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**LEVON HOVSEPYAN  
TATEVIK MANUKYAN**

**TURKISH DOMESTIC DETERMINANTS AND ANKARA'S MILITARY  
OPERATIONS IN SYRIA: KURDISH THREAT AND EXPANSIONIST  
AMBITIONS\***

***Abstract:** The Syrian conflict became one of the most important directions of Turkey's regional security policy, playing a key role in the redefinition of Ankara's security policy and the expansion of Ankara's power projection area and tools. The military operation "Euphrates Shield" in August 2016 thus became the first attempt at the massive use of the military in regional policy after 1974, which justified the vitality of aggressive initiatives among the ambitious Turkish elite and had a unique domino effect. The purpose of the article is to highlight the domestic factors that supported and conditioned Turkish military operations in Syria, as well as the main objectives pursued. The article contains a case study, the focus of which is Turkey's military operations on Syrian territory and the military-political goals pursued by them. Furthermore, the Turkish domestic factors and transformations that enabled and aided in the implementation and expansion of these military operations are revealed.*

***Keywords:** Turkey, Syrian crisis, military operations, regional and security policy, strategic culture, PKK/PYD.*

**Introduction**

Turkey's military-centered power projection has evolved into the primary element that effectively defines its current regional security policy. The core tenets of Turkey's foreign and regional security policy now include military engagement in regional conflicts, the deployment of military bases abroad, the support and patronage of various Islamist proxies, and increasing militarization trends. Today, Turkey, which has become a driving force for instability and conflict in its geographical proximity, is not hesitating to pursue its aggressive and expansionist ambitions. The escalation of Turkish-Greek tensions in the Aegean Sea has given rise to aggressive moves in the Eastern Mediterranean, military engagement and operations in the Syrian and Libyan conflicts, cross-border operations, and the expansion of military bases and posts in Iraq. Its full support for Azerbaijan's aggression against the

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Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and its increasing military and political influence in the Caucasus clearly demonstrate the militarized and aggressive features of Turkey's regional policy. Turkey's militarized and securitized regional policy is accompanied by expansionist political discourse and aggressive initiatives aimed at reversing the status quo in neighboring regions. The strategy, based on military power, is designed to serve the regional ambitions of the current ruling elite.

Such security policy behavior, undoubtedly, is conditioned by the processes and transformations in the international system which constrains but at the same time gives opportunity to maneuver and seek new possibilities to carry out its ambitions. Over the past two decades, Turkey has undergone significant internal, state, ideological, and social transformations that have equally influenced and conditioned Ankara's behavior in foreign and security policy.

The Syrian conflict became one of the most important directions of Turkey's regional security policy, which was the key factor in the redefinition of Ankara's security policy and the expansion of power projection areas and tools. The "Euphrates Shield" military operation in 2016 thus became the first attempt at the massive use of the military in regional policy after the occupation of the northern part of Cyprus in 1974, which justified the vitality of aggressive initiatives among the ambitious Turkish elite and had a unique domino effect. The aim of the article is to reveal the domestic factors that supported and conditioned Turkish military operations in Syria and also highlight the main pursued goals. In the article, a case study has been done, the core of which is the military operations carried out by Turkey in the territory of Syria and the military-political goals pursued by them. Besides, the domestic factors and transformations in Turkey, especially in the fields of the civil-military relations and the strategic culture, that made possible and contributed to the implementation and further expansion of these military operations are revealed.

### **Domestic determinants: civil-military relations and strategic culture transformations**

By achieving control and, moreover, monopolizing the domestic and foreign policy decision-making systems, the AKP's foreign and regional policy took a sharp turn toward securitization, making international behavior deriving from the identity and ideological preferences of the elite more pronounced. One of the goals of the transformation of the domestic sphere and the weakening of the role of the military was not only to strengthen the power of the AKP but also to define and implement a foreign policy based on preferences arising from its identity, for which the Kemalist military-bureaucratic system, led by the military, would be a major obstacle. Turkey's foreign policy became conflict-provoking and threatening after the AKP established supremacy in the foreign policy decision-making mechanism (Özpek and Yaşar 2018,

208-209), destroying the domestic system of checks and balances by establishing a personal authoritarian rule. Due to the neutralization of the role of the military domestically as a restraining factor, a counterbalancing factor led to the self-confidence of the AKP in the country's domestic and foreign policies (Hovsepian 2018, 34-36). Kirişçi notes that the process of widespread civilianization and demilitarization that began in the 2000s was crucial in understanding various aspects of the AKP's "new" foreign policy, from the Cyprus and Northern Iraq issues to active engagement in the Middle East, which differed significantly from traditional foreign and security policy (Kirişçi 2006, 49). Haugom, considering changes in foreign policy during Erdogan's presidency, among other factors, emphasizes the "disappearance" of the military from the process of decision-making and implementation of foreign policy, which facilitated the projection of military force as a foreign policy tool. Because, traditionally, the military has been extremely cautious about the issue of military engagement in other countries and surrounding conflicts (Haugom 2019, 214). Although the latter considers the military's withdrawal from the foreign policy implementation process as the result of the 2016 failed military coup, that process had already taken place earlier, when in institutional and legislative terms the military was pushed to the margins of the definition of the security agenda.

Along with the weakening of the positions of the military in the state, the AKP felt stronger and consolidated its potential both in the state and on the international stage. It managed to initiate processes, including in the foreign policy, which were previously rejected (Barkey 2012, 3). Turkey's foreign policy agenda reflects the nature of the AKP itself, whose Islamic, populist, and authoritarian tendencies were more quickly and clearly manifested after the military and Kemalist bureaucratic system emerged on the political margins (Özpek and Yaşar 2018, 202).

Neutralizing possible challenges and insuring itself against possible military coups, the AKP began to implement its ambitious domestic and foreign political agenda, particularly its Islam-centric policy in the Middle East (Bokhari & Senzai 2013, 180). The transformation of the AKP's revisionist, hegemonic ambitions based on "autonomous expansionist" regional policy became more bellicose, especially after the 2016 coup attempt (Taş 2022, 7-9). After the failed coup, the aim of the government's policy on Syria was to finally reshape civil-military relations in its favor and to restore public trust toward the army, which had been continuously shaken as a result of Erdogan's consistent steps. The political orientation of the army also changed, of course, in favor of Erdogan (Siccardi 2021).

One of the most striking examples was Turkey's military engagement in the Syrian crisis. The command of the Turkish army objected and voiced concerns regarding such a decision. Security expert Gurcan stated in this regard that the only means to restrain the authorities was the army, which set controls and counterbalances

against Erdogan (BBC 2016). However, the subsequent processes in the Syrian issue clearly showed that the army's capabilities to restrain the authorities have been extremely limited and exaggerated. One of the analysts remarkably notes that the acting generals who were not deposed and survived after the 2016 failed coup were so afraid of Erdogan's anger and revenge that "they rolled their troops inside Syria—a prospect they once resisted without a whimper" (Jacinto 2017). The Chief of General Staff, Hulusi Akar, who was considered loyal to President Erdogan, was unable to resist Erdogan's "war game" in Syria (ibid). Akar was more interested in serving the Erdogan agenda.

The Turkish invasion of Syria took place following the botched military coup, which was due to the fact that high-ranking military officials who clearly opposed it had been removed or arrested. The same applies to Erdogan's plans to establish close military-political cooperation with Russia, which were again opposed by the military until mid-2016 (Kenez 2019). By the middle of 2012, the possibility of military intervention in Syria had started to be discussed. The National Intelligence Organization (MIT) was requesting interventions, but the Turkish military leadership, however, was reluctant to launch any military operations in Syria (Cantenar and Kozera 2022). The plan to provoke a war with Syria was discussed in March 2014 at a secret meeting of Turkish high-level officials. Erdogan's government was making every effort to find pretexts and justifications for invading Syria. At the same meeting, head of the MIT Hakan Fidan proposed fabricating a pretext for war by "directing a missile attack on Turkey by its agents." (Cumhuriyet 2014) At that time, MIT was under the full control of Erdogan (Hovsepian 2013, 51-63) as it was headed by his confidant Hakan Fidan, so a military involvement was the AKP government's assertive preference.

Prior to the military invasion of Syria, the supply of weapons to the armed groups and jihadist proxies was carried out by the Erdogan-sponsored Special Forces commander Zekai Aksakalli and the MIT, often bypassing the leadership of the General Staff. Aksakalli was the commander who authorized secret missions in Syria (Bozkurt 2021). It is noteworthy that, according to some publications, the brigadier general of the Special Forces Command, Semih Terzi, who opposed Aksakalli's adventures and Turkey's engagement in the Syrian war, submitted reports to the General Staff about Aksakalli and MIT's underground operations. On the night of the 2016 military coup attempt, according to some testimonies, General Terzi was shot dead by a non-commissioned officer of the Special Forces Command by order of Aksakalli (Bozkurt 2021). The same Aksakalli took command of Turkey's "Euphrates Shield" military operation in Syria and later was appointed the commander of the Second Corps of Land Forces (CNN Türk 2017).



Tziarras rightly notes that after the 2016 coup attempt, the AKP's control over state institutions, especially the army and security system, accelerated and deepened. As a result of this and the continued dominance of Erdogan's consistent policy and official discourse, an "imperial strategic culture" based on expansionism and regional leadership was institutionalized (Tziarras 2022, 82). Also, the weakening of the role of the military institutionalized the new imperial strategic culture because the military was at the root of the formation and maintenance of the Kemalist strategic culture under the conditions of the military-political bureaucratic system. In general, it is accepted that Turkey's foreign policy was mostly based on the principles of caution, passivity, and maintenance of the status quo (Mufti 1998), which were part of the strategic and security culture of the military-bureaucratic dominant elite. In contrast to the Republican strategic culture's defensive stance on regional matters, the AKP government adopted an aggressive, adventurous, and revisionist attitude to the challenges that surfaced during the "Arab Spring" processes and the Syrian crisis. That is a risky foreign and security policy to increase Turkey's influence and realize ambitions in the Middle East (Tziarras 2022, 57-58).

Changes in Turkish foreign policy, particularly its primary focus on the Middle East, were heavily caused by a shift in the state elite's geopolitical worldviews and identities. Turkey's active engagement in the Middle East and the Islamic world in general was more of an outcome of identity politics than of the post-Cold War anarchy (Warning and Kardas 2011, 128). The Republic of Turkey's "founding philosophy," which was based on Westernism, secularism, and caution in foreign policy, started to alter after the 2000s. AKP's security thinking does not see Turkey as an entity divorced from the past but rather as a continuation of the Ottoman socio-political legacy. This security thinking interprets Turkey's foreign and security interests not only in Anatolian terms but also in terms of the vast geographical scope of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey's historical obligations and roles therein (Oğuzlu 2020).

After the active phase of the armed resistance, the PKK and Kurdish separatism have been the principal challenges defining national security in the Republic of Turkey. This has steadily increased militarization and consolidated the concept of the "national security state", resulting in the securitization of domestic politics and foreign policy (Sarlap 2020). The emergence of the PKK and subsequent armed struggle strengthened not only the role of the military in the state but also instrumentalized the PKK in a unique way. The instrumentalization of the PKK in Republican Turkey was primarily motivated by domestic concerns, including a desire to preserve the military's dominance in politics and its exclusive right to define national security policy and discourse. This type of instrumentalization was carried out from the defensive strategic culture position, through the prism of the dominant

Republican "Sèvres syndrome" (Hovsepyan 2020, 17-29) mentality. Turkish Republican security culture was mainly defensive, based on caution and fears emanating from historical experiences due to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of a nation-state.

The instrumentalization of the PKK during the AKP's rule underwent certain methodological and discursive transformations. De-securitization of the Kurdish issue was initially started by the AKP, which is best explained by its intention to consolidate its power and increase its influence in security decision-making by reducing the influence of the military and military-bureaucratic system. That was an interim and tactical move serving the other main goals of the AKP authorities. The instrumentalization of the PKK changed along with the re-securitization and militarization of the AKP's foreign and security policies. With the institutionalization of the "Imperial strategic culture" championed by Erdogan, the instrumentalization of the Kurdish threat, and especially the PKK, in addition to defensive strategic perceptions, was moved to the sphere of more aggressive and ambitious foreign and regional policy. It was considered and served as a tool to legitimize and justify the military-centered, aggressive, and ambitious security policy in the region. To support Turkey's expansionist regional aspirations for Aleppo, Mosul, and other territories, the paradigm of the PKK's instrumentalization was shifted. Erdogan's instrumentalization of the PKK serves to realize the ambitions in the region arising from his own geopolitical vision and preferences.

### **Military operations: Kurdish threat and expansionist ambitions**

During the late 2000s, foreign policy rearrangements were noticeable, as Ankara intended to become one of the leading political players in the world and the definite leader in the Sunni Muslim world. These transformations were indisputable in the relationship with Syria, which became a unique testing ground for the AKP's foreign policy doctrine. (Murariu and Anghiu 2020, 140). Turkey's policies and actions in the Middle East in general and particularly in Syria were mainly influenced by ideological motivations and the ambitions of the ruling elite rather than the critical, existential necessity of eliminating security threats. Moreover, the perception of security risks and their neutralization were smartly combined with the AKP's neo-Ottoman ambitions.

Along with the Syrian crisis, Turkey's regional expansionist ambitions became more realistic and assertive. The importance of the Kurdish factor has increased dramatically in the context of regional shifts as well as within reshuffled geopolitical centers of power. Kurdish expanding ambitions outgrew into a severe issue for Ankara. The formation of another Kurdish autonomy near its borderline has dramatically disturbed the Turkish authorities; hence, they coordinated all the

military-political potential and tools to disrupt the process of the consolidation of the Syrian Kurds. It was obvious that the Kurdish ambitions to have autonomy in Syria were incompatible with the interests of both internal and external players involved in the crisis.

In the early stages of the Syrian crisis, Ankara took the initiative to strengthen its pressure on President Bashar al-Assad. Ankara tried to place the "Muslim Brotherhood" organization that is under its patronage in the ruling elite of Damascus (Salt 2018, 88), which would enable it to direct and control the domestic political developments in Syria and keep it in a manageable orbit. Failing its plans to expand its position in Syria with political pressure, Ankara went for another way to actualize its political interests and ideologically driven ambitions. It provided military-technical, material, and financial support to the Syrian opposition and various Islamic extremist groups and even established camps of the Free Syrian Army in its territory (Demirtaş 2013, 117). These later became the primary servants of Erdogan's expansionist ambitions in Syria.

In contrast to Ankara's initiatives to support the Syrian opposition, Damascus, as a lever of counteraction, restarted the "Kurdish Card", returning to its old "partner", the PKK. The cooperation between the Syrian authorities and the PKK was interrupted in 1998. It was restored on March 17, 2012, in Qamishli, based on an agreement between the Syrian special services and the military leadership of the PKK. According to this agreement, the Syrian side promised to provide the PKK with complete military and financial support in exchange for the group carrying out terrorist activities in Turkey, specifically in Syrian refugee camps (Balmasov 2012). The reappearance of the PKK in the military-political arena of the Kurdish cantons bordering Turkey later became the best basis for the legitimacy of Ankara's armed operations.

Early in 2012, by the decision of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian army left the Kurdish regions, handing over de facto power to the Kurdish forces. (Ivanov 2016, 39). It was a forced decision that worked well politically. All echelons of local government came under the control of the Kurds in the Kobanî, Afrin, Darik, Amuda, and Jindires settlements bordering Turkey, where the Kurds gradually established autonomous local units to govern their territories (Crisis Group Middle East Report 2013, 3). Strengthening their position, the Kurdish forces, the Syrian Kurdistan People's Council, were formed in cooperation with the Democratic Union Party<sup>1</sup> (Kurdish; Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat PYD) and the Kurdish National Council, declared Afrin Canton autonomous in January 2014 (Schmidinger 2019, 50). For the security of the areas newly taken over, the PYD founded the People's Protection Units (Kurdish: Yekîneyên Parastina Gel, YPG), which were assembled by an

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<sup>1</sup> Turkey claims that Democratic Union Party (PYD) is a Syrian branch of the PKK.

experienced cadre of the People's Protection Forces (Hêzên Parastina Gel, HPG), the PKK guerilla army, under its commander Murat Karayılan (Schmidinger 2019, 48). In the spring of 2016, a situation had already been created when the Kurdish forces controlled the majority of the regions of northern Syria bordering Turkey, except for the Azaz region, where Turkish-sponsored opposition groups, including the Jabhat Al-Nusra Front, were deployed (Balanche 2015). On March 17, Kurdish forces, led by the PYD, announced the formation of the "Democratic Federation of Northern Syria" in areas under their control, which they called "Rojava" (Schmidinger 2020, 16). Generally speaking, at the beginning of the crisis in Syria, the PYD, both in the Kurdish community and in international discussions, began to exploit the idea of Kurdish democratic autonomy (sometimes also confederation) on the territory of Syria, which was the vision of the last period of the PKK (Kamran 2019, 1076).

In response to expanding Kurdish ambitions, on June 29, 2015, the Turkish National Security Council meeting confirmed that the Eastern bank of the Euphrates River is a "red line" for Turkey. Moreover, in case the Kurdish forces try to cross the river and connect the two cantons of Afrin and the areas west of Kobanî under their control, the Turkish military will intervene (Çelikaslan 2021, 378). "Kurdish terrorist threat" became tangible for Turkey in 2015-2016. During this period, the YPG, backed by the US-led international alliance, achieved military success in the fight against IS, liberating Tel Abyad (then crossing Ankara's declared "red line"), Manbij, and reaching Jarablus. Considering the strategic importance of these areas and the Jarablus-Azaz road, it became imperative for Turkey to prevent the Kurdish military from advancing. On August 20, 2016, a terrorist attack in Gaziantep, which Turkey blamed on IS, was well-timed and provided a convenient excuse to launch a military operation and gain support from the international community.

It should be noted that the necessity and expediency of a military intervention in Syria were constantly debated among Turkey's military and political elites in early 2012. The intervention was justified by the importance of establishing a security zone to control the flow of refugees and protect the tomb of Süleyman Shah<sup>1</sup> (27 kilometers deep). However, since the Turkish military leadership at that stage was directly involved in the decision-making processes, it was still possible to prevent the intention of a military operation (Cantenaar and Kozera 2022, 353). As previously stated, following the July 15 failed coup, Turkey's decision-making and internal

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<sup>1</sup> Süleyman Shah (1178–1236) was the grandfather of Osman I, the founder of the Ottoman Empire, whose grave is in Syria, on the bank of the Euphrates River.

