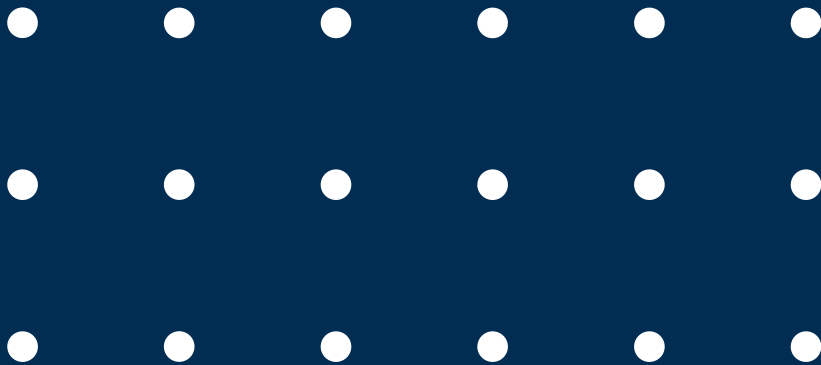




# MALUMAT

# DERGİSİ



**Malumat Dergisi** The Journal of Malumat  
**Sayı / Number: 1 • Haziran / June 2025**

Malumat Dergisi uluslararası ve hakemli bir dergidir.  
Yayımlanan makalelerin sorumluluğu yazarına / yazarlarına aittir.  
The Journal of Malumat is an international, peer-reviewed journal.  
The responsibility for the published articles rests with the author(s)

**Dergi İmtiyaz Sahibi**  
**Sosyal ve Ekonomik Perspektif Derneği (SEPDER)**  
**Social and Economic Perspective Association**

**Baş Editor / Editor-in-Chief**  
Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Furkan DÜZENLİ

**Baş Editör Yardımcısı / Assistant Editor-in-Chief**  
Doç. Dr. Yasin YILMAZ

**Baş Editör Yardımcısı / Assistant Editor-in-Chief**  
Öğr. Gör. Ersel ERTÜRK

## **Yayın Kurulu / Publishing Board**

Prof. Dr. Abdülkadir Şenkal, Kocaeli Üniversitesi, Kocaeli, Türkiye  
Prof. Dr. Bayram Zafer Erdoğan, Anadolu Üniversitesi, Eskişehir, Türkiye  
Prof. Dr. Bekir Berat Özipek, İstanbul Medipol Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Türkiye  
Prof. Dr. Maria Elena Robles Rabago, Sevilla Üniversitesi, İspanya  
Prof. Dr. Mehmet Fatih Aysan, Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Türkiye  
Prof. Dr. Metin Toprak, İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Türkiye  
Prof. Dr. Mujibur Rahman, Bangladeş Dakka Üniversitesi, Dakka, Bangladeş  
Prof. Dr. Murat Şentürk, İstanbul Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Türkiye  
Prof. Dr. Necmettin Kızılkaya, İstanbul Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Türkiye  
Prof. Dr. Ramazan Nacar, Bursa Teknik Üniversitesi, Bursa, Türkiye  
Prof. Dr. Serhat Yüksel, İstanbul Medipol Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Türkiye  
Doç. Dr. Aamir Jamal, Calgary Üniversitesi, Calgary, Kanada  
Doç. Dr. Hakan Kalkavan, İstanbul Medeniyet Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Türkiye  
Doç. Dr. Osman Akgül, İstanbul Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Türkiye  
Dr. Cafer Deniz, Newcastle Üniversitesi, Newcastle, İngiltere  
Dr. Matilda Likaj, Aleksandër Moisiu Üniversitesi, Durrës, Arnavutluk  
Dr. Pascal Stiefenhofer, Newcastle Üniversitesi, Newcastle, İngiltere  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Serdar Serdaroglu, İstanbul Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Türkiye

## **Tasarım ve Uygulama / Design and Implementation**

SEPDER Tasarım Ekibi

## **Yayın Türü / Type of Publication**

Uluslararası Süreli Yayın / International Periodical

## **Yayın Dili / Language of Publication**

Türkçe ve İngilizce / Turkish and English

## **Yayın Periyodu / Publishing Period**

Altı ayda bir Haziran ve Aralık aylarında yayımlanır / Biannual (June and December)

## **İletişim / Correspondence**

Akşemsettin Mah. Evyap Cad. 63/1 Eyüp – İstanbul / Türkiye

**Web:** <https://malumatdergisi.com>

**E-Mail:** [editor@malumatdergisi.com](mailto:editor@malumatdergisi.com)

## İÇİNDEKİLER / TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **Yaşlı Bireylerde Yoksulluk Algısına Dair Nitel Bir Çalışma**

*Doç. Dr. Fatih Kucur - Sibel Çevik - Derya Akyüz*

5

### **The Impact of Mobbing on Employee Satisfaction- A Case Study in the Service Sector**

*Nigar Gasimzade*

16

### **Mobbingin Kültürel DNA'sı ve Bir Savunma Modeli: Kültüre Duyarlı Örgütsel Bağışıklık Sistemi**

*Erdem Yürekli*

32

### **Dijitalleşen Emek Süreçlerinde Z Kuşağı: Özel Sektör Deneyimlerine Dayalı Fenomenolojik Bir Çalışma**

*Elçin Süleymanov*

49

### **A Strategic Actor in the Energy Corridor: An Analysis of Türkiye's Geopolitical Position in the Context of Geopolitical Theories**

*Seniyye Kalyoncuoğlu*

73

## Araştırma Makalesi

# YAŞLI BİREYLERDE YOKSULLUK ALGISINA DAİR NİTEL BİR ÇALIŞMA

Fatih Kucur<sup>1\*</sup>, Sibel Çevik<sup>2</sup> ve Derya Akyüz<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Doç. Dr., İstanbul Üniversitesi-Cerrahpaşa, Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi, Sosyal Hizmet Bölümü, fatihkucur@iuc.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0001-5329-9905

<sup>2</sup> Sosyal Çalışmacı, ceviksibell@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009-0002-4396-7628

<sup>3</sup> Sosyal Çalışmacı, derya.akyuz39@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009-0005-9627-5846

**Öz:** Bu çalışma yaşlı bireylerin yoksulluğu tanımlama, algılama ve yoksulluğa bakışlarını keşfetmek amacıyla oluşturulmuştur. Böylece yaşlılık ve yoksulluk arasındaki ilişkinin bizzatı konunun merkezinde olan bireyler tarafından nasıl algılandığına ve bu algıları etkileyen unsurlara odaklanarak bakış açılarının ortaya konulmasına ve yaşlı bireylerin ihtiyaçlarının ve isteklerinin anlaşılmasına katkı sağlanması hedeflenmiştir. Bu hedefe yönelik araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemi ile fenomenolojik araştırma deseni kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılara kartopu örnekleme yöntemiyle ulaşılmıştır. Bu kapsamda İstanbul ilinde ikamet eden, 65 yaş üzeri emekli maaşı alan (doğrudan kendisine ait veya dolaylı olarak) dördü kadın ve on biri erkek toplam 15 katılımcıyla derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Yapılan görüşmeler sonrası dökümlenen veriler, MAXQDA nitel veri analizi programı aracılığıyla kategorize edilerek analiz edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak yaşlılık döneminde yoksulluk algı ve yorumunun, sadece gelir düzeyinden değil, aile ilişkileri, bireylerin içinde yaşadıkları sosyal çevre, geçmiş birikimler, miras yoluyla devraldıkları mal varlıkları, manevi tutum, inanışlar, politik tutum ve hayata bakış açılarından önemli ölçüde etkilendiği bulgulanmıştır. Araştırmanın sonuçları, aktif ve sağlıklı yaşlanmanın temel alınarak sosyal politikaların bu minvalde yeniden düzenlenmesinin yaşlıların sosyal alanda daha fazla desteklenmesinin önemini açığa çıkarmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yaşlılık, Yoksulluk, Emeklilik, Yaşlı Yoksulluğu

## A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF POVERTY IN ELDERLY INDIVIDUALS

**Abstract:** This study is designed to explore the ways in which older/retired individuals define and perceive poverty and their perspectives on poverty. Thus, by focusing on how the relationship between old age and poverty is perceived by the individuals who are at the center of the issue and the factors affecting these perceptions, it is aimed to contribute to revealing the perspectives of finding answers and understanding the needs and wishes of older individuals. For this purpose, qualitative research method and phenomenological research design were used in the study. Participants were reached by snowball sampling method. In this context, in-depth interviews were conducted with a total of 15 participants, four women and eleven men, who reside in İstanbul and receive pensions (directly or indirectly) over the age of 65. The data transcribed after the interviews were categorized

**Atıf:** Kucur, F., Çevik, S., & Akyüz, D. Yaşlı Bireylerde Yoksulluk Algısına Dair Nitel Bir Çalışma. MALUMAT, (1), 2–11.

Geliş Tarihi: 08/05/2025

Kabul Tarihi: 20/06/2025



**Telif Hakkı:** © 2024. (CC BY)

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

and analyzed through MAXQDA qualitative data analysis program. As a result, it was found that the perception and interpretation of poverty in old age is significantly affected not only by income level, but also by family relations, the social environment in which individuals live, past savings, inherited assets, whether they are retired or not, spiritual attitudes, beliefs, political attitudes and perspectives on life. The results of the research reveal the importance of reorganizing social policies in this direction based on active and healthy aging and supporting the elderly more in the social sphere. The results of the study reveal the importance of reorganizing social policies in this respect based on active and healthy aging and supporting the elderly more in the social field.

**Keywords:** Old Age, Poverty, Retirement, Elderly Poverty

## 1. GİRİŞ

Yoksulluk hem toplumsal hem de bireysel refaha etki eden bir sosyal sorundur. Genellikle gelir yetersizliği ile ilişkilendirilen yoksulluk esasen çok boyutlu bir niteliktedir. Bu kapsamda yoksulluk ekonomik kaynak yetersizliği ile birlikte çeşitli sosyal, kültürel veya siyasi haklardan yararlanamama halini de içermektedir (Malak, 2023). Tarihsel süreç içerisinde göçler, savaşlar, sanayi devriminin getirdiği ekonomik dengesizlikler, ülke genelinde değişen ekonomik şartlar ya da bireyin kendi yetersizliklerinden kaynaklanan birçok neden yoksulluğun ortaya çıkmasının ve düşük hayat standartlarının sebepleri olarak görülmüş ve yorumlanmıştır (Soyuer ve Soyuer, 2008). Yoksulluğa yol açan sebepler her ne kadar dönemlere ve ülkelere göre değişiklik gösteriyor olsa da toplumsal sonuçları itibarıyla benzer sorunlara yol açmaktadır (Yıldırım, 2019). Neredeyse toplumun tüm kesimlerini etkileyen bir faktör olarak yoksulluğun daha çok dezavantajlı gruplar olarak adlandırılan kesimleri etkilediği literatürde sıkça vurgulanmaktadır. Bu dezavantajlı gruplardan birisi de yaşlılardır. Yine bu noktada yaşlı nüfusun, diğer gruplara kıyasla daha yüksek bir yoksulluk oranıyla karşı karşıya olduğu vurgusuna da literatürde rastlanılmaktadır (Barrientos vd., 2003; Mujahid vd., 2008). Her ne kadar insanın doğumundan itibaren devam eden süreçte her yeni yaş alma durumu yaşlanma olarak ifade edilse de (Uyanık, 2017) esas olarak yaşlılık vücut fonksiyonlarının, işlevinin ve süreğenliğinin önemli oranda azaldığı belirli bir dönemi kapsamaktadır. Bu dönem ve süreç ise her bireyde ve toplumda birebir aynı olmamaktadır. Bu açıdan yaşlılığın tanımlanmasında farklı kıstaslar göz önünde bulundurularak farklı tanımlar yapılabilmektedir. Bu tanımlamalarda, takvim yaşı, vücutta fiziki değişimler, toplumda bulunan sosyal yapının içerisinde bireyin konumu, rolü ve ilişkileri gibi farklılıklar öne çıkmakta ve buna bağlı yaşlılık tanımı da değişmektedir (Sarı, 2021; Aslan ve Hocaoglu, 2017; Tereci vd., 2016).

Ayrıca yaşlılığı bireyin öznel bir durumu olmaktan öte devlet ve toplum açısından birtakım sosyo-ekonomik sonuçları olan bir durum olarak görmek de içinde yaşadığımız modern dünya açısından daha anlamlı olacaktır. Nüfusun yaşlanması, doğum oranlarındaki düşüş, sağlık ve teknoloji hizmetlerinin gelişmesi doğumda yaşam beklentisini de artırmıştır (Uyanık, 2017: 68). Dünya Sağlık Örgütü (DSÖ) nüfusun geçmişte olduğundan daha hızlı bir seyrinde yaşlandığını belirtmektedir. DSÖ'nün 2018 yılında yayımladığı raporlarda 2015 ve 2050 yılları arasında dünya üzerindeki 60 yaş üzeri nüfus oranının %12'den %22'lere çıkarak neredeyse iki kat olacağı öngörülmektedir. Dolayısıyla DSÖ tüm ülkeleri, sağlık ve sosyal sistemlerinin dönüşen demografik yapıya karşı hazırlıklı olması konusunda uyarmaktadır (WHO, 2018). Nitekim yaşlı nüfus oranının, dolayısı ile de kırılganlığın, giderek artması yaşlılığın tüm ülkeleri etkileyen sosyal bir sorun olarak gündeme gelmesinde etkili olmuştur (Ergun, 2017).

