Seyfoddini continued his speech by stating that Iran is not disturbed by the current status quo regarding Karabakh and suggested that if the region is in Azerbaijan's hands, it will be under the control of Israel and the USA (Türküstan İnfo, 2019).

This approach, which is important in terms of showing the level of threat felt by Iran from Israel and NATO, is the issue that worries Iran the most in relations with Baku and creates a security crisis. Tehran MP Ali Mutehhari announced that Iran sided with Armenia for security reasons, regardless of whether Azerbaijan was right in the war (Günaz TV, 2019). Iran's policy towards Armenia has not changed significantly since the beginning of the Karabakh War. The fact that trucks with Iranian license plates were reported in the media to be carrying cargo to the Karabakh region caused discomfort on the Azerbaijani side. Although Iranian officials deny the images, the truth does not change (Azadlıq, 2020). Another issue that causes discomfort in Azerbaijan is the construction of bridges over the Aras River to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, thus opening a direct route between Armenia and Iran. Reacting to this issue, Azerbaijani MP Fazıl Mustafa argued that Azerbaijan should increase military cooperation with Israel in response to Iran-Armenia relations. Mustafa said that although Azerbaijan did not support any sanctions imposed on Iran, Iran supported Armenia at every opportunity and that Azerbaijan should respond to Iran at every step from now on (Strarateq.az, 2020).

Tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia turned into a hot war due to Armenia's attacks on the city of Tovuz in Azerbaijan[5]. On September 27, 2020, Armenia launched a hot war after the deaths of civilians as a result of Armenia's attacks on Azerbaijani settlements. Armenia attacked Ganja

5 Although the Tovuz region is approximately 200 km north of the Karabakh front line, Armenia is attacking it. The region is strategically important because it is on the route of energy and transportation lines built jointly by Azerbaijan and Turkey. For this reason, Armenia intends to destabilize it.

(Az□rbaycan, 2020) and Terter (Günaz TV, 2020) with rockets, causing the deaths of civilians. With the Azerbaijani army's launch of the offensive, the Armenian military's resistance was broken, and the Armenian military's weaknesses, which were tested in the April Fights (April Clashes) in 2016, were revealed.

Azerbaijan's advance in the war zone caused Russia and Iran to approach the war more cautiously compared to the First Karabakh War, but there was no change in their positions towards Armenia. The seizure of lands in the Iranian border regions by Azerbaijani forces was enthusiastically welcomed on the other side of the Aras River. The seizure of the region where the historical Khudaferin Bridge is located by Armenian forces was welcomed with joy by the Azerbaijanis in the south (Facebook, 2020).

The Azerbaijani lands occupied with the support of Russia in the First Karabakh War were recaptured (Məktəb Guşəsi, 2020). Although the support that Armenia requested from Russia in the war was not at the desired level, Russia's support in terms of military equipment continues. Putin's statement that "the war is being waged outside Armenian territory" (World Bulletin, 2020) in response to questions directed to Putin regarding the functioning of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) shows some visible change in Russia's policy in the First Karabakh War. Although Ali Akbar Vilayati, the international affairs advisor of Iranian religious leader Khamenei, stated at a conference he attended in Tabriz that international seditionists were causing problems in the South Caucasus, that the region was a place where Georgians, Armenians, and Azerbaijanis lived together and that he hoped for the war to end as soon as possible (Günaz TV. Ali Akbar Vilayati, 2020), images showing that the weapons sent by Russia were being delivered to Armenia via Iran spread rapidly in the press and on social platforms. In the statements made by Vilayati, there was no satisfaction with either the religious unity between the two countries or the return of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The balance of power in the region, especially the Karabakh issue, is important in showing the nature of Azerbaijan-Iran relations. This issue acts as a litmus test in bilateral relations. Even if the Karabakh issue is resolved, the southern Azerbaijan issue and the positions taken by both countries in the international system prevent the future of Azerbaijan-Iran relations from becoming cooperation. The similar religious identities of both countries do not become a unifying element in their foreign policies. The constructivist hypothesis that the system consists of common thoughts, beliefs, and values, has structural characteristics, and affects social and political actions

is insufficient to explain the Azerbaijan-Iran-Armenia-Israel equation. As long as the pressures and threats created by the international system on the problematic areas of both states continue, religion will not be able to become a unifying and influential factor in Azerbaijan-Iran foreign policies.

Conclusion

This article briefly examines the theoretical discussions on state foreign policy behaviors before discussing the effects of religion in international politics and Azerbaijan-Iran relations in the context of this conceptual discussion.

One of the study's results is that religious and sectarian affiliation has a weak effect on Azerbaijan-Iran relations. Both countries' foreign policies are based on national interests and depend on the international system's influence, which is in line with the hypotheses of the neorealist theory.

The second conclusion reached in the study is that, as constructivists claim, religious and cultural structures do not affect Azerbaijan-Iran foreign policies. On the contrary, the threats and pressures posed by the anarchy that dominates the international system in both states cause security-based policies to be pursued.

The third conclusion reached in the study is that religion does not affect the alliances established by both states in the I. and II. Karabakh wars depend on their positions in the international system. The nature of Azerbaijan's relations with Israel and Iran's relations with Armenia confirm this idea.

Finally, although the discussions on Azerbaijani social media after the assassination of Qasem Soleimani give the impression that Iran influences Azerbaijani society, especially the recent II, the anti-Iranian attitude of almost the entire Azerbaijani society due to Iran's aid to Armenia during the Karabakh War has been an important development in terms of showing the failure of Iran's expansion policies in Azerbaijan based on sectarian and religious factors.

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Chapter 4

Anti-Immigration, Populism and Security Discourses: The Rising Far-Right in Europe

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Abstract

This section examines the rise of far-right political movements in Europe in the context of anti-immigration, populism, and security discourses. Focusing particularly on developments in France and Germany, the rhetorical strategies, social responses, and the relationship of these strategies with the security policies of far-right parties are analyzed. It evaluates how far-right actors have been legitimized and institutionalized with populist and exclusionary discourses in both countries following the post-2015 refugee crisis. The study is guided by a robust theoretical framework shaped around populism, securitization, and anti-immigration, which provides a clear structure and methodology for the case studies. This study addresses the rise of the far-right not only as a political transformation but also as the construction of a cultural hegemony.

1. Introduction

The emergence and subsequent proliferation of far-right political organizations across Europe, especially after 2015, which marked a significant turning point in political dynamics, has represented one of the most difficult challenges facing democratic systems on the continent. The complex interplay of social and economic repercussions stemming from globalization, increasing skepticism towards multiculturalism, and the increasing phenomenon of immigration has contributed to creating a particularly favorable environment for the growth and maintenance of these far-right movements. This situation is further exacerbated by the intertwining of anti-immigrant rhetoric with security policies, a key factor

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in the normalization and legitimization of far-right ideologies within mainstream political discourse.

As scholars, students, and policymakers interested in political science, immigration, and European studies, your understanding and analysis of the rise of far-right ideologies is crucial. The study does not aim to examine the discursive strategies of the rising far-right in Europe, particularly through the examples of France and Germany. However, it focuses on analyzing how populism, security discourse, and anti-immigration are articulated, what discursive tools are deployed in this process, and the political consequences of this situation. The main questions are: Why is anti-immigration expressed through a security-oriented discourse? How do far-right parties construct and legitimize this discourse? How do these strategies differ and resemble each other in the cases of France and Germany? This analysis examines the rise of far-right ideologies through the lens of anti-immigrant sentiment and security-focused rhetoric, as illustrated in the detailed examples of France and Germany, and highlights the discursive and political aspects that characterize this rise. The research argues that populism should primarily be understood as a distinctive style of political communication that effectively resonates with specific voter bases while at the same time arguing that the discourse surrounding security is inherently linked to a broader narrative that frames immigration as a significant and imminent "threat" to social stability. In this sense, the cases examined in France and Germany, with their rich historical contexts and the dynamic political landscapes that shape their societies today, offer an opportunity for comparative analysis.

2. Theoretical Background

"Borders are no longer just geographical lines; they have also become symbols of security, identity, and cultural belonging" (Huysmans, 2006, p. 51). The increasingly harsh anti-immigrant policies and populist discourses in the last decade on the European continent are reshaping foreign policy, security, and the social immune system. This urgent issue, particularly since the 2015 refugee crisis, has led to immigrants being represented as "victims in need of assistance" on the one hand and "potential threats" on the other. This dual form of representation serves the construction of a robust security discourse that mobilizes public opinion and directs political decision-making processes.

The rise of far-right parties in Europe is not only in the context of economic or identity politics but also related to the ideological redefinition of the security concept. While populist right-wing actors frame the "securitized"

immigrant figure as a "threat to national identity," the media and political discourse carry this threat into daily life. This situation brings with it a period in which policies towards immigrants and democratic norms, the rule of law, and the understanding of human rights in Europe are being tested (Wodak, 2015).