“The tomb of Süleyman Şah and the land surrounding it is our territory. We cannot ignore any unfavorable act against that monument, as it would be an attack on our territory, as well as an attack on NATO land,” Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said in a televised interview late Aug. 5 (Hürriyet Daily News 2012). Already in February 2015, Turkey carried out its first military campaign, "Shah Euphrates," in Syria under the pretext of saving the tomb from attacks by the Islamic State (Aktar 2015).

power centers shifted fundamentally (Kaynar 2022). The former military-bureaucratic system of security policy decision-making and implementation lost its influence and leverage in favor of President Erdogan's hegemonic and undisputed autocracy. Since then, the National Security Council has turned into a structure that ratifies Erdogan's decisions. One essential priority was redefining the scope of the army's "missions" (Hovsepyan 2018, 34-37).

Barely a month after the coup attempt, on August 24, 2016, Turkey declared that it was exercising the right of self-defense enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter and initiated the "Euphrates Shield" codenamed military invasion of Syria (Kasapoğlu and Ülgen 2017, 2). Referring to the beginning of that invasion, it should be mentioned that the Erdogan propaganda machine was thoroughly preparing for it for a long time. From time to time, the news was spread about the bombarding and shelling of Turkish settlements from the border areas that were under the control of IS, and the victims among the civilian population, giving Turkey a "legal right" to invade northern Syria and forming a "security zone" (Kasapoğlu and Ülgen 2017, 1).

On August 22, before the start of the operation, the Turkish military began bombarding Kurdish positions in Manbij, and already on August 24, the special force units of the Turkish Armed Forces, with the support of the air forces, began the ground attack in the Jarablus area.

Justifying the need for a military operation, Erdogan announced in his speech at the Grand National Assembly in July 26 that he was going to "eliminate terrorism from Syria" (Bouvier 2019). He exceptionally emphasized the danger of Kurdish "terrorism" for Turkey's security environment. Furthermore, he declared that he aims to stop "the advance and ambitions of the Kurds, to prevent the creation of a corridor connecting the two Kurdish associations that have emerged in the territory of Syria, so they will not be able to unite" (Bouvier 2019).

Nevertheless, to strengthen his status as a "player" in the international arena and to appear as a pioneer in the fight against terrorism, Erdogan established the following justifications for military action.

- secure the border of Turkey and neutralize IS threats and attacks,
- ensure the possibility of Syrian refugees returning to their country,
- ensure the security of the northern regions of Syria.

During the "Euphrates Shield" operation, Ankara tested indigenous Bayraktar TB2 combat UAVs (Kasapoğlu and Ülgen 2017, 9), which proved their effectiveness in mountainous terrain and rugged terrain, greatly influencing the course of combat operations. Turkey carried out its military incursions into Syria using a hybrid war model, combining Turkish regular military forces and Syrian opposition militias Sunni Arab and Turcoman groups (Ahrar al-Sham, the Sultan Murad Division, Jays al-Tahrir, Al-Mutasim Brigade, Hamza division etc) that were under Turkish control

from the beginning of the crisis. Their total number would reach around 5,000 men during the later days of military operations (Cantenaar and Kozera 2022, 353).

The successful conclusion of operations was announced by Turkey's National Security Council on March 29, 2017. It was stressed that, nevertheless, Turkish military units will remain in Syria to "counter" Kurdish terrorism in Afrin and Manbij (Sözcü 2017). With this statement, Ankara outlined its ambitions. Nevertheless, if we try to assess the final result of the "Euphrates Shield" operation, conducted by Turkey in Syria, we can state that, although it did not have a dividing line of pre-declared ambitions, the Turkish military managed to take control of the cities Jarablus and al - Bab. According to Turkish sources, Turkish Armed Forces liberated 2055 sq km area from IS control in the aftermath of the operation (Koparan and Özcan 2022). Turkey is unceasingly positioning itself in the territories that are now under its control, although this time by using soft power tools: mainly educational, cultural and religious<sup>1</sup>.

In fact, it is hard to imagine that Ankara would launch a military invasion of Syria without prior multilateral agreement. It is evidenced by the fact that neither the Syrian government forces nor the international coalition forces led by the US and the Russian military did anything to stop the invasion by leaving the Kurdish forces alone to confront the Turkish aggression.

On January 20, 2018, the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces announced the start of the "Olive Branch" military operation in the Afrin region in northwestern Syria. This invasion was right before Washington's announcement on January 15, 2018, about the intention of forming a border guard corps of 30,000 of its sponsored Arab and Kurdish troops and deploying it in northern Syria (Malbrunot 2018).

Ankara protested this initiative, countering that it directly threatened the security of its borders since the YPG fighters would be mainly involved in the border guard corps. Perhaps this became the much-needed "motive" for the second military invasion of Syria, disguising the enterprising ambitions of the Turkish aggression to take control of Afrin. The necessity of the "Olive Branch" campaign was once again based on the urgency of the fight against terrorism, particularly the "Kurdish" PKK/PYD/YPG.

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<sup>1</sup> Turkey played a key role in the opening of nearly 700 schools that were renovated or rebuilt, enabling around 300,000 students to attend schools in the region. Meanwhile, Gaziantep University, located in Türkiye's southeastern Gaziantep province, also carries out higher education activities in the Syrian regions of Jarablus, Al-Bab and Azaz. The Turkish Ministry of Health carries out activities to normalize life in the areas cleared of terrorists, to provide health services needed as part of humanitarian and technical assistance, and to minimize patient referrals from Syria to Türkiye. In the town of Al-Rai, a medical faculty affiliated with the Turkish University of Health Sciences was established. A total of 280 mosques were restored and 253 new mosques were built in the region as part of the efforts led by Turkey's Directorate General of Foundations and Diyanet Foundation (Koparan and Özcan 2022).

Another important event that happened before also directly impacted Turkey's decision to initiate the second invasion. It was in 2017. The Iraqi Kurdistan independence referendum on September 25 seriously worried Ankara, as Kurdish ambitions were already more evident, threatening Turkey's internal security environment. The presence of two Kurdish autonomies rich in energy resources on its border was perceived as a serious threat to Turkey. In the case of their independence, the threat would have become more grievous several times. It was imperative for Ankara to disrupt the Kurdish plans, to stop the possibility of unification and access to the Mediterranean Sea. On the other hand, the active and direct involvement of foreign power players in both Iraqi and Syrian military-political processes significantly increased the vulnerability of the security environment; hence, maintaining order became extremely hard for Ankara.

Regarding the choice of Afrin, it should be noted that Ankara considers it its natural territory, like the neighboring Hatay province (Sanjak of Alexandretta), and the occupation of Afrin fits perfectly with the expansionist perceptions of the reunification of the Ottoman titular nation and its vassal vilayets.

The "Olive Branch" military invasion ended on March 18, 2018, with the utter defeat of the Kurdish forces. The occupation of Afrin gave Turkey the opportunity to establish control over the region, show its real capabilities and ambitions to Western partners, and secure a decisive voice at the negotiating table on Syria's future. President Erdogan even compared the strategic importance of this operation to the Battle of the Dardanelles, saying, "We used to teach a lesson to those who tried to defeat us at Gallipoli. Today, we do the same with those who question our independence and future by trying to create a terrorist state at our borders" (YeniBirlik 2018).

After the events surrounding Afrin, it is clear that Turkey has no intention of returning Afrin to Syria. Since late 2018, Afrin has been under the Turkish occupation administration and a coalition of Sunni Islamist groups (Schmidinger 101-103). In addition to the displacement of the Kurdish population (about 350,000 (Von Hein 2019), Turkey has organized the mass relocation, mainly of Arab jihadists, of many foreign mercenaries and their families (including slaves) from Ghouta, Deir ez-Zor, and Aleppo. Through demographic engineering, Turkey tries to change the demographic picture of the region with the clear intention of redrawing it. From Afrin, news began to spread of the violent treatment of the local Christian and Yezidi populations, including abductions, extrajudicial executions, and widespread destruction and looting (Schmidinger 2019, 109). Turkey's long-term plans for Afrin are also evidenced by the introduction of the Turkish model into local governments, religious expansion, Turkish flags and photographs of Erdogan, and Turkish educational programs in all educational institutions (Schmidinger 2019, 110). Turkish

state and non-state institutions were actively engaged in the reshaping of social and demographic domains in northern Syria. Diyanet, which "essentially evolved as Erdogan's signature institution on par with Turkey's MIT", demonstrates the ideological motivation behind Turkey's Syria policy that goes far beyond security considerations (Tziarras 2022, 84).

On October 9, 2019, Turkish President Erdogan announced the beginning of the third military operation, "Spring Peace" in Syria. It was again a joint force of the Turkish Air Force, the Turkish-sponsored Syrian National Army, and other Islamist armed groups. The PKK and its affiliates, the PYD/YPG Kurdish "terror" group, were once again targeted. This time, the likelihood of sending 3 million 400 thousand refugees back to Syria and the pressing need to establish a "security zone" were advanced as reasons for the need for a military intervention (Sabuncuoğlu et al. 2020).

At the planning stage of operation "Spring Peace," the US tried to prevent or at least delay the Turkish military invasion by signing (perhaps also taking into account the severe consequences of the two previous incursions on the Kurdish forces) an agreement with Turkey to establish the "safe zone" in early August. It provided for the withdrawal of PYD/YPG personnel and military equipment from the Turkish border (Dadouch 2019). Before that, on June 5, 2018, Turkey managed to force the Kurds to cede Manbij. As per the US-Turkish agreement to govern Manbij, the Kurdish armed forces have left the city.

In the meantime, the US State Department, in order to ease the tensions caused by PYD/YPG's support for Turkey, officially announced on November 6, 2018, the "award" for three PKK leaders: Murad Karayılan (\$5 million), Cemil Bayik (\$4 million), and Duran Kalkan (\$3 million) in exchange for any information (Koru 2018). However, it was later revealed that the agreement contained unspecified and controversial elements, which did not make it a reality. Uncertainty continued until US President Trump announced that the US was withdrawing its armed forces from northeastern Syria. This controversial decision allowed Turkey to launch a military invasion, which was announced by President Erdogan in a tweet (Sabuncuoğlu et al. 2020). Although one of the main goals of this military campaign was the return of Syrian refugees, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, about 300,000 people (mostly Kurds) were forcibly displaced during Operation "Spring Peace" (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights). It is clear that Turkey is attempting to change the demographics of Kurdish communities once more by establishing a "safe zone" for the settlement of Syrian refugees through military force. A few days after the military invasion, a representative of the US State Department arrived in Ankara for talks with Erdogan. As a result, a cessation of hostilities was agreed on October 17 (TRT Haber 2019). The agreement signed between Turkey and Russia in Sochi on



October 22 confirmed a new regrouping of forces in north-eastern Syria. As a result of operation "Spring Peace" Russia has deployed military units and military equipment on the Eastern banks of the Euphrates River, outside the territory of its presence and control. Russia's approach to the Kurdish issue was obviously influenced by Russian-Turkish relations as well as agreements reached between these countries in other conflict zones, including Artsakh, as a result of the 44-day war. As a result of military incursions, Turkey increased its military and then economic and ideological presence in Syria, which is at the core of Turkey's neo-Ottoman policy. It also prevented the possibility of unifying the "Kurdish autonomous regions" on its southern borders, which was also a serious opportunity for the Kurds of Iraq, providing access to the Mediterranean.

### **Conclusion**

Turkey's foreign and regional policies became conflict-provoking and threatening after the AKP established supremacy in foreign policy decision-making, destroying the domestic system of checks and balances by establishing a personalist authoritarian rule. Because the military's role as a restraining, counterbalancing factor was neutralized domestically, the AKP gained confidence in the country's domestic and foreign policies. The Turkish invasion of Syria followed the botched military coup, which was caused by the removal or arrest of high-ranking military officials who opposed it. The acting generals who were not deposed and survived after the 2016 failed coup were so afraid of Erdogan's anger and revenge that they did not resist Erdogan's risky military operations.

The military's diminished role institutionalized the new imperial strategic culture because the military was central to the formation and maintenance of the Kemalist strategic culture under the military-political bureaucratic system. In general, it is accepted that Turkey's foreign policy was largely based on the principles of caution, passivity, and status quo maintenance, which were part of the military-bureaucratic dominant elite's strategic and security culture. In contrast to the Republican strategic culture's defensive stance on regional matters, the AKP government adopted an aggressive, adventurous, and revisionist attitude to the difficulties that surfaced during the "Arab Spring" processes and the Syrian crisis.

For a long time after the "Arab spring" Ankara tried to find opportunities and make pretext to carry out a military invasion into Syria, which became a reality in August 2016, almost a month after the botched military coup. Later, Ankara expanded the geography and scope of its military operations. On August 20, 2016, a terrorist attack in Gaziantep, which Turkey blamed on IS, was well-timed and provided a convenient excuse to launch a military operation and gain support from the international community. Following the military operations, Turkey increased its

military, economic, and ideological presence in Syria, which is central to Turkey's neo-Ottoman regional policy. It also prevented the possibility of unifying the "Kurdish autonomous regions" on its southern borders, which would have provided a significant opportunity for Iraqi Kurds to gain access to the Mediterranean. Erdogan, thus, smartly used the Kurdish threat to achieve its ambitious goals, ensuring its military-political presence and influence in Syria and Iraq.

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NELLI MINASYAN

## **TURKISH INITIATIVES IN THE DIRECTION OF TURKIC INTEGRATION: PREREQUISITES AND TENDENCIES**

**Abstract:** *The main purpose of the research is to analyze the main document of Turkic integration, "Vision--2040", the directions of integration, Turkish President R. T. Erdogan's initiatives in the direction of Turkic integration and the approaches of Turkic republics. The Turkic integration process is a reality and it is a complete program which includes the political, economic, cultural, security spheres. The research is conducted using the historical analytical method.*

*The research demonstrates that the key structure of Turkic integration is the Organization of Turkic States, and Turkey's goal is not only economic, political and cultural integration, but also strategic and military.*

*Under the leadership of R. T. Erdogan, a lot of work is being done in the direction of Turkic integration and there are some results. The Turkic republics of Central Asia are currently interested in Turkic integration and are participating in that process to some extent.*

**Keywords:** *Turkic Integration, Organization of Turkic States, "Vision-2040", Turkic World, R. T. Erdogan.*

### **Introduction**

The Central Asian direction of Turkey's foreign policy was formed after the collapse of the USSR, when Turkey got the opportunity to establish direct relations with the Turkic republics. The leadership of Turkey established cooperation with the Turkic republics in the political, economic, and cultural spheres. Turkey's goal was to gain influence in the post-Soviet Central Asian region, but it did not have the necessary economic and financial resources, so Turkey primarily devoted a lot of space to ideological propaganda (Neo-Pan-Turkism or Turkic unity) and educational-cultural activities. Turkey used linguistic, historical, and cultural commonalities with Turkic countries for propaganda purposes, which also became the basis of Turkey's educational policy. The goal of this policy was to achieve the creation of a common spiritual and cultural environment, towards which Turkey has been actively working to this day. Basically, this was the basis of Turkic integration, based on which Turkey has started integration processes in the political, economic, and security spheres as well.

The idea of integration in Turkey's Central Asian policy has gained importance in the last two years, which is primarily due to the current geopolitical processes. During the previous decades, Turkey was able to establish strategic relations with Azerbaijan, as a result of which military-political treaties were signed between the two countries. After the 44-Day War, Turkey and Azerbaijan began talking about integration and taking practical steps in this direction.

In order to understand the goals of the Turkic integration policy implemented by Turkey, the research set out to answer the following questions: 1) What are the issues faced by the OTS as a key structure of Turkic integration? 2) What role does Turkish President Erdogan play in Turkic integration processes? 3) What is the attitude of Central Asian Turkic republics towards Turkic integration?

The hypotheses worked out to test are the following: 1) The Turkic integration as a political process is mainly conditioned by geopolitical processes, which at the moment give Turkey the opportunity to be more active, and the realization of the complete Turkic integration process or one of its spheres will again be conditioned by further geopolitical developments; 2) cultural and identity factors play a key role for Turkic integration; and 3) first of all, Turkey is trying to achieve integration in the educational, cultural, and economic fields, but its main goal is to achieve political integration and the establishment of collective security mechanisms.

Thus, Turkey's primary goal is to achieve cultural and economic integration with Turkic republics, and the long-term goal is to develop a unified foreign policy course and sign strategic agreements.

## **Organization of Turkic States as a key structure of Turkic Integration**

### *Organization of Turkic States and the "Vision-2040"*

In the beginning of the 1990s, Turkey established relations with the Turkic republics of Central Asia. Turkey started to establish various structures, funds, and organizations, even schools and universities, in these republics, the purpose of which was to establish cooperation with Turkic countries in the political, economic, educational, cultural, and security spheres. During this time, Turkey's security actions mostly fell under the purview of NATO programs, particularly "Cooperation for Peace." It should be noted that Turkey has been able to ensure its presence in the mentioned fields during the previous decades and is currently striving to gain influence.

One of Turkey's first steps was the organization of summits of Turkic-speaking countries starting in 1992. The summits were organized in this format until 2011, when on October 20–21 of the same year, the Turkic Council was founded during the summit held in Nakhichevan (Nakhichevan Agreement 2011). At the 8th Summit of the Turkic Council, which took place on November 12, 2021, in Istanbul, the

organization was renamed the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) (TRT World 2021). The OTS members are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan; Turkmenistan and Hungary have observer status. The OTS has the following structure: Organizational Chart, Presidential summits, and Chairman. The organizational structure includes the following principal organs: the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Council of Elders, the Senior Officials Committee, and the Secretariat. The main organ of the organization is the Council of Heads of State, whose office is located in Istanbul and from where all the activities of the organization are coordinated (Organization of Turkic States, 2021). It is also worth highlighting the activities of the Secretariat, whose head office is also located in Istanbul. The Secretariat is mainly engaged in the implementation of the agreements reached as a result of the meetings of the heads of Turkic states. Turkey's role in this regard is very big, because it initiates and coordinates all kinds of actions, although the principle of equality of the member states is mentioned within the framework of the organization.