Bu kırılgan durumun ekonomideki küreselleşme baskısı dolayısı ile ekonomi temelli modern toplum/devlet açısından tolere edilmesi oldukça zor görünmektedir. Çünkü yaşlanan nüfus, özellikle sosyal devlet yapılanmasının güçlü olduğu ülkeler bakımından, hem üretim kapasitesi ve iş gücü üzerinde olumsuz bir baskı oluşturmakta hem de sağlık harcamaları vb. sebepler dolayısı ile sosyal güvenlik sistemleri üzerinde ciddi bir baskıya yol açmaktadır (Gündoğan, 2001). Bu da küresel rekabet ve kaynakların verimli kullanımı noktasında devletler üzerindeki baskıyı artırmaktadır.

Nitekim bu gerçekten hareketle yaşlı ve yaşlılığa yönelik son yıllarda artan derecede ortaya çıkan çalışmalar (Özen ve Özbek, 2017; Davey, 2017; Neal ve DeLaTorre, 2016) bireyin bağımsız yaşam süresinin ve verimliliğini artırmaya yönelik çalışmalardan oluşmaktadır.

Bireyin üretim kapasitesinin artırılması ve üretim sürekliliğinin sağlanmasının önemli olduğu gerçeğinin vurgulanması sonucunda bu alanda yapılan çalışmaların da sayısı artmıştır. Bu çerçevede uzun yaşam sürelerinin bireyin üretim süreci ve kapasitesi ile eşdeğer kılınmaya yönelik çalışmalar önem kazanmış ve ön plana çıkmıştır. Bu yolla bireyin üretim sürecini hayat boyu sürdürebilmesinin imkanının üretilmesi hedeflenmektedir. Çünkü rekabet ve büyüme odaklı ekonomi anlayışı devletleri ve

bireyleri daha verimli ve kârlı işlere yönelme konusunda da baskı altına almaktadır (Uğur ve Atılğan, 2023).

Öte yandan yaşlılık ve yoksulluk arasındaki ilişkinin anlaşılmasına yönelik çalışmalar da giderek ön plana çıkmıştır. Bu çalışmaların her birisi ise sorunu kendi alanı çerçevelerinde ve dolayısı ile farklı veçheleri ile ele almaktadır. Bu çalışmalarda kişileri yoksulluğa iten nedenler incelenmiş, yaşlılık ve yoksulluk odaklı çalışmalarda yaşlılık ve yoksulluk arasındaki ilişki ortaya konmuştur (Sarica, 2019; Ak ve Közleme, 2017; Karadeniz ve Öztepe, 2013).

Yapılan bu çalışmalar bireylerin, yaşlılık döneminde yaşlanmanın ekonomik sonuçlarıyla yüzleştiği sonucuna sıklıkla ulaşmaktadır. Çünkü bu dönemde gelirde önemli ölçüde azalma ve buna bağlı yoksulluk meydana gelebilmektedir. Nihayetinde yoksulluğun sonucu olarak bireylerin, yeterli düzeyde beslenmemesi, temel sağlık hizmetlerinden mahrum kalması, barınma ortamının elverişli olmaması gibi yoksulluk ile bağlantılı sorunların yaşanması, yaşlanmanın olumsuz etkilerini derinleştirmektedir (Ak ve Közleme, 2017). Yoksulluk, bireyi sağlıklı bir ortamda ve koşullarda hayatını devam ettirmeye zorlamaktadır. Bireyin hayat kalitesinin düşmesi, sosyal hayattan dışlanması, yalnızlığa mahkûm edilmesi yoksulluğun beraberinde getirdiği diğer olumsuzluklardandır (Karasoy, 2021; Türkan ve Sezer, 2017). Özellikle, yaşlanma ve emeklilik sonrası gelir düzeyindeki düşüş ve ortaya çıkan sağlık problemleri gibi nedenler gelirin düşmesine ilaveten masraflar oluşturmaları sebebiyle yaşlılık döneminde ekonomik yetersizlikleri daha da derinleştirebilmektedir.

Bu çalışma ise yaşlılık ve yoksulluk arasındaki ilişkinin bizatihi konunun merkezinde olan bireyler tarafından nasıl algılandığına ve bu algıları etkileyen unsurlara odaklanarak bakış açılarının ortaya konulmasını amaçlamaktadır. Bu çerçevede *“Yaşlı bireylerin yoksulluğa bakış açıları hangi unsurlar etrafında şekillenmektedir?”* ana sorusu araştırmanın sorusunu oluşturmaktadır.

## 2. YÖNTEM

Bu araştırmada 65 yaş ve üzerindeki yaşlı bireylerin, yaşam deneyimlerden hareketle yoksulluğa bakış açılarına ulaşılması amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaca uygun olarak katılımcılar ile etkileşim içerisinde veri elde edebilmek için bireylerin deneyimleri, duyguları, algıları ve olaylara karşı bakış açılarını değerlendirmeye yardımcı olan nitel araştırma yönteminin fenomenolojik araştırma deseninden yararlanılmıştır (Creswell, 2013). Fenomenolojik araştırma deseninde araştırmacı, olgu ve olgular hakkında derinlemesine bilgi edinmek amacıyla, her bir katılımcının kendi dünyasına ulaşmaya çalışmakta ve öznel deneyimleri açığa çıkarmayı hedeflemektedir (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2018).

### 2.1. Araştırma Grubu

Bu araştırmanın katılımcı grubunu İstanbul’da ikamet eden 65 yaş üstü bireyler oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcıları araştırmaya dahil etme kriterleri emekli maaşı (doğrudan kendisine ait veya dolaylı olarak) alma ve yaş ile sınırlandırılmıştır. Katılımcılara, araştırmanın amacına uygun olarak belirlenen nitelikler bağlamında kartopu örnekleme yöntemiyle ulaşılmıştır. Kartopu örnekleme, araştırmacıların yeni katılımcılara ve sosyal gruplara erişmelerine yardımcı olan bir araç olarak kullanılabilir (Noy, 2008). Bu araştırmada da emekli maaşı alan yaşlılara ulaşabilmek için katılımcıların sosyal çevrelerinden destek alınmıştır.

Merriam ve Grenier (2019, s. 27), nitel araştırmalarda verilerin birbirini tekrar etmeye başlayıp yeni bilgilerin ortaya çıkmamasıyla veri doygunluğuna ulaşılabileceğini belirtmektedir. Bu çalışmada da araştırmacılar veri doygunluğuna ulaştıklarını fark ettiklerinde veri toplama sürecini sonlandırmıştır. Bu doğrultuda gönüllülük esasına dayalı biçimde 4 kadın ve 11 erkek katılımcı olmak üzere toplamda 15 katılımcı araştırmaya dahil edilmiştir. Katılımcıların kişisel bilgilerinin gizli kalması amacıyla gerçek isimlerine yer verilmemiş, kadınlar “K1”den başlayarak, erkekler de “E1”den

başlayarak kodlanmıştır. Katılımcıların sosyo-demografik özellikleri Tablo 1.'de detaylı biçimde sunulmuştur:

Tablo 1: Katılımcıların Sosyo-Demografik Bilgileri

Katılımcı	Yaş	Cinsiyet	Eğitim Durumu	Doğum Yeri	Eşi Sağ/Vefat
E1	68	Erkek	İlkokul	Tokat	Sağ
K1	65	Kadın	Okur-yazar	Erzurum	Vefat
E2	65	Erkek	İlkokul	Sinop	Sağ
K2	68	Kadın	İlkokul	Erzurum	Vefat
E3	77	Erkek	İlkokul	Siirt	Sağ
E4	65	Erkek	Üniversite	Almanya	Sağ
K3	83	Kadın	İlkokul	Bursa	Vefat
E5	73	Erkek	Üniversite	Tokat	Sağ
E6	66	Erkek	Lise	Sivas	Sağ
E7	73	Erkek	İlkokul	Elbistan	Sağ
E8	65	Erkek	İlkokul	Çanakkale	Vefat
E9	65	Erkek	İlkokul	Zonguldak	Sağ
K4	65	Kadın	Lise	İstanbul	Sağ
E10	91	Erkek	Lisans	Bilecik	Vefat
E11	87	Erkek	Yüksek Lisans	İstanbul	Sağ

## 2.2. Veri Toplama Araçları

Araştırmının veri toplama sürecinde literatür destekli hazırlanan demografik bilgi formundan yararlanılmıştır. Görüşmelere demografik bilgi formu sorularıyla başlanmış ardından yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme sorularına geçiş yapılmıştır. Katılımcılar ile yapılan görüşmeler 25.12.2022-01.02.2023 tarihleri arasında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmelerde katılımcılara araştırmanın amacı ve kapsamı hakkında gerekli bilgilendirme sağlanarak onam alınmış, aynı zamanda görüşmelerin kalitesini artırmak ve sağlıklı olabilmesi amacıyla ses kaydı alınmıştır. Yüz yüze gerçekleştirilen görüşmeler ortalama 30-40 dakika sürmüştür. Çalışmanın tüm aşamaları 19.12.2022 tarih ve E-74555795-050.01.04-568333 sayılı İstanbul Üniversitesi-Cerrahpaşa Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Onay Belgesi ile bilimsel araştırma ve yayın etiği kurallarına uygun olarak hazırlanmıştır.

## 2.3. Veri Analizi

Araştırmadan elde edilen veriler, görüşmelerde alınan ses kayıtlarından oluşmaktadır. Ses kayıtlarının deşifresi yapılmış ve sonucunda 89 sayfa deşifre elde edilmiştir. Verilerin deşifre edilmesinin ardından elde edilen metin dikkatlice okunmuş ve herhangi bir hatanın olmaması amacıyla kontrol edilmiştir. Fenomenolojik araştırmanın temel amaçlarına uygun bir biçimde bireylerin deneyimleri ve deneyim yoluyla elde ettikleri çıkarımlar dikkate alınarak Braun ve Clarke'nin (2006) tanımladığı tematik analiz yöntemiyle MAXQDA programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu doğrultuda veri analizi altı adımda gerçekleşmiştir. İlk adımda veri seti dikkatlice gözden geçirilmiş, ikinci adımda başlangıç kodları oluşturulmuş ve üçüncü adımda buna bağlı temalar ortaya çıkarılmış, dördüncü adımda ortaya çıkan temalar gözden geçirilmiş, beşinci adımda tema adlarının son hali verilmiş ve son aşamada ise veriler raporlaştırılmıştır.

## 3. BULGULAR

Bu araştırmanın bulguları “yaşlılık, sosyal yaşam ve emekliliğe bakış”, “yoksulluğa bakış” ve “yoksullukla başa çıkma biçimleri” olmak üzere üç tema altında sunulmuştur.



### 3.1. Yaşlılık, Sosyal Yaşam ve Emekliliğe Bakış

Uzun yıllar çalışma hayatı içerisinde kalmış bireylerin, tutum, alışkanlık ve sosyal ilişkileri de bu bağlamda oluşmakta ve bu durum giderek rutin bir yaşam şekline dönüşmektedir. Ancak emeklilikle birlikte yıllara yayılmış ve rutinleşmiş bu hayat biçimi önemli bir kırılmaya maruz kalmakta ve bu durum karşısında bireyi bir belirsizliğe ve yeni bir düzene zorlamaktadır. Bu duruma adapte olmakta zorlanan birey ise kendisini işlevsiz hissetmekte ve emeklilik öncesi hayatına yönelik özlem duymaktadır. Bu durumu katılımcılar şu şekilde ifade etmektedir:

*"Çalıştığım günlere özlem duyuyorum. Çalışırken şu 25 senemiz bitse de emekli olsak şu 25 sene geçse derdim ama şu an da düşünüyorum da keşke o günler geçmeseydi diye düşünüyorum. Bu da olumsuz tabii insanı rahatsız edici, iyi duygular değil. Meslek hayatımdaki yaptıklarım canlanıyor gözümde uygulanıyorum bazen. Öğrencilerim aklıma geliyor. Erken emekli oldum biraz da diyorum keşke erken emekli olmasaydım."* (E5, 78)

*"Çalışmanın eksikliğini hissediyorum yine. Çalışmak isterdim yani. Şu an çok boş, asosyal bir yaşam."* (E9, 65)

Emeklilikle birlikte gelen işlevsizlik duygusu esasen modern toplumun ve şehir hayatının sosyalleşme olanakları ve çalışma hayatı endeksli bir düzlemde inşa edilmesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. İç göç dolayısı ile şehirlere yönelmiş ve enerjisinin büyük bir kısmını bir iş sahibi olmaya adanmış bireylerin çoğunun göç ile geldikleri şehirde kendi zeminlerinde olmamalarından kaynaklı sosyal hayatlarını neredeyse sadece iş arkadaşları ve iş ilişkileri bağlamında inşa etmeleri/etmek zorunda kalmaları emeklilik sonrası kaybettikleri iş ile birlikte sosyal çevre ve statülerini de kaybetmelerine yol açmaktadır. Bu durum da bireyde tekrar işe dönme duygusunu ve sadece bu durumda işe yarayacağı fikrini ortaya çıkarmaktadır. İş hayatından uzaklaşmış olmak ise hayatın da sonlandığı düşüncesinin doğmasına yol açmaktadır. E2 bu durumu şu şekilde ifade etmiştir:

*"Yani öbür tarafa her adım... Emekli yaşınsın. Yaşlılar genelde emekli oluyor. Yaşlılar her an için öbür tarafa daha... Öbür tarafa her gün bir adım daha atmış oluyoruz."* (E2, 65)

Ancak bir diğer taraftan bazı bireylerin bu durumu bir fırsat olarak değerlendirdikleri de görülmüştür. Katılımcılar emekliliği yeni bir başlangıç ve hayallerini gerçekleştirecek bir imkân olarak görmektedir:

*"Emekli olmak hayatın sonu değil ikinci bir başlangıç olarak kabul ediyorum. Yeniden dört elle efendim sevdiklerime, arkadaşlarıma kavuşuyorum ve yapamadığım şeyleri yapmaya bazı hobiyile ilgilenmeyi arzu ediyorum. Bol bol okumak oluyor genelde bu. Ancak gücüm ona yetiyor. Yaş nedeniyle."* (E10, 91)

*"Üretici olarak bir şeyler üretmek, yapmak bunun hazzını duymak istiyorum. Sosyal aktiviteler, uğraşlar eklemek istiyorum. Yani sadece maddi beklenti olmaksızın hoşlanacağım, keyif alacağım hobiler eklemek istiyorum. Yeni arkadaş ortamı eklemek istiyorum. Zamanında iş hayatı yüzünden gidip göremediğim yerlere gidip gezmek, görmek yani iş hayatı yüzünden yapamadığım her şeyi yeni hayatıma eklemek istiyorum."* (E4, 65)

Emekliliği bir fırsat olarak gören katılımcılardan bir kısmı ise bu fırsatları yakalamak ve ekonomik durum arasında bir ilişki kurmuştur. Emeklilikle birlikte her ne kadar yeterli vakitleri olsa da ekonomik sebeplerden ötürü zamanı istedikleri gibi kullanamadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Katılımcılar; seyahat etmek, restorana gitmek, arkadaşlarla buluşmak gibi birçok sosyalleşme faaliyetini maddi yetersizlikler nedeniyle yerine getiremediklerini belirtmişlerdir:

*"Mesela bir sahil bölgesine gidemiyoruz. Mesela Ege'de Akdeniz'de. Benim akrabalarım özellikle Akdeniz'de çok olmasına rağmen Adana-Mersin hattında Antalya hattında arkadaşlarım çok olmasına rağmen gidemiyorsun. Mesela şimdi 3 kişilik bir aile yazın bir yere gittiğin zaman eğer kendi araban da yoksa yol parası açısından bile dünyanın masrafını tutuyor. (...) Esasında normalde insan gereksinimleri itibarıyla suya girebilmesi, deniz kenarında gezebilmesi, vücudun güneşlenebilmesi, bu ihtiyaçlarının giderebilmesi gerekiyor ama böyle bir olanağın yoksunuz yani. Bunu kesinlikle yerine getiremiyoruz."* (E6, 66)

"Yaşadığım hayattan... isyan etmek istemiyorum ama memnun değilim. Niye bende yaşamayayım? Niye bir geziye gitmeyeyim? Niye bir tatil yapmayayım? Niye eşimle, çocuğumla, çocuğumla bir restorana gidip yemek yemeyeyim? Bizlerin nesi eksik? Ama maalesef bugünün şartlarında, bu ekonomik krizde emeklinin hali perişan. Her şeyden mahrum. Asosyal bir yaşam. Yani hiçbir şey, devlet bize hiçbir şey tanımıyor. Bizi açlığa mahkûm ediyor." (E9, 65)

Katılımcıların hayalini kurduğu emeklilik hayatı ile gerçeğin ve dolayısıyla imkanların örtüşmediği anlaşılmaktadır:

"Avrupa ülkeleri gibi refah şeyimiz yok. Avrupa ülkelerinde diyelim ki adamlar ülke ülke tatile gidiyorlar biz köyümüze gidemiyoruz. Köyümüze gidemiyoruz ya. Bu nasıl emeklilikse! Aslında emekli olacağına öyle emeklilik şey yapmamıştık, ummamıştık." (E1, 68)

Katılımcılar, emeklilik hayatında gerçekleştirmek istediklerini uygulamaya geçirebilmek için gerekli olan ekonomik imkanlardan yoksun oldukları durumlar için birtakım öneriler sunmaktadır. Bu paralelde devletin ve belediyelerin yaşlı bireylere ücretsiz sosyo-kültürel faaliyetler sunması ortak öneriler arasındadır:

"Yani böyle bedava hizmetler versinler. Mesela ücretsiz bir gezi düzenlesinler yaşlılar için türbelere götürsünler, camilere götürsünler." (K3, 83)

"Mesela bizler şimdi altmış beş yaşın üzerindeyiz. Yaşlı insanlarız. Bizlere bir yere gönderip bir hafta, on gün şöyle bir temiz hava bir ılıcalar en azından en azından kaplıcalar herhangi bir şey." (E8, 65)

Emeklilik sonrası süreçte sürece uyumu zorlaştıran önemli etkenlerden birisi de eş kaybı ve sürekli yas sürecidir. Bu durumu bir katılımcı şu şekilde ifade etmektedir.

"Şimdi yaşlıyım ama keşke diyordum zamanında emekli olsam, eşimle beraber tatile gitsek, deniz kenarında oturup çay içsek. Ben Bursalı olduğum için kaplıcalara hiç gidemedim biliyor musun? O kaplıcalara gitsek şimdi bak ihtiyacım var o kaplıcalara gitsek Bursa'nın kaplıcaları meşhur gidebilseydik ama eşim öldü hayallerim de bitti. Artık ben napayım, parayı da napayım, yaşantıyı da napayım hiçbir şey artık istemiyorum yapmak." (K3, 83)

### 3.2. Yoksulluğa Bakış

Ekonomik imkanlar ve yaşamın zorluklarına dair yapılan tüm yorumlara ve ülkenin mevcut ekonomik koşullarına yapılan eleştirilere rağmen, yoksulluk kavramına yönelik değerlendirmeler, bu düşünceler ile tezatlık içerecek biçimde farklılaşmakta ve katılımcılar kahir ekseriyet kendilerini yoksul olarak tanımlamamaktadır. Katılımcılar, yoksulluğu temel ihtiyaçların karşılanmama hali olarak değerlendirmektedir.

"Yoksulluk deyince akşam pazarları...akşamleyin geç vakitte gidip o Pazar şeylerini toplayanları görsünler. Yoksulluk odur işte. Biz yapmıyoruz o işi de. Biz idareten ayağımızı yorganımıza göre şey yapıyoruz. Onlar yapamıyorlar işte ev kirası veriyorlar onlar. 5-10 tane çocukları oluyor onların. Ne yapsın millet." (E1, 68)

"Yoksulluk zaten hiçbir şeyde imkanları olmayan bir kişidir yani." (K2, 68)

"Yoksulluk yani gideri karşılayamamak geliyor. Yani gelirinizin temel ihtiyaçlarınızı karşılayamaması bence yoksulluktur. Bir birikim yapamamak bence yoksulluktur. Sadece açlık ihtiyacınızı karşılamaktan başka diğer ihtiyaçlarınızı karşılayamamak bence yoksulluktur." (E4, 65)

Temel ihtiyaçlar bağlamında katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu için barınma, beslenmeyi ifade etse de bazı katılımcılar ihtiyaçları sosyal ve kültürel olanaklar olarak tasvir etmektedir. Bu katılımcılar bir insanın sahip olması gereken yaşam koşullarını açıklarken sosyo-kültürel faaliyetlerin de bir ihtiyaç olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Dolayısıyla bunlara erişemeyen insanları da yoksulluk tanımına dahil etmişlerdir. E5 ve E6 bu durumu şu ifadeleriyle özetlemiştir:

"Yoksulluk ne bileyim ihtiyaçlara erişimle ilgili diye düşünüyorum. Şimdi insani olarak insan neye ihtiyaç duyuyorsa eğer ona rahatça, kolayca erişebiliyorsa yoksul olmadığı söylenebilir. (...) İsteddiğini alabilme, istediğini yiyebilme, istediğini giyebilme maddi ihtiyaçların yanında manevi ihtiyaçların doyurulması da yani bir ihtiyaç. Tiyatroya gitmek, sinemaya gitmek, bir kültürel etkinliğe gitmek de bir ihtiyaç." (E5, 78)

*"Ya insanların temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılayamaması. Temel ihtiyaç deyince ne mesela beslenme, barınma, giyinme, gezmeye, kültür ihtiyaçları, sportif ihtiyaçları normalde bir insanın yaşayabilirdi diyebilmesi için bunların sorun olmaktan çıkması gerekiyor ki iyi ki bu dünyaya gelmişim ve yaşayabilmişim diyebilsin diye düşünüyorum."* (E6, 66)

### 3.3. Yoksullukla Başa Çıkma Biçimleri

Katılımcıların, emeklilik dolayısı ile kaybedilen sosyal çevre ve statü ile birlikte, gelir düzeylerinde de meydana gelen azalmaya bir de ülkenin olumsuz ekonomik şartları eklenince günlük ihtiyaçları karşılama hususu da bireyleri epeyce zorlamaktadır. Ancak çalışma süreci içerisinde ekonomik birikim ve yatırım yapan bireylerin bu süreçle başa çıkma konusunda daha avantajlı oldukları görülmektedir.

*"Niye yoksul değilim. Allah'ın verdiği için çok şükür. Yoksulluk...Canım sağ Allah'a şükür. Gidiyorum işimi görüyorum. Topluyorum. Şey ediyorum. Daha hani...Evim var barkım var. Evim var çok şükür."* (K2, 68)

Araştırmanın diğer önemli bulgularından biri tüm anlatılanlara rağmen ister emekli aylığı ister dolaylı emekli aylığı olsun var olan gelirin bir şükür kaynağı olarak atfedilmesidir.

*"Çok güzel valla. Aydan aya parasını getiriyor. Bize de yetiyor. Yiyoruz. Allah razı olsun. Devletimizden de Allah razı olsun. Her şeyden de. İlacımızı alıyoruz. Her şeyimizi alıyoruz. Çok şükür."* (K1, 65)

Katılımcıların bir kısmı, içinde bulundukları mevcut yaşam koşullarını kendilerinden daha kötü şartlarda olanlarla kıyaslamakla bu kıyas sonucunda ise kendilerini avantajlı konuma yerleştirmektedirler. Örneğin E7 bu durumu şu ifadeleriyle açıklamıştır:

*"Biz yine halimize şükrediyoruz adam çöp bidonlarında geziyor. Ondan imdat bekliyor, ekmek parası için bir şeyler çıkarıyor. Biz böyle bir ülkede yaşıyoruz yani."* (E7, 73)

E11 ise geçmiş dönemki yaşantısıyla günümüz ekonomik imkanlarını kıyasladığında şartların kendisi için yeterli olduğunu aktarmıştır:

*"Bir defa biz fakir bir aileden geliyoruz. Kuru ekmeği kemirdiğimiz zamanları hatırlıyorum ben harp yılları. Fazladan ekmek artarsa annem dilimler tepsiye koyar açık havada kuruturdu öyle yerdik. Dolayısıyla biz böyle bir yerden geldiğimiz için bugünkü şartlar bize yetiyor."* (E11, 87)

Diğer taraftan bazı katılımcılar çocuklarının desteğinin süreç içerisinde kendileri için bir dayanak oluşturduğunu, hayati bir önem arz ettiğini belirtmişlerdir:

*"Benim harçlığım bana yetiyor gerçi arkamda dayanacağım 2 tane oğlum var."* (K3, 83)

*"Şöyle bir şey bir oğlum bir kızım var dedim ya. Şimdi ben sıkıldığım zaman faturalarımı yatırıp da elimde üç kuruş kaldığı zaman onlar bana destek yapıyor."* (E8, 65)

Bazı katılımcılar ise çevrelerinden aldıkları yardımların öneminden bahsetmişlerdir.

*"Öyle zaman ölüyor ki yaz geçiyor bir meyve alamıyoruz. Hesap et. Bir tane çilek, bir tane erik, bir tane muz. Herhangi bir şey daha bu eve girmedi yani. Zorlanıyoruz. Ramazan'da işte erzak geliyor. Onunla idare ediyoruz."* (E3, 77)

## 4. TARTIŞMA

Bu çalışmada İstanbul'da ikamet eden ve dezavantajlı gruplar içerisinde yer alan yaşlı bireylerin yoksulluğa bakış açıları ve yaşam deneyimleri ele alınmıştır. Yoksulluk sorunu her ne kadar genel bir sorun olsa da dezavantajlı grupların yoksulluğu deneyimleme ve sonuçlarından etkilenme riskinin daha yüksek olması muhtemeldir (Nazlıer-Keser, 2019). Bir dezavantajlı grup olan yaşlılar da bu risk ile karşı karşıyadır (Yıldırım Aykurt, 2020). Yaşlıların dezavantajlı gruplar içerisinde ele alınmalarının sebepleri olarak ise fırsat eşitliği ve rekabet edebilirlik zeminlerinin zayıf olması gibi hususlar gösterilmektedir. Buna göre yaşlılar yoksulluk riski ile karşı karşıyadırlar çünkü gelir düzeyleri düşük ve piyasa şartlarında iş bulma olanakları zayıftır. Bu zayıflığın en önemli sebebi ise fiziksel, mental kapasitelerinin yetersizliğidir. Çünkü yaşlı bireyler fiziksel, mental yönden yaşla birlikte zayıflık yaşamaktadır (Ağar, 2020). Bu zayıflık da rekabet edebilirlik ve üretim kapasitelerini düşürerek onları piyasanın dışına itmektedir.