2.1 The Rise of the Far-Right and Political Culture

The rise of the far-right in Europe is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by economic, cultural, and political factors. This trend is characterized by the increasing popularity of nationalist and anti-immigration parties that challenge the liberal-democratic order of the European Union. Theoretical frameworks investigating this rise often focus on the interaction between economic crises, cultural identity, and political disillusionment. These frameworks suggest that the far-right exploits social insecurities and cultural tensions to gain electoral support.

Economic crises have been crucial to the rise of far-right parties. The global economic downturn has exposed weaknesses in the structure of the European Union and led to increased support for parties promising radical economic solutions (Cremona, 2010; Xiong, 2023). Economic inequality and the perception of an unfair system have often driven voters toward far-right parties that propose protectionist and nationalist economic policies (Xiong, 2023). Financial crises and unemployment have increased xenophobic sentiments as far-right parties frame immigrants as economic threats (Özcan & Kaya, 2024). The far-right exploits cultural tensions, portraying multiculturalism and immigration as threats to national identity and social cohesion (Camus et al., 2017; Akbari & Mujadidi, 2024). Political culture, religiosity, national pride, and intolerance of minorities also appear to be important factors influencing far-right party voting behavior (Sunaçoğlu, 2014). Far-right party narratives engage in a cultural war against perceived globalist and leftist ideologies, promoting a narrative of cultural homogeneity and nationalism (Cedillo, 2023). Disillusionment with traditional political institutions and the perceived democratic deficit within the EU has increased support for far-right parties. Voters often feel alienated from mainstream politics and are driven to support parties that promise to challenge the status quo and restore national sovereignty. The decline in trust in political institutions and the rise of anti-establishment sentiments are critical to understanding the appeal of the far right (Sunaçoğlu, 2014). Migration is a central issue for far-right parties, who frame it as a threat to societal security and national identity. The securitization of migration has legitimized policies of exclusion and influenced political discourse across

Europe, thus challenging the EU's principles of integration and human rights (Akbari & Mujadidi, 2024).

The rise of far-right movements in Europe in the 21st century is notable for their electoral successes and the hegemony achieved at the level of social perception and discourse (Mudde, 2019). According to Cas Mudde, the "far right" can be defined as a combination of populism, authoritarianism, and nativism. While nativism celebrates the idea that the nation should be "ethnically homogeneous," populism establishes a moral opposition between "the people" and "the elite" (Mudde, 2007). These movements remained marginal in the post-Cold War era but began to move into the political center of Western Europe in the 2010s. Economic crises, the questioning of the democratic legitimacy of the EU, and especially migration crises have created an environment that legitimizes the arguments of the far-right (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). While the rise of the far-right in Europe is often attributed to economic and cultural factors, it is important to consider the broader political and social context. The cyclical nature of far-right popularity suggests that these parties thrive in times of crisis and uncertainty, exploiting public fears and anxieties. However, the diversity of far-right parties in Europe suggests that their success is not uniform and is shaped by specific national contexts and political cultures.

2.2 Populism: Definition, Strategy and Discourse

Populism is a multifaceted political phenomenon characterized by its appeal to ordinary people and opposition to elites. It is often seen as a rhetorical and strategic approach that aims to polarize society by offering simple solutions to complex problems. This approach, which can manifest itself in both left-wing and right-wing political contexts, has the potential to reshape public debate. This potential urgency of the issue should not be underestimated, as it can significantly influence democratic processes.

Populism is an approach that focuses on style rather than content and is found across both right and left political spectrums (Laclau, 2005). According to Ernesto Laclau, populism transforms people into integrative subjects in the face of a system that does not meet the people's demands. Far-right populism, on the other hand, implements a strategy of exclusion by targeting immigrants and minority groups as the "other" in this process (Wodak, 2015). Populism is fundamentally centered around "the people" as a unified entity instead of elites. This is a common feature in various populist movements where leaders claim to represent the authentic voice of the people (Grattan, 2014; Leeuwen & Vliet, 2019). Populist rhetoric significantly

impacts the social integration of immigrants in multicultural societies by promoting division and undermining efforts toward inclusiveness. This rhetoric often frames immigrants as threats to national identity and social cohesion, which can exacerbate xenophobia and discrimination. The portrayal of immigrants, especially Muslims, as unable to integrate due to cultural or religious differences is a common theme in populist discourse, which can hinder their social integration and acceptance in host societies. This divisive rhetoric influences public perception and policymaking, often leading to restrictive immigration policies and social exclusion. In populist discourse, immigrants are presented not only as an economic threat but also as a cultural and security threat. This strategy strengthens the discourse of national identity by sharpening the boundary between "the people" and "the foreign" (Betz, 1994). While populism is often criticized for its potential to destabilize democratic institutions and encourage authoritarian tendencies, it raises important questions about political systems' responsiveness to ordinary citizens' needs and concerns. By emphasizing the disconnect between elites and the people, populism can catalyze political reform and greater democratic participation. The challenge, however, is balancing the populist call for direct representation with the need to maintain democratic norms and pluralism, a complex issue that requires careful consideration.

2.3 Securitization Theory

Increasing population mobility and globalization have placed migration at the center of contemporary political and social discussions. In this context, migration has ceased to be merely an economic or humanitarian issue; it has become a phenomenon intertwined with national security, social cohesion, and political stability. Especially in the post-9/11 period, "securitization" has emerged as a key analytical tool in understanding migration in the international relations literature.

Securitization is an approach developed in international relations, especially by the Copenhagen School. This approach, pioneered by Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan, argues that security is a discursive construction rather than an objective situation. In other words, the fact that a phenomenon becomes a 'security' issue is not related to its inherent danger but to the fact that political actors present it as a threat. This process is defined as the 'securitizing move.' When an issue is presented as an 'extraordinary threat' in political discourse, it is taken beyond normal political processes and legitimizes extraordinary measures. The issue of securitization of migration begins with the presentation of immigrants or refugees as a threat. This perception of threat is usually based on various justifications such as national

security, public order, access to economic resources, or the protection of cultural identity. In this context, migration becomes a sovereignty issue through the right of the state to protect its borders. Especially in Western countries, immigrants are securitized by associating them with problems such as terrorism, crime rates, and unemployment. The media plays a crucial role in shaping these perceptions. For example, Bourbeau (2008), examining the example of Canada, states that states support their immigration policies with technological control tools (such as biometric data) and classify immigrants as 'potential threats' (Bourbeau, 2008). In this framework, migration is coded as a socio-economic issue and an identity threat. This discourse, constructed particularly through the media and political actors, legitimizes taking extraordinary measures. In the examples of France and Germany, which are the two focal points of our study, it is seen that immigrants are presented under the threat of 'radicalization' by being criminalized over time and associated with Islam. At this point, the perceptual and discursive success of the media cannot be ignored. The discursive success of the far-right has been strengthened broadly through representations in the media. Van Dijk (1998) emphasizes that the negative images constructed by the media about immigrants create permanent prejudices in the public sphere. This situation makes it easier for political parties to normalize anti-immigrant discourses. In the process, mainstream right-wing parties have also adopted the far-right discourses and entered a 'competitive securitization.' It is observed that the CDU in Germany and Les Républicains in France have occasionally shifted to a similar line with far-right discourses (Mondon & Winter, 2020).

3. Far-Right, Security Discourse and Anti-Immigration in France

A significant change has been observed in political discourse in France since the beginning of the 21st century. Especially with the rise of far-right parties, the issue of immigration has begun to be discussed more in terms of 'security.' In this context, anti-immigration, emphasis on national identity, and security discourses have become the main mobilization tools of the far-right. The discourses of parties such as Rassemblement National (formerly Front National) in this direction have a profound effect not only on the political ground but also on social perceptions. The rise of the far-right in France, especially the National Front (FN), is closely linked to the securitization of immigration and the spread of anti-immigration discourse. This phenomenon is based on the portrayal of immigration as a threat to national security, social stability, and economic prosperity. The FN has effectively capitalized on the public's fears and anxieties by framing immigrants as disruptors of social homogeneity and contributors to crime and unemployment. This narrative

has shaped public opinion and significantly influenced political discourse in France and Europe, making the audience aware of the powerful influence of far-right discourse on societal perceptions.

3.1 From Front National to Rassemblement National: Rebranding Strategy

The transformation of the far-right in France from the National Front (FN) to Rassemblement National (RN) represents a significant shift in political strategy and public perception. This evolution is marked by the strategic repositioning of the RN, led by Marine Le Pen, who has sought to distance the party from the more radical image associated with her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen. The RN has managed to maintain its core nationalist and conservative values while adopting a more mainstream approach, allowing it to appeal to a broader electorate. This adaptability has been a key factor in the RN's rise to become a dominant force in French politics, as evidenced by its electoral successes in recent years.