The OTS also sponsors and coordinates the activities of existing organizations and structures in the political, economic, cultural, and scientific-educational spheres, such as the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic Speaking Countries (TÜRKPAA), the International Turkic Academy, the Turkic Business Council, the Turkic University Union, the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, and the Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Organization of Turkic States 2021). All these structures were founded by Turkey, and they aim to strengthen cooperation between Turkey and the Turkic republics in the political, economic, cultural, and scientific-educational spheres. In other words, these structures are managed by Turkey and implement its political plans. On the other hand, when Turkey initiated Turkic integration, it united all the mentioned structures under the umbrella of the OTS. So we can conclude that Turkey's goal is to turn the OTS into a key integration structure. In such conditions, the organization is using regular dialogue, consultation, and cooperation platform for the Turkic countries, whose main goal is to develop common projects for member states and coordinate their activities. The OTS, with the problems it faces, stands out from all the previous mechanisms. The structures and mechanisms established by Turkey in previous decades were related to separate fields, such as economic, cultural, educational, etc. However, OTS not only includes all these mechanisms, but its task is to reach the highest level of integration, namely, political integration. On the other hand, we are dealing with a new level of political regionalization. It is primarily manifested on the basis of local identity. Thus, the emphasis here is on local identity, namely Turkic identity and culture, and it includes two regions: the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Turkey represents the need for local development in



economic, political, and security terms under Turkic integration.

In order to understand the essence of the OTS as an integration structure, it is necessary to refer to an important document, namely "Vision 2040." This document was adopted on November 12, 2021. This document differs from similar ones adopted in the past as it clearly states the main content, nature, and directions of activities that the organization plans for the next two decades<sup>1</sup>. This document states: "Turkic cooperation has been providing added value for the Member States, both strategically and politically," and in another place, "Commending the achievements of the Organization of Turkic States to enhance cooperation and solidarity among Turkic States and their people since its establishment based on historical ties, common language, culture, and traditions" (Turkic World Vision – 2040 2021). In fact, the basis of Turkic integration is primarily linguistic, cultural, historical, and ethnic commonalities, with which Turkey has done a lot of work in previous decades. Another important basis for Turkic integration is the creation of a common Turkic identity, which is also one of the main goals of Ankara's policy in Turkic countries. In our view, the most important element of common identity is ethnicity. Essentially, the creation of ethnic-based integration (if it becomes a reality) will create serious challenges in the future, both for the regions of the South Caucasus and Central Asia and their neighboring countries. In this case, there will be a transition from integration to an ethnically homogeneous state. The Turkic ethnic group will dominate in the Eurasian region, which will control the geopolitical and geo-economic nodes and strive for the Turkification of the South Caucasus, Central Asia, and their neighboring territories.

In general, the "Vision-2040" document states the general provisions of cooperation in the fields of strategy, politics, economics, culture, and education for the next two decades. Now we try to briefly present the activities done in the mentioned fields recently and their prospects.

#### *Initiatives of economic integration*

Turkey began to carry out economic activities in the Turkic republics at the beginning of the 1990s. Turkey gradually began to invest in various sectors of the economies of these republics, and economic councils were established, which are still active today. Turkey's economic interests in Turkic countries are conditioned by two circumstances: 1) with the energy resources that Turkey needs, it seeks to participate in the process of exporting energy resources to Europe; and 2) Turkic countries are a market and a source of raw materials for her and where Turkish goods are sold. In our

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<sup>1</sup> Since the summits of the Turkic-speaking countries, also within the framework of the Turkic Council, as a result of all the meetings with the participation of the Turkic leaders, some documents were signed, but they mostly indicated general provisions rather than presenting specific programs.

view, Turkey attaches primary importance to these two circumstances for Turkic economic integration, especially since the developing Turkish economy needs both energy resources and markets (moreover, the latter is also important for the Turkish economy, which is currently in crisis; N. M.). On the other hand, economic relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics of Central Asia have significantly developed in the last two decades. Currently, Turkey has established closer relations with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. More than 80 bilateral cooperation agreements have been signed between Turkey and Kazakhstan in several fields, including economics and trade. The volume of Turkish–Kazakh trade doubled between 2005 and 2020, from US\$1 billion to US\$2.1 billion (International Trade Centre 2020). According to the statistics of 2019, 2000 Turkish companies operated in Kazakhstan with investments totaling US\$25 billion and implemented approximately 487 projects (Daily Sabah 2018). Turkish-Uzbek relations began to develop after 2016, when Shavkat Mirziyoyev became president. From this period on, Uzbekistan joined the Turkic Council and began to actively work with other Turkic structures. Turkish-Uzbek economic and trade relations began to develop. Between two countries bilateral trade has increased from US\$ 412 million in 2005 and reaching US\$ 2.1 billion in 2020 (International Trade Centre 2021). The total number of Turkish companies in Uzbekistan has reached 1,300. During the mentioned period, Turkey has been able to establish good relations with Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. Bilateral trade with Turkmenistan has also grown, from US\$ 341 million in 2005 to US\$ 1.5 billion in 2010, peaking at US\$ 2.4 billion in 2015 before dropping back to US\$ 1.1 billion in 2020 (International Trade Centre 2021). More than 600 Turkish companies have implemented construction projects in Turkmenistan valued at US\$50 billion (Alrmizan 2022, 26). Turkish-Kyrgyz relations are limited, which is primarily due to Russia's influence. But trade has grown here as well from about US\$ 94 million in 2005 to US\$ 508 million in 2020 (International Trade Centre 2021). These facts show that trade relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics of Central Asia are developing steadily. However, for economic integration, Turkey must implement major economic and investment projects, as well as create the necessary infrastructure and legislative framework. So, the "Vision-2040" document considers these projects.

When we study the "Vision-2040" document, it presents the perspective of creating a unified economic system in the Turkic world, which can be said to be taken from the Soviet economic model, when different branches of the common economic system were located in different Soviet republics. This project is also attractive to Turkic republics because they need investment. For the formation of such a large economic system, some serious financial investments are needed, so under the structure of OTS, an attempt is made to coordinate the existing capital in the Turkic world. OTS is working towards the creation of the Turkic Investment Fund, which

should contribute to the economic and social development of the member countries (Turkic Investment Fund 2021). On May 3, 2022, a meeting of the representatives of the ministries of economics and finance of the member states of the OTS was held in Istanbul, where the issue of the creation of the Turkic Investment Fund was discussed. During this meeting, the functions, powers, financial resources, organization issues, and activities of the Investment Fund were discussed (yuz.uz 2022). At the meeting, OTS General Secretary Baghdat Amreyev noted that it is necessary to finish the process of creating the fund on time and expressed hope that it will work by the end of the year, as planned (Dunyo 2022). It should be noted that the decision to create such a structure was made at the 8th summit of the organization, which was held on November 12, 2021.

During the 9th summit of the OTS, which took place on November 11 of this year in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, the heads of member states signed a special decision on the establishment of the Turkic Investment Fund, and according to this decision, Baghdad Amreyev, who has completed his office as the Secretary General of the OTS, was appointed as the President of the Turkic Investment Fund (Daily Sabah 2022)<sup>1</sup>. The statement of OTS states: "The Turkic Investment Fund will be the first and main joint financial institution established by Turkic States and aims to mobilize the economic potential of Member States of the Organization of Turkic States to strengthen the trade and economic cooperation between them and to implement joint projects" (Organization of Turkic States 2022). This fund will mainly support small and medium-sized businesses by providing them with finance through the fund's assets as well as those of other competent financial institutions. The Fund shall support the following areas: agriculture, logistics and transport, energy efficiency, renewable and alternative energy, industrial projects in manufacturing, information and communication technologies, infrastructure projects, tourism, etc (Organization of Turkic States 2022). Thus, the Turkic Investment Fund will initially aim to centralize finances in the Turkic world and, in the future, will try to achieve the adoption of a common currency.

#### *Educational and cultural integration*

OTS also takes active steps in the fields of education and culture. Activities in the field of culture are mainly coordinated and initiated by TÜRKSOY, which has done significant work in this regard, implements common Turkic cultural events, and publishes books and journals. According to our observation, in the process of Turkic integration, Turkey pays more attention to education, which has been one of the

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<sup>1</sup> During the 9th Summit of the Organization of Turkic States, Kubanychbek Omuraliev was appointed Secretary General of the Secretariat of the Organization of Turkic States by the Council of Heads of State. He was the ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Turkey.

important directions of Turkish politics since the 1990s. (Yanik 2004, 294-302). Turkey has established state and non-state schools and universities in Turkic republics, which are the basis of its educational policy. On the other hand, it is obvious that one of the important targets of Turkey's policy is the adoption of a unified alphabet and the creation of a common education system. The last one implies the development and implementation of a uniform curriculum in all Turkic republics, especially in subjects related to Turkic history, literature, language, and culture. Turkic history, literature, and geography textbooks have already been prepared for this academic year (for now, for electives, but actually with an experimental meaning) (24.kg 2022). Basically, these three subjects are the best means of forming a common identity among any people or ethnic group. Of course, language is of primary importance for the creation of a common identity and a unified educational system, and in this case, that means having a common alphabet. It should be noted that Turkey has been working on the creation of a unified alphabet since the beginning of the 1990s, but until now has not reached its final goal, which is the adoption of a unified alphabet based on the Turkish Latin alphabet. Under the auspices of the OTS, this issue was given prime importance again. On October 20, 2022, during the meeting of the representatives of the OTS member countries in Bursa, a decision was made to create a "Commission for the creation of a unified alphabet" within the structure of the OTS, the first session of which is scheduled to be held in Kyrgyzstan (Özdener; Ekberova 2022). The goal of the commission is to "achieve linguistic unity among the Turkic states and accept a common alphabet" (Yermolov 2022). We consider this step very serious because it is part of Turkey's far-reaching strategic policy. Following these processes, we can note that the next step will be the creation of the concept of "common Turkic history".

#### *Initiatives of political integration*

The ultimate goal of the Turkic integration vision is the establishment of political integration between Turkey and the Turkic republics. The political integration requires cooperation and coordination of activities at the political and state levels, which is reflected in the "Vision-2040" document. Turkey seeks to establish strategic cooperation with the Turkic republics, which should be considered the first stage. In the second stage, Turkey will try to unite all the Turkic republics (including the unrecognized Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) around one strategic structure or agreement. In the last 10 years, the relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics have gradually gained a strategic character. A strategic partnership between Turkey and Kazakhstan was established in 2009, and the High-Level Strategic Council (HLSC) was formed in 2012 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey). A strategic cooperation agreement was also signed between Turkey and

Uzbekistan, and the HLSC was established. The first meeting of the HLSC took place in February 2020 (Dauren n.d.). The Turkish-Kyrgyz HLSC was founded in 2012 but has been more active recently. Currently, a strategic partnership has been established between Turkey and Azerbaijan, which Turkey presents as an example for other Turkic states (Minasyan 2021, 45-47). Turkey does not have such cooperation only with Turkmenistan, as it has recently started to participate in the processes taking place in the Turkic world. Thus, Turkey establishes the basis for strategic cooperation, and the results in this regard will not be visible in the near future.

The cooperation between Turkey and Turkic states in the political field should be considered in the fields of domestic and foreign policy. The structures included in the organization (in this regard, the activities of various funds and non-governmental organizations should also be noted) participate in some ways in the internal political processes in Turkic republics. We believe that the main goal in this area is to strengthen Turkey's positions in these republics.

In our view, foreign policy is more important. The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs is one of the important structures of OTS. The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs prepares the meetings of the leaders of the member states of OTS as well as the documents or agreements to be signed. The last meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers took place on October 17 of this year in Istanbul (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey 2022). It is stated in the published statement that they discussed the most important issues planned for the upcoming meeting of the leaders of the member countries of OTS and prepared the documents for signing. Besides, they discussed the OTS strategy for 2022–2026 as well as the draft protocol for making changes to the Nakhichevan Agreement (Organization of Turkic States 2022). In essence, work is being carried out in the direction of the development and submission of joint decisions related to various regional and international issues. The result of such activities implies the development of a unified foreign policy course under the OTS and then being guided by it, which is one of the most important elements of the integration process.

Articulation of common problems and challenges is important for political integration. Currently, Turkey and Azerbaijan are doing a lot of work in this direction. Turkey provides political, diplomatic, and military support to Azerbaijan in connection with a number of issues, especially the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) issue. During the previous decades, Turkey conditioned the establishment of diplomatic relations with Armenia on the Artsakh issue, and after the 44-Day War, it conditioned the signing of a peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It should be noted that since the 1990s, Turkey and Azerbaijan have tried to form a common position regarding the Artsakh problem on various Turkic platforms. They continue this policy to this day, but have not achieved significant success. In connection with

the events taking place in Kazakhstan in January of this year, Turkey tried to form a common position within the OTS and even tried to intervene in those events. However, the OTS had neither the resources nor the mechanisms to intervene in those events. We can conclude that Turkey has not been able to achieve serious achievements in the direction of political integration, and the level of political integration has been low so far.

### *Security integration*

Finally, one of the important areas is security, which consists of several dimensions and ultimately aims to establish military-strategic cooperation under the auspices of the OTS. Turkey has also been working in this field since the beginning of the 1990s. Turkey started cooperation in two spheres: the first refers to the organization of military education, and the second is cooperation in the field of military industry, which has become more noticeable in recent years. The Turkic republics of Central Asia have recently been mainly interested in Turkish drones (Turkish drones became more popular after the 44-Day War), and they have bought drones, except Uzbekistan, which bought other Turkish weapons (Blue Domes 2022). A more strategic step by Turkey is the establishment of the production of drones in Kazakhstan (Kumenov, Eurasianet 2022), which is already talking about cooperation in the field of military industry. In this context, it is expected that production of both drones and other Turkish weapons will be organized in other Turkic republics as well. Of course, one of Turkey's goals is to sign military or military-political agreements with Turkic republics. This would be seen not only as integration but as military-political cooperation. In this matter, Turkey is more careful, and in the "Vision-2040" document, it is mentioned about the creation of the police and other joint groups to establish internal order, which can be the basis for the creation of a joint military contingent in the future (Turkic World Vision – 2040, 2021). This is seen by many analysts as the basis of the so-called "Turanian army". Thus, military cooperation between Turkey and Turkic republics is developing. On the other hand, some preliminary steps are taken towards the creation of collective security mechanisms, which are to be created under the aegis of OTS. It should be noted that, currently, the creation of a military alliance is not realistic. There are a number of obstacles to this project in Turkey. First of all, we should mention Russia and its military-political alliance, the CSTO. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are members of this organization. In addition, Russia has military influence in the Central Asian (and South Caucasus) region and holds many levers in its hands. Basically, the creation of opportunities for Turkey's activity in this field is primarily due to the weakening of Russia's military and political positions. It should be noted that in this case, Turkey's opportunities are also limited because the influence of the USA, EU, China, and India is increasing in the region.

In connection with the Turkic integration, the issue of forming a cooperation platform among the special services of the Turkic states is important. This is evidenced by the meetings of the leaders of the power institute. On July 26 of this year, the 24th conference of the Special Services of Turkic-speaking republics was held in Cholpon-Ata, a town in Kyrgyzstan's Issyk-Kul region<sup>1</sup>. The representatives of the special services of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Turkey took part in the meeting, as did the delegations of Russia and Hungary's participants as observers (according to press reports, the Russian side was invited by the Central Asian countries to show that they are not carrying out anti-Russian actions) (Turan 2022). The countering of terroristic activity and religious extremism in the Middle East and Afghanistan was the main topic of discussion during the meeting (Kazinform 2022). Obviously, the cooperation between the security services has important meaning and subtext. Perhaps most importantly, the event was organized under the auspices of OTS and thus highly sponsored and coordinated by Ankara. From the point of view of the implementation of integration processes in Turkey, the activity of security services is an important and necessary step, particularly for collecting information, developing operations, and preparing political events. On the other hand, it is logical that Turkey should also try to organize the integration of the security services of Turkic-speaking countries around a common structure. Thus, we are not only talking about the "Turanian army" but also the "Turanian special services". The proof of this is the fact that Turkey and Kazakhstan signed a protocol on the exchange of military intelligence information, which was approved by the Parliament of Kazakhstan on August 5, 2022 (Haidar 2022). In general, Turkey is expected to try to sign similar protocols with other Central Asian Turkic republics in the near future.

Analyzing Turkey's recent actions, we can say that its ultimate goal is to create a strategic union or alliance with Turkic republics. The establishment of strategic cooperation between Turkey and Turkic republics was mentioned in the "Vision-2040" document, and currently is working more actively with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

In summary, we can conclude that the core of the creation of a Turkic integration is the OTS, and the "Vision-2040" document is the road map of the organization's actions in the next two decades. Under OTS, Turkey initiated political, economic, cultural, and security integration processes, with the goal of uniting the Turkic world around a single structure, in fact led by Turkey.

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<sup>1</sup> The first meeting of the Special Services of Turkic-speaking republics took place in 1998 at the initiative of Turkey. According to press reports, during those meetings, issues of cooperation in the fight against international crime, terrorism, and other crimes were discussed.

## **Recep Tayyip Erdogan's role in the activation processes of Turkic integration**

When the Justice and Development Party (Adaletve Kalkınma Partisi-AKP) came to power in 2002, it began to pursue a more realistic policy with the Turkic countries. In the first two periods of the governance of the AKP, the issue of EU membership was the main focus, but the development of relations with Turkic countries continued. It should be noted that the AKP, under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, gave an important place to the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. In the 2010s, important transformations took place in international relations. Transformations in post-Soviet regions have also continued, despite increased Russia-West competition. On the other hand, active processes are taking place in the Middle East, and the Syrian crisis that started in 2011 is causing new challenges for the region, including Turkey. In such conditions, the EU puts forward new requirements for Turkey's European integration (in addition to economic and political issues, issues of cultural identity are also presented), but Turkey tries to use the issue of refugees. China is also starting to play an important role in the international system. In fact, the multifaceted transformations taking place in the system of international relations had their impact on Turkey's foreign policy as well. In such conditions, after 2015, when the EU refused to approve Turkey's application for membership (the attempted coup of 2016 was also important; N. M.), some changes took place in Turkey's foreign policy at the initiative of President Erdogan. He and his regime began to give greater prominence to Turkic republics and the Muslim world. Starting from this period, the gradual activation of Turkey's policy in Turkic republics is becoming noticeable, which is also due to the ongoing geopolitical processes. In general, Erdogan's role and personal ambitions as a politician and head of state have a big impact on Turkey's foreign policy. We can give as an example the Turkey-Russia relations (which can be described more as a cooperation between the leaders of the two states, V. Putin and R. T. Erdogan), the Turkey-West relations, etc.