Yaşlılıkta yoksullukla karşı karşıya kalma riskinin bir diğer sebebi olarak da yaşlı bireylerin emeklilik veya istihdam dışına itilme gibi nedenlerle gelir düzeylerinde bir düşüş yaşadıkları ve bu durumun da yine toplumsal katılım noktasında yaşlı bireyleri zayıflattığı düşüncesidir (Çunkuş vd., 2019). Ayrıca ilerleyen yaşla birlikte yaşanan eş ve akran kayıpları da yaşlı bireylerin toplumsal katılımını zorlaştıran sebepler arasında gösterilmiştir (Tereci vd., 2016). Bu sonucu destekler biçimde bu araştırmada da eş kaybı yaşayan beş katılımcının toplumsal hayata aktif katılım göstermedikleri sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Ayrıca on bir katılımcının da uzun çalışma hayatının ardından emeklilik sonrası sürece adapte olamadıkları ve sonuç olarak toplumsal katılım noktasında zorlandıkları da bulgulanmıştır.

Nitekim yaşlanma ile birlikte çalışma hayatından ayrılma ve üretim süreçlerinden dışlanma yaşlı bireylerin iş yaşamına özlem duyma ve kendilerini işlevsiz hissetmelerine yol açabilmektedir. Her ne kadar bu durum yaşlı bireyler için önemli bir kırılma noktası ise de bu kırılmaya yüklenen anlam bireyden bireye farklılıklar içermektedir. Bu kırılmayı bazı yaşlı bireyler ikinci bahar, yeniden doğmak, yaşama yeniden başlamak şeklinde yorumlarken bazı bireyler ise hayatın sonuna gelmek, ölümden sonraki yaşama hazırlık yapmak evresi olarak yorumlamıştır. Bu yorum doğrultusunda ortaya konulan başa çıkma yöntemleri de farklılık göstermektedir. Yaşlılık dönemini yolun sonu olarak gören bireylerin manevi yönelimleri daha ağır basmaktadır. Nitekim Gürsu ve Ay (2018) bu tip durumlarda yaşlı bireylerin çoğu kez manevi iyiliği ön plana aldığını, dini inanç sistemi ile sıkı bir bağlanma oluşturduğunu ve Tanrı'yla iletişimini kuvvetlendirdiğini ifade etmektedir. Bu durumun ise yaşlı bireylerde yaşamdaki zorluklarla mücadele etme isteğini aynı oranda artırdığı görülmüştür (Şentepe, 2015). Bu da yaşlılarda şükür temelli bir anlayış uyandırarak yoksulluk algılarını şekillendirmektedir.

Emeklilik veya yaş dolayısıyla iş yaşamından dışlanma ile birlikte yaşlılık döneminde karşılaşılan ve önemli sorunların başında gelen bir diğer husus ise gelir düzeyindeki azalmadır (Özben, 2022). Ancak araştırmaya katılan bireylerin yoksulluk algıları incelendiğinde, yaşamış oldukları tüm ekonomik ve sosyal zorluklara rağmen kendilerini yoksul kategorisinde değerlendirmedikleri görülmektedir. Çünkü araştırmanın katılımcıları yoksulluğu temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılayamamak, açlık ve mahrumluk olarak (Ak, 2016) tanımlamakta kendilerini ise büyük çoğunlukla kaynaklara (mülk) ve hayatlarını idame ettirebilecekleri kadar gelire sahip oldukları için yoksul olarak görmediklerini belirtmektedirler. Yaşlı bireylerin emeklilik sonrası durumu veya yaşlılık dönemini yorumlama farklılığı yoksulluk algılarında da kendini göstermektedir. Yoksulluk gibi reel bir durumu algı ve bakış açıları gibi daha soyut kavramlar çerçevesinde anlamaya çalışmak her ne kadar tartışmalı gibi görünse de çalışma sırasında elde ettiğimiz bulgu ve izlenimler, yoksulluk tanım, algı ve hissedilebilirliğinin kişilik, eğitim düzeyi, sosyal çevre, ideolojik duruş gibi faktörlerden etkilendiği şeklinde oluşmuştur. Bunların yanında yaşlı bireylerin yoksulluğa bakışları beslenme, sağlık, kendi kendilerine yetebilme gibi birtakım faktörlerden de etkilenmektedir (Kantar Davran vd., 2020). Ayrıca emeklilik sonrası süreçte yoksulluk düzeyinin ölçümünde sadece emekli aylığı üzerinden bir değerlendirme yapmanın sağlıklı bir analiz olmayacağı da ortadadır. Nitekim Sarıcı'nın (2019) yaptığı çalışmada emekli aylığına sahip bireylerin yoksulluk seviyelerinin sanıldığı kadar kötü olmadığı, yoksulluğu etkileyen sebepler arasında kişilerin maddi gelirleri olduğu kadar gelir getiren unsurlara sahip olmasının da etkili olduğu görülmektedir.

Emekli aylığı almanın yanında bireylerin aktif yaşam süreçleri içerisinde edindikleri mal varlıkları, yaşlanma dolayısı ile istihdam dışı kaldıkları süreçte ekonomik sorunların derinleşmesini azaltmaya kısmen yardımcı olsa da bireylerin aktif dönemlerinde edindikleri bu birikimleri yaşlılık gibi bir dönemi dikkate alarak bilinçli bir şekilde edinmedikleri bu araştırma sırasında karşılaşılan bir gerçektir. Esasen bireyler çoğunlukla bir yaşlılık planlaması yapmamaktadır. Benzer şekilde Sütçü ve Kalaycı (2023) da yapmış oldukları çalışmada bireylerin yaşlılık dönemi için plan ve hazırlıklarının olmayışına dikkat çekmektedir. Bu plan ve hazırlığın olmayışı yaşlılıkla birlikte ortaya çıkan sosyal

hayat değişikliğine de hazırlıksız olmak anlamına gelmektedir. Nitekim bu hazırlık sadece ekonomik olarak kendilerini güvenceye alabilecekleri bir süreci içermemektedir. Sosyal anlamda da toplumsal varoluş ve bağımsız yaşam pratikleri açısından önem arz ettiği de aşikardır. Özellikle emeklilik sonrası sosyal çevre ve statü kaybına uğramak oldukça sık karşılaşılan bir durumdur. Bu durumda bireyler derin bir yalnızlık duygusu yaşamakta ve sosyal desteğe ihtiyaç duymaktadır (Tamkoç vd., 2023). Hem kendi yaşlılarından hem de yakın çevrelerinden destek görmek bu dönemde yaşlı bireyler için oldukça önemlidir. Bireyler yaşlılıkla birlikte kendilerinin “işe yaramaz” olduğu düşüncesine kapıldıkları için (Aktin, 2020) sosyal çevrelerinin kendi fikirlerini önemsediklerini düşünmemekte ancak değer görmek ve dikkate alınmak istemektedir (Abay Alyüz, 2022). Bu noktada dayanışmacı bir toplumsal yapı ve ekonomi merkezli olmayan bir değer paradigmasının inşası önem arz etmektedir. Yaşlı bireylerin kendilerini dışlanmış ve değersiz hissetmemeleri açısından sosyal destek mekanizmaları çok önemlidir. Bu açıdan ülkemizde toplumsal dayanışmanın özellikle de yakın aile içi dayanışma dinamiklerinin gelişmiş ülkelere kıyasla halen daha canlı ve güçlü olması yaşlı bireyler açısından olumlu bir durumdur. Bu durum yaşlı bireylerin kendi yakın çevrelerinden özellikle de çocuklarından maddi/manevi anlamda destek alabilmelerine olanak sağlamaktadır. Böylece yaşlı bireylerin kendilerini zayıf ve yoksul hissetmelerini engellemektedir. Hassoy ve Özvuramaz (2023) yaptığı çalışmada yaşlılıkla beraber yalnızlık hissinin arttığı, ailenin yaşlı birey için duygusal destek ve motivasyon kaynağı olduğunu belirtmiştir. Dolayısıyla yaşlılık döneminde sosyal destek mekanizmaları önemli bir yere sahiptir.

Bunlardan farklı olarak bu çalışmadaki katılımcılarından bir kısmı yoksulluk tanımını, temel ihtiyaçların ötesinde birtakım sosyal gerekliliklerin yerine getirilebilmesi için imkanlara sahip olmakla eşdeğer tuttuklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Böyle düşünen bireyler emeklilik sonrası süreçlerinde bu imkanlara ulaşmak açısından kendi imkanlarını yetersiz görüp yoksulluk algılarını bu düşünceden hareketle oluşturmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu bireyler yaşlılık döneminde, boş zamanlarını değerlendirmek ve kaliteli bir şekilde geçirmek amacıyla sosyalleşmeyi ön planda tutmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda da yeni yerler görmek, yurt içinde veya yurt dışında turistik gezilere gitmek, kültürel aktivitelere katılmak gibi sosyal ihtiyaçları gündemleştirmişlerdir. Ancak günlük rutinler dışına çıkan bu gibi durumlar yaşlı bireyler için ekonomik anlamda bir sınırlanma getirmektedir. Bu noktada sosyal devlet beklentisinin ön plana çıktığı görülmektedir. Dolayısı ile yaşlı bireyler devlet desteği ile bu sosyal ihtiyaçların giderilmesini beklemektedir. Ancak devletin yaşlılara yönelik uygulamış olduğu sosyal politikalar kişinin kalkınmasına yönelik olup, aynı ya da maddi destekleri içermektedir. Yaşlılar ise bu dönemde daha çok sosyalleşmenin odağı alındığı sosyal politikalar oluşturulmasını talep etmektedir (Şen, 2015). Nitekim Çavuş (2013) tarafından yapılan ve durumun toplumsal açıdan önemini gösteren bir araştırmada yaşlı bireylerin çoğunun sağlık sorunları yaşadığı ancak bu sorunların sağlık hizmetlerinin iyileştirilmesi ile değil hareketli bir yaşam alanı oluşturulması ile çözülebileceği aktarılmıştır. Dolayısıyla aktif ve sağlıklı yaşlanmanın temel alınarak sosyal politikaların bu minvalde yeniden düzenlenmesinin yaşlıların sosyal alanda daha fazla desteklenmesinin önemi ortadadır. Bu noktada yaşlı bireylerin ekonomik ve sosyal durumlarını koruyabilecekleri ve bağımsız, aktif yaşam süreçlerinin desteklenmesi sağlıklı bir toplumsal yapısının da gerekliliklerindendir. Bunun için ise yaşlı bireylerin potansiyellerini ortaya koyabilecekleri imkanların yaratılması, yaşlı haklarının düzenlenmesi, aile ve toplum içerisindeki rollerinin güçlendirilmesi, sürekli eğitim, meslek ve istihdam süreçlerinin desteklenmesi gerekmektedir (Kalınkara, 2016).

## 5. SONUÇ

Yoksulluk gelir ve imkan bakımından somut alanlar üzerinden değerlendirildiğinde ve toplumsal ortalama açısından ele alındığında bu ortalamanın altında kalma durumu olarak ortaya konulabilir. Ancak bireyin kendisini yoksul görüp görmediği durumu bazen bu gerçeklikten farklılaşmakta ve bu noktada bireyin yoksulluk algı ve tanımının

manevi tutum, inanışlar, politik tutum ve hayata bakış açılarından önemli ölçüde etkilenebildiği de görülmektedir. Bu da yoksulluğun ve yoksulluk algısının sadece bir gelir ve imkan durumu olmanın ötesinde psikolojik bir boyutunun da olduğunu göstergesidir. Bu çalışma bulguları da sosyal destek ve sosyal ilişkilerin yaşlılık döneminde oldukça önemli bir işlevi olduğunu göstermektedir. Dayanışma eğilimlerinin yüksek olduğu ailelerde yoksulluk algısı farklılaşabilmekte ve şiddeti azalabilmektedir.

Nitekim çalışmadan ortaya çıkan bir diğer sonuç, yine yoksulluğun boyutunun sadece hali hazırda alınan emekli maaşı üzerinden değerlendirilmesinin yanlış olduğudur. Aynı şartlarda çalışmış iki kişinin geçmiş ailesinden getirdiği birikim veya çalışma hayatları sırasında yapmış oldukları yatırımlar da bugünkü ekonomik durumlarında oldukça etkili olabilmektedir. Dolayısı ile ekonomik göstergelere yansımayan bir kayıt dışı gelirin varlığı da aşıkardır ve bu da bireylerin yoksulluk algılarını ciddi anlamda etkilemektedir.

Çalışmada öne çıkan bir diğer husus da bireylerin yaşlılık dönemine ait bir yaşlılık planlaması ve stratejisine sahip olmadıkları gerçeğidir. Bu noktada uygulanan sosyal politikaların da yetersizliği ortadadır. Yaşlılık döneminde refahın sağlanabilmesi açısından bireylerin çalışma hayatı içerisindeyken bilinç düzeylerinin yükseltilmesi ve ekonomik yönetim/verimlilik konusunda desteklenmesi gerektiği görülmektedir. Çünkü küresel rekabet karşısında sosyal bir devlet olmanın yükü ancak verimlilikle aşılabilecektir. Bu noktada son yıllarda ortaya konan Bireysel Emeklilik Sistemi (BES) benzeri sistemlerin gerçekçi ve verimli bir şekilde düzenlenmesi bireylerin tasarruf eğilimleri ve geliri doğru yönetmeleri konusunda etkili olabilecektir.