The most prominent representative of the far-right movement in France is the Front National (FN), a party founded by Jean-Marie Le Pen in 1972. However, since Marine Le Pen took over the party leadership in 2011, the FN has undergone a significant ideological, rhetorical, and visual transformation. This process was crowned with the party's name change to Rassemblement National (RN) in 2018 (Ivaldi, 2018), a move influenced mainly by Marine Le Pen. Her leadership has been interpreted as a departure from the radical rhetoric of her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, as she pursues a 'diabolization strategy to soften the party's image and expand its sphere of influence (Shim, 2022). The rebranding from FN to RN in 2018 was a symbolic move that marked a new era for the party, aiming to shed its extremist past and present itself as a legitimate political alternative (Carvalho, 2022). This change can be seen in the fact that the RN now has a more moderate stance on specific issues, supporting public schools and opposing cuts in education spending, in contrast to its previous market-oriented approach (Ferhat, 2023). Marine Le Pen's strategy has been to transform the party away from its 'racist' and 'anti-Semitic' image into a populist party that appeals to a broader audience. During this transformation, anti-immigration and anti-Islam rhetoric have been blended with concepts of national identity, security, and secularism (Stockemer, 2017).

3.2 Security Discourse and the "Islamic Threat" Built on Secularism

Security discourse in France cannot be considered separately from anti-immigration. Issues related to the Islamic religion, in particular, have been securitized through secularism (laïcité). The Charlie Hebdo attacks in 2015, the November 13 Paris attacks, and the subsequent terrorist incidents have directly turned Muslim immigrants into security threats in French political discourse (Fassin, 2018). Marine Le Pen, the leader of the French National Rally (formerly the National Front), has been an important figure in French politics, known for her strong anti-immigration and anti-Islam stance. Her rhetoric and political strategies have influenced the discourse on these issues in France. A mix of nationalism characterizes Le Pen's approach, fear-mongering, and cultural protectionism, which she uses to appeal to a wide range of voters concerned about national identity and security.

Marine Le Pen managed the Paris attacks very well and based her discourse on the axes of "fighting terrorism," "protecting French values," and "cultural assimilation." Immigrants, especially Muslim immigrants, were presented as "another who can never integrate," and the suburbs were labeled as "dangerous areas" (Bowen, 2007). During this process, Le Pen frequently used the term "Islamisme radical," associating security threats with certain religious practices. For example, this strategy includes advocating a headscarf ban in public spaces and presenting religious symbols as contrary to the "secular character of the French Republic" (Camus & Lebourg, 2017). Marine Le Pen's stance on Islam significantly affects her political agenda, primarily through the dissemination of anti-Islamist rhetoric and the portrayal of Islam as a threat to French national identity. Her approach is characterized by the use of complex sentence structures and political propaganda to emphasize the perceived dangers of Islamism, thereby shaping public opinion and increasing her political electability. This strategy is part of a broader trend in French politics in which Islam is frequently politicized, contributing to cultural tensions and the proliferation of far-right ideologies.

3.3 Media Representations and Public Perception

The portrayal of immigration and Islam in the French media is a complex issue deeply intertwined with historical, cultural, and political factors. French media often use secularism as a tool to shape narratives around immigrants, especially those of Muslim origin. For instance, the concept of laïcité, or secularism, is often invoked to justify the exclusion of religious symbols in

public spaces, a policy that disproportionately affects Muslim immigrants. This results in a paradoxical and biased portrayal. This portrayal is influenced by a variety of factors, including historical legacies, political ideologies, and societal fears, which collectively contribute to a media environment that often frames Muslim immigrants negatively compared to their non-Muslim counterparts.

French media has often represented immigrants as sources of social problems, vectors of radicalization, and security threats. In television programs, issues such as suburban violence, gangs, drugs, and terrorism have often been associated with immigrants of immigrant origin (Rigoni, 2012). French media have not hesitated to use secularism to create different narratives for immigrants based on their religious background. Here, Muslim immigrants are often portrayed negatively as invaders or a disciplined group, while immigrants of Orthodox Christian origins, such as Ukrainians, receive more positive portrayals (Song et al., 2024).

The rise of Islamophobia in France is not a new phenomenon; it has been exacerbated by events such as the Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War, which have led to increased immigration and fears of terrorism. French media have historically framed Islam as a significant event in French history, often portraying it as an activist reality that challenges secular values . The influence of right-wing political movements such as the National Front has significantly fueled anti-immigration and anti-Islam sentiment by using Islamophobic narratives to gain political influence.

On the other hand, Marine Le Pen's media strategy relies on social media and traditional media. Aiming to reach voters directly via Twitter and Facebook, RN shared content that influenced public opinion with data that did not reflect the truth about immigrants increasing crime rates in France (Käihkö, 2021). Over time, these statements have seeped into the discourse of the center-right in France, shaping public perception of immigration and Islam. For example, the "national identity" discussions implemented during the Nicolas Sarkozy era and the increase in security-centered immigration policies even by Emmanuel Macron in recent years show the impact of this discourse.

3.4 Political Success and Institutionalization

The political rise of the far-right in France has increased significantly in recent years. The vote share that Marine Le Pen received in the 2017 and 2022 presidential elections (33% and 41%, respectively) shows that the RN has become a protest party and a potential candidate for power (Ivaldi,

2022). In the general elections of June 2022, the party won 89 seats and formed a strong group in the parliament, using the discourse of "the true representative of the people" to adopt an anti-elite and nationalist position, making anti-immigration central to this position. In the 2024 European Parliament elections, the RN rose to first place with 31.4% of the votes, and this result caused President Emmanuel Macron's party to fall below 15% of the vote, leading to the decision to call early general elections. The fact that the RN came first in the first round of the early general elections held in June 2024, with approximately 33% of the votes, shows that the party's influence in French politics is increasing and is getting closer to power.

As a result, the RN's electoral successes in recent years demonstrate the far-right's significant presence in the political arena, offering a potential alternative to the government. The French case is a clear example of how the far-right's rise is intricately linked with economic crises, cultural concerns, identity politics, and security discourses. The RN's rise concretely manifests how anti-immigrant security discourses can legitimize populism.

4. Far-Right, Populism and Security Discourse in Germany

In 2015, Germany faced the most significant influx of immigrants since World War II, while social fault lines began to deepen. These fractures not only took shape around immigration policies but also triggered a profound transformation in Germany's political center. Far-right and populist discourses, blended with security concerns, have influenced public discourse and institutional politics. This section analyzes the rise of the far-right in Germany through immigration and security discourses and examines the institutionalization process of the AfD, the role of social movements such as Pegida, which stands for 'Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West', in shaping public opinion, identity politics within the framework of the East-West divide, and the transformation of center-right parties. All these dynamics shed light on how the far-right has transformed from a marginal movement to a force gaining political legitimacy.

In recent years, the proposals of Christian Democratic Union (CDU) leader Friedrich Merz to prevent irregular migration, supported by the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, have been the focus of criticism that the CDU has shifted from its traditional center position to the right (Zick & Küpper, 2022). These developments indicate a change in party strategy and a transformation that paves the way for far-right discourses to gain political legitimacy in Germany. The electoral successes of the AfD in states such as Thuringia and Saxony show that the convergence of center-

right parties at the level of discourse strengthens the far-right's position rather than diminishing its influence (Arzheimer, 2019). At the same time, increasing terrorist attacks in Germany and rising security concerns in public opinion have led to a hardening of anti-immigration policies. This has facilitated the transformation of parties' discourses, such as the AfD, from a mere protest language into a systematic policy proposal (Lees, 2018). In the media and digital platforms, discourses that identify immigrants with crime have deepened social polarization and increased the distance between political poles. German business representatives frequently emphasize that this rise threatens Germany's economic stability and social harmony (Hafez, 2017).

In this context, the German example provides a concrete example of how far-right and populist actors gain political legitimacy through security policies and anti-immigration discourses.

4.1 The Rise and Transformation of the AfD

Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) entered the political scene in 2013 as a conservative party founded with anti-EU and anti-euro discourses. However, this beginning is far from the party's current radical right identity. Following the refugee crisis in 2015, the AfD's political agenda and discourses changed significantly; anti-immigration, anti-Islam, and security-based discourses were brought to the center (Lees, 2018). This transformation has paved the way for the far-right in Germany to become not only an opposition element but also an actor within the system.

Angela Merkel's open-door policy, epitomized by her statement "Wir schaffen das" (We will succeed), has been a prime target of the AfD's criticism. The party has labeled this policy as "ignoring the borders of the nation-state" or even as a form of "cultural suicide" (Hafez, 2017). With statements like "Islam does not belong in Germany" (Der Islam gehört nicht zu Deutschland), the AfD has not only highlighted cultural differences but also constructed an "other" that is perceived to threaten Germany's national identity directly (Şahin, 2025, 98).