Erdogan openly started talking about Turkic integration after the 44-Day War in 2020, when Azerbaijan achieved victory in Artsakh with the direct help and support of Turkey. This victory was used by the Turkish leadership in two ways. First, it raised the image of Turkey, especially President Erdogan, in Turkic countries. Propaganda has begun that Turkey can not only be an effective partner in educational, cultural, and socio-economic issues, but can also be a strategic ally for the Turkic countries, including providing them with modern weapons, primarily Turkish drones. In addition, Turkey presents itself as the defender of the Turkic world and is currently doing so in the context of the Tajik-Kyrgyz conflict, supporting Kyrgyzstan. Secondly, Turkey-Azerbaijan relations were presented as an example of integration between two brotherly states, which was confirmed by the Shushi Declaration signed



in June 2021 (The declaration of Shushi 2021). In addition, the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, also actively participates in the processes of Turkic integration.

According to our observation, Erdogan's policy regarding the activation of Turkic integration is conditioned by two important circumstances. First of all, the processes of Turkic integration should be considered in the context of the current geopolitical developments, which have created favorable conditions for them. Currently, the process of forming a new world order is taking place, where Erdogan is trying to turn Turkey into a regional power (although he is talking about a world power; N. M.). It is improbable that Turkey will be able to achieve such a status given its current resources and capacities. But the integrated Turkic world will create a completely different geopolitical situation, demographically, economically, and geographically. The other circumstance refers to the processes taking place in the post-Soviet regions, which are part of the current geopolitical processes. Russia has begun to lose its spheres of influence in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, which is more felt due to the Russian-Ukrainian war. There is a noticeable vacuum in these two regions, which Turkey is trying to fill (possibly with the support of the West; N. M.). From this point of view, an opportunity has been created for Turkey, not only at the ideological level but also practically, to embark on the creation of a Turkic world.

It should be noted that internal factors and transformations have an important influence on Turkey's foreign policy. The political parties guided by secular and Islamic ideas play an important role in the domestic political life of Turkey. It should be noted that both secular and Islamic ideologies have undergone transformations in recent decades. The AKP, which has Islamic-conservative ideas, has also undergone ideological transformations during the 20 years of its rule, which essentially had their influence on both domestic and foreign politics, for example, in relations with Russia, Turkic republics, actions in the Middle East, activity in Africa, etc (Kara 2022, 1-25). The ideological narratives of Erdogan and his environment also play an important role and have undergone transformations. At the beginning of the AKP's rule, a great deal of attention was devoted to European integration, so the ideas of westernization were paramount. In the second period of government, a great place is given to the ideas of neo-Ottomanism and, currently, Turkish nationalism and pan-Turkism. In this context, Erdogan emphasizes the strengthening of cooperation with Turkic republics. In other words, he is guided by the ideas of pan-Turkism, because Turkic integration is the concept of creating the same Turkic world.

In fact, observing the current geopolitical developments, Erdogan took more active steps in the direction of turning Turkic integration into a real process. In this regard, the first step should be the transformation of the Turkic Council into the Organization of Turkic States and the adoption of the "Vision-2040" program

document. General Secretary Baghdad Amreyev of the OTS expressed interesting thoughts in one of his last speeches: "Due to his leadership qualities, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has not only turned Turkey into one of the world's strongest powers but has also managed to unite the entire Turkic world... If four years ago, four states were part of the Organization of Turkic States; now there are seven. Today, for the first time in history, Turkic states are acting on a united front. The Turkic world is becoming real. We are united, we are strong, and this is a new paradigm... A high-level summit will be held in Samarkand (he means the summit held on November 11, 2022), which will complete the implementation of the historic decisions that were taken during the last summit held in Istanbul. The emphasis will be on economics and trade. We have an intention to achieve progress in the cooperation in the fields of politics and security, according to the "Vision-2040" adopted in Istanbul" (Muhammet Mutaf 2022).

In essence, one has to agree with some of Amreyev's thoughts, particularly regarding the unification of the Turkic world, because the Turkic countries have never cooperated so closely in history. On the other hand, he emphasizes the role of Turkish President Erdogan, with which we also must agree. First of all, it should be noted that Erdogan has created a personalist or autocratic system in Turkey, which also includes foreign policy issues and Turkic integration. On the other hand, he managed to establish good personal relations with the heads of Turkic republics (he has more cordial relations with the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, and recently with the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, and the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev), which he uses for political purposes. As a result, he was able to form a common conversation or environment with the presidents of the Turkic countries, which we can consider an achievement.

### **The position of the Turkic republics of Central Asia regarding Turkic integration**

The attitude of the Turkic-speaking countries of Central Asia towards Turkic integration was formed during the previous decades and is related to the ongoing geopolitical developments. It is known that after the collapse of the USSR, the Turkic-speaking countries of Central Asia showed great interest in Turkey and began to establish relations with great enthusiasm. But soon they became disillusioned and began to pursue a more realistic policy. On the other hand, Turkic republics continued cooperation with Turkey in various fields, and over time some coordination of actions took place. It should be noted that the Turkic Cooperation Council has done a lot of work in terms of the rapprochement of the Turkic states. On the other hand, the structures implementing the Turkish soft power policy played no less an important role (the TURKSOY and the TIKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency)

play a big role in this regard). As a result, Turkey was able to establish at least a presence in the region, which served as the foundation for Turkish integration.

Serious changes in the position of Turkic republics towards Turkic integration took place during the last two years, which are evident both in the press and even in social networks. In our opinion, this is primarily due to the current geopolitical processes, in particular two events: the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan and the Russian-Ukrainian War. After leaving Afghanistan, NATO has no intention of leaving the region, and it is trying to locate its military bases in one of the countries of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan versions are circulating in the media, but both republics have not officially confirmed this information). On the other hand, since the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian War, the West has activated its policy in Central Asia as well, with the goal of weakening Russia's position in this region. Under these conditions, a great interest in Central Asia has begun again; one can even say that a new struggle for influence has begun, which can already be described as a "New Great Game"<sup>1</sup> (i.e. Third Great Game) (Rashid 2002, 143-156). It should be noted that the NATO is trying to locate its military bases in Turkic countries after leaving Afghanistan (according to press reports in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan), on which no country has yet given consent (Warsaw Institute 2021). The US has great interests in the Central Asian region and has intensified its policy in this region especially after leaving Afghanistan (Mackinnon 2021). In the current situation, the Turkic republics of Central Asia have faced security problems. Besides, they also need investment, which is also an important issue. Regional security issues are mainly under responsibility of Russia. But here too, Russia's position has somewhat weakened, which is best seen in the case of Tajik-Kyrgyz border clashes (these two countries are not only Russia's allies, but also members of the same military-political alliance, the CSTO) (TACC 2022). Another more serious issue is the threats from Afghanistan, particularly radical Islam and terrorism. No less important are actions provoked by various external powers, such as the one that took place in Kazakhstan

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<sup>1</sup> In the 19th century, a political and diplomatic confrontation began between the British and Russian Empires over Afghanistan and Central and South Asia, which continued until the beginning of the 20th century. Britain began the conquest of India and Russia, one of the countries of Central Asia. Under such conditions, Britain feared that Russia was planning to invade India. According to one of the major views, the Great Game began on January 12, 1830, when the president of the Board of Control of India, Lord Ellenborough, tasked the governor-general, Lord William Bentinck, with establishing a new trade route to the Emirate of Bukhara (Yapp Malcolm (2000), *The Legend of the Great Game*, Proceedings of the British Academy: Lectures and Memoirs, Vol. 11, Oxford University Press, pp. 179–198). In the 1980s, there was talk about the Great Game again when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. The countries of Central Asia have energy resources, so after their independence, a competition began for influence in that region. From this period, some journalists began to use the term "New Great Game," which described the geopolitical competition that started in Central Asia. One view of the New Great Game is a shift to geo-economics compared to geopolitical competition. Since the beginning of the 21st century, two major powers, Russia and China, have become dominant players in Central Asia. Currently, a new competition has started in Central Asia amid the confrontation between Russia and the West.

earlier this year and which has a high probability of being repeated in other Turkic republics.

The conflict between Russia and the West has intensified due to the Ukrainian crisis, which is also manifested in Central Asia. The West is engaged in extensive activities in Turkic republics to move the region out of the Russian sphere of influence. Basically, the same policy is followed by Turkey. In the case of existing challenges, Turkic countries should logically look for new forms of cooperation and try to form new security environments. In such conditions, the Central Asian republics have started to cooperate with other states and power centers. In our view, Turkic integration is part of the existing processes in the region because the EU, the USA, China, and other states are also active there.

Turkic integration is not a priority in the politics of Turkic republics at the moment, but, on the other hand, they are also working in that direction, essentially considering it a political process with a future. However, their aspirations to strengthen bilateral cooperation with Turkey are more noticeable, as is evident in the cases of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and even Turkmenistan. There are also supporters of Turkic integration in Turkic republics who believe that it will give the Turkic-speaking countries the opportunity to work together and, accordingly, the Turkic world will become a factor in international relations. Turkey also carries out a lot of propaganda about this, which is accepted by some of the Central Asian societies. In fact, the extent to which Turkic states will continue this integration will depend on further geopolitical developments and the power balance established in the region as a result of them.

## **Conclusion**

The projects for the creation of a Turkic world or pan-Turkism are the basis for Turkic integration, which is represented by the characteristics of the 21st century, and the European one is considered an example. Such integration gives Turkey a wide range of possibilities to operate in Turkic countries from economic, political, cultural, security, and geopolitical perspectives.

Under the OTS, Turkey has united all the structures created in the previous decades and accordingly initiated the processes of cultural, economic, political, and security integration. The OTS adopted the "Vision-2040" document, which presents the planned activities in the direction of Turkic integration in the next two decades. On the basis of this document, the "Strategic Roadmap of the OTS 2022–2026" was developed, and work is being done towards its realization. Currently, Turkey is mainly focused on educational, cultural, and economic integration, but her main goals are political integration, the development of a common foreign policy course, and creating collective security mechanisms or forming a military-political axis with Turkic republics.

It should be noted that Turkish President Erdogan plays an important role in the processes of Turkic integration. His personal aspirations and ambitions have greatly influenced Turkey's foreign policy, which is also evident in the case of Turkic integration. On his initiative, the name of the organization was changed, and the main document and action plan were approved. In addition, he strengthens cooperation with Turkic republics in various fields, using both geopolitical developments and personal relations.

Currently, Turkic republics are also showing interest in Turkic integration, but in our opinion, it is not a priority in their politics. On the other hand, it is obvious that recently all Turkic republics actively cooperate with Turkey in various fields, including security. Perhaps, first of all, this should be connected with the ongoing geopolitical developments because there is an active competition for influence between the major powers and regional states in Central Asia.

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**SOCIO-POLITICAL PERCEPTION OF SHĪ'A ISLAM IN AZERBAIJAN:  
THE INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL FACTORS\***

**Abstract:** *The aim of the article is to reveal the changes in socio-political perception of Shī'a Islam in Azerbaijan by the ruling secular and religious elites, on the one hand, and some circles of the society, on the other hand, as well as to highlight the impact of external factor on the process. The analysis of state-religious relations, the gradual reinforcing of legal regulation of religious activities, and the role of "official Shī'a Islam" in the state-building process are the objectives of the article.*

*The article argues that the political elite of Azerbaijan, with the support of the religious establishment, institutionally employed the notion of "secularized Shī'a Islam" as a part of the official interpretation of "Azerbaijani Islam" in shaping national identity, presenting "official Islam" as a key component of the history and culture of the state. The government's autocratic efforts in preventing foreign religious, particularly Iranian influence are intended to preserve Aliyevs' authoritarian regime. However, the government failed to completely eradicate the religious and political influence of Iran in Azerbaijan. The state's efforts to institutionalize "Azerbaijani Islam" or "traditional Islam" and neutralize Iranian religious influence remain one of the most painful issues of the authoritarian Azerbaijani regime. There are many circles in Azerbaijani society that adhere to the underground interpretation of Iranian Shiite Islam. Accordingly, there are different approaches to Shī'a Islam that are incompatible with each other. A special contribution of the article is conceptualizing the state's antagonistic approach towards Shī'a religious and civil activism in the country in the most compelling way.*

**Keywords:** *Azerbaijan, Shī'a Islam, "official Islam", Iran, religion, religious identity, religious servant, law, repression, restriction.*

## **Introduction**

Azerbaijan is a secular state with a predominantly Shī'a population. Azerbaijan has the second largest Shī'a population in the world, after Iran (Constantin-Bercean 2017, 139). There are different statistics and data about Sunni Islam and Shī'a Islam<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the U.S. Department of State report based on Azerbaijan State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations (SCWRO) 2011 data (the most recent available), 96 percent of the population is



Islam is considered an important segment of Azerbaijani culture and identity and helps link Azerbaijan with the Islamic world. Anyway, the state's approach to Islam is characterized by double standards because the authorities maintain total control over religion's field and over all religious functions. Despite legal constraints, the state has made visible efforts to strengthen the dominance of "Azerbaijani Islam" or "Traditional Islam". Since Heydar Aliyev's rule, traditional Islam has been legitimized and regulated within official ideological rhetoric through references to national traditions, religion, and values (Gasimov 2020, 15). One of the most serious problems facing the Republic of Azerbaijan since independence has been the reformulation of the Azerbaijani identity. The involvement of Turkic, Iranian, and Caucasian identities and various religious elements in the Azerbaijani reality further complicated the process of state building in Azerbaijan. Heydar Aliyev managed to lay the foundation for a new project of Azerbaijani national identity and "Azerbaijani Islam" (Vardanyan 2012, 57–58), which involved getting rid of foreign influences. That approach remained agenda-driven during Ilham Aliyev's presidency. Tougher measures were taken to counter external religious influences, especially Iranian ones (Valiyev 2017, 86–87). The religious component remains one of the most sensitive issues in current Azerbaijan-Iran relations (Jödicke 2017). Azerbaijan's political and cultural orientation towards Turkey, the popularity of Turkish culture in Azerbaijan, and wariness and distrust of Iran led to strong opposition to the political and conservative approaches of Shī'a Islam, which led to the parallel recognition and expansion of Sunni Islam in its Turkish interpretation in Azerbaijan (Pashayan and Navasardyan (b) 2021, 131).

The research is conducted using content and discourse analysis methods. For this analysis, the authors used data from government documents, international reports, scientific and newspaper articles, and social media. The authors mainly focused on the key issues of the topic within the developments before and after the 2020 Artsakh War.

The theoretical context of this study is based on A. Sarkissian's "Varieties of Religious Suppression: Why Governments Restrict Religion" work (Sarkissian 2015). It claims that non-democratic authorities utilize legal prohibitions on religion as a maneuver to stifle independent civic action. The author refers to religious groups in civil societies that are subject to state pressure by authoritarian leaders if their own power and legitimacy are threatened. K. Gasymov adds that limitations on religion

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Muslim; approximately 65 percent is Shia and 35 percent is Sunni (U.S. Department of State, 2022). According to Pew Research Center (2011) statistics of Azerbaijan ranks among the four countries of the world, except for Iran, Bahrain, and Iraq, where the Shī'a make up the majority of the population and about 70 percent of its Muslim population is Shī'a and the rest is Sunni. According to some unofficial studies, Muslims are divided between majority Shia (65–70%) and minority Sunni (30–35%) lines (Galib Bashirov 2018, 33) or have approached the 50-50 percent threshold (Sofie Bedford 2016, 144).

led to the government's involvement in the area of religion. As a result, religion has become bureaucratized, with the state having full control over religious matters, regulating how the government interacts with believers, and defining what constitutes a "national religion." On the other side, religious leaders who submit to the state end up working for the government or in the bureaucracy. Thus, bureaucracy appears to political leaders as a public good or a neutral administrative process aimed at delivering services to citizens (Gasymov 2020).

### **Shī'a Islam in the process of nation-building**

As it is mentioned above, the Republic of Azerbaijan is a state with a predominantly Shī'a identity. Sunnis are mostly native to the north, but during the period of independence, influenced by both internal and external factors, Sunni Islam spread through various currents to Baku and various regions of the country (Country of Origin Information Report Azerbaijan 2021, 32–33). After gaining independence, the Azerbaijani society had the opportunity to get acquainted with Iranian, Turkish, and "Arabic Islam", the rhetoric of foreign preachers, and compare them with the Azerbaijani narrative. There was a certain disappointment in Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade, president of the Caucasus Muslim Board (CMB), and in "official Islam", which has the Soviet seal on it.

The authorities in Azerbaijan promptly revised their religious policy. Despite the state's secular nature and the supremacy of Turkic ethnicity in identity, Islam was regarded as an essential component of Azerbaijan's identity and culture. The most important step, as it was mentioned, taken by Heydar Aliyev was the "Azerbaijanization" of Islam, the purpose of which was to preserve it from external influences. For this purpose, the state has made a number of amendments to the law "On freedom of religion". The Azerbaijani authorities incorporated secular Shī'a Islam in shaping national identity and explained the role of religion in the national context. Gradually, "official Islam" became a tool for the authorities to advance their religious policies. Instead, the authorities were trying to strengthen the legitimacy of Pashazadeh - Azerbaijani's top Shī'a Muslim leader of Talysh origin. Clerics operating within the framework of "official Islam" began to be invited to state radio and TV programs. However, in 2006–2008, the Azerbaijani authorities shut down many television programs related to Islam (Darieva 2019). Heydar Aliyev started visiting Shiite mosques during the Islamic holidays, praying with the clerics and meeting with community members in the courtyard of the mosque. Tezepir was one of his favorite mosques. Islamic expressions began to find a place in the speeches of state dignitaries. A new culture of pilgrimage to Mecca was formed. Under Heydar Aliyev's rule, the construction of mosques was gaining momentum, and old mosques

with significant Shī'a influence were being restored (Pashayan 2014, 44). Significant steps have been taken to revive the system of religious education in Azerbaijan. The Faculty of Sharia at Baku University and the Islamic University began functioning. The state has begun to invest in the renovation and construction of mosques, most of which are Shiite. After independence, many mosques were built or reconstructed at the expense of foreign funds, but after the establishment of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, the state took over these expenditures, thus demonstrating its commitment to religious issues (Pashayan 2014, Ibid). It should be noted that President A. Mutalibov immediately after independence restored Islamic holidays to the state calendar. The state returned the Waqf property to the administration of CMB.