#### KAYNAKÇA

- Abay Alyüz, S. B. (2022). Sosyal hizmet perspektifiyle yaşlının yaşam alanlarında arkadaşlık ağları: güle güle filmi örneği. *Turkish Studies - Religion*, 17(1), 1-19.
- Ağar, A. (2020). Yaşlılarda ortaya çıkan fizyolojik değişiklikler. *Ordu Üniversitesi Hemşirelik Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 3(3), 347-354.
- Ak, M. (2016). Toplumsal bir olgu olarak yoksulluk. *Akademik Bakış Uluslararası Hakemli Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, (54), 296-306.
- Ak, M. ve Közleme, O. (2017). Yaşlı yoksulluğu. *Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 3(2), 197-208.
- Aktin, S. (2020). Emeklilik sonrası gündelik yaşam ve boş zaman pratikleri: Kabul günleri örneği. *Senex: Yaşlılık Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 4, 17-39.
- Aslan, M., ve Hocaoglu, C. (2017). Yaşlanma ve yaşlanma dönemiyle ilişkili psikiyatrik sorunlar. *Düzce Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 7(1), 53-62.
- Barrientos, A., Gorman, M., ve Heslop, A. (2003). Old age poverty in developing countries: Contribution and dependence in later life. *World Development*, 31(3), 555-570.
- Braun, V., ve Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. (M. Bütün ve S. B. Demir, Çev. Ed.). Siyasal Kitapevi.
- Çavuş, F. Ö. (2013). *Yaşlılara yönelik evde bakım hizmetlerinin değerlendirilmesi*. (Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi). Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara.
- Çunkuş, N., Yiğitoğlu, G. T. ve Akbas, E. (2019). Yaşlılık ve toplumsal dışlanma. *Geriatrik Bilimler Dergisi*, 2(2), 58-67.
- Davey, J. A. (2017). Age-Friendly cities and communities: World experience and pointers for New Zealand. <http://www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz/documents/age-friendly-communities/afcc-report-9-full-report-single.pdf>
- Ergun, A. D. (2017). Türkiye’de yoksulluk ve dezavantajlılık halleri: Yaşlı kadın. *Toplum ve Demokrasi*, 11(4), 17-36.
- Gündoğan, N. (2001). İsgücünün yaşlanması ve işgücü piyasalarına etkisi. *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 56(4), 95-108.
- Gürsu, O., ve Ay, Y. (2018). Din, manevi iyi oluş ve yaşlılık. *Int J Soc Res*, 11(61), 1176-1190.
- Hassoy, D., ve Özvurmaz, S. (2023). Yaşlılar ve yalnızlık. *Sağlık Bilimlerinde Güncel Yaklaşımlar*, 143-154.
- Kalınkara, V. (2016). *Temel gerontoloji yaşlılık bilimi* (3. b.). Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.

- Kantar Davran, M., Sevinç, M. R., ve Cançelik, M. (2020). Şanlıurfa ili köylerinde yaşlıların demografik ve sosyo-ekonomik durumları ile yoksulluk ve yaşlılık algıları. *Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 19(73), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.17755/esosder.591786>
- Karadeniz, O., ve Öztepe, N. D. (2013). Türkiye’de yaşlı yoksulluğu. *Çalışma ve Toplum*, 3(38), 77-102.
- Karasoy, G. (2021). Sosyal bir sorun olarak yaşlı yoksulluğun incelenmesi. *Manisa Celal Bayar Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 19(3), 155-167.
- Malak, M. (2023). Türkiye kapsamında yoksulluk üzerine bir inceleme. *Kapanaltı Muhasebe Finans Ekonomi Dergisi*, (3), 53-71.
- Merriam, S. B., ve Grenier, R. S. (2019). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Mujahid, G., Pannirsalvem, J., ve Doge, B. (2008). The impact of social pensions: Perceptions of asian older persons UNFPA country technical services team for east and south east asia. Bangkok.
- Nazlier-Keser, E.N. (2019). Türkiye’de yaşlı yoksulluğu sorununa yönelik bir değerlendirme. *Toplum ve Sosyal Hizmet*, 30(2), 739-764.
- Neal, M., ve DeLaTorre, A. K. (2016). *The Case for Age-Friendly Communities*. Institute on Aging Publications. Paper 20. Portland, OR: PSU.
- Noy, C. (2008). Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(4), 327-344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570701401305>
- Özben, Ş. (2022). Yaşlıların ruh sağlığının incelenmesi. *Scientific Journal of Finance and Financial Law Studies*, 2(2), 119-127.
- Ozen, S., ve Özbek, C. (2017). Çalışma yaşamında yaşlılık: Yaşlı çalışanlar ve insan kaynakları uygulamaları. *Çalışma ve Toplum*, 547-572.
- Sarı, H. K. (2021). Yaşlılık ve sosyal hizmet ilişkisi bağlamında yaşlılık ve yoksulluk. *Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, 5(1), 159-167.
- Sarıca, A. O. (2019). Türkiye’de emeklilik sistemlerinin yaşlı yoksulluğu ve emekli yoksulluğu üzerine etkisi. *Sosyal Güvenlik Dergisi*, 9(2), 477-498. <https://doi.org/10.32331/sgd.658919>
- Soyuer, F. ve Soyuer, A. (2008). Yaşlılık ve fiziksel aktivite. *İnönü Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Dergisi*, 15(3), 219-224.
- Sütçü, S., ve Kalaycı, E. (2023). Türkiye’de 65 yaş üstü kişilerin yaşlılık değerlendirmeleri: Doğu karadeniz örneği. *Sosyal Sağlık Dergisi*, 3(2), 52-68.
- Şen, Y. (2015). Emeklilik döneminde yaşanan sorunlara yönelik bir çözüm önerisi: İkinci işe hazırlık eğitimi ve emeklilik kulüpleri. *Ekev Akademi Dergisi*. (64), 313-334.
- Şentepe, A. (2015). Yaşlılık döneminde dini başa çıkma. *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 4(1), 186-205.
- Tamkoç, B., Sürsavur Demirel, L., Erdemir Turgut, A. ve Karataş, K. (2023). Kırsalda yaşayan yaşlıların yoksulluk durumları ve yoksullukla baş etme biçimleri: Satılar köyü örneği. *Toplum ve Sosyal Hizmet*, 34(4), 791-813.
- Tereci, D., Turan, G., Kasa, N., Öncel, T. ve Arslansoyu, N. (2016). Yaşlılık kavramına bir bakış. *Ufuk Otesi Bilim Dergisi*, 16(1), 84-116.
- Türkan, M., ve Sezer, S. (2017). Yaşlı yoksulluğunun yarattığı sosyal ve psikolojik sorunlar: Muğla örneği. *Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*. 4(4), 35-57.
- Uğur, B., ve Atılğan, D. (2023). Beşeri sermayenin ekonomik büyüme üzerindeki etkisi: Kırılğan beşli örneği. *Doğuş Üniversitesi Dergisi*, 24(1), 181-198.
- Uyanık, Y. (2017). Yaşlılık, yaşlanan nüfus ve sosyal politika. *İş ve Hayat*. 3(5), 67-100.
- WHO. (2018, Şubat 5). Ageing and health. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health>
- Yıldırım Aykurt, A. Y. (2020). 21. yüzyıl’da sosyal sorunlar ve dezavantajlı gruplar. *Journal of Awareness*, 5(3), 427-448.
- Yıldırım, A. (2019). Türkiye’de yoksulluk ve yoksullukla mücadele. *İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi*. 1(1), 15-33.
- Yıldırım, A., ve Şimşek, H. (2018). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Seçkin Yayıncılık.

## Araştırma Makalesi

# THE IMPACT OF MOBBING ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION: A CASE STUDY IN THE SERVICE SECTOR

Nigar Gasimzade<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Azerbaycan Mimarlık ve İnşaat Üniversitesi. Azerbaycan. nigar\_gasimzade@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** This study seeks to investigate the impact of mobbing practices on employee satisfaction among individuals employed in the service sector in Azerbaijan. This quantitative study polled 351 employees to examine the impact of four primary mobbing sub-factors—attacks on self-assertion and communication, attacks on social ties, attacks on reputation, and attacks on professional status—on employee satisfaction. Simple linear regression studies indicated that each form of mobbing had a negative and statistically significant impact on employee satisfaction. We determined that attacks on professional status had the most significant impact on satisfaction. The findings indicate that employees are predominantly content with their work environment; yet, instances of mobbing behaviors are occasionally encountered in certain aspects of communication and social interactions. The study highlights the need for careful and organized plans to tackle mobbing at both the personal and company levels, offering practical advice for creating rules, handling complaints, and improving leadership methods. Mitigating the adverse impacts of mobbing on employee satisfaction is essential for workplace productivity and organizational viability.

**Keywords:** Mobbing, Psychological Harassment, Employee Satisfaction, Service Industry

## MOBBİNGİN ÇALIŞAN MEMNUNİYETİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ: HİZMET SEKTÖRÜNDE BİR VAKA ÇALIŞMASI

**Öz:** Bu çalışma, Azerbaycan'da hizmet sektöründe çalışan bireyler arasında mobbing uygulamalarının çalışan memnuniyeti üzerindeki etkisini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu nicel çalışmada, dört temel mobbing alt faktörünün (kendini kanıtlama ve iletişime yönelik saldırılar, sosyal bağlara yönelik saldırılar, itibara yönelik saldırılar ve mesleki statüye yönelik saldırılar) çalışan memnuniyeti üzerindeki etkisini incelemek için 351 çalışanla anket yapılmıştır. Basit doğrusal regresyon çalışmaları, her bir mobbing türünün çalışan memnuniyeti üzerinde negatif ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Mesleki statüye yönelik saldırıların memnuniyet üzerinde en önemli etkiye sahip olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bulgular, çalışanların ağırlıklı olarak çalışma ortamlarından memnun olduklarını, ancak iletişim ve sosyal etkileşimlerin belirli yönlerinde zaman zaman mobbing davranışlarına rastlandığını göstermektedir. Çalışma hem kişisel hem de şirket düzeyinde mobbing ile mücadele etmek için dikkatli ve organize planlara duyulan ihtiyacı vurgulamakta ve kurallar oluşturmak, şikayetleri ele almak ve liderlik yöntemlerini geliştirmek için pratik tavsiyeler sunmaktadır. Mobbingin çalışan memnuniyeti üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerinin azaltılması, işyeri verimliliği ve organizasyonun yaşayabilirliği için elzemdir.

**Atıf:** Gasimzade, N. The Impact of Mobbing on Employee Satisfaction: A Case Study in the Service Sector. MALUMAT, (1), 12–27.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mobbing, Psikolojik Taciz, Çalışan Memnuniyeti, Hizmet Sektörü

Geliş Tarihi: 03/05/2025

Kabul Tarihi: 01/07/2025



**Telif Hakkı:** © 2024. (CC BY)  
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The work environment, characterized by intense interpersonal interactions, relies not only on production but also on the psychological welfare of employees. In this perspective, mobbing, a significant issue that has garnered attention recently, is regarded as a form of psychological aggression that is more prevalent in workplace situations. Throughout history, psychological coercion and emotional degradation have supplanted physical violence, and mobbing has emerged as a covert menace in contemporary corporate environments. Mobbing, regarded as a significant issue in the workplace following sexual harassment, can adversely impact both individual mental health and organizational productivity.

Mobbing is a phenomenon when individuals are consistently subjected to adverse behaviors in the workplace, leading to significant deterioration in job satisfaction,



motivation, performance, and overall contentment over time. Such activities jeopardize the psychological well-being of the individual and undermine the organizational climate by fostering a network of toxic relationships within the workplace. Given the structure of the service sector, which necessitates significant emotional work, mobbing results in more detrimental effects in this domain.

This study examines the correlation between mobbing encounters among service sector employees and the impact of these incidents on job satisfaction. The research seeks to delineate mobbing, identify its kinds, and investigate the underlying causes of its prevalence in the service industry, while also addressing the implications for employee satisfaction. Comprehending the implications of mobbing at both individual and organizational levels is essential for organizations to evaluate their human resources policies and cultivate a healthy work environment.

In this context, mobbing, a kind of psychological aggression in the workplace, is a complex phenomenon with significant repercussions at both the individual and organizational levels. Systematic psychological intimidation adversely impacts employees' emotional well-being, job performance, organizational dedication, and overall life satisfaction. This circumstance arises as a significant factor jeopardizing employee pleasure. Employee satisfaction reflects the psychological and physical contentment an individual gains from their employment and is a primary factor influencing organizational productivity, workplace dedication, and sustainable performance. Consequently, comprehending the impact of detrimental organizational behaviors, such as mobbing, on employee satisfaction is crucial for both the formulation of human resources policy and the establishment of a healthy organizational atmosphere. Particularly in the service sector, due to the intensity of emotional labor and the nature of business connections, the detrimental impact of mobbing on employees is more pronounced, potentially resulting in substantial declines in satisfaction levels. Therefore, improving workplace rules to prevent psychological harassment and creating thorough policies that focus on long-term employee satisfaction are crucial for protecting individual well-being and boosting how well organizations function.