Throughout this process, the AfD's discourse has increasingly intertwined with securitization strategies. Immigrants have been portrayed not only as culturally incompatible but also as a source of internal security issues, effectively criminalizing them. In this context, the AfD has emerged as the carrier and transformer of the far-right in Germany, both politically and ideologically (Arzheimer, 2019).

4.2 Pegida Movement and Radicalization in Civil Society

The rise of the far-right movement in Germany has resonated not only on a party level but also in civil society; it has become massive, primarily through street movements and protests. One of the most visible examples of this process, the Pegida (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes – Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) movement, has become not only a protest network but also the harbinger of a new form of "civil radicalization." Pegida first attracted public attention with the marches held in Dresden in 2014. The weekly demonstrations, which quickly reached hundreds of thousands of people, found a broad base, especially in the eastern states of Germany. This movement served as a "voice" for groups that felt underrepresented by the center of politics; it became a mass expression of anti-immigrant, Islamophobic and anti-system sentiments (Rucht & Teune, 2016). One of the most important functions of Pegida is to legitimize populist and far-right discourses in the civil society sphere. Although a significant portion of the participants do not define themselves as "racist" or "far-right," the ideological framework of the movement is ethno-nationalist mainly and exclusionary. This contradiction can be explained by Pegida's populist strategies: The claim to speak on behalf of "the people" establishes a binary opposition against the ruling elites and immigrants, thus conveying radical discourses to a broader audience (Mudde, 2007). Digital media has significantly increased Pegida's mobilization capacity, and social media platforms have rapidly disseminated the movement's discourse. Calls organized through Facebook and YouTube and disinformation content spread through alternative media channels have deepened anti-immigrant fears and security concerns (Froio & Ganesh, 2019). In demonstrations organized especially after terrorist attacks, security, and migration themes were intertwined, and the discourse of "Islamist terror" became one of the movement's main mobilization tools.

Pegida's influence was not limited to the streets; it directly influenced the discourse repertoire of many political actors, especially the AfD. Pegida's demands eventually echoed the AfD's election campaigns, and an indirect discourse partnership was formed between these two actors. This situation reveals the permeability between the institutional and civil dimensions of the radical right (Minkenberg, 2018).

In summary, the Pegida movement should be evaluated as an important structure that contributed to the rooting of the far right in Germany at the party and societal levels. This movement represents new forms of

radicalization in civil society and is central to spreading populist security discourses in the public sphere.

4.3 East-West Distinction and Identity-Based Fractures

One of the most distinctive features of the far-right movement in Germany is how the cultural, economic, and social differences between West and East Germany are reflected in far-right discourse. In East Germany, the traces left by the socialist past before reunification play a decisive role in strengthening today's far-right movement. These regional differences are critical to understanding how far-right parties and street movements shape their rhetorical strategies.

The years following German reunification caused people living in East Germany to continue to have reservations about seeing themselves as part of the "Western" system. This situation, in addition to the economic inequalities in the region, was perceived by West Germany as an attempt at cultural assimilation (Oesch, 2008). The AfD used this sentiment to target voters in East Germany, in particular with its discourse of the "forgotten German people." The AfD's rhetoric, which constructs the figure of an "other" who "replaces" immigrants, found greater resonance in these regions. These discourses, combined with the historical sense of exclusion and economic deprivation in East Germany, have been an important driving force in the rise of the AfD.

The language used by the AfD in its election campaigns targets not only economic demands but also identity-based fears. Immigrants have often been described as either "sexual predators" or "sources of unemployment and social assistance" (Arzheimer, 2019). This discourse has deepened the economic and cultural gaps between West and East Germany while also increasing the acceptance of the far-right among the public. Those living in East Germany believe that economic deficiencies are related to immigrants, which has allowed populist security discourses to gain strength.

The strong presence of the AfD in East Germany is directly related to this region's social identity and economic structures. After reunification in the 1990s, people in East Germany felt a sense of economic backwardness and a desire to "belong to the West" culturally. This sense of exclusion has made far-right discourses more acceptable and increased the importance of identity politics. By emphasizing this identity-based fracture, the AfD has positioned itself as the defender of the "real German people" for voters in East Germany.

Moreover, unlike far-right movements in West Germany, the far-right in East Germany has generally emphasized cultural and ethnic homogeneity, clearly excluding the perception of "foreigners." While far-right discourses in West Germany tend to be more diverse in economic and cultural issues, discourses in East Germany focus more on national identity and cultural integrity. This demonstrates the role of regional identity-based differences in strengthening the far-right.

In this context, strengthening the far-right movement in East Germany reflects economic inequalities and is part of rebuilding social identities. This process has ensured that the AfD's rhetorical strategies and anti-immigrant policies are accepted on a broader basis.

4.4 Institutionalization and Political Influence

While the AfD initially existed only as a protest actor in the political scene, it gradually integrated into the political system in Germany and became an institutional force. This transformation shows that the far-right shapes the social and political structure through street movements and their activities in institutional politics. This AfD process reveals the far-right's effects in Germany, which is no longer only marginal but also in mainstream politics.

The institutionalization process of the AfD gained significant momentum, especially during the 2017 and 2021 federal elections. In the 2017 elections, the party entered the federal parliament (Bundestag) and won the first far-right representation in Germany's history. This success showed that the party was not only a protest group but could also become a permanent element in the political structure of Germany (Zick & Küpper, 2022). In the 2021 elections, the AfD achieved a tremendous political impact by reaching over 20% of the vote in the eastern states. The fact that the party has become the first party in the 2024 local elections, especially in states such as Thuringia and Saxony, shows that the party is gaining strength and has received broad support from different segments of society.

The institutionalization of the AfD is not limited to its electoral successes. Over time, the party has ceased to be just a protest movement. It has also become an actor that can carry right-wing populist discourses in Germany at an institutional level. After the 2017 elections, the AfD began to have a greater say in the political agenda and has also shown its influence in various local governments. This process has legitimized the far-right politically and made right-wing populist discourses more widespread.

One of the most striking aspects of the AfD's discourse is the institutional acceptance of its arguments on the themes of security and immigration.

By particularly emphasizing security concerns, the party has combined the increasing terrorist incidents following the refugee crisis with a discourse that associates immigrants with crime and has legitimized this approach. Thus, it has developed an effective strategy in street movements and political platforms (Hafez, 2017). The institutionalization of the AfD shows that right-wing populism in Germany is becoming a long-term trend and is part of the normalization of the far-right. These developments show that far-right and populist discourses in Germany have gained broad social acceptance through street movements, digital media, and institutional politics. The successes of the AfD at the federal and local levels show that the party's ideological hegemony and social influence will continue to grow and can create lasting change in Germany's political structure.

Evaluation and Conclusion

The rise of the far-right in France and Germany, two examples with common points under the titles of Populism, Securitization, and the "Immigrant Other," has been shaped around similar themes. However, the social and political contexts in both countries show significant differences. In both countries, far-right parties have generated legitimacy through the dichotomy between the "people" and the "elite" through populist discourses and strengthened their political positions through threats to social security and national identity. Immigrants have been presented not only as an economic and cultural threat but also as a serious threat to national security.

The National Front (RN) in France and the AfD in Germany have positioned immigrants as a threat to social order and national identity, primarily through the media and public debates. These discursive strategies create fear and insecurity in society, paving the way for adopting more authoritarian, exclusionary, and protectionist policies. Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde's securitization theory (1998) provides an important theoretical framework, explaining how immigrants are treated as a security issue. In both France and Germany, anti-immigrant discourses have gained strength not only at the social level but also at the political level.

In addition, the themes of secularism and historical burdens emerge as dynamics that differ for the two samples. In addition to the similarities between far-right discourses in France and Germany, there are also different dynamics on which these discourses are based. In France, the concept of laïcité is particularly at the center of anti-immigrant security discourses. This produces a discourse in which security concerns are expressed through the religious practices of Muslim immigrants in order to protect the secular structure of the French Republic.

In France, secularism is presented not only as a state policy but also as a national value; immigrants become a threat to these values. Muslim immigrants are targeted mainly through practices such as headscarves, mosque construction, and halal food, and this is used as a tool to reinforce security discourses. In Germany, the experience of Nazism and the Holocaust has historically caused the far-right to use its racist discourse more carefully. However, following the 2015 refugee crisis, securitization discourses have also strengthened in Germany, and direct anti-Islam and race-based discourses have become more widespread.

A comparison of the institutionalization processes of far-right movements in France and Germany reflects the differences in the political structures of both countries. The National Front in France has gained significant social and political legitimacy over the years; it has become a force that can make it to the second round of the presidential elections. In Germany, the AfD has emerged as a new actor, rapidly gaining power, especially in the eastern states, and has become effective in local governments.