Until 2000, the authorities of Azerbaijan managed to neutralize external religious infiltration and take the religious sphere under the control of the state. Ilham Aliyev remained faithful to his father's precepts in the religious policy of the state. Photos of Aliyev praying at the mosque were occasionally published in Azerbaijani media. Ilham Aliyev and his family made a pilgrimage to Mecca three times. In terms of national security, Aliyev continued the process of cleansing the religious field from the impact of foreign Islam.

### **Amendments to the Law "On Freedom of Religion": Restrictions in Legal Packaging**

In order to limit foreign religious penetration into Azerbaijan in the period 1992–2011, the authorities made 14 amendments to the law "On Freedom of Religion". After passing through the various stages of religious awakening and transition, Islam in Azerbaijan was subjected to strict state control. Since 2009, the government of Azerbaijan has adopted a number of laws limiting the activity of Islamic organizations and political parties, thus identifying mechanisms of state control. Opportunities for religious preaching were limited, and religious servants were banned from running in national elections. The law on political parties prohibits clerics from establishing religious-political organizations and participating in party activities (Ter-Matevosyan and Minasyan 2017, 825). With the establishment of the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations (SCWRO) in 2001, all religious organizations came under its authority. With the amendment of the Law "On Freedom of Religion" in 2009, religious propaganda in Azerbaijan became possible only with the permission of a committee. The amendments tightened the procedure for the registration of religious organizations and granted additional powers to the CMB (ibid, 821-822). Additional changes to the Criminal and Administrative Codes made in 2009 and later amended in 2013 made it illegal to publish, distribute, or

import religious literature without the authorities' permission (ibid, 827).

After a long propaganda campaign in 2021, justifying the need for protection against COVID-19, the authorities put forward the need to amend the law "On freedom of religion" (Trend.az 2021). On July 16, 2021, Aliyev signed a decree on 14 amendments to the law (Official webpage of the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2021. SNG.today 2021).

One of the main changes concerns the appointment of clerics, which is delegated to the SCWRO and falls outside the remit of the CMB (Ulkyar 2022). Among other things, the new amendments prohibit the religious coercion of children and prohibit religious leaders from engaging in any religious activity if they are not employed by the state. According to the amendments, the right to confer religious titles is reserved only for state religious centers approved by the government. Religious communities must have the consent of the state when opening religious schools; believers must inform the government when going to places of worship abroad; and in the absence of a state-appointed religious leader, religious communities must cease their activities. Any religious ceremony is permitted only in places of worship or sanctuaries designated by the state, and permission from the State Committee on Religious Affairs is required for the organization of mass religious events. Only citizens of Azerbaijan have the right to conduct any religious ritual, and it is prohibited to invite preachers from abroad. Citizens who have received religious education abroad have no right to perform religious rituals unless they have received special permission from the CMA. Fines for violations of the law include up to a year of imprisonment or fines of 1,000 to 5,000 manats (from US\$590 to US\$2,900). The certification of clergy chosen by the CMB every five years is one of the law's new requirements, and it is carried out with the help of representatives of SCWRO (the U.S. Department of State 2022).

On February 15, 2022, the Parliament of Azerbaijan adopted a decision on the introduction of additional amendments to the law. The change is related to the new appointment of imams and servants of religion as well as the registration of new religious communities. The SCWRO is fully responsible for this. Thus, the CMB will only endorse the decisions of the Committee. The authorities argued that in this way they were "protecting" Pashazade from making the wrong choice because imams must possess "impeccable behavior, deep knowledge, and protect the state," so they must be elected by the state. This decision provoked strong criticism and is contrary to the principle of separation of religion and politics stipulated by the Azerbaijani constitution (Ulkyar 2022). In that way, the state machinery tried to cleanse the religious field of uncontrollable clergy, especially the Iranian one. As a result, every year, several international human rights organizations address the worst abuses and violations of human rights on religious grounds in Azerbaijan (U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom).

## **Shī'a Islam as an opposition ideology: the role of Iran**

Since independence, Iran has always sought to gain religious superiority in Azerbaijan, where it has historical, cultural, religious, and ethnic relations. For this purpose, Iran used different religious channels to export the Iranian interpretation of Shiism. Initially, Iran succeeded and got significant influence on the Tats (Caucasian Persians) of Nardaran, the Talysh people of Iranian origin in the southern region, and among other Shī'a religious and civil groups and figures. In the mid-1990s, more than twenty Iranian madrassas were operating in Azerbaijan. Iranian clerics and missionaries appeared in great numbers all over Azerbaijan and set about helping to restore religious life in the country. Various Iranian charitable and cultural organizations were operating (Constantin-Bercean 2017, 141) in Azerbaijan. Iran was supporting the renovation of Shī'a mosques (Jödicke 2017). However, according to the Azerbaijani authorities, Iran backed the "Islamic Party of Azerbaijan", protests and clashes over the school hijab ban (in the period of 2010–2013), and other unrests, particularly in Nardaran (Bashirov 2020).

Nevertheless, Iran is considered an unreliable partner for Azerbaijan because of its close cooperation with Armenia and its balanced approach to the Karabakh conflict, which Baku perceives negatively. Besides this, the Turkey-Iran regional rivalry and Israel's and the USA's antagonistic position towards Tehran forced Azerbaijan to take an anti-Iranian stance. It was also added the Azerbaijani regime's fears about the Iranian version of Shī'a Islam. The authorities have consistently persecuted pro-Iranian circles under the pretext of combating extremism or terrorism. Gradually, Aliyev's propaganda formed the public narrative of the "Iranian threat" as a challenge to the secularity of the Azerbaijani state, especially in terms of threats from the Iranian interpretation of Shiism. It contributed significantly to alienating Iran from the public life of Azerbaijan and diverting the model of national development towards "Turkification". It is interesting to note that after independence, a significant number of Shī'a origin young people have adopted Sunnism in Azerbaijan. In 2013, the Azerbaijani press spread the information that authorities unofficially encouraged the transition from Shī'a to Sunni Islam. In addition to Sumgait, the center of Sunni conservatism, similar cases were reported in other Azerbaijani cities: Baku, Ganja, Kuba, and Zakatala (Pashayan and Navasardyan 2021 (b), 107).

The state apparatus harassed and took arbitrary actions against pro-Iranian public, political, and religious figures and activists, portraying them as agents of Iran. Police and security forces periodically raided Nardaran (Bashirov 2018, 35), the stronghold of conservative Shiism in Azerbaijan. The policy of restraining the Iranian interpretation of Shī'a Islam is being implemented in two directions: legislative and monitoring. Despite state repression, especially in Nardaran and beyond, Iranian

religious influence continues to be the most important factor in social and religious life underground (Ismayilov 2019).

Since 2015, the key members of the "Muslim Union" movement (MUM) have been convicted in connection with the Nardaran. Tale Bagerzade, the leader of the movement and a young Shiite charismatic cleric, continues to be imprisoned (Isayev 2022). In the Nowruz pardon of March 18, 2021, one Islamic Party of Azerbaijan (IPA) member was released. However, party chairman Movsum Samadov, who had been sentenced to 12 years in prison in 2011, remained in prison. On February 29, 2020, the state security service arrested the acting party chairman, Ilham Aliyev. On May 6, 2021, Turan reported that a court in Baku had sentenced him to 16 years in prison under Article 274 (high treason). His brother-in-law, Mehman Rzayev, was sentenced to 14 years in prison. Both men were accused by the authorities of spying for Iran (Country of Origin Information Report Azerbaijan 2021, 46; 69). On November 16, 2020, a court in Baku sentenced journalist Polad Aslanov to 16 years in prison under Article 274 (treason) on the accusation that he sold state secrets to Iran. Aslanov was editor-in-chief of the news websites xeberman.com and press-az.com. Among other subjects, he had written in his articles about employees of the state security service who took bribes at the border from pilgrims who wanted to visit holy places in Iran (ibid, 65). In October 2021, the State Security Ministry secret police arrested Shī'a Muslim Imam Sardar Babayev on treason charges, or, in other words, as an Iranian spy. Meanwhile, Imam Babayev has already served a three-year jail term for leading mosque prayers after gaining Islamic education outside Azerbaijan. In Arif Yunusov's words, "...he is the last respectable Shī'a theologian qualified to issue fatwas" (Forum 18, 2021).

Thus, the stereotypes of "Iranian treats" formed by the state about Iranian religious infiltrations and Iranian interference in the domestic political agenda were mainly intended to legitimize the repression of the regime against both religious and secular opposition. The retreat of Shī'a Islam and the concurrent spread of Sunni Islam, particularly "Turkish Islam", were facilitated by the Pan-Turkish propaganda carried out by the Azerbaijani authorities for years (Bedford 2016).

### **Islam and the youth of Azerbaijan**

The growth in the number of places of worship and the alteration in public perception of religion, as supported by the survey results, show that interest in Islam, Islamic practice, and Islamic education was increased and that the aspects of religiosity have broadened in the post-independent period (Mamadli 2018). It is important to understand the attitudes and role of young people towards religion in our days. Religious youth organizations are not officially functioning in Azerbaijan, but

there were organizations in which young people constituted a significant number, such as the "Muslim Unity Movement" in Nardaran, etc. According to "Caucasian Barometer 2013" research, age is not a key factor in the spread of religiosity in Azerbaijan. Only 9% of interviewees aged 18–35 said they were highly religious (ibid). According to the survey on "Social Capital, Mass Media, and Gender in Azerbaijan", about 45% of respondents aged 18–35 stated that they either did not participate in religious ceremonies at all or participated very little (Ibid). "It can be seen that the average indicator of religiosity among young people in Azerbaijan is either the same as with other age groups or even lower, which does not correspond to the average statistical indicators of developed countries" (ibid). There is another important fact, which is interesting. Since individuals who got their Islamic religious education abroad are not permitted to serve, as well as ongoing repressions the number of people who want to receive Islamic education has been significantly reduced.

Young people who exhibit the slightest religious activity may be presented by the state as extremists or agents of Iran and imprisoned. There is also a social explanation for young people's tendency to become less involved in the religious process. Religious activities do not provide people with social well-being or career opportunities. From this point of view, it is also interesting that the participation of many young people from Azerbaijan in the Syrian war was in some cases determined by social factors rather than religious ones because the fighters were promised a substantial salary (Sputniknews.ru 2016).

On the other side, there is little chance of involving young people in religious education. In recent years, the state has done some work in the field of Islamic education. Since independence, religious schools (madrassas) have been opened in Azerbaijan mainly by foreign power centers, including Iran. Later, until 2000, madrassas that had been opened with foreign funds were closed. Baku Islamic University<sup>1</sup>, which started functioning in 1992 as a university under the CMB and has four branches, trains personnel in the field of religion. However, currently it has only one branch in Zakatala. Qualified specialists find it difficult to find a job after graduation. There are currently 10 madrassas in different regions of Azerbaijan. The girls' "Shabnam" madrassa in Baku, "Alibad" madrassa in Zakatala, Sheki madrassa, madrassas of Heydar, Zakatala, Ganja, Lenkoran, Guba, Nardaran, and Bibibeibet were registered in 2017 by the State Committee for Work with Religious

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<sup>1</sup> During its existence, Baku Islamic University, where only Hanafi Fiqh is taught, has graduated 3,550 students; 431 students were sent to study abroad; and 319 students are studying (as of January 2018). The theological faculty at Baku State University, which was created with funding from the Foundation for Religious Affairs of Turkey, has so far produced 758 graduates (Goyushov, Altay, and Elchin Askerov. Islam and Islamic education in Soviet and independent Azerbaijan, in: Kemper, M., Motika, R., & Reichmuth, S. 2015. Islamic education in the Soviet Union and its successor states. London: Routledge).

Organizations (Azərbaycan Respublikası Dini Qurumlarla İş üzrə Dövlət Komitəsi) but coordinated by the CMB (Report.az 2017). Madrassas are targeted at both Sunnis and Shiites. Some Sunni madrassas, including Alibad, are influenced by Turkish Islam. The madrassas operating in Nardaran have a pro-Iranian orientation. According to some data, the CMB is not able to properly manage this area. Corruption is common in this field, and students are given low qualifications. In general, the training of religious servants in Azerbaijan continues to be in the same deplorable state as during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. On the other hand, the CMB continues to be the permanent service structure of the discredited, corrupt, and authoritarian regime. This circumstance also negatively affects the attitude of young people towards religion. In other words, "Azerbaijani Islam" is not attractive to young people. Meanwhile, Islam is penetrating through foreign channels, and imams educated outside Azerbaijan are in many cases more attractive to young people.

### **The role of Islam in the context of the Artsakh War of 2020**

During the last Artsakh war and in the post-war period, the Islamic discourse that was generated for an external audience began to manifest itself in the public sphere (Pashayan 2021, 254). Early in October 2020, state news about the Jbrakan (Jabrayil) district, which came under Azerbaijani control, mentioned a call to prayer in a mosque for the first time in 27 years. Following the end of the war, Ilham Aliyev and members of his family began to visit separate mosques in Baku-occupied areas (Ibid). The "most Islamic" speech of Ilham Aliyev was delivered at the Akna (Ağdam) Mosque, where he emphasized: "Today I can say that I am a happy person in front of the mosque destroyed by vandals. I thank Allah once more for hearing my prayers and providing me with strength. I consider myself fortunate to have visited Mecca four times, once with my late father and three times as president. I am grateful to have prayed in the Kaaba with my family. I have the same emotions as the rest of us. My first prayer was for the liberation of our lands. I begged Allah to grant me the authority to liberate our occupied lands from the occupiers, to grant us this happiness, and to return our ancestors' lands" (Goyushev 2021). Whatever the case, not everyone in Azerbaijani society agreed with Aliyev's impassioned address because there have long been serious issues in the socioeconomic, political, and human rights sectors, as well as widespread discontent with the dictatorial rule.

The Azerbaijani authorities tried to use the Islamic discourse on the domestic political field to ensure victory and gain the support of public circles dissatisfied with the ruling regime. Azerbaijan used the Islamic factor extensively during the 2020 war, not only externally but also internally, to incite the Armenian world, form anti-Armenian sentiments, etc. It is noteworthy that during and after the Artsakh war, Azerbaijan received the unconditional support of both the Sunni and Shi'a worlds.



The sympathies of the Iranian Azerbaijani province towards the Republic of Azerbaijan were also undisguised (Pashayan, Navasardyan 2021 (a), 113-114). It is remarkable that before the Artsakh war of 2020 in Azerbaijan, it was unofficially forbidden to make the Artsakh topic a part of religious discourse. The authorities feared that the move of the Artsakh question to the religious field would become a new impetus for the formation of anti-government sentiments. However, after the war of 2020, anti-Armenian propaganda also penetrated the religious field. Notably, some imams started criticizing Armenia in their sermons for destroying Islamic monuments and mosques in Nagorno Karabakh and beyond. Despite that fact, that during of the Artsakh War 2020, Iran supported Azerbaijan (Pashayan, Navasardyan 2021 (a)) and made many statements in behalf of Azerbaijan territorial integrity (Khamenei.ir 2020, Isna.ir 2020, Qafqaz.ir 2020), the post-war Azerbaijani-Iranian relations have been continued to develop in an environment of mutual mistrust. Iran tries to counter the Pan-Turkic plans by activating cooperation with Armenia. Iran is worried not only by the growth of Turkish, but also Israeli influence in the South Caucasus. Azerbaijan and Turkey's demands for the so-called "Zangezur corridor" to Armenia Iran is considered a big threat to its national interests (Kucera 2022). In this context, Iran and particularly many pro-Iranian clerics in Azerbaijan also appeared to be under attack. Baku accused Iran of its unambiguous and uncompromising position on the issue of the inviolability of Armenia's borders (Report.az 2022), when the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran has stated that the borders of Armenia are the "red line" of Iran and Iran will not allow any changes in the borders in the region (Khamenei.ir 2022). In October 2021, during another escalation with Iran, the Azerbaijani government shut down a number of pro-Iranian websites. Although Baku did not make any official announcement, media sources revealed that six websites were blocked: Deyerler (values), Maide (blessings), Ahlibeyt (Prophet's House), Ehlibēt (Prophet's House), Shī'a, and Islaminsesi (the Voice of Islam). Some reports also claimed that YouTube channels broadcasting Iranian religious programs were also blocked (Sinaee 2021). Parallely, the Iranian embassy in Baku said that Azerbaijani police had inspected the Husseiniya mosque in Baku and shut it down. The office of the representative of Iran's leader, Ali Khamenei Ali-Akbar Ojaghnejad, was located in that mosque (ibid). At the same time was developed a trend of the Azerbaijani regime intends to involve Shī'a clerics in the field of anti-Iranian sentiment. In October 2022, when Iran started unprecedented military exercises on the border with Azerbaijan (Iran International 2022), Baku began to more strongly exploit the religious card in the confrontation with Iran. Proof of this is the recent anti-Armenian sermon of Imam Javid, which, surprisingly for a Shī'a cleric, is also highly anti-Iranian. Iran is regarded as an ally and supporter of Armenia. According to him, such a move diminishes the religious feelings of the Shī'a Turks (The Imam reveals the

rotten nature of the Iranian turban-wearers 2022). Furthermore, CMB chairperson Allahshukur Pashazade, in one of his interviews, said: "My brother Iran sold me to Armenia. The hopes of millions of Shiites were dashed" (REAL TV 2022). These anti-Iranian statements are not accidental, as they were punished a year earlier by the information space of Azerbaijan. He was careless to emphasize that the victory was also achieved thanks to Iran's support, and the media accused him of putting Iran on the same level as Turkey, demanding his resignation (Media.az 2021). However, Iran's expectations regarding a new geopolitical alignment in the post-war region did not come true. Turkey, Israel, and Pakistan, Azerbaijan's strategic allies, have become more active, which poses a threat to Iran's security. New realities have created a new tension in Iranian-Azerbaijani relations, in which the religious factor again came to the fore. The Iranian interpretation of Shīʿa Islam and its legitimacy in the Azerbaijani environment began to be questioned.