## 2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOBBING AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

Workplace mobbing is characterized as a type of psychological assault wherein individuals endure systematic, persistent, and deliberate emotional coercion, jeopardizing their professional livelihood. Psychological harassment in the workplace has multifaceted repercussions for victims, perpetrators, organizations, society, and the economy (Dalgaldere, 2021: 65). These effects are interconnected with elements that directly influence employee happiness.

Mobbing activities are associated with the victim's personal traits, the perpetrators' individual inclinations, and the decline in organizational structure. Personal variables, such as victims' susceptibility, diminished self-esteem, or failure to adhere to social standards, can render them targets (Yıldırım & Ekici, 2019: 25). Conversely, the personality disorders, power-seeking tendencies, or historical traumas of perpetrators may further exacerbate these behaviors (Dalgaldere, 2021: 66; Palabıyık, 2021: 46). Leymann (quoted in Palabıyık, 2021: 46) elucidates the acts of offenders through psychodynamic motivations, including the gratification of hatred, ennui, and the reinforcement of prejudice.

Another significant aspect of the mobbing phenomenon is organizational factors. Strict company structures, poor communication, unclear job roles, unclear management practices, and unfair performance reviews help mobbing to spread, either directly or indirectly. Inability to avert mobbing within the organization results in diminished job satisfaction, reduced employee loyalty, and a crisis of trust affecting both the victims and the organization as a whole (Tınaz, 2006: 18).

The impact of mobbing on employee satisfaction significantly alters an individual's impression of work. Individuals subjected to mobbing exhibit a decline in job interest,

diminished motivation, and emotional exhaustion (Şahin, 2015). This circumstance diminishes employee performance and leads to absenteeism, resignation, or disengagement (Akça & İrmış, 2006: 181; Tınaz, 2006; Tokat et al., 2011: 57). Additionally, the physical consequences of stress induced by mobbing are prevalent, including migraines, cardiovascular disorders, ulcers, asthma, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Palabıyık, 2021: 64).

At the organizational level, the adverse consequences of mobbing manifest as decreased productivity, heightened employee turnover, diminished team cohesion, and a decline in internal communication (Leymann, 1996; Tınaz, 2006: 18). Mobbing has been shown to hinder institutionalization processes, adversely affect organizational dedication, and erode consumer trust by tarnishing the organization's reputation (Palabıyık, 2021: 68). A study on public employees in the USA revealed that psychological harassment resulted in a loss of time and productivity amounting to 180 million dollars over a span of two years.

The traumas inflicted by mobbing impact not just individuals but also their surrounding environment, resulting in damage to the social fabric that is challenging to mend. The anger, isolation, and feelings of inadequacy experienced by victims of mobbing can directly impact familial relationships, social connections, and the psychological development of children (Tınaz, 2006b: 19). In this environment, children, identified as "silent victims" of bullying, are profoundly impacted by familial discord. Moreover, numerous studies have established that mobbing exerts detrimental consequences on the national economy; it imposes an economic burden through diminished productivity, attrition of skilled workers, and escalated health and legal expenses (Yıldırım & Ekici, 2019: 49).

Employee happiness is influenced by internal and external influences. The drivers of job satisfaction include an individual's personal traits, self-confidence, self-discipline, values, and emotional state (Polat, 2020: 245; Korkmaz & Erdoğan, 2014: 24). Simultaneously, external factors include working conditions, salary policies, career possibilities, job security, and management practices that significantly influence satisfaction levels (Kök & Çakıcı, 2016: 47). In this setting, equitable management, efficient communication, and a nurturing work atmosphere are essential for assuring employee happiness and eliminating harassment.

The correlation between mobbing and employee satisfaction exemplifies a significant paradox of contemporary work life. The pervasive occurrence of mobbing has evolved into a multifaceted issue that jeopardizes individual psychological well-being, professional productivity, and societal cohesion. Consequently, it is essential for firms to establish frameworks that emphasize both economic performance and the psychosocial well-being of employees for long-term sustainability (Akbaş & Karcıoğlu, 2010: 140; Tutar, 2015: 151).

### 3. IMPACT OF MOBBING ON INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The escalating competition, power conflicts, and repressive working circumstances in the corporate environment result in the prominence of mobbing behaviors and their normalization. Individuals subjected to mobbing experience significant impairment psychologically, physically, economically, and socially. The adverse impacts are not confined to the person; they also encompass wider domains such as institutional efficacy, workplace atmosphere, social framework, and the national economy (Akça and İrmış, 2006: 181).

Individuals subjected to mobbing typically endure health issues including severe stress, anxiety disorders, depression, burnout syndrome, and post-traumatic stress disorder, which culminate in diminished job performance, decreased workplace commitment, and frequently lead to absenteeism or resignation (Palabıyık, 2021: 64; Tınaz, 2006: 17). Simultaneously, these individuals demonstrate heightened retreat, deterioration of social connections, self-reproach, and sensations of worthlessness.

The impact of mobbing at the organizational level mostly pertains to economic and emotional domains. The increase in employee turnover, absenteeism, sick leave, and recruitment-training expenses due to mobbing leads to an inefficient allocation of organizational resources. The attrition of skilled personnel throughout this process represents a considerable impediment to long-term institutionalization (Tınaz, 2006: 18; Yıldırım & Ekici, 2019: 46). Moreover, impaired communication in the workplace, erosion of trust among team members, and diminished motivation undermine organizational commitment and adversely affect production (Dalgaldere, 2021: 71).

Frequent mobbing in institutions adversely impacts both victims and other employees. In the workplace, mobbing perpetrators foster a climate of discord, undermining collaboration and diminishing the effectiveness of other employees (Savaş, 2007). Employees who observe mobbing may cultivate a dread of experiencing such circumstances in the future, which markedly diminishes their trust and loyalty to the business (Tınaz, 2006b: 18).

Mobbing can adversely affect the external reputation of the organization. The litigation initiated by victims of mobbing, along with the adverse public view generated throughout this process, can result in the company losing clientele and tarnishing its brand reputation. Moreover, the financial liabilities arising from legal proceedings impose considerable economic strains on the enterprise (Palabıyık, 2021: 68).

The repercussions of mobbing extend beyond the individual and the business, also impacting society at large. Individuals subjected to mobbing experience deterioration in familial connections, which may adversely impact divorces, domestic violence, and the psychological development of children (Tınaz, 2006: 19). The socio-psychological harm inflicted by mobbing processes similarly jeopardizes societal cohesion.

The indirect economic repercussions of mobbing, including diminished productivity, employee turnover, elevated healthcare expenses, and legal costs, adversely impact the national economy. A study in the USA revealed that the economic cost of mobbing at the federal level surpasses 4 billion dollars (Yıldırım and Ekici, 2019: 49). This scenario illustrates that mobbing is not merely a human resources concern at the micro level but also a systemic issue impacting economic and social development at the macro level. These data demonstrate that workplace mobbing produces complex repercussions, necessitating prevention at individual, institutional, and societal levels. In this environment, establishing an effective plan to address mobbing is crucial for employee well-being, corporate success, and sustainable societal welfare.

#### 4. THE IMPACT OF BULLYING ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

Mobbing is a systematic process of psychological coercion that individuals endure in the workplace, encompassing stages such as diagnosis, dissent, aggressiveness, the exertion of institutional authority, and eventually termination. This process has multifaceted impacts on employee satisfaction, both directly and indirectly (Kirel, 2008: 61).

The mobbing process induces psychological stress, depressive dispositions, and physical diseases at the person level, while at the organizational level, it results in adverse outcomes such as absenteeism, diminished job efficiency, elevated employee turnover, increased insurance expenses, and premature retirement. Furthermore, on a societal level, outcomes such as unemployment, the necessity for social aid, and the heightened economic obligations of the family arise (Kirel, 2008: 68).

Individuals experiencing workplace mobbing are typically responsible, diligent, loyal, and well-educated; however, they are at risk of deteriorating personal health and diminished professional productivity due to psychological strain (Gün, 2010: 38). Employees subjected to bullying encounter significant challenges, including alienation, powerlessness, diminished self-esteem, and psychological deterioration due to behaviors such as ridicule, intimidation, exclusion from responsibilities, and exposure to sexual or

physical harassment (Yener and Özdamar, 1990: 25). This circumstance has detrimental consequences on an individual's familial, social, and professional life in the long term.

Employee happiness is a complex phenomenon resulting from the interplay of human and environmental influences. At the individual level, internal characteristics including gender, age, educational attainment, personality traits, self-assurance, and emotional condition are significant determinants of employee satisfaction (Polat, 2020: 245; Korkmaz and Erdoğan, 2014: 24). Identifying a workplace that corresponds with their ideals or operates inside a favorable emotional atmosphere enhances their job satisfaction.

External factors, including physical working conditions, equitable wage policies, career advancement chances, managerial practices, work-life balance, and job security, directly influence employee happiness (Kök & Çakıcı, 2016: 47). Disregarding these elements or misrepresenting them to employees diminishes job satisfaction and adversely impacts organizational commitment.

In environments characterized by mobbing, employees experience insecurity, isolation, and exclusion. In corporate environments lacking enforceable written regulations, ineffective communication, and absent management equity, mobbing proliferates and organizational anomie emerges among employees (Akbaş, 2009: 67). The escalation of mobbing intensity results in diminished job satisfaction, less compliance with organizational standards, and an increased propensity to resign (Akbolat et al., 2014: 5).

Vartia's (1996) study demonstrates that organizational structure, managerial style, and organizational culture are critical factors in the occurrence of mobbing; individuals in these contexts exhibit symptoms including stress, sadness, and absenteeism. This condition engenders employee dissatisfaction with their work environment and diminishes job satisfaction. In this scenario, elevated employee satisfaction enhances productivity and fosters devotion to their work.

In summary, workplace bullying constitutes a significant issue that endangers individual welfare and organizational productivity. To maintain employee happiness, it is crucial to establish techniques for the identification, monitoring, and avoidance of mobbing. In this context, implementing an equitable management strategy, attuned to employees' needs, and fostering a transparent organizational environment will diminish mobbing while enhancing employees' job satisfaction and dedication to the firm.

## 5. THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

In contemporary professional life, the duration employees dedicate to their workplaces frequently surpasses the time allocated to their families and social networks. Consequently, employees anticipate a work environment that is not only physically secure but also mentally safe, tranquil, and supportive. In situations characterized by psychological violence or mobbing, substantial reductions in employee satisfaction are evident.

A survey of scientists in Bosnia and Herzegovina indicated that 76% of participants encountered workplace mobbing, with the remainder experiencing it persistently. The research indicates that many individuals experience loneliness stemming from job insecurity, which leads to notable declines in job satisfaction due to factors such as diminished motivation, reduced self-confidence, and lack of support from colleagues (Akbaş, 2009: 58).

The phenomenon of mobbing is typically grounded in organizational and managerial inadequacies. Key contributors to mobbing include deficient recruitment policies, an intensely competitive atmosphere, inflexible hierarchical structures, inadequate communication, ineffective leadership comprehension, inequities in reward systems, interruptions in information dissemination, and impractical job descriptions (Tınaz, 2011: 123-124; Tutar, 2015: 144-145). These structural flaws engender distrust among employees, diminish organizational commitment, and obscure psychological violence.

Attributing psychological violence to a solitary individual is misguided, as mobbing frequently arises via a reciprocal contact process. Some research indicates that the behaviors of the perpetrator may be incited and that mobbing can be regarded because of corporate culture (İzmir and Fazlıoğlu, 2011: 11). Furthermore, individuals in leadership positions might influence other employees during this process, rendering the mobbing behavior collective. This circumstance may result in the victim's isolation, departure from the company, and subsequent difficulties with references in future job applications (Çabuk, 2010: 15).

Psychological aggression adversely affects employees' working lives as well as their social and mental well-being. Individuals subjected to mobbing progressively become reclusive, internalize blame, and experience a decline in productivity and a diminished sense of belonging within the company. The job dissatisfaction of the employee constitutes not merely an individual issue but also a systemic danger that jeopardizes the institution's operations (Akbaş & Karcıoğlu, 2010: 140; Erdoğan, 1996: 27).

Job satisfaction is strongly correlated with an employee's love of their work, the cultivation of a positive attitude towards their role, and the congruence of company aims with personal aspirations. Nevertheless, adverse elements such as workplace inequity, disproportionate workload allocation, and communication deficiencies can undermine this sense of fulfillment. In environments characterized by mobbing, employees suffer a decline in inner tranquility and motivation when they perceive an inequitable distribution of tasks and responsibilities. This scenario frequently results in elevated employee turnover, an uptick in leave requests, a propensity for individuality, intra-organizational disputes, diminished trust, and a rise in physical or mental health problems (Şimşek, 2006: 137).

In conclusion, mobbing must be viewed not merely as an individual psychological concern but also as a substantial hazard that directly impacts organizational well-being and productivity. To ensure sustained job and employee happiness, institutions must implement preventive initiatives, foster equitable management and communication settings, and cultivate an organizational culture that honors employee rights. Enhancing the institutional response to mobbing is essential for promoting individual well-being and social productivity.

## 6. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mobbing has emerged as a prominent topic in organizational discourse, with research demonstrating its effects on various factors, including employee health, job happiness, and organizational commitment. This research examines the causes of mobbing and its repercussions at individual, organizational, and societal levels in a comprehensive manner.