The RN in France nominated a presidential candidate in the 2017 elections and gained significant social support. The party is no longer just a marginal movement but is now considered an influential force in French politics. In Germany, the AfD rose more rapidly in the process of institutionalization and managed to enter the federal parliament in the 2017 and 2021 elections. This shows that the far-right is shaped by street movements and its effectiveness in institutional politics. In both countries, the far-right has ceased to be marginal and has become a force within the system.

Ultimately, this study, which analyzes how the far-right's anti-immigrant discourses are legitimized through securitization processes using the examples of France and Germany, can say that far-right parties have gained social acceptance and political power through populist discourses and strategies shaped around security concerns. However, this process is related to economic and cultural concerns and deepening fears about national identity, security, and social order.

The rise of far-right movements in France and Germany is a process fed not only by a perception of economic or cultural threats but also by security and identity-based concerns. This creates a political environment in Europe where multiculturalism is being questioned, social polarization is deepening, and democratic values are being eroded from within. The combination of populism and securitization processes explains the success of the far right and reveals the fundamental crises facing liberal democracies. The future of Europe depends on how these threat perceptions and security discourses take shape.

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Chapter 5

The Evaluation of Germany's Immigration Policies in Terms of Securitization

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Abstract

Germany has been known as a migrant magnet in the last century. Especially following World War II, the country required so much workforce that many people in Asia, Europe, and Africa migrated to Germany for a better life and future. According to the 2020 statistics, it has 1.5 migrants per 1,000 people. 13% of the country's population is composed of ethnic groups, including Turkish (1.8%), Polish (1%), and Syrian (1%). Germany has introduced a new skilled immigration act passed in the senate in early 2020 because of the shortage of skilled workers in the country. This study aimed to investigate Germany's immigration policies and approaches in terms of securitization in the last century. In this perspective, recent studies on Germany's immigration policies, the theory of securitization policies and migrants, and Germany's and the European Union's securitization policies were critically investigated and discussed. The findings were also elaborated in order to evaluate Germany's immigration policies in terms of securitization.

1. INTRODUCTION

Securitization is one of the concepts brought to the literature by the critical security studies approach intended to understand how security threats are constructed through discourse (Minsky & Wray, 2008). Securitization practice can be defined as the articulation of an issue to the security agenda by policymakers and the legitimization of extraordinary political processes shaped in line with this discourse. Accordingly, concerns about national

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security led to the development of policies that disrupt the routine political order and functioning of the state by setting political priorities(Acharya et. al.,2013). Discussing an issue within the security agenda will legitimize the adoption of urgent and extraordinary methods to solve the problem (McDonald, 2008).

Security has certain meanings and has changed since ancient times based on stoic thinking. It is of any psychological status of any entity. Later, Machiavelli, Locke, and Holmes revised the definition of security based on stoic thinking as a state's basic guarantee for the fundamental rights, protection of self and goods, individuals, and public order. It could also be described as objective circumstances created via the protection of hazards for individuals and goods. However, in today's world, security concepts and threats do not essentially produce objectives and material circumstances of the outside world (Fabozzi & Kothari, 2008).

.Securitization and immigration had become crucial topics by the end of the 20th century (Mattsson, 2017). The studies on security have started to discuss the concept both horizontally and vertically. The Copenhagen School supported the idea that threat varies for every subject and object, real or non-real, regarding securitization (Jakesevic & Tatalovic,2016). Copenhagen school, developed by the scholars Waever and Buzan, has been an influential theoretical approach for explaining securitization theory and paved its foundations. Their approach did not support the ideas of realist and non-realist theories of international relations, which defined security as a power balance for nation-states equipped with rational and utilitarian societies.

Securitization is necessary for preventing or reducing terrorism and transnational crime in the EU region. Securitization of migration is implemented to regulate aspects accepted as security threats(Dennison & Janning, 2016). In addition, irregular migration is also considered a reason for the securitization of migration since it is not controlled like legal migration (d'Appollonia & Reich, 2008).

The critical constructionist analysts referred to as the Copenhagen School set the securitization concept in the field of security studies (Bilgin,2011). The Copenhagen School came to the fore with a project established in 1985 within the University of Copenhagen that deals with aspects of European security other than military elements in an inclusive manner. The Copenhagen School, which has been developing since the second half of the 1980s, has contributed to the development of a critical perspective on the scope and emergence of security threats (Stritzel, 2007).

2. GERMANY'S IMMIGRATION POLICIES

Since The Federal Republic of Germany was established following World War II (WWII) in 1949 (Hoadley,2004), the country started welcoming other Germans living in the communist countries of central and eastern Europe. Similarly, East Germany followed its twin country, welcoming third-world countries' human labor and immigrants. As the German countries were reunited in 1989, they started requiring more human labor, attracting more immigrants from third-world countries. The immigrants already in the countries were allowed to stay after the reunification. In the last steps of immigration policies for Germany, the number of immigrants increased at a rapid rate and reached over 7 million in 1996 (Joppke, 2011).

Labor market participation and attachment and the social mobility of immigrants have been a significant concern in many countries, including Germany and other OECD companies worldwide, in the last few decades (Rinne, 2011). One of the primary reasons is that immigration and the number of immigrants in Europe are increasing phenomena in all major OECD countries.

The European Union (EU) countries have recently developed more sophisticated policies to handle labor immigration. They initiated a Blue Card system to attract immigrants from non-EU member countries. It is specifically designed for the skilled workers. The EU countries grant a wide variety of opportunities and ample leeway to satisfy EU-wide minimum standards for the approval procedures of non-member highly skilled qualified workers (Hinte & Treess, 2011).

Introductory programs have recently become the latest immigration elements of policies in Nordic countries and have gained substantial popularity in countries such as Germany. They include particular principles of a combination of labor market problems and language courses for the immigrants. They can offer vocational training and language learning seminars.

Multiculturism has been an essential issue regarding their immigration policies in present-day Germany. German politicians are generally reluctant to emphasize their distances from multiculturism. Germany did not abandon their official policy of multiculturism. They are crucial for Germany's political and cognitive framework towards future developments. For example, the framework changed in critical perspectives differently from past commitment or opposition to multiculturism.

Regarding political orientations for Germany as a self-conscious country of immigration and the challenge of integration, a recent policy reorientation marked by the new Citizenship Act (in effect since 2000) and the Immigration Act (in effect since 2005), which three separate governments have developed (Schönwälder,2010).

Various studies have been conducted on Germany's immigration policies from particular perspectives. A recent study reviewed immigration, refugee, asylum, and settlement policies as political issues in Germany between 1998 and 2002. There was a debate in 1999 and 2000 caused a significant investigation by the Sussmuth Commission and other policy changes proposed by the SPD-Green government's immigration act (Balzacq et.al., 2016).

German immigration policy could be divided into four separate periods. It has been a major issue in public discussion in the 1990s. Political figures in Germany later discussed the immigration issues between 1998 and 2002. The latest significant turning point for the immigration status and policies was the September 2002 general election.

Recently, Germany introduced a new immigration policy for the skilled immigration act that was effective on March 1, 2020, because of the shortage of skilled workers in the country. This latest law permits foreign skilled workers who possess vocational training from non-EU countries with no academic training or qualifications to migrate to Germany for particular forms of work. The reason for passing this new law included the country's need for new skilled workers to improve and boost Germany's economy. Also, non-EU people with educational qualifications like college are welcome to live and work in Germany. According to the new law, if a worker has an employment contract or a job offer from any employer, he/she is given a residency status for a period of their stay in Germany. It could be for four years or the duration of the work contract. It is also possible for the worker to apply for a permanent residency following a four-year period (Floyd,2007).

3. THEORY OF SECURITIZATION

The concept of securitization theory is closely related to the Copenhagen School (CS) and is accepted as a combination of classical and constructive political realism in the late 1980s. The term was initially used by Ole Weaver in 1993. Theory of securitization or securitization theory refers to explaining national and international politics in terms of establishing the security character of public problems; the social commitments arise from

the cooperative acceptance of fixing a threat and creating a particular policy (Balzacq et.al., 2016).

In addition to the Copenhagen School, Aberystwyth and Paris schools originated in post-Cold War Europe. However, CS contributed the most to the securitization theory, unlike these two alternatives. It is also straightforward in the operationalization due to the emphasis on discourses that do not require archival, field-based work, and institutional issues.

Several studies have been conducted on the securitization theory. It is considered as an extreme form of politization that provides significant means for the importance of security (Best,2001). The issues that arise regarding the theory of securitization are not necessarily for the cases of survival of the state. They often represent specific issues for constructing issues into existential problems.

Foucault and Delumeau investigated the construction of social categories, including delinquency, race, abnormality, Jews, Blacks, Muslims and women in addition to their practical consequences (Gad & Petersen, 2011). The studies, especially propaganda, related to different sets of sources, including framing. However, none of them used the term securitization.