## **Conclusion**

The research concludes that the beneficiaries of Shīʿa factor in Azerbaijan are the state, society, and external forces that have interests in the country. Other beneficiaries of Shīʿa Islam were those segments of Azerbaijani society that were distinguished by Shīʿa religiosity, religious conservatism, civil activism, anti-authoritarian attitudes, etc. Since independence, the state apparatus has constantly monitored the activities of pro-Iranian circles in all directions, developing the necessary tools. Meanwhile, the state used Shīʿa Islam in the nation-building process, representing Islam as an important segment of the history and culture of Azerbaijan. At the same time, authorities prevent the politicization of Shīʿa Islam through continuous restrictions and repression in order to prevent the religion from being redrawn. The sum of the evidence demonstrates that Islam continues to be the government's primary weapon on both the internal and external fields. It is no coincidence that the Islamic factor was used to some extent during the Artsakh war of 2020 in order to consolidate society against the enemy and strengthen the legitimacy of Aliyev's regime.

In this context, two questions are important: to what extent Aliyev succeeded in shaping "official Islam", putting it forward as the core of nation-building, and to what extent Aliyev's religiosity is perceived by the Azerbaijani society. The authors argue that the regime not only failed to rationally use Islam in state-building, but also to institutionalize "Shīʿa official Islam" and make it competitive. The reason is the lack of trust in Azerbaijani society towards the authoritarian regime and the imitation of religiosity by Aliyev, as well as the repressions and restrictions imposed by the law on the free practice of religion and freedom of speech.

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## TECHNOLOGY DIFFUSION AND POWER TRANSITION: THE CASE OF THE SEMICONDUCTOR INDUSTRY IN EAST ASIA

***Abstract:** The semiconductor industry is an excellent illustration of the interaction between technology diffusion and power transition. Since the 1960s, there have been three large waves of technology transfer as well as industry transfer in East Asian countries' semiconductor industry, where the production network acted as an essential nexus. International technology diffusion, whose channels consist of international trade and foreign direct investment, plays a primary role in the formation of the semiconductor production network in East Asia, which has a profound influence on shaping the international power structure. However, the reshaping power structure always attracts the technology exporter's attention and provokes power competition between the dominant state and the rising power, which in turn casts negative influences on international technology diffusion. Nowadays, the third wave of technology transfer in this field has been ongoing for decades between first-movers and China, while the power competition and the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the process, which will greatly influence the power distribution in the field of the semiconductor industry and the international power structure.*

***Keywords:** International Technology Diffusion, Power Structure, Production Network, Power Competition.*

### **Introduction**

The ongoing global chip shortages, which started in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and would definitely last longer than expected, have become a critical choke point not just for economic activities such as the manufacturing of medical devices, electronic products, and so on, but also for national security. The current crisis in the semiconductor supply chain, which attracted the attention of the great powers, spurred industrial relocation with the stimulation of industrial policies designed by the major powers. In the 20th century, there were two large waves in the semiconductor industry relocation: the first wave was during the 1950s to 1970s, Japan succeeded to undertake the industry transfer and dominated in the Dynamic Random-Access memory (DRAM) industry for almost a decade; the second wave was initiated from the mid-1980s, Taiwan and Korea as latecomers caught up and built its own advantages in certain segments of the semiconductor industry. These two large waves of global semiconductor industry transfer brought about the collective

rise of the semiconductor production networks in East Asia, which shaped the current international production power structure. Each wave of industrial transfer was not only driven by knowledge spillover but also supported by industrial policy.

Since China entered the World Trade Organization (WTO), a new wave of semiconductor industry transfer is showing up, accompanied by foreign capital flowing into China. There are obvious improvements in technology and a move-up in the global value chain of the semiconductor industry. Technology spillovers count, which gradually enhance the competitiveness of Chinese firms in this field and improve the market share of the world semiconductor industry. However, given the state-centric power competition and the COVID-19 pandemic, which heavily damaged the international liberal order as well as the global supply chain, the semiconductor supply chain was deemed the main concern of national security by most countries. The international cooperation of the semiconductor industry based on the global value chain was challenged by power competition, which would definitely bring the global supply chain into chaos. In the context of re-globalization, great powers compete for manufacturing capacity in key fields, which has become a new feature of this era. Industrial policies with the aim of improving the indigenization capacity of the semiconductor industry were designed, which reflected the desires of these countries to secure the supply chain and keep the industrial chain under control. There is no doubt that the production network of the semiconductor industry, which plays a key role in shaping the international production structure, is highly valuable for those countries to achieve their strategic goals.

However, there are few articles focusing on the relationship between technology and the international power structure. Obviously, the production network is the critical nexus between them. Then, what's the relationship between the technology diffusion network and the production network? How could the production network shape the international power structure? And when it comes to power competition, how could it influence the interaction between technology and the international power structure? To answer these questions, it is necessary to trace the brief history of the formation of the semiconductor production network in East Asia and explain how the network contributed to the transition of the international power structure, as well as the relocation of the production network during the power competition. This article will try to figure out the interaction mechanism between the technology and the international power structure.

### **Interaction between technology and international power structure**

Susan Strange points out that the international power structure consists of four different sources of structural powers, namely knowledge, security, finance, and



production, which shape and determine the structures of the global political economy, while technology is most important for acquiring relational power and reinforcing other kinds of structural power (Strange 1988, 31). Moreover, Strange holds the point that the technological changes in the knowledge structure have had on the production structure bring about the centralized power in the big transnational corporations, which headquartered in the US. In short, the technological changes have led to a greater concentration of power in one state (Strange 1988, 133). However, in reality, the technology changes not only bring about the concentration of power, but also lead to the power transition, thus it is necessary to figure out the interaction between technology and power structure.

The hinge between Technology diffusion and power transition is the production network: the production network is the basis of the production structure which could be influenced by technology diffusion, the international technology diffusion could bring about the international transfer of the production network, which forms international production center and reshapes the international power structure.

#### *Technology innovation and diffusion shape the international power structure*

There are strong correlations between the international production network and technology diffusion. The formation of a production network is always connected with the diffusion of technology. International firms focusing on international trade usually need to build their own supply chains in the host countries with the aim of reducing production costs, which could help the host countries form their complex production networks. Therefore, it is very critical for host countries to join international trade to spur the formation of an international production network and attract foreign direct investment to stimulate the technology spillover.

As for the main channels of technology diffusion, International Trade and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) played essential roles during the process of technology spillover (Keller 2002, 2004; Branstetter 2006; Poole 2013).

International trade could be divided into two different types: import and export. The import would augment the domestic technology stocks by way of purchasing and utilizing them, as well as imitating the advanced technology, which could help improve the host countries' technology level and spur endogenous innovation (Crespo ed., 2002; Blalock ed., 2007; MacGarvie 2006). Meanwhile, import should be synchronous with export, which could contribute to the formation of a dense production network and facilitate industry transfer. Export could notably improve the productivity and the industrial growth in the host countries through learning-by-export effects (Biesebroek 2005; Loecker 2007). Moreover, international trade could help the host country join the international supply chain, which is essential for the formation of a competitive production network.

FDI could play a positive role as a channel of international technology diffusion by way of horizontal and vertical FDI spillover, as well as worker turnover, which could potentially generate a positive technology spillover to the domestic firms (Keller 2010, 810-815). Horizontal FDI spillovers refer to the technology learning effects of multinational firms occurring in within-industry firms, especially in high-tech industries, which could generate an increase in firm productivity as well as industrial growth (Haskel ed. 2007; Keller and Yeaple 2009). Vertical FDI spillovers refer to multinational firms purchasing intermediate inputs from local suppliers, which could impose technology requirements and standards on local suppliers and diffuse the technology to downstream firms (Pack and Saggi 2001; Blalock 2002; Javorcik 2004; Blalock and Gertler 2008). FDI counts, not just for the technology diffusion that could help improve the firms' productivity and form a competitive production network, but also because it could create large amounts of jobs and generate tax revenue. FDI spillover through labor turnover is another important way of technology diffusion, which could help transfer technology from the multinational companies to domestic firms (Görg and Strobl 2005).

*International power structure counteracts technology innovation and diffusion*

Competitive Production Network embedded into the global supply chain, is not just the basis of the international power, shaping the power structure, but also the powerful platform conducive to the industrial upgrading and the technology diffusion, which always spurs the great powers' competition and stimulates the technology innovation and diffusion.

The production network, which is embedded in the global supply chain in the host country, could contribute to technology innovation and diffusion with the method of industrial upgrading. It would be more convenient for firms in the global production network to absorb advanced technology to improve their productivity and complete the primitive accumulation of capital, while simultaneously stimulating their determination to upgrade and lift their position in the global value chain to earn more profits (Gereffi 1999; Krugman 1992; 1994). Consider East Asia: with rapid growth in manufactured exports, the newly industrializing countries (NICs) of East Asia, namely Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, gradually raise participation rates, intersectoral labor transfer, educational levels, and investment rates, which objectively help firms move up in the GVC (Young, 1995).

Technology innovation and diffusion are not just the core elements to drive the changes of international power structure, but the significant causes to spur the competition between the rising power and the dominant power (Drezner 2019; Milner and Solstad 2021; McCarthy 2015; Zhu and Long 2019). In order to keep their status in GVC and satisfy the requirements of the domestic interest groups, developed

countries as the dominant power and technology exporter always take actions to block the technology diffusion and deter the industry upgrading or technology innovation of the rising power by all means. Moreover, given that the production center is always separated from the technology-export center, the production network could be the focus of power competition by great powers with the aim of securing and decentralizing the supply chain, even taking actions to crack down on the competitors' network.

### **Collective rise of the semiconductor industry in East Asia**

The United States has dominated the semiconductor industry from the beginning of the integrated circuit (IC) at Texas Instruments in 1958 until the 1980s. The early market demand (1958–1964) was primarily driven by the Department of Defense and NASA, but until 1966, commercial demand had surpassed the federal government's demand for ICs (Moore 1990, 99). ICs' technological improvements have always been motivations for technological revolutions in computers, telecommunications, and other electronics industries: price reductions and performance improvements could help IC products possess abilities for the further development of electronics goods by providing opportunities for new entry and innovation. (Steinmueller 1988, 319). Actually, there have been two large-scale waves of semiconductor industry transfer in history: The first wave was with the rise of mainframe in the 1970s and 1980s, Japan succeeded to develop its own semiconductor industry and catch up with American competitors, gradually dominated the DRAM industry and became the most important international production centre of semiconductor; the second wave was with the rise of personal computer (PC) industry and IT industry in the 1980s and 1990s, Korea replaced the status of Japan's status in the DRAM industry, meanwhile Taiwan succeeded to create a new model-'foundry' and became a competitive role in the world semiconductor industry. In the past, waves of industry transfer, technology diffusion, and power competition played essential roles.

#### **1. The first wave of industrial transfer and Japan's rise**

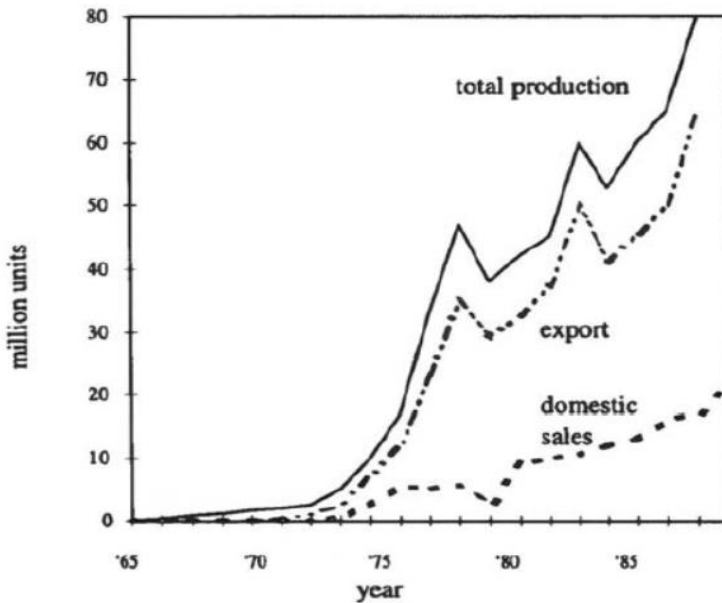
(1) The semiconductor industry is the basis of several industries, e.g., the consumer electronics industry, which could provide the necessary increased market capacity to drive the research and development of the semiconductor industry. As for the outset of Japan's semiconductor industry, international trade, and FDI count.

#### **(2) International trade**

International trade played an important role in absorbing advance technology and capturing more world market share to earn more profits, Japanese semiconductor industry start from the early 1950s, of which the import of transistor technology was the sign: in 1953, Morita, the founder of SONY, signed a licensing agreement with

Western Electric to use the transistor in consumer electronics, such as radio sets. The company produced its first transistor radio in 1955 and, two years later, in 1957, its first "pocketable" radio, which initiated a new era of miniaturized radios (Nakayama ed. 1999, 32). In the following decades, the boom of consumer electronics created enormous market demands for the Japanese IC industry, for example, the calculator industry, which has grown to become export-intensive since 1975, contributed a lot to the development of the Japanese IC industry (see Table 1).

*Table 1: Growth in sales volume of the calculators from 1965 to around 1985 (Nakayama ed. 1999, 35)*



Since the mid-1970s, Japan has gradually grown up and become a major world computer producer, whose domestic production has begun to outstrip imports. Moreover, in Japan, the major computer producers were also IC producers, which shortly grew up to be competitive rivals with IBM in the domestic market (Steinmueller 1988, 326). The rapid growth of commercial demands for DRAM attracted Japanese manufacturers. With the stimulation of the government's industrial policies, the production of DRAM chips soon surpassed domestic demand, and the export drive began: the share of made-in-Japan chips in the world DRAM market was nil in 1970, then grew to 80 percent in 1988. In the age of 64K DRAM, the Japanese suppliers had established an overwhelming presence in the DRAM market. By the mid-late 1980s, only TI and Micron Technologies remained in the market (Nakayama ed. 1999, 48).

### (3) FDI

In the beginning, FDI was restricted by the Japanese government with the aim of protecting its own industry and domestic market. However, there were positive influences on introducing new technologies. In Japan, what stimulated the IC market was Texas Instruments' (TI) investment in 1964, which compelled the Japanese companies to transform their marketing strategies from the transistor to the integrated circuit in 1965. However, in the early stages, FDI was highly restricted by the Japanese government with the aim of protecting the domestic market and producers. Therefore, TI was coerced by the government to open its patents to the public to gain permission to invest in Japan, which help the Japanese firms much easier access to more advanced technology and stimulated the birth of the first Japanese MOS IC in 1967, just two years behind the US (Okada 2000, 67-68). American technology leadership and rising market share stimulated the Japanese companies to develop their own technologies without foreign licenses, such as the development of LSI technology: main IC producers started to develop process technologies by themselves with ambitions of being self-reliant and cutting down patent costs, thus the period of LSI technology contained many indigenous technologies (Okada 2000, 70). While American electronic companies were decimated in the calculator war, Japan drastically reduced import dependence in 1972, which was regarded as a watershed moment for Japanese semiconductor.

Meanwhile, since the government imposed more strict control over the importation of IC units and lifted restrictions on foreign ownership of IC companies (computer use was allowed in 1974), Texas Instruments, Fairchild, and Motorola, which established joint ventures with Sony, TDK, and Alps in the early 1970s, started to conduct independent operations without joint ventures (Okada 2000, 72). Facing more and more fierce competition, Japanese companies try their best to strengthen their competitive edges. Later on, Japanese companies gradually overcame the pressures imposed by U.S. technology dominance and high market share and led the development of a highly profitable area, e.g., the DRAM industry, with the method of cumulative production improvement and technology innovation.

### (4) Production network's active influence

With the growing IC market (e.g., the upcoming Mainframe Computer age,) and severe competition, domestic semiconductor companies in Japan gradually formed a production network consisting of multidivisional firms: For the period 1978–1982, nine firms (Matsushita, Mitsubishi, Fujitsu, Fujitsu, NEC, Tokyo Sanyo, Hitachi, Oki, and Sharp) contributed about 90% of the domestic output in the IC industry and reshaped the competition pattern (Kimura 1990, 75). Especially in the IC industry's segment, e.g., the DRAM industry, Japanese companies dominated in this field for several years and successfully overturned US technology dominance. Intel

was the first company to invent 1KB DRAM in 1971, and due to the "first-mover advantage," American companies such as Mostek, Motorola, and Fairchild led the development of the DRAM industry for several years. Japanese firms caught up with their American peers in the mid-1970s and gradually occupied 5 of the top 7 companies in the DRAM industry from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s (see table 2).

*Table 2: Top Seven IC Firms in the DRAM industry in the World  
(Kim and Lee 2003, 1201)*

Rank	1975	1978	1981	1984	1987	1990	1993	1995
1	Intel	Mostek	Mostek	Hitachi	Toshiba	Toshiba	Samsung	Samsung
2	TI	TI	Fujitsu	NEC	NEC	Samsung	Hitachi	NEC
3	Mostek	NEC	NEC	Fujitsu	Mitsubishi	NEC	Toshiba	Hitachi
4	NEC	Intel	Hitachi	TI	TI	TI	NEC	Hyundai
5	Motorola	Motorola	TI	Mitsubishi	Hitachi	Hitachi	IBM	TI
6	Fairchild	Fujitsu	NS	Mostek	Fujitsu	Fujitsu	TI	Toshiba
7	NS	Hitachi	Motorola	Motorola	Samsung	Mitsubishi	Mitsubishi	LG

The reasons were various, while the dense production network of the IC industry in Japan established a solid basis for Japan to surpass American peers and dominate the DRAM industry in the 1980s: In 1984, a large scale of investment flowed into the Japanese semiconductor industry, especially in the building of the 64K DRAM generation's factories, which improved the capacity development and competitiveness of the Japanese firms in the generations of the 64K DRAM and accelerated the exit of many American firms during the next generation, the 256K DRAM (Flaherty 1992, 291-292).

(5) Power competition over the production capacity

There was no doubt that the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) was significant in the development of the Japanese computer and semiconductor industries with its contributions to the import and improvement of technology for domestic firms. MITI funded the Mainframe Computer Project (1972–1976) and the Pattern Information Processing Project (1972–1976), which fostered three Japanese companies (Hitachi, NEC, and Fujitsu) to be serious competitors to IBM; IBM's market share in Japan shrank from 80% in the 1950s to less than 30% by the late 1970s. Meanwhile, MITI released the Very-Large Scale Integration (VLSI) Project (1976–1980), which stimulated the Japanese development of memory chips (Nakayama 1999, 45). The demands created by the mainframe computer drove the

development of the Japanese IC industry; with the help of well-structured industrial policies designed by MITI, Japanese semiconductor firms finally caught up with their American peers and dominated the DRAM industry in the 1980s. However, several technology projects created by MITI, like the Supercomputer Project (1981–1989) and the Fifth Generation Project (1982–1991), aroused American attention about national security issues and unfair trade practices, which created years of political disputes.