Kirel (2010) investigated the influence of primary school administrators' management styles on teachers regarding mobbing and discovered that female teachers experienced less derogatory behavior than their male counterparts, indicating that the phenomenon may be attributed to administrators demonstrating a more lenient attitude towards women.

Şahin (2010) highlighted in his study of the service sector that mobbing constitutes a significant workplace issue in Turkey, akin to the worldwide context, and recognized that such behaviors engender multifaceted negative repercussions for both individuals and organizations. We recommend enhancing the organizational knowledge level of mobbing through awareness and combat training for personnel.

Vveinhardt (2012) asserted that mobbing adversely impacts the company climate, resulting in diminished trust and commitment among employees. He indicated that a reduction in mobbing would lead to favorable alterations in the organizational environment.

A study by Akbolat et al. (2014) on tourist sector employees revealed that mobbing adversely impacts job satisfaction and heightens the intention to resign. Inverse

correlations were identified between job satisfaction and mobbing, whereas positive correlations were observed between mobbing and the intention to resign.

A study by Beycan (2014) examining female employees demonstrated that gender roles affect the direction and severity of mobbing. Research reveals that women are more vulnerable to psychological harassment, primarily due to discrimination based on gender.

Durmuş (2015) analyzed the effects of mobbing on workplace productivity, asserting that detrimental tactics employed by managers to conceal their deficiencies result in decreased productivity and emotional fatigue among employees.

Kement and Batga (2016) conducted a study on employees in the entertainment and hospitality sector, revealing significant correlations between mobbing and the facets of organizational commitment (emotional, normative, continuance), notably emphasizing that reputational attacks diminish employees' commitment.

Yalçın and Tekin (2016) found no significant correlation between mobbing and organizational commitment within the healthcare sector; nonetheless, they noted that the matter is intricately linked to organizational culture and business practices.

Saraç (2018) discovered a positive and significant correlation between mobbing and anxiety levels in a study involving nurses. The findings indicated that mobbing accounted for 20.9% of the anxiety.

Kara and colleagues (2018) investigated the influence of managerial mobbing behaviors on the work life and general quality of life of female employees, concluding that such actions had a significantly detrimental effect on their quality of life. Furthermore, research indicates that the quality of working life significantly influences the overall quality of life.

Şerifoğlu (2019) determined that mobbing adversely impacts physical and mental health, familial relationships, and social life; he asserted that company culture and managerial structure are crucial in this process.

Semedova (2019) examined the economic, social, and psychological repercussions of mobbing, contending that such behaviors initiate a chain reaction affecting society and the national economy. The absence of corporate leadership and a deficient organizational culture notably exacerbate mobbing.

Ismaeel (2020) disclosed that the influence of mobbing on employees' decision to resign is minimal; however, the impacts are more pronounced in aspects concerning personal reputation and private life.

Usta and İrge (2020) discovered that mobbing undermines the perception of organizational justice and heightens employees' propensity to resign. The notion of mobbing has resulted in considerable adverse repercussions, particularly for procedural and interactional fairness.

Memmedova (2020) emphasized the absence of institutional initiatives to address mobbing in Azerbaijan, observing that the inadequate awareness among individuals diminishes the seriousness of mobbing and undermines preventive measures.

Umarova (2021) determined that the predominant mobbing conduct among educators is the "devaluation of work"; she discovered that mobbing is more frequent among unmarried instructors and that a substantial correlation exists between work experience and mobbing.

Vardalı (2021), in his research on occupational safety specialists, identified that the frequency of overtime contributes to an increase in mobbing; he found that individual demographic variables (gender, age, marital status) do not influence the degree of exposure to mobbing.

Qasımlı (2021) asserted that occurrences of mobbing in educational institutions might be mitigated through teacher training and awareness seminars, highlighting that ignorance contributes to the normalization of mobbing.

İlerigelen and colleagues (2022) showed that the notion of mobbing among employees at the Covered Bazaar in Bursa adversely impacts work-life balance.

Ekinci (2022) discovered that mobbing influences perceptions of organizational atmosphere variably across demographic factors. In this context, it has been established that factors such as educational attainment, job title, and tenure significantly influence the perception of mobbing.

Doğruca (2022) elucidated a notable correlation between job happiness and mobbing; as job satisfaction heightened, the sense of mobbing, especially regarding threat and harassment, concurrently intensified. This discovery indicates that persons content with their employment may exhibit heightened sensitivity to mobbing behaviors.

All this research indicates that mobbing is associated not just with individuals but also with organizational structure, leadership style, and cultural norms. The literature suggests that multi-tiered methods must be created to successfully address mobbing.

## 7. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This research aims to examine the effects of mobbing behaviors encountered by individuals in the service industry of Azerbaijan on employee satisfaction. The service sector, characterized by significant direct human connection, prioritizes the psychological well-being and job happiness of employees as critical determinants of sectoral success. Employee happiness can directly influence customer experience, organizational reputation, and sustainability. This research seeks to inform policy development by elucidating the impact of mobbing on employee satisfaction.

The study is confined to enterprises within the service sector in Azerbaijan and excludes personnel from other industries. Only structured surveys were employed as a quantitative data-gathering method within the research framework, excluding qualitative methods. Consequently, the results should be assessed solely within the framework of the service sector, and prudence should be applied when extrapolating to other domains.

A primary weakness of the study is that the sample inadequately represents the broader population. The study's sample comprises 351 participants selected by the snowball sampling method. This circumstance restricts the straightforward extrapolation of the research findings to enterprises beyond the service sector or to alternative geographical regions. The participants' responses to survey questions, influenced by their personal perceptions during data collection, introduce the danger of perceptual bias.

Statistical techniques were employed in the research analysis procedure. The data analysis was conducted using SPSS 22.0 software, while reporting procedures were executed with Microsoft Excel and Word applications. The initial phase was a frequency study of demographic factors, subsequently assessing the reliability of the scales using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Simple linear regression analyses were employed to examine the hypotheses.

The measurement instruments employed in the study are founded on measures that have demonstrated validity and reliability in the literature. The Leymann-developed mobbing scale was utilized to assess mobbing behaviors, comprising four sub-dimensions.

- Attacks on Self-Expression and Communication
- Attacks on Social Relationships
- Attacks on Reputation
- Attacks on Professional Standing

To assess employee satisfaction, three sub-dimensions have been established according to the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale:

- Contentment with the Occupational Atmosphere A feeling of Inclusion Personal and Career Advancement

Based on the variables included in the research model, we have formulated the following hypotheses:

**Table 1:** Research Hypotheses

H1	The sub-factor of mobbing that pertains to attacks on self-expression and communication significantly affects employee satisfaction.
H2	The sub-factor of mobbing, namely attacks on social interactions, significantly affects employee satisfaction.
H3	The sub-factor of mobbing, namely attacks on reputation, significantly affects employee satisfaction.
H4	The sub-factor of mobbing, specifically attacks on professional status, significantly affects employee satisfaction.

This study analyzes the correlation between service sector employees' views of mobbing and their satisfaction levels while also proposing strategic recommendations for institutional implementation.

The research population comprises all employees engaged in the service industry in Azerbaijan. As per the 2022 data from the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan, the country has a total of 1,714,500 wage earners, with 65.4%, or around 1,121,980, employed in the service sector (State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan, 2023). The study population includes all individuals employed in this sector.

The research sample comprises 351 employees from the service sector, identified by the snowball sampling approach. Snowball sampling is a highly effective technique often favored, particularly for accessing hard-to-reach populations or those with rare traits. This sample size is adequate to guarantee the trustworthiness of the statistical analyses in the research. Consequently, the research has been organized to accurately reflect the essential traits of the target group.

## 8. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND EVALUATION

This section presents findings regarding mobbing and employee satisfaction indicators derived from employees in the Azerbaijani service sector, along with an appraisal of these findings. The studies performed with SPSS 22.0 software assessed the frequency distribution of demographic data and the frequency analyses pertaining to the primary components.

A survey was administered to 351 employees in the service sector as part of the research. 55.6% of the participants are male, while 44.4% are female. The proportion of singles is 62.4%, above the proportion of married individuals (37.6% of the employees). The predominant age group is 26-35, comprising 44.7%, followed by the 18-25 age group at 31.1%. 47.9% of participants possess a bachelor's degree, while 27.4% hold a master's degree. In the monthly income distribution, 29.6% have an income between 351 and 650 AZN.

### Frequency Findings Regarding the Perception of Mobbing

- Attacks on Self-Expression and Communication: 54.2% of participants indicated they were frequently interrupted, while 39.9% reported being reprimanded vociferously.
- Attacks on Social Interactions: 55.2% of individuals reported experiencing antagonistic reactions when attempting to converse with others, and 58.7% noted that their errors were highlighted to them.
- Reputation Attacks: 43.6% reported being the subject of rumor. Nonetheless, most participants indicated that they had not experienced significant attacks on their reputation.
- Attacks on Professional Standing: 58.1% reported employment in positions above their capabilities, whereas 72.6% noted that their allocated tasks were not consistently altered.



### Frequency Findings on Employee Satisfaction Factors

- Work Atmosphere Satisfaction: 69.8% of interviewees reported a tranquil work atmosphere, while 76.3% affirmed the presence of effective communication with management.
- Sense of Belonging: 56.4% of participants expressed satisfaction with their employment at the institution, while 61.8% showed a willingness to make sacrifices for it.
- Individual and Professional Development: 63.5% of participants reported that their institutions facilitate their individual and professional growth; 64.4% claimed that they were provided with opportunities for title advancement.

The data indicate that the majority of individuals employed in the service industry possess a favorable impression of employee satisfaction inside their organizations. However, we observe a higher prevalence of specific bullying practices related to social connections and communication. This condition should be regarded as a variable that may influence employee satisfaction levels.

### 9. Analysis Results

This section checked how reliable the mobbing and employee satisfaction scales used in the study were by using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, and the results of this analysis were shared. Cronbach's Alpha is a widely utilized statistical measure for assessing the internal consistency of items within a scale. The alpha value varies from 0 to 1; a higher number indicates greater internal consistency of the scale.

The widely recognized threshold values for the Cronbach Alpha coefficient are categorized as follows (Altunışık and Coşkun, 2012):

- 0–0.40: Not reliable
- 0.41–0.60: Low reliability
- 0.61–0.80: Quite reliable
- 0.81–1.00: Highly reliable

The Cronbach Alpha values for the sub-dimensions of the scales used in the study are as follow:

**Table 2:** Reliability Analysis Statistics for Mobbing and Employee Satisfaction Scales

RELIABILITY STATISTICS				
Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha (Items Standardized)	Number of Items	N
MOBBING_KGVİYS	0,783	0,786	6	351
MOBBING_SİYS	0,808	0,810	6	351
MOBBING_İYS	0,796	0,790	6	351
MOBBING_MDYS	0,642	0,644	6	351
SATISFACTION_SCALE_ÇOM	0,793	0,799	11	351
SATISFACTION_SCALE_BELONGING	0,823	0,823	4	351
SATISFACTION_SCALE_BMVG	0,709	0,715	4	351

The numbers in Table 2 show that the Cronbach Alpha coefficients for all parts of the mobbing scale are between 0.642 and 0.808, indicating that these scales are quite reliable. The Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the scale variables related to employee satisfaction are between 0.709 and 0.823, meaning these scales are both reasonably consistent and very

reliable. The Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the scale variables associated with employee satisfaction range from 0.709 to 0.823, signifying that the internal consistency of these scales is both adequate and high.

In conclusion, both the mobbing and employee satisfaction scales were deemed suitable and reliable for application within the study's parameters. This evidence further substantiates the scientific validity of the research findings.

**Table 3:** F Tests for Hypotheses

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Sd.	Average Square	F	P
1	Regression	19.058	1	19.058	58.565	0.000
	Residue	113.569	349	0.325		
	Total:	132.627	350			
2	Regression	12.382	1	12.382	35.939	0.000
	Residue	120.244	349	0.345		
	Total:	132.627	350			
3	Regression	19.408	1	19.408	59.826	0.000
	Residue	113.219	349	0.324		
	Total:	132.627	350			
4	Regression	39.659	1	39.659	148.881	0.000
	Residue	92.967	349	.266		
	Total:	132.627	350			

The results of the variance analysis (ANOVA) related to the regression studies on how the four aspects of mobbing affect employee satisfaction are shown in Table 3. The F statistic computed for each regression model, along with the associated significance levels (p-value), gives critical insights into the overall validity of the developed models.

The table indicates that the p-values for all models are below the 0.05 significance threshold ( $p=0.000$ ). This finding demonstrates that each model is statistically significant, indicating that every sub-dimension of mobbing substantially influences employee happiness. In Model 1, the computed F value for the factor "attacks on self-expression and communication" is 58.565. This outcome signifies that the pertinent factor substantially influences the satisfaction variable. The F value for the "attacks on social relationships" factor in Model 2 is 35.939, indicating a statistically significant effect on satisfaction.

In Model 3, the computed F value for the "attacks on reputation" factor is 59.826. This score signifies a robust correlation between the component and employee happiness. Model 4 exhibited the greatest F value. The computed F value for the "attacks on professional status" variable is 148.881, signifying that this variable exerts the most substantial influence on satisfaction levels.