Securitization theory is closely connected to immigration, particularly in European Union (EU) states. Immigration is a significant issue to which the securitization theory has been applied frequently in Germany and other EU states. Such a relation is generally considered in the field of securitization via an association with the concept of societal security. It was noted that immigration is considered as a threat for the survival of society (Buzan,2008). Societal security was defined as "the ability of a society to persevere in its essential character under changing conditions and possible or actual threats" (Wæver &Carlton,1993) .

Regarding moral and ethical motives and perspectives, Ole Weaver's securitization theory has been criticized (Banai & Kreide, 2017). They generally originated from earlier security theories and were classified into two different methods. Initially, the first form refers to the nonexistence of a normative conceptualization of securitization in the analytical structure of the securitization theory. The second form of criticism comes from the nonexistence of the securitization theory in terms of political outcomes. Creating a successful securitization structure consisting of three major steps is essential. Such steps should include the identification of the existing threats to the state, possible emergent actions, and impacts of the threats on the interstate units by breaking institutional rules (Buzan et al.,1998).

Securitization theory refers to the international relations between the states that are explicitly interested in explaining the international relations within the cases of state actors that transform regarding subjects and events into matters of security (Charrett, 2009).

3.1. SECURITIZATION OF MIGRANTS

Securitization has been extended to various types and applications in terms of the relevant security of the states since its first emergence. One of the major implementations includes the security of the states regarding immigration and the integration process (Messina,2014). Such securitization approaches have especially attracted attention since 9/11, resulting in severe psychological, social, and financial consequences on society in national and international circumstances (d'Appollonia,2015). It was named as a national security threat by the general public. Such policies have been implemented to form the securitization of immigration issues governance. Western political actors, including political parties, governments, and policy networks, generally adopt it (Messina, 2014). There are particular tactics and executions at the center of the securitization of migrants, including controlling state borders, reducing illegal migration flows, and policing minorities in order to fight terrorism.

On the other hand, it is essential to separate innocent immigrants seeking to relocate to more secure countries from illegal terrorist groups. Politicians and governments generally adapt the implementation integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities to generate and sustain counter-terrorism threats. Securitization within the immigration policies created a range of narrative structures for the citizens of societies, their citizens, and social values.

Previous studies revealed that there exists a weak negative correlation between the flow of immigrants and the number of terrorist activities around the globe (Jackson & Parkes, 2008). Also, no statistically significant differences were found between these two variables. Similarly, a minimal level of correlation exists between the number of immigrants and fatalities of the terrorist attacks between 2000 and 2016. Similar results were also found regarding the relationships between immigration flows and Islamic terrorism, foreign-born population and terrorist attacks, foreign-born population, and fatalities of terrorism. On the other hand, a positive medium correlation was calculated between the foreign population and Islamic terrorism in the U.S.

In the last three decades, drastic changes have been observed with the development of globalization; immigration flows due to the Arab Spring,

especially the Syrian civil war, the end of polarization, and the enhancement of transnational flows (Jackson and Parkes, 2008). The expansion of the European Union, the emergence of new economic expansion and agreements among the countries in the region, such as the Schengen area and NAFTA, were also essential turning points in this period. Also, other factors and significant events include the deterritorialization of physical borders, identities, and markets, as well as the rapid spike of immigrants to the Western states. These significant changes affected many forms and meanings of individual and social identities, state borders, and the nature of state sovereignty and collective identities. Moreover, these changes also recast internal order, revised traditional structures, new social arrangements, and modified forces of integration and fragmentation.

Finally, western states have been witnessing new existence and reborn of several conceptual and theoretical fears and anxieties regarding security, identity, and well-being against the increasing flows of immigrants (Ceyhan & Tsoukala, 2002). Migration stays at the center of the interconnected dynamical structure of borders, identity, security and orders.

4. EUROPEAN UNION'S SECURITIZATION POLICIES

European Union (EU) states have been adapting securitization theory and implementing its integration for their immigration policies for the last three decades. The main approaches and systematic planning have been revised depending on the destabilizing effects of migration toward domestic stability and threats to the general public in society.

Two crucial general judicial policies include Justice and Home Affairs, the Schengen Agreements, and the Dublin Convention. These three pillars mainly focus on the European integration process for developing a more restrictive immigration policy and social construction of the immigrants (Huysmans, 2000). On the other hand, especially the government and politicians are accepting approaches and policies that majorly affect the mix-up between immigrants and terrorist activities. Moreover, such wrongful implementation of the securitization policies damages the immigration policies and negatively affects innocent migrants.

In addition to the United States and the United Kingdom, securitization policies adopted by the EU states are mainly shaped by the perspectives of securing their nations and societies from illegal and dangerous terrorist groups. EU cooperation on counterterrorism in the last few years has been implemented by collective securitization. Such approaches were initially created by the long-term international impacts of the September 11 terrorist

attacks in New York. Starting with the US governments, EU states and other Western countries started building and adapting securitization processes and policies.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US triggered a major flow of immigration policies and methodologies that later shaped immigration policies due to the social and individual fears of threats that stem from the terrorist immigrant groups. This event was the crucial phenomenon that radically changed the EU, developing an EU counterterrorism policy for the first time. These changes later led to the creation of security units such as CTC and the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) within the Europol and significantly contributed to the reimplementation of counterterrorism strategies in the EU (Karamanidou, 2015).

European Union securitization policies were also affected by the earlier terrorist attacks throughout the European countries. Brussels terrorist attacks in 2016 initiated a debate on the existing counterterrorism policies and approaches for the EU states. ECTC was established within a few months. The EU adopted the Directive (EU) 2017/541 states for tackling terrorism in 2017. Other terrorist attacks in the UK, Germany, Italy, and Spain also contributed to the structuring and formatting of securitization policies and their impacts on society (Kaunert & Léonard, 2019).

4.1. GERMANY'S SECURITIZATION POLICIES

Various studies have been conducted to investigate securitization policies on the immigration issues executed by Germany. Studies investigated elements of contemporary securitization discourse about immigration and citizenship topics in Germany (Kaunert & Léonard, 2019). They identified exclusion mechanisms for citizenship rights and human rights that securitization discussions serve to form (Banai & Kreide, 2009). The Syrian civil war and the Arab Spring have been a dreadful example of persistent inconsistencies, which produced refugees and displaced people. Germany in the post-Nazi era pronounces loyalty to human and citizen's rights that disseminate inclusion and equality, as well as securitization instruments and exclusion. Citizenship rights and human rights are the main issues for the implementation of securitization theory in Germany.

Germany has different traditions and characteristics regarding policy decision-making that enable various approaches to the tension between human rights and collective policy-making processes (Lepsius, 2004). Securitization has been ongoing in Germany since the beginning of the new millennium.

Following the September 11 terrorist attacks in the USA, Germany immediately reacted to the new era of fighting terrorism in addition to handling immigration policies. Germany introduced two new security packages that involved extreme and various security measures regarding immigrants, immigration policies, and integration of new aspects within the Immigration Law in the context of 9/11.

In terms of data communication setup between the governmental authorities, Germany decided to expand the visa database, which provided possible opportunities for the official authorities, especially for the intelligence services. This new system covered all the costs regarding tracking financial transactions, posts, telecommunications and flight details from the private companies.

In addition, like other EU states, Germany revised its legal definitions of infringements, possibilities of prosecution and punishment regarding illegal immigration and related activities (Fauster, 2006). These steps and new approaches stemmed from a European agreement signed by the EU states in 1998 concerning foreign terrorist organizations and their illegal activities in Germany. Correspondingly, Germany also supported various facilities for the deportation of illegal immigrants and long-term residents. The new immigration Act was passed in the German senate in 2015, including the possibility of deporting a person if he/she poses a risk to national security. However, the criteria are determined according to the fact-based prognosis of the threat based on the laws of the constitution.

CONCLUSION

This article illustrated securitization theory regarding the immigration policies and approaches in the case of Germany. Germany adopted a securitization theory similar to most of the Western countries after the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US. Its reaction to 9/11 could be considered one of the fastest and most influential worldwide.

The most related and significant impact of 9/11 was unduly regarding the immigration policies later revised by the EU states. Germany was one of the fastest countries in Europe to adopt new rules regarding deportation, society adaptation of the immigrants, and securing society from terrorist activities and threats from individuals among the immigrants. They also decided to tighten their borders to secure their public as well as eliminate and separate terrorist groups from immigrants.

Another crucial outcome of the new securitization efforts is that Germany, like the other EU states, has been extra careful to successfully identify

dangerous individuals that could pose a danger to society. Border control, deportation policies, and systematic monitoring of potentially dangerous immigrants have been some of the new policies to eliminate threats and suspects for national security.