From the mid of the 1980s, the US Department of Commerce (USTR) initiated a series of section 301 investigations into Japanese semiconductor firms, with the ambition of deterring the Japanese IC industry and restricting its preponderance in the field of DRAM industry. In 1986, after years of political negotiations, the U.S. and Japan finally reached an agreement (the U.S.-Japan Semiconductor Trade Agreement of 1986), in which Japan made a concession: it agreed to improve the share of imports from the U.S. to 20% within five years and established an organization to take charge of this; the manufacturing costs of DRAM and EPROM chips produced by Japanese companies should be reported to the U.S. government to ensure the reduction of unfair trade practices (Nakayama 1999, 48). Power competition between Japan and the U.S. lasted for decades. Under great pressure from the US government and a deteriorating international trade environment, the Japanese IC industry faced great challenges and lost the ability to promote further industry upgrading. In the 1980s, when Japan's semiconductor industry reached its peak, a new wave of industry transfer and relocation of the production network arose in East Asia.

## 2. The second wave of industry transfer and the rise of Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore

Under the great pressures of power competition with the U.S. and severe market competition with Korea, Japan gradually lost its leading role in the DRAM industry in the early 1990s. Korea, Taiwan, and even Singapore found their own way to develop the semiconductor industry and gradually replaced Japan in this field. Latecomer firms in these countries which succeeded to catch up with the leading firms in U.S. and Japan, highly relied on the acquisition of technological competences by way of various means, such as licensing, contract manufacturing as well as joint ventures (Cho and Mathews 2000, 3). Combined with the governments' industrial policies, the management of technology diffusion was deemed the competitive strategy, even a national strategy, for latecomers in East Asia.

The rise of Korean semiconductor companies, such as Samsung, LG Semicon, and Hyundai, could be attributed to the rapid rise of PC demands, and they overtook the Japanese giants NEC, Toshiba, and Hitachi in the DRAM industry in the 1990s. The success of Taiwanese semiconductor firms benefited from the new business

model, "exclusive wafer foundries," which fabricate chips for an increasing number of firms all over the world that could not afford to build fabrication factories, as well as for those IC design giants without the desire to invest huge amounts of capital in quickly updating fabrication facilities. By the second half of the 1990s, Taiwanese firms had entered the memory chip fabrication business and were starting to challenge the Korean and Japanese firms. Moreover, Singapore's success in the semiconductor industry owed much to FDI from the leading firms in the U.S. and other Asian countries. The second wave of industry transfer shaped the current international power structure in the field of semiconductor manufacturing.

(1) International trade

Knowledge transfer, such as technology import, played an important role in the creation of the semiconductor industry in Korea and Taiwan. In the early 1980s, Korean firms like Samsung, Hyundai, and Goldstar entered the production of the IC industry, especially memory chips (DRAM), by importing technology from leading firms in the US or Japan.

*Table 3: IC Industry Technologies' Licenses to Korea Firms 1982-1988  
(Mathews and Cho 1999, 148)*

Company	Year	Technology
Samsung and :		
ITT	1982	Telecom ICs
Micron	1983	64K DRAM
Sharp	1983	CMOS Process
Zytrex	1983	High-speed CMOS process
Zilog	1984	8-bit Microprocessor
Intergraph	1984	32-bit Microprocessor
Exel Micro	1985	16KEEPROM
Goldster and:		
AT&T	1984	Telecom ICs
Zilog	1985	Z80 Microprocessor
AMD	1985	64K DRAM
United Microtek	1985	256K DRAM
Hitachi	1988	1M DRAM
Hyundai and:		
WDC	1984	8-bit 6502 MPU
Vitellic	1985	256K DRAM
Mosel	1985	64K 256K SRAM
Vitellic	1986	1M DRAM
LSI Logic	1985	Gate arrays

Similar to Korea, Taiwan initiated its semiconductor manufacturing in the 1970s by signing agreements with American firms (RCA at the beginning) to import technology and train engineers. Technology was transferred to the private sector when the Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) transferred its VLSI technology to TSMC in 1987. With the assistance of Philips to provide the major technological



input and well-trained personnel provided by ITRI, a new era of pure foundries was created (Tung 2001, 271).

On the other hand, outward exports helped both Korean and Taiwanese firms act as major participants in the global IC industry in the fields of production, trading, and investment.

In Korea, it was inevitable for Korean firms to choose an export-oriented strategy due to the limited domestic market demand. The Korean firms with strong competitiveness showed an outstanding growth rate compared with the growth rate of the world semiconductor industry, which contributed to improving the Korean firms' market share and the status of Korea in the global value chain.

*Table 4: Current Status of Korea's Semiconductor Industry (US \$ million)*  
(Byun 1994, 708)

	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992	Annual Growth Rate (%)
Production (A)	1,268	1,469	3,066	5,104	7,800	25.5
Exports (Korea)	1,250	1,397	3,179	4,538	6,804	23.6
World Market (B)	29,087	30,642	45,017	58,200	65,300	10.6
A/B(%)	4.4	4.8	6.8	8.8	11.9	

The Korean semiconductor production totaled US \$8,508 million in 1994, and 90% of this was exported, for 1995, an export ratio of 91%, which made Korean IC (most of them were DRAM) producers successfully compete in the world market on the basis of process innovation and manufacturing efficiency (Kim 1996, 6-7).

As for Taiwan, in the 1980s, the electronics industry, consisting of consumer electronics, telecommunications, and IT, surpassed textiles to become the country's largest manufacturing sector and create huge amounts of exports as well as trade surpluses. The Taiwan semiconductor industry, as an upstream sector, was stimulated by market demands from the electronics industry and gradually saw a boom in both manufacturing and design beginning in the late 1980s.

Therefore, international trade is critical for the semiconductor industry's transfer; it was crucial for Korea and Taiwan, with their limited domestic markets, to join the international trade, which could not only introduce advanced technology from abroad but also provide an enormous overseas market.

## (2) FDI

General Instrument Microelectronics' investment in Taiwan in 1966 to operate its IC packaging business could be considered the start of Taiwan's semiconductor industry. Multinational firms like Philips, TI, and RCA started the packaging business, which concentrated on the labor-intensive industry and laid the foundation

of the Taiwan semiconductor industry (Liu 1993, 302). Later, Taiwan's industrial upgrading was carried out through a joint venture with international firms in order to capture technology diffusion.

*Table 5: Taiwanese DRAM Fabrication Initiatives 1993-1998  
(Cho and Mathews 2000, 49)*

Date of Production	Company	Technology Transfer source
1993	TI-Acer(ASMI)	Texas Instruments
1994	Mosel-Vitellic	Oki
1995	Vanguard	ERSO
1996	Nan Ya	Oki
1997	Powerchip	Mitsubishi
1998	Winbond	Toshiba
1998	MXIC	Matsushita

For Singapore, the electronics industry plays a significant role in Singapore manufacturing, which mainly relied on FDI, e.g. the semiconductor industry, with the main operations of testing and assembly in the mid-1980s, was upgraded through the multinational corporations' investment in wafer fabrication plants, such as SGS, Hewlett Packard and TECH Semi (Kai-Sun ed. 2001, 48). FDI is an important technology diffusion channel for Singapore, which could help induce the domestic transfer of related knowledge and technologies through local labor training and domestic operations.

*Table 6: IC Fabrication Facilities in Singapore 1985-1999  
(Cho and Mathews 2000, 52)*

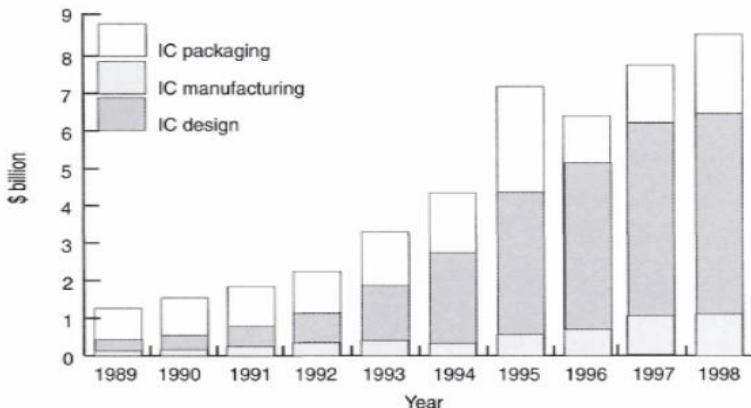
Year	Company	Wafer Size
1985	SGS	6 inch
1987	Hewlett Packard	6 inch
1989	Chartered I	6 inch
1993	TECH Semi I	8 inch
1996	Chartered II	8 inch
1997	TECH Semi II	8 inch
1997	<u>SGS-Thomson</u>	9 inch
1997	Charter III	10 inch
1998	Chartered Silicon Partners	11 inch
1998	Hitachi/Nippon Steel	12 inch
1999	Silicon Mfg Partners	13 inch
1999	Hitachi/Nippon Steel	14 inch
1999	TSMC/Philips	15 inch

### (3) Production network's active influence

Except Japan, all the countries in East Asia have entered the semiconductor industry through the investment in the packaging and testing of chips, which is the least value-added and the most labor-intensive, through an industry transfer from American firms. The Korean semiconductor industry was initiated by the investments of Fairchild and Motorola in 1964, as well as the later participants, Signetics and American Micro-Systems; Taiwan's assembly industry was started by foreign investment from TI, GI, and Micro-Systems between 1967 and 1969; as for Singapore, TI and Fairchild contributed a lot to its semiconductor industry's development in 1968 and 1969 (Davis and Hatano 1985, 128–129). Both the firms and their host countries had very strong incentives to move up in the global value chain of the IC industry, from 'back-end' packaging and testing to 'front-end' wafer fabrication and the affiliated activities of wafer production, and supply of raw materials and equipment (Cho and Mathews 2000, 38). There was no doubt that the formation of a production network for packaging and testing ensured the solid basis of industrial upgrading by providing the necessary labor force and capital accumulation.

Take, for example, the Taiwan semiconductor industry, which has relied heavily on multinational investment in packaging and testing operations since the 1960s. With the fast-growing electronics industry offering a huge amount of market demand, the IC industry's value has increased at a rapid rate of 13.2 percent in 1986–1992 and 27.6 percent in 1993–1998 (Tung 2001, 268). In 1995, as the fourth largest IC producer, Taiwan has moved up in the global value chain of the semiconductor industry, as illustrated by the rise of IC manufacturing revenue, which is more value-added than IC packaging operations.

Table 7: Taiwan: IC-Related Revenue 1989-98  
(Cho and Mathews 2000, 48)



#### (4) Power competition and national strategy

The semiconductor industry is not only a technology-intensive sector but also a capital-intensive sector, as well as the basis of several industries, which has always attracted the attention of governments all over the world. The rise of the Japanese semiconductor industry threatened the status of American interests, which triggered years of trade wars between the two countries. With the aim of weakening the potential capability of industry upgrading in Japan, the American government chose to cultivate a substitute to replace Japanese firms. Meanwhile, both the Korean and Taiwanese governments devoted all their efforts to nurturing their technological capabilities in this strategic industry and making it the national strategy. Benefiting from the power competition between the U.S. and Japan, Asian countries like Korea, Taiwan, and even Singapore succeeded in capturing the technology transfer from leading firms in both countries and eventually cultivated their own semiconductor production network. The development of the semiconductor industry in those countries was not just stimulated by the private sector's pursuit of high profits but also shaped by the national strategic competitions among powers.

The Korean government devoted a lot of effort to promote the semiconductor industry in its early stages, e.g., by covering part of the R&D expenses for new technology and developing an overall plan to stimulate the industry, including financial and fiscal support for R&D, production, marketing, and labor training (Byun and Ahn 1989, 646). Moreover, the role of the Taiwan government in developing its semiconductor industry was irreplaceable: the foremost role was to obtain foreign advance technology and to do domestic research through national projects; the second role was to stimulate demand through promoting firms to commercialize these advance technologies to meet market demands; another role was to build a comprehensive supporting industry as well as the competitive infrastructure to offer necessary services to the manufacturing of ICs (Liu 1993, 304–306).

### **The ongoing third wave of the industry transfer**

In the past four decades, the IC industry has experienced striking growth and brought great economic influence: cost reductions and performance improvements made it possible for the electronics industry to evolve from mainframes to PCs in the 1990s, the internet-related industries in the 2000s, and the smartphone industry in the 2010s (SIA 2021, 11). Corresponding with these chip-enabled innovations, the first two waves of semiconductor industry transfers took place, which illustrated the correlation between the subversive industry innovations and the semiconductor industry transfer. Those chip manufacturers who captured the market demands created by the emerging electronic industry would grow up and even dominate in the next stage: Japan grasped the chance in the age of mainframes and dominated the

DRAM industry; Korea and Taiwan captured the chance in the age of PCs, then caught up with the U.S. and Japan and dominated the DRAM industry and foundries, respectively. Therefore, there is no doubt that the smartphone revolution in the 2010s could be a great chance for Chinese semiconductor firms to catch up with the leading firms and occupy more market shares than before, with the help of massive industrial policies created by the Chinese government. However, the potential industry transfer was interrupted by the U.S. and provoked the power competition between China and the U.S. much earlier than previously, which potentially made it uncertain for China to grow up into the next semiconductor production center.

#### 1. The possibility of the rise of Chinese semiconductor industry

Due to intense competition in the semiconductor industry, Chinese firms found it more difficult than ever to obtain licensing agreements from leading companies. However, there are still plenty of chances for China to successfully undertake the semiconductor industry transfer and become one of the production centers in the world, due to its huge market demands, a production network formed by FDI and domestic firms, as well as the strong support from the government's industrial policies.

##### (1) Market demands

Like Taiwan in the 1990s, the electronics industry has recently become one of the leading sectors in the Chinese economy due to the cheap labor force and satisfactory investment environment created by the local government. China is a powerhouse in the electronics sector. With a nominal GDP of more than \$14.7 trillion in 2020, the value of the Chinese electronics industry was nearly \$350 billion, or almost 25 percent of the world assembly value in 2020 (GlobeNewswire 2021). The market demands of chips created by the electronics industry spurred the domestic development of the semiconductor industry: in 2017, China's IC production sales was \$13 billion, almost 3.8 percent of the worldwide chip sales; in 2020, the Chinese IC industry reached an unexpected growth rate of 30.6% with \$39.8 billion in total annual sales, which helped China capture 9 percent of global chip market in 2020, transcending Taiwan for two consecutive years and following Japan and the EU which took of market share respectively (SIA 2022).

##### (2) Production network

China has been devoted to developing its own semiconductor industry since 1965; however, due to its blocking economic environment, there were no possibilities for China to capture the technology diffusion and catch up with leading firms in the U.S., Taiwan, the EU, and so on. Since 1979, China has been open to foreign investment, even creating the Ministry of Electronics Industry (MEI) to regulate the FDI that poured into the electronics industry. By the mid-1990s, the world's leading firms planned to conduct or upgrade IC production operations in China, such as

Advanced Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (ASMC), which is the joint venture with Philips in Shanghai, and a huge high-technology park created by the Singapore government in Suzhou, where much of China's future semiconductor industry is likely to be located (Cho and Matthews 2000, 63–64). Given that Wuxi has been the "Silicon Valley" of China due to the investment of state-owned enterprises like Huajing Electronics and Jiangnan Semiconductor Devices, the Yangtze River Delta has formed the most important production network for the Chinese semiconductor industry, which has not only cultivated huge amounts of skilled labor but also provided valuable chances for the domestic firms to move up in the global value chain of the semiconductor industry.

### (3) Industrial policy

Since 1956, the Chinese government has played an important role in helping to develop its own semiconductor industry for almost half a century. However, even after reform and opening up, China's strategy to use industrial policy to improve technological advances in the semiconductor industry has met with limited success in the 20th century. The reasons were various: the problem of Chinese bureaucracy, the division of power between central and local government, which impedes execution of policies across the country; the methods taken by the government, which promote and impede high-tech firms' performance; the government's corruption; the mismatch of resources to the SOEs; and the lack of ability to absorb FDI-related knowledge spillovers (VerWey 2019, 8). After entry into WTO in 2001, especially the establishment of SMIC in 2000 and starting volume production in 2002, Chinese semiconductor industry gradually grew up rapidly. Well-structured industrial policies count: In 2005, China released a National Medium- and Long-Term Science and Technology Development Plan Outline for 2006–20 (MLP) and issued subsequent related policies to support MLP, which generated the concept of IDAR: "Introducing, digesting, absorbing, and re-inventing intellectual property and technologies as a means of industrial catch-up" (VerWey 2019, 12). In 2014, Chinese government released Guidelines to Promote National Integrated Circuit Industry and Made in China 2025, which presented detailed-strategy to lead the Chinese semiconductor industry to foster technology transfer and catch up with leading firms in the world. Meanwhile, the National IC Fund was founded by the government, according to Made in China 2025, to help implement the national IC plan. Until 2019, China has completed two rounds of IC industry investment funds: Phase I raised 139 billion yuan, which ended in 2018, and Phase II collected 204.2 billion yuan (\$28.9 billion) with the aim of achieving self-sufficiency in the industrial chain (The Wall Street Journal 2019). Well-designed industrial policies aim to foster technology diffusion and absorption, while Chinese semiconductor firms are granted a great chance to seize the domestic market under the requirement of "Indigenization Substitution" and

accumulate enough capital to do further investment and R&D research.

## 2. Power competition between U.S. and China

In the context of power competition between the U.S. and China, the third wave industry transfer of semiconductors presented a complex characteristic: Reshoring semiconductor manufacturing capacity is a primary task for U.S., Meanwhile, cutting off the technology diffusion, even disengaging with Chinese economy are adopted by American government to deter the growth of Chinese semiconductor, which never showed up in the previous industry transfers.