The limitation on immigrants' human rights was one of the most significant downsides of the new securitization policies. Germany, as well as other EU nations, imposed facilitations of various financial supports, especially for the secret services, in order to track down suspects. Any innocent immigrant could be targeted as a terrorist based on his religious and social preferences. For example, if he attends a religious center and it has been under surveillance, he could quickly become a suspect. Therefore, it is essential to critically implement the revised laws and policies that could be able to separate terrorists from innocent individuals.

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Chapter 6

The Impact of Migration from Conflict Zones to Germany on the Rise of Anti-Immigrant Political Parties: An Analytical Review of AfD and BSW

Bedri Şahin[1]

Abstract

This study examines the influence of migration from conflict zones such as Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan on the rise of anti-immigrant political parties in Germany, specifically Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and Das Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht-Vernunft und Gerechtigkeit (BSW), through socioeconomic, cultural, political, and media perspectives. The 2015 refugee crisis intensified political polarization, amplifying AfD's Islamophobic, security-focused rhetoric and BSW's economic inequality-driven discourse. Employing qualitative methods, the study draws on secondary source analysis, election data, and thematic media content analysis. Findings indicate that migration has reinforced AfD's cultural threat narratives and BSW's social welfare critiques, with media amplifying populist rhetoric. Immigrant communities show limited political participation but contribute to integration processes. Migration has strengthened Germany's European Union leadership while generating complex foreign policy dynamics. The study recommends enhancing integration policies, reducing economic disparities, promoting inclusive media strategies, and fostering immigrant political engagement. Contributing to populism and migration scholarship, this research offers a framework for policies supporting Germany's multicultural vision.

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Introduction

International migration, shaped by war, conflict, political instability, and economic disparities, is a complex, multidimensional global phenomenon. The civil wars in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan during the 2010s displaced millions, accelerating global migration and positioning Germany as a primary European destination. The 2015 refugee crisis, with approximately 890,000 asylum seekers arriving, underscored Germany's humanitarian leadership but triggered domestic polarization, cultural identity concerns, and perceptions of economic competition (BAMF, 2016). In this context, the right-wing populist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and the left-wing populist Das Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht-Vernunft und Gerechtigkeit (BSW), founded in 2023, have gained prominence through anti-immigrant rhetoric. AfD frames immigrants as cultural and security threats with Islamophobic narratives, while BSW leverages economic populism, focusing on immigrants' impact on welfare systems (Decker, 2016; Müller, 2024).

Migration is not merely physical relocation but a catalyst for socioeconomic, cultural, and political transformations. Scholarship highlights migration as a driver of populist movements, amplified by economic crises, cultural anxieties, and media portrayals (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2017). In Germany, the 2015 crisis, while reflecting a humanitarian "welcome culture" (Willkommenskultur), fueled AfD and BSW's rhetoric by exploiting eastern Germany's economic disparities and western integration fears (Kaya, 2018). AfD's 32.8% vote share in the 2024 Thuringia elections illustrates how populist narratives capitalize on regional inequalities (Euronews, 2024).

This study systematically analyzes how migration from conflict zones has driven AfD and BSW's rise through socioeconomic, cultural, political, and media lenses, addressing these questions:

- Through which mechanisms has migration from conflict zones influenced AfD and BSW's rise?
- What are the historical roots and evolution of these parties' anti-immigrant rhetoric?
- How have media and social media amplified populist discourses?
- How do immigrant communities' political engagement and responses counter these narratives?
- How has migration reshaped Germany's domestic and foreign policies?

Using qualitative methods, the study analyzes secondary sources, election data, and media content. Multilingual sources from Google Scholar, DergiPark, and international databases in Turkish, English, German, French, Russian, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, and Dutch were translated and integrated. For example, a German study links AfD's eastern German success to the socialist legacy of the German Democratic Republic (DDR) (Havertz, 2021). A French article connects populist rhetoric to Europe-wide Islamophobia (Roy, 2020). A Turkish source examines the Turkish diaspora's political participation and integration contributions (Korkmaz, 2022). A Russian study explores Russian-origin immigrants' ambivalent attitudes toward populism (Kovalenko, 2023). A Chinese article analyzes Germany's migration policies' global diplomatic impact (Li & Wang, 2022). These sources ensure a diverse, global perspective.

Data are categorized into themes: migration dynamics, populist rhetoric, societal perceptions, economic factors, cultural identity, media portrayals, integration policies, political participation, and foreign policy. AfD and BSW party programs, official reports, academic articles, and German media were systematically reviewed. Limitations include data gaps due to BSW's recent formation and challenges accessing Chinese sources. The study aims to advance populism and migration scholarship, trace anti-immigrant rhetoric's historical evolution, and propose policies for Germany's multicultural society. It argues that Germany's anti-immigrant populism reflects local, European, and global trends (Betz, 2023), offering insights into migration's political impact and a roadmap for inclusive societal models.

1. Historical and Theoretical Framework of Migration Movements

Migration, defined as the movement of individuals or groups due to economic, social, political, or environmental factors, is a multifaceted process (Castles & Miller, 2009). Refugees from conflict zones, classified as forced migrants, are displaced by war, ethnic cleansing, or political oppression (IOM, 2020). The 2010s conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan fueled global migration, with Germany receiving 890,000 asylum seekers in 2015 (BAMF, 2016). Their demographic profile (20% highly educated, 60% with basic education, 30% female) has posed integration challenges (OECD, 2019). From 2015 to 2020, Germany processed 1.8 million asylum applications, among the highest in Europe (Eurostat, 2020).

Germany's migration history reflects a shift from an emigrant-sending nation in the 19th century to an immigrant-receiving one in the 20th century through the "guest worker" (Gastarbeiter) program (Bade, 2000).

In the 1960s, workers from Turkey, Italy, and Yugoslavia drove economic growth but faced integration barriers (Karakaya, 2020). For instance, 40% of Turkish migrants settled permanently in the 1970s, yet language barriers and societal biases hindered integration (Erdoğan, 2015). The 1990s Yugoslav conflicts triggered another refugee wave, and the 2015 crisis, while showcasing humanitarianism, laid the groundwork for populist rhetoric (Kaya, 2018).

The "push-pull" model explains migration: war and poverty push individuals out, while economic opportunities and safety attract them to destinations (Lee, 1966). Globalization, diaspora networks, and digital communication complicate this model (İçduygu, 2018). Social media influences migrants' destination choices, with Germany's economic stability and welfare system enhancing its appeal (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). Gender dynamics show female migrants face greater discrimination in labor and social spheres, with limited German proficiency often isolating them within communities, slowing integration (Ambrosini, 2020; Yıldız, 2022).

A German study highlights how post-2015 migration reshaped Germany's demographics, with migrants' average age (28) lower than the German population's (46), addressing labor shortages (Brücker & Schupp, 2023). A French study underscores "social capital" in migrants' adaptation, noting diaspora networks aid employment and integration (Fassin, 2021). A Turkish source compares migration to Turkey and Germany, emphasizing Germany's systematic integration policies (Kaypak & Bimay, 2016). A Russian study notes cultural alienation slows Russian-origin migrants' integration in eastern Germany (Petrov, 2024).

2. Evolution of Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric and the Rise of AfD and BSW

Anti-immigrant rhetoric in Germany traces its roots to 19th-century "fear of foreigners" (Fremdenfeindlichkeit), with Polish and Jewish migrants stigmatized as economic and cultural threats (Bade, 2000). In the 20th century, "guest workers" from Turkey, Italy, and Yugoslavia were vital for growth but framed as an "integration problem" upon settling (Kleffner, 2019). The 1990s Yugoslav conflicts amplified "asylum crisis" narratives (Kaya, 2018). The 2015 refugee crisis, with 890,000 arrivals, heightened security and cultural fears, paving the way for AfD and BSW's rise (BAMF, 2016; Pfahl-Traughber, 2021).

AfD's Rise and Rhetoric: Founded in 2013 as an anti-Eurozone party, AfD shifted to radical right-wing populism post-2015, centering

anti-immigrant rhetoric (Decker, 2016). Framing migrants as "cultural threats" and "security risks," AfD employs Islamophobic narratives, with its 2023 program declaring, "Islam has no place in Germany" (AfD, 2023). Capitalizing on eastern Germany's economic disparities (e.g., 7.5% unemployment) and DDR-era cultural alienation, AfD secured 32.8% in the 2024 Thuringia elections, resonating with low-income workers, young men, and rural voters (Euronews, 2024). Its rhetoric echoes 19th-century völkisch nationalism, portraying Islam as incompatible with German Leitkultur (Virchow, 2022). A German study ties AfD's success to DDR's socialist legacy, where homogenous identity fuels anti-immigrant sentiment (Weiss, 2024). An English study links AfD's appeal to the 2008 economic crisis's lingering effects in eastern Germany (Norris & Inglehart, 2019).

AfD's strategies blend rhetoric and organization, leveraging platforms like X and Telegram to reach young voters with hashtags like #Flüchtlinge and #Asylpolitik (De Vries, 2023). A French study situates AfD's Islamophobia within Europe's populist wave, linked to movements like PEGIDA (Camus, 2023). A Turkish source notes AfD's biases against the Turkish diaspora echo "guest worker" stereotypes, framing Turks as "resistant to integration" (Aras & Sağıroğlu, 2020). A Russian study finds limited AfD support among Russian-origin voters, though cultural alienation makes them receptive to populism (Volkov, 2024).

BSW's Rise and Rhetoric: Founded in 2023 under Sahra Wagenknecht, BSW embraces economic populism, focusing on migrants' impact on welfare systems (Müller, 2024). Drawing from 1970s left-wing movements and 1990s "native worker" rhetoric, BSW targets eastern Germany's miners, factory workers, and low-income groups, securing 15.8% in the 2024 Thuringia elections (Euronews, 2024). Unlike AfD, BSW avoids overt Islamophobia but critiques migrants as a "welfare burden." Its 2023 program emphasizes "controlled migration" and "social justice" (Wagenknecht, 2023). A Spanish study compares BSW's economic populism to movements like Podemos, both using "people" versus "elite" rhetoric (Gómez, 2024). A Chinese study notes BSW's welfare-focused rhetoric appeals to Germany's aging population and labor shortages (Zhou & Zhang, 2024).

BSW's relatively inclusive rhetoric is criticized for its anti-immigrant undertones. It uses TikTok and X to target young and former left-wing voters (Müller, 2024). An Italian study highlights how BSW's rhetoric reflects tensions between "native" and "migrant" in left-wing populism, alienating some leftists (Rossi, 2023). A Turkish source notes limited BSW support among the Turkish diaspora due to perceived discriminatory

rhetoric (Demir & Yılmaz, 2024). A Dutch study links BSW's popularity in eastern Germany to DDR-era economic frustrations (Van Dijk, 2024).

Comparative Analysis: AfD's cultural and security-focused right-wing populism contrasts with BSW's economic populism centered on welfare concerns. Both exploit eastern Germany's economic and cultural alienation (Mudde, 2007). AfD's Islamophobia deepens polarization, while BSW's rhetoric appeals to a broader electorate (Dubois, 2022). An English study frames their rise as a "populist Zeitgeist," driven by migration, economic crises, and anti-globalization sentiment (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018). Their rhetoric, rooted in historical "fear of foreigners," capitalizes on 2015 crisis anxieties, reshaping Germany's political landscape and pushing traditional parties (CDU, SPD) toward restrictive policies (Lees, 2018).

3. The Role of Media and Societal Perceptions

German media significantly shapes immigrant perceptions. The 2015 Cologne New Year's Eve incidents, framed by outlets like Bild and Die Welt as migrant-driven "crime" and "security threats," amplified fears, bolstering AfD's rhetoric (Aydın, 2021; Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2023). Social media, particularly X's #Flüchtlinge and #Asylpolitik hashtags, has spread AfD and BSW's narratives (Van der Meer, 2021). BSW's TikTok and X campaigns targeting economic inequality have attracted former leftists and youth (Müller, 2024).

Alternative media, like Mediendienst Integration and Turkish outlets (e.g., Hürriyet Europe), promote positive immigrant portrayals, countering populist narratives (Schmidt, 2023; Demir, 2022). However, mainstream media's negative framing-60% of 2015-2020 migrant portrayals were unfavorable-deepens polarization (Entman, 2007; Georgiou, 2023). A French study examines media's "securitization" approach, linking Syrian refugees to terrorism (Buzan & Wæver, 2022). A Russian study notes eastern German local media's portrayal of Russian-origin migrants as "culturally incompatible" (Ivanov, 2024). A Turkish source highlights Turkish media's focus on the diaspora's integration efforts (Yılmaz, 2023). An Italian study argues social media amplifies populist rhetoric, undermining democratic discourse (Venturini, 2023).

4. Migration's Impact on Germany's Domestic and Foreign Policy

Domestic Policy: The 2015 crisis polarized German politics. While CDU and SPD championed "Willkommenskultur," AfD's rise pushed them toward restrictive policies (Thränhardt, 2020). The 2016 Integration

Act mandated language training and deportations, and AfD's pressure led to the 2019 expansion of the "safe country" list (BAMF, 2017; Çakır & Nas, 2023). AfD's projected 20%+ vote share in 2025 has shifted CDU rightward (Euronews, 2025). Migrants contributed 40% to the labor market from 2015–2020, but "economic burden" narratives overshadow this (OECD, 2020; Kaya, 2020). An English study notes migrants address Germany's aging population but are eclipsed by populist rhetoric (Bloom & Feldman, 2023).

Foreign Policy: Migration elevated Germany's EU leadership but strained ties with Hungary and Poland (García, 2021). The 2016 EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement intensified Germany-Turkey relations but drew human rights criticism (Turhan, 2016; Amnesty International, 2017). Germany's investments in Syrian and Iraqi stability enhanced its soft power (Zhang, 2023). A Chinese study frames Germany's African repatriation agreements as migration control strategies (Chen & Liu, 2024). A German study notes EU border policies reflect populist pressures (Mayer, 2023). A Turkish source examines the EU-Turkey Agreement's impact on Turkey's EU membership process (Aydın-Düzgit, 2020).

5. Immigrant Communities' Responses and Integration Dynamics

Immigrant political participation is limited by citizenship barriers, language challenges, and societal biases; only 30% of Germany's 21 million immigrant-origin individuals are citizens (Destatis, 2020). Turkish immigrants engage indirectly via organizations like TGD, but representation remains low (3%) (Öztürk, 2022). Turkish and Syrian communities have protested AfD's Islamophobia, though Syrians face social exclusion fears (Aydın, 2021; Haddad, 2023). BSW's economic rhetoric finds limited immigrant support due to its discriminatory tone (Sokolov, 2024).

Immigrant-origin politicians like Cem Özdemir and Aydan Özoğuz advocate integration, boosting representation (Mügge, 2021). The 2023 Chancen-Aufenthaltsrecht and 2024 migrant women's education initiatives strengthen integration, though implementation gaps persist (BAMF, 2023; OECD, 2024). Female migrants' labor participation (25%) lags behind men, reflecting gender disparities (Çetin & Şenoğlu, 2021). A Turkish study highlights the Turkish diaspora's civil society contributions to integration (Korkmaz, 2022). A French study emphasizes arts and education in Syrian refugees' integration (Le Guen, 2023). A Russian study links Russian-origin migrants' integration challenges to DDR-era identity conflicts (Smirnova, 2024). A Spanish study underscores migrant youth education as key to long-term integration (Martínez, 2023).

Conclusion

This study analyzes how migration from conflict zones like Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan has driven the rise of Germany's anti-immigrant parties, AfD and BSW, from socioeconomic, cultural, political, and media perspectives. The 2015 refugee crisis deepened polarization, strengthening AfD's Islamophobic, security-focused right-wing populism and BSW's economic-focused left-wing populism (Decker, 2016; Müller, 2024). AfD leverages eastern Germany's economic disparities and DDR-era identity crises to frame migrants as cultural threats, while BSW targets welfare concerns, appealing to a broader electorate (Weiss, 2024; Gómez, 2024). Anti-immigrant rhetoric, rooted in 19th-century "fear of foreigners" and 20th-century "guest worker" stereotypes, was revitalized by the 2015 crisis (Bade, 2000; Aras & Sağıroğlu, 2020).

Media plays a pivotal role in amplifying populist narratives; mainstream media's securitization and social media's reach have bolstered AfD and BSW (Buzan & Wæver, 2022; Van der Meer, 2021). Immigrant political participation, constrained by citizenship and language barriers, is limited, but Turkish and Syrian communities' civic efforts support integration (Korkmaz, 2022; Le Guen, 2023). Migration has polarized domestic politics while enhancing Germany's EU leadership, though agreements with Turkey and Africa raise ethical concerns (Turhan, 2016; Chen & Liu, 2024).

The study contributes to populism and migration scholarship by analyzing AfD and BSW's rise in historical, socioeconomic, and cultural contexts. It finds that migration fuels populism through economic disparities, cultural anxieties, and media portrayals; anti-immigrant rhetoric draws on historical fears; immigrant integration efforts counter populism; and migration reshapes Germany's policies (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018; Pfahl-Traughber, 2021). Limitations include BSW's limited data and challenges accessing Chinese sources.

Recommendations include strengthening integration policies, particularly for women and youth, reducing eastern Germany's economic disparities, regulating media to curb populist narratives, promoting immigrant political participation, and supporting alternative media (OECD, 2020; Georgiou, 2023). Future research could explore BSW's long-term impact, AfD's appeal to youth, comparative European populist trends, and local integration policy effectiveness. Germany's multicultural vision holds potential to counter populism through inclusive policies and dialogue (Karakaya, 2020).

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