As is illustrated above, innovations in the IC industry help stimulate more market demands and exploit new markets entirely, which will enable a great many innovative technologies, including 5G, artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous electric vehicles, and the internet of things (IoT) in the next decade (SIA 2021, 12). In other words, as the foundation of all those emerging technologies related to national security, the semiconductor industry, especially the wafer fabrication capacity, has become an essential part of national power, which could cast an essential influence on the international power structure and attract the attention of great powers in turn. With the fast growth of the Chinese electronics industry and the strong industrial policies released by the Chinese government, the U.S. government is afraid that China will gradually catch up with American firms in the semiconductor industry like other Asian countries in history. When Trump came into power in 2017, USTR initiated Section 301 investigations into China's unfair trade practices as well as its unfair and even illegal technology transfers. The semiconductor industry became the focus of power competition again; however, unlike Japan in the 1980s, China has not built dominance in any semiconductor segments compared with leading firms in developed countries, even after decades of development. Therefore, the semiconductor industry, especially the advance technologies owned by the American firms, are used to be a technology leverage to help U.S. deter Chinese firms' rise in any innovative technologies, take Chinese company Huawei for example: afraid of the leading advantages of Huawei in 5G field, the Trump administration imposed series of restrictions on Huawei by cutting off all access to US technology, especially chip technology, which made Huawei run out of chips stocks and stop producing its own chips (AP News, 2020). Later on, the Biden administration pointed out that the share of American IC manufacturing capacity has reduced from 37% 20 years ago and now reaches about 12% of global production, and U.S. semiconductor firms highly rely on external sources for IC production, especially in Asia, disclosing a supply chain risk that could definitely threaten national security (The White House 2021, 22). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic shows the importance for U.S. to strengthen the global semiconductor supply chain in an uncertain era, when facing the power competition between U.S. and China. Meanwhile, Congress recognized the pivotal

role of the American semiconductor industry in America's future. Both the House and the Senate tried to authorize the CHIPS Act to increase domestic investment in semiconductor research, design, and manufacturing. Besides, Congress is also discussing legislation called the FABS Act that would introduce a semiconductor investment tax credit (SIA, 2022). Currently, both the government and the Congress are determined to rebuild the competitive production network in the U.S. and deter the growth of Chinese semiconductor firms by blocking the diffusion of technology.

## **Conclusion**

The three waves of semiconductor industry transfers in history and the present are excellent examples to illustrate the relationship between technology diffusion and power transition. Latecomers generate their own technology based on imported technology, which is deemed as international technology diffusion: e.g. the American dominance in the DRAM industry in the 1970s and the 1980s was transfer to the Japanese in the 1990s, and then was passed to the Koreans in the 2000s, these evolution was corresponding with the order of entry into the industry and following with the industry transfer (Lee and Yoon 2010, 568). Production network is the nexus between technology diffusion and international power structure: technology transfer promotes the formation of the semiconductor production network in East Asia, and gradually reshapes the international power structure of production. East Asian countries succeeded in establishing the competitive production networks of the semiconductor industry in the previous two waves of technology transfer, which greatly challenged the dominance of American firms and shaped the current international power distribution in the field of the semiconductor industry. Each wave of technology transfer stirred up the power competition between the dominant country and the rising state; the most famous one was the semiconductor trade conflict between the U.S. and Japan. Nowadays, with the rapid rise of Chinese economy, its semiconductor industry showed the similar trend to catch up with the leading firms of the U.S. through the technology spillover, which arouse American worries and provoked power competition between the U.S. and China. The technology diffusion channel was blocked by the American government in order to deter the rise of the Chinese semiconductor industry as well as the potential dominance of the future technologies; meanwhile, industrial policies were released by the governments of the U.S., Japan, Korea, China, and even Europe. The third wave of technology and industry transfer will definitely be affected by technology diffusion, industrial policy and the power competition, which will cast a profound influence on the international power structure in the future.



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ARAM GASPARYAN

**THE “CIVIL CONCORD”: ATTEMPT FOR PEACE IN ALGERIA**

**Abstract:** *In 1999, the ratification and implementation of the "Civil Concord" law was a positive initiative, aimed at ending the long-standing "Algerian crisis" and ultimately establishing peace and stability in Algeria. The purpose of the article is to present the political processes prior to the "Law" towards the settlement of the conflict, which later became the basis for the adoption of the "Civil Concord" Law. One of the key issues is to study the positive and negative sides of the "law" and to show the omissions that undermined the legislative initiative of Algerian President Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika. In this regard, we consider it essential to present the inattention, sometimes even neglect, to the problems of ethnic minorities (Berbers, Amazighs) in the process of national reconciliation, which obviously did not contribute to the process of establishing final peace in the country. After a description of the historical context, this article examines the "Civil Concord" law, which had a great impact on the general situation of the country, as Algeria continues to be in a vulnerable situation in economic and social spheres.*

*The novelty of this paper is that the Civil Concord was, in fact, the legislative change initiated by the authorities that was supposed to be the basis and become the main tool on the way to achieving public solidarity in Algeria. However, precisely in this respect, the law and its consequences left out the Berbers, who were an integral part of Algerian society. The internal political changes initiated by Abd Al-Aziz Bouteflika, which began with the adoption of the Civil Concord, created a political system that predetermined and shaped the model of the Algerian government system.*

**Keywords:** *Civil Concord, Algeria, Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika, National Reconciliation, Algerian crisis.*

**Introduction**

The National Reconciliation in Algeria announced by the new president Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika and the adopted law of "Civil Concord" were among the possibilities that would allow to put an end "Algerian crisis" by establishing peace and opening a political period for the country. The National Reconciliation was a long and politically difficult dialogue process aimed at overcoming the Algerian crisis and establishing peace. In 1992, the armed conflict between the authorities and the Islamists, which had disastrous consequences for the Algerian economy and claimed thousands of lives, couldn't be solved only by military force; there was a need for a political solution and dialogue between all parties involved in the conflict.

The armed conflict clearly showed that dialogue, negotiations, and compromise had become the only tools that would enable national reconciliation to be achieved. The National Reconciliation Program was implemented in 1999 with the adoption of the "Civil Concord" law.

The paper outlines the omissions of the Civil Concord Law as well as the political developments that preceded its adoption and had an essential impact on the political atmosphere in Algeria.

### **The Civil Concord. First steps for peace and national reconciliation**

It is notable that, before 1999, several significant attempts had been made to resolve the conflict. Among them were the meetings of Algerian opposition parties<sup>1</sup> held in Rome at the end of 1994 and in the beginning of 1995 through the mediation of the Catholic community of Sant'Egidio (Volpi 2003, 73).

These meetings were landmarks in the political life of Algeria, as a result of which the parties adopted the so-called "Platform of the National Agreement"<sup>2</sup> which called for the convening of a national conference to create a short-term transitional authority to oversee free and pluralistic elections that would permit the Algerian people to choose a new government under rules established by the constitution of 1989. The Platform also called to withdraw the military from the political field and establish the basic, universal values and principles in Algeria, such as affirmation of basic human rights, popular sovereignty, the rule of law, and the separation of powers.

The platform also affirmed Islam as an important element of Algerian identity while guaranteeing freedom of religion to all. As measures to precede negotiations, it called for the liberation of all political prisoners, including leaders of the "Islamic Salvation Front" (ISF), the restoration of press freedoms, and the reopening of the political field to all parties, including the ISF (Ruedy 2005, 266).

The second attempt for reconciliation were the secret negotiations in 1995 between the high command of the army and the leadership of the "Islamic Salvation Army" (armed wing of the "Islamic Salvation Front")<sup>3</sup>, as well as the "clemency" law adopted in 1996 (MacQueen 2009, 98) by president Liamine Zeroual<sup>4</sup>. It made changes in the Algerian criminal code, particularly regarding the definition of the

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<sup>1</sup> "Islamic Salvation Front", "Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights", "Movement for Democracy in Algeria", "Trotskyist Workers' Party", "Contemporary Muslim Algeria" and "al-Nahda". Ruedy 2005, 266.

<sup>2</sup> Or otherwise, "Rome Platform".

<sup>3</sup> The armed wing of "The Islamic Salvation Front": Le Sueur 2010, 67. The secret negotiations in 1995 were a direct consequence of the opposition's meeting in Rome. Lamine Zeroual categorically rejected the decisions of the "Rome Platform," wanting to start the negotiations on his own terms.

<sup>4</sup> From January 31, 1994 to April 27, 1999, Liamine Zeroual served as Algeria's sixth president.

crimes committed by terrorist groups and the punishments provided for them. This law was meant to restore peace, stability, security, and respect for the law and the state; it was also supposed to put an end to the bloodshed. It should be noted that the law was the first legal document of the political dialogue on reconciliation and served as the foundation for the subsequent processes of resolving the political crisis. It is also necessary to note that the adoption of the "clemency" law had a positive effect on the negotiations with the ISF, as a result of which it was possible to reach a ceasefire with the ISF in 1997 (Volpi 2003, 77–78). This was rightly an important event, as it gave new impetus to the process of achieving civic solidarity.

The process of political settlement of the Algerian crisis, which began during the administration of Liamin Zeroual, continued under Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika, who was elected president of Algeria in 1999 (Jacob 2015, 24), promising almost impossible peace to Algeria. The ongoing armed conflict between extreme Islamists and the government since 1992 has had irreversible consequences for all sectors of the country and almost destroyed civil society. However, the military managed to retain power despite heavy losses and huge wastage of resources. The tactics and strategy chosen by the latter weakened their influence for obvious reasons and directly had an effect on the reputation of the army and the soldiers. The most influential and prestigious Islamic organizations had also lost their old strength and power, but many new volunteers continued to join their ranks. Foreign powers, in turn, put pressure on the Algerian authorities, expressing concern about the danger of Algerian terrorism spreading beyond the borders of the country.

All these circumstances created a unique political atmosphere in which Bouteflika had to fulfill his campaign promise to achieve political and civil solidarity. Algeria's newly elected president began implementing a "Civil Concord" law with a number of generals, most notably Larbi Belkhair (Werenfels 2007, 56). Thus, Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika, in fact, continued the process of reconciling his successors, this time headed by a civilian figure, albeit with a military background.

The "Civil Concord" law, which was essentially a positive initiative aimed at securing Algeria's peaceful future, nevertheless also had its opponents and critics, and the most influential of them were the military personnel.

Bouteflika's decision to resolve the conflict peacefully led to military resistance, as expected. Many high-ranking military officers who had been fighting against Islamist terrorists for a long time opposed Bouteflika's initiative. Bouteflika, who had not yet been strengthened in his new position and was aware that he would be unable to prevent possible military coups, considered it important to secure broad public support, which would enable him to mitigate criticism and strengthen his position (Le Sueur 2010, 78).

In this context, it should also be noted that there were also contradictions between the newly elected president of Algeria and the high-ranking military over the appointments to strategically important positions. Bouteflika initiated unprecedented and significant personnel changes in the ranks of the high-ranking military in the early 2000s, with the goal of strengthening his political positions. That is why the Algerian president put the approval of the law he initiated to a national referendum, thus bypassing the opposition of the military (Werenfels 2007, 58–59).

A referendum was held on September 16, 1999, and the “Civil Concord” law was approved by a majority of voters (Stora 2001, 47). The results of the referendum thus once again confirmed the president's high reputation and reaffirmed that Bouteflika had chosen the exact political direction. The public perceived him as a wise political leader who would manage to put an end to the “Algerian crisis”. At the same time, the adoption of the law and the expected peace, albeit temporarily, distracted Algerians from many internal problems. Thus, in September 1999, the “Civil Concord” Law came into force, which particularly states: “This law is a part of a broader program to reestablish civil solidarity, which aims to take special measures to exempt from standard punishment those who participate in or are involved in terrorist or divisive acts. Those who willingly wish to stop their criminal activities are given an opportunity to realize that intention by becoming a part of society again. The above-mentioned persons, in order to benefit from the provisions of this law, must inform the relevant authorities that they are ceasing any terrorist activity and report to these authorities. The law further states that the persons referred to in Article 1 may be subjected to three different punishments: exemption from criminal prosecution, probation for a term of three to twelve years, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years. The law requires the release of all previously imprisoned persons to whom the provisions of the law apply. The adoption of court decisions was handed over to regional and state departments. The law specifically refers to several types of crime. 1) murder; 2) rape; 3) permanent disability; 4) mass murder and 5) use of explosives in public places or in a large crowd of people. For the last two crimes the perpetrators are subject to the death penalty according to the criminal code” (Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne, N 46).

It should be noted that the legislation of the “Civil Concord” law did not have the expected results. Bouteflika's plan did not get a response from extremist Islamist groups. The latter were not going to lay down their arms and surrender. At the same time, as we have already mentioned, the implementation of the law caused the anger of the military commanders, who had previously expressed their support for Bouteflika. In addition, the provisions of the law were unacceptable for a considerable part of the Algerian population, especially for the families of the dead and missing, who found the provisions of this law unacceptable, as it effectively deprived them of

any opportunity for justice and did not address the problems of the victims of hostilities (MacQueen 2009, 101).

Despite the fact that the "Civil Concord" law came into force in September, terrorist acts and massacres continued. As Benjamin Stora notes, relying on the information published by the Algerian press, only in October 2000, more than 250 people were killed (Stora 2001, 48) as a result of the terrorist activities of armed groups operating in Algeria. In January-February, 2001, 500 people were killed (Dolgov 2004, 194).

The "Civil Concord" law and the amnesty for rebels who laid down their arms had to become a stable basis for the establishment of peace in Algeria. However, only the "Islamic Salvation Front" benefited from the amnesty, which, by the way, stopped his fight in September 1997<sup>1</sup>. However, by the deadline for implementation of the law (January 13, 2000), about 5,500 fighters had surrendered. Later, about 5,000 prisoners convicted of "divisive and terrorist activities" were released (Ruedy 2005, 277; Le Sueur 2010, 80).

As we have already mentioned, a significant part of Algerian society and the political and public opposition forces didn't support the adoption of the "Civil Concord" law. The latter considered this move a sign of the weakness of the administrative apparatus. At the same time, there were opinions that the Algerian government, due to a lack of resources, can no longer continue the struggle and is forced to compromise with the Islamists (Vidásova, Orlov 2008, 215-216). Obviously, one cannot disagree with such statements, especially considering the fact that the long-lasting "Algerian crisis" had a negative impact on the socio-economic condition of the country and caused thousands of human losses. However, if one agrees that the crisis reduced the government's power, then the same claim can be applied to the Islamists and the Islamic Salvation Front in particular.

Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika, wanting to show the positive results of the "Civil Concord" law as well as give new momentum to the peace process in the country, took as an example some of Liamin Zerual's steps. Being an experienced politician, Bouteflika guided the Islamic movement into the political arena, involving them in the reforms of the cultural and educational sectors initiated by the government. In addition, some conservative figures occupied high political positions.

The Algerian authorities tried to pave the way and facilitate the integration of various Islamic political forces into the political life of Algeria by involving moderate Islamists in various sectors of the country. In this context, great importance was given

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<sup>1</sup> Willis 2014, 187. The cause and result of the cessation of the armed struggle against the Algerian regime were the armed Islamic groups' continued fragmentation. The emergence of the Islamic Armed Group created both strategic and ideological tensions with the "Islamic Salvation Front," leading to armed clashes between the two factions in the mid-1990s.



to the Arabic language as an important factor in uniting Algerians, on which the cultural and educational reforms announced by the state were based and built.

It should be noted here that the policy of achieving civil solidarity by reaching an agreement with the Islamists, had its opposite side. The newly elected president of Algeria saw the only guarantee of ending the crisis in the pacification of the Islamists, while ignoring another important factor in the country: the rights of Algeria's ethnic minority, the Berbers. Although Bouteflika managed to make some progress with Islamists, these policy (especially the establishment of Arabic in the Constitution as the official and national language) angered the Berber political forces.

At the same time, a considerable part of the Algerian society was deeply disillusioned with the country's leaders. Unlike the war of independence, which united society around a common goal and ideology, the "victory" over the extreme Islamists had left most of the population, tired of the long-running conflict, in a desperate state. The lack of a unified ideology and accusing attitude toward the ruling elite, sometimes even open disregard, had a direct impact on the society's aspirations.

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In the spring of 2001, this frustration and alienation exploded with new force. It is no coincidence that the main hotbed of the public's wrath became Kabylia. The motive for the Berber rebellion was the killing of an eighteen-year-old school student by the police on April 18 (Maddy-Weitzman 2011, 185). The Berber uprising soon spread from Kabylia to the mountains of Ares, Annaba, and Biskra. 60 people were killed by the police and hundreds were injured during these events (Ilahiane 2006, 29). Security forces widely used disproportionate force against protesters, torturing those arrested and executing them without trial. These tragic and bloody events became known as the "Black Spring".

These events showed one important fact. Algeria was still far from establishing real civil solidarity, although due to Bouteflika's policy, it became possible to stabilize the country's internal political situation to a certain extent.

## **Conclusion**

Thus, the study showed that there were a number of fundamental reasons for the adoption and implementation of the "Civil Concord", the most important of which was a political and not a military solution to the long-standing "Algerian crisis", which would enable peace and stability in the country. In addition, the adoption of this law was highly valued by Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika himself, as the promise to approve gambling was his election pledge, and its implementation had a direct impact on his authority and power.

Thus, it should be noted that the application of the "Civil Concord" law and the political steps taken by Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika managed to mitigate and ease the existing tension in Algeria to a certain extent and to establish a situation close to peace. This was accompanied by the surrender of a number of Islamist groups, which also reduced terrorist activities, but they did not stop.

The implementation of the "Civil Concord" law was not a political solution as a result of the negotiation process with the opposition forces; it was more of a security measure that was to be ensured thanks to the amnesty. The law was formulated and implemented without a public discussion process. It was a document full of ambiguity and given to the public in plain language for ratification by a referendum. At the same time, the law, which provided amnesty for the Islamist attackers, bypassed and ignored the rights and demands of the families of the conflict's victims, excluding a just solution to their problems and, in fact, depriving them of any possibility of compensation for the damages they suffered. The law and its consequences generally express the political views and position of the Algerian political elite, clearly showing that the government does not want and is not going to consider alternative theories. Instead, the government forced and insisted on the choice of the state as the only correct and acceptable option.

The Law of "Civil Concord" and the subsequent legislative regulations resulting from it should have led to the establishment of national solidarity; however, the direction of solidarity and agreement chosen by the Algerian political elite did not include the protection of Berber's (Amazigh) rights, which in our opinion could not have a lasting positive impact on Algeria and on peaceful development. Thus, the "Civil Concord" law, with all of its positive aspects, had a destructive effect on the formation of the country's internal political model, which had a great impact on the general situation of the country.

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