The findings indicate that all sub-dimensions of mobbing significantly influence employee satisfaction, specifically highlighting that threats to professional status exert a more detrimental effect and have a greater impact on satisfaction levels among employees. This circumstance demonstrates that when mobbing occurs within organizations, especially through pressures about professional competence and job responsibilities, it significantly endangers employee well-being and job happiness.

**Table 4:** Regression Analysis Results for Hypotheses

Coefficients Obtained from Regression Analysis						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	P
		B	Std. Sapma	Beta		
1	(fixed)	4.486	0.103		43.623	0.000
	MOBBING_KG VİYST	-0.298	0.039	-.379	-7.653	0.000
2	(fixed)	4.291	0.098		43.811	0.000
	MOBBING_SİYS	-0.205	0.034	-0.306	-5.995	0.000
3	(fixed)	4.440	0.096		46.179	0.000
	MOBBING_İYS	-0.254	0.033	-0.383	-7.735	0.000
4	(fixed)	4.924	0.101		48.591	0.000
	MOBBING_MD YS	-0.446	0.037	-0.547	-12.202	0.000

We conducted four distinct simple linear regression analyses to investigate the influence of mobbing sub-factors on employee satisfaction levels in the service sector. In each analysis, a single subdimension of mobbing served as the independent variable, while the mean of the satisfaction scale functioned as the dependent variable.

- Attacks on Self-Expression and Communication (MOBBING\_KGVİYS)

The  $R^2$  value derived from the model for this factor is 0.144, signifying that roughly 14% of the variance in satisfaction scale scores is elucidated by this factor. The F test yielded a significant result ( $F=58.565$ ;  $p<0.000$ ), and the coefficient of the predictor variable is likewise significant ( $B=-0.298$ ;  $p<0.000$ ). This sub-factor exerts a negative and considerable influence on satisfaction. This sub-factor adversely and significantly affects satisfaction.

- Attacks on Social Relationships (MOBBING\_SİYS)

The  $R^2$  value for this factor is 0.093. The F test result ( $F=35.939$ ;  $p<0.000$ ) and the importance of the regression coefficient ( $B=-0.205$ ;  $p<0.000$ ) show that this factor has a strong negative effect on satisfaction levels.

- Attack on Reputation (MOBBING\_İYS)

The  $R^2$  value was determined to be 0.146, indicating that this factor accounts for 14.6% of the variance in satisfaction. The model's overall significance ( $F=59.826$ ;  $p<0.000$ ) and the statistical significance of the independent variable's coefficient ( $B=-0.254$ ;  $p<0.000$ ) substantiate this impact. The model's overall significance ( $F=59.826$ ;  $p<0.000$ ) and the statistical significance of the independent variable's coefficient ( $B=-0.254$ ;  $p<0.000$ ) corroborate this impact.

- Attacks on Professional Standing (MOBBING\_MDYS)

The impact of this sub-dimension was determined to be  $R^2=0.299$ , indicating that the model accounts for 30% of the overall variance in satisfaction. Based on the model's F-test

( $F=148.881$ ;  $p<0.000$ ) and the significance of the regression coefficient ( $B=-0.446$ ;  $p<0.000$ ), it is concluded that this factor has the most substantial negative impact.

**Table 5:** Results of the Hypothesis Tests

H1	The sub-factor of mobbing that pertains to attacks on self expression and communication significantly affects employee satisfaction.	Accepted
H2	The sub-factor of mobbing, namely attacks on social interactions, significantly affects employee satisfaction.	Accepted
H3	The sub-factor of mobbing, namely attacks on reputation, significantly affects employee satisfaction.	Accepted
H4	The sub-factor of mobbing, specifically attacks on professional status, significantly affects employee satisfaction.	Accepted

All four hypotheses examined in the study were determined to be statistically significant and accepted. Each sub-dimension of mobbing — attacks on self-expression and communication; attacks on social relationships; attacks on reputation; and attacks on professional position — significantly affects employees' happiness levels. The findings indicate that manifestations of psychological violence encountered in the workplace adversely impact job satisfaction and general contentment among service sector employees. Research has established that attacks targeting professional roles have the greatest impact.

## 10. CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that the forms of mobbing encountered by individuals in the service sector in Azerbaijan adversely affect employee satisfaction. Mobbing is regarded as a phenomenon that diminishes employees' psychological well-being, decreases job satisfaction, and undermines organizational commitment. The analyses performed in this study indicate that the four sub-factors of mobbing—"attacks on self-expression and communication," "attacks on social relationships," "attacks on reputation," and "attacks on professional status"—exert negative and statistically significant impacts on employee satisfaction. The influence of attacks on professional positions significantly affects satisfaction more than other factors.

The frequency analyses performed in the study indicated that a considerable number of participants did not directly experience mobbing; however, they reported occasional exposure to unfavorable behaviors. Nonetheless, employees seem to generally possess a strong sense of security regarding their social relationships, reputations, and professional standings. This instance indicates that mobbing within organizations transpires not systematically, but rather in an individual and situational context. Nonetheless, given that such encounters result in considerable reductions in employee satisfaction, employers and managers must not stay apathetic to this concern.

The Cronbach Alpha evaluations conducted in the study indicate that both the bullying scale and the sub-dimensions of the employee satisfaction scale exhibit substantial reliability. This conclusion corroborates the robust internal consistency of the measurement instruments and the validity of the research outcomes. Regression models robustly indicate that every aspect of mobbing diminishes employee happiness. A decline in participant satisfaction was noted in reaction to mobbing behaviors, especially in

contexts where employees experienced communication pressure, social exclusion, targeted reputational attacks, or professional devaluation.

The research data on satisfaction dimensions reveal that employees are predominantly content with their work environment, can communicate effectively with their managers, that internal equality of opportunity is substantially upheld, and that the physical conditions are adequate. However, we have also noted inadequacies in the impression of belonging and opportunities for individual-professional development. The findings about the insufficiency of educational opportunities and the incomplete implementation of merit-based promotion systems reveal structural difficulties that may jeopardize employees' long-term commitment to the business.

This study elucidates the effect of mobbing on employee satisfaction within Azerbaijan's service sector through quantitative analysis, indicating that this link constitutes a structural issue. The results suggest that preventive and corrective measures must be established at both the individual and organizational, as well as legal, levels. Employers must establish explicit regulations regarding mobbing, enhance employee knowledge via training initiatives, provide functional complaint systems, and emphasize respect, equity, and collaboration within the workplace culture. Moreover, endorsing both personal and legal channels in the battle against mobbing is crucial for employees to perceive that they are not isolated when confronting such challenges.

The proposed strategy for Azerbaijan's service sector requires a comprehensive approach grounded in robust leadership, transparent communication, organizational equity, psychological support systems, and legal guarantees. The research shows that mobbing, which harms employee well-being and how well organizations perform, needs immediate action; it indicates that making changes in this area will lead to positive results for both institutions and society.

## REFERENCES

- Akbaş, S. (2009). İşyerinde psikolojik şiddet (mobbing) ve iş tatmini ilişkisi-sağlık çalışanları üzerine bir uygulama. Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Erzurum.
- Akbolat, M., Yılmaz, A., & Tutar, H. (2014). Konaklama İşletmeleri Çalışanlarının Algıladıkları Mobbingin İş Tatmini ve İşten Ayrılma Niyetine Etkisi. *Manas Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 3(3), 1-17.
- Akça, M., & İrmış, A. (2006). İşgören Davranışları. Bursa: Ezgi Kitabevi.
- Akbaş, S., & Karcıoğlu, F. (2010). Association between mobbing at workplace and job satisfaction. *Ataturk University Journal of Economics & Administrative Sciences*, 24(3), 139-161.
- Altunışık, R., & Coşkun, R. (2012). Sosyal Bilimlerde Araştırma Yöntemleri. Sakarya: Sakarya Yayıncılık.
- Beycan, B. (2014). İşyerindeki Psikolojik Tacizin (Mobbing) Kadın Çalışanlar Üzerindeki Etkisi. Uzmanlık Tezi. Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı.
- Çabuk, S. (2010). Mobbing ve Örgütsel İletişim. Ankara: Nobel Yayın.
- Dalgaldere, A. (2021). Yargıtay Kararları Işığında Psikolojik Taciz (Mobbing). Seçkin Hukuk Yayınları.
- Davenport, N., Schwartz, R. D., & Elliott, G. P. (2003). Mobbing: Emotional Abuse in the American Workplace. Civil Society Publishing.
- Diener, E., Suh, E. M., Lucas, R. E., & Smith, H. L. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(2), 276-302.
- Doğruca, E. (2022). İş Doyumu ve Mobbingin Depresyonla İlişkisi: Ordu İli Örneği. İstanbul Okan Üniversitesi.
- Durmuş, Ü. (2015). Mobbingin Çalışan Verimliliği Üzerindeki Etkileri: Sakarya İmalat Sanayisinde Bir Araştırma. Maltepe Üniversitesi.
- Ekinci, F. (2022). Mobbingin Örgüt İklimi Üzerindeki Etkisi: Belediye Çalışanlarına Yönelik Bir Uygulama. Aksaray Üniversitesi.
- Erdoğan, İ. (1996). İşletme Yönetiminde Örgütsel Davranış. Avcıol Basım-Yayın.
- Fazlıoğlu, A., & İzmir, G. (2011). İşyerinde Psikolojik Taciz (Mobbing) ve Çözüm Önerileri. TBMM Basımevi.

- Ganguli, H. (1994). *Job Satisfaction Scales for Effective Management*. Concept Publishing, New Delhi.
- Gün, H. (2010). *Çalışma Ortamında Psikolojik Taciz*. Ankara: Lazer Yayıncılık.
- Judge, T. A., Bono, J. E., Thoresen, C. J., & Patton, G. K. (2001). The job satisfaction–job performance relationship. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127(3), 376–407.
- Kara, D., Kim, H., & Uysal, M. (2018). The effect of manager mobbing behaviour on female employees' quality of life. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(13), 1453–1467.
- Karavardar, G. (2009). *İş Yaşamında Psikolojik Yıldırma*. İstanbul Üniversitesi.
- Kayış, K. (2010). Güvenilirlik Analizi. In Ş. Kalaycı (Ed.), *SPSS Uygulamalı Çok Değişkenli İstatistik Teknikleri*. Ankara: Asil Yayın.
- Kırel, C. (2008). *Örgütlerde Mobbing ve Çalışanlara Etkileri*. Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Kök, M., & Çakıcı, A. (2016). Fabrika çalışanlarının iş memnuniyetini etkileyen etmenler. *İnsan & İnsan*, 7, 40–63.
- Korkmaz, O., & Erdoğan, E. (2014). İş Yaşam Dengesinin Örgütsel Bağlılık ve Çalışan Memnuniyetine Etkisi. *Ege Academic Review*, 14(4), 21–37.
- Laçiner, V. (2006). *Mobbing(İşyerinde Psikolojik Taciz)*. Turkish Weekly.
- Leymann, H. (1996). The Content and Development of Mobbing at Work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5(2), 165–184.
- Locke, E. A. (1976). The nature and causes of job satisfaction. In M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 1297–1349.
- Lokmanoğlu, S. Y. (2009). *İşyerinde Psikolojik Taciz - Mobbing*. Ankara: Seçkin Hukuk.
- Memmedova, İ. (2020). Menecmentdə mobbingin aradan qaldırılmasında İKT-nin rolu. *Baku*.
- Nielsen, M. B., & Einarsen, S. (2012). Outcomes of exposure to workplace bullying: A meta-analytic review. *Work & Stress*, 26(4), 309–332.
- Palabıyık, B. B. (2021). *Yargı Kararları Işığında Mobbing ve İspatı*. Seçkin Hukuk.
- Polat, E. (2020). İş Güvencesizliği Algısında Sosyo-Demografik Değişkenlerin Etkisi: Otel İşletmelerinde Bir İnceleme. *İş ve İnsan Dergisi*, 7(2), 241–253.
- Saraç, E. (2018). *Hemşirelerde mobbingin anksiyete düzeyi ile ilişkisi*. Isparta: Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi.
- Semedov, G. (2019). *Adaptasiya proseduru və mobbing: Azərbaycan şirkətlərindəki vəziyyət*. Baku.
- Şahin, A. (2015). *İş Tatmini ve Mobbing Arasındaki İlişki*. Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Şerifoğlu, E. (2019). *Mobbingin Özel Sektör Çalışanları Üzerindeki Etkileri*. Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi.
- Şimşek, M. Ş. (2006). *Örgütlerde Yabancılaşmanın Yönetimi Araştırması*. 14. Ulusal Yönetim ve Organizasyon Kongresi.
- Telman, N., & Ünsal, P. (2004). *Çalışan Memnuniyeti*. İstanbul: Epsilon Yayıncılık.
- Tınaz, P. (2006). *Mobbing: İşyerinde Psikolojik Taciz*. Çalışma ve Toplum Dergisi, 4, 13–28.
- Toker, G. A. (2009). *Mobbing: İşyerinde Yıldırma Kavramsal Çerçeve*. Çalışma ve Toplum Dergisi, 9(2).
- Tokat, B. M., Cindiloğlu, M., & Kara, H. (2011). *Değerlerin Psikolojik Kuşatması Mobbing*. Kütahya: Ekin Basım Yayın.
- Tomažević, N., Seljak, J., & Aristovnik, A. (2016). The Importance and Impact of Perceived Values on Job Satisfaction in Slovenian Police. *Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe*, 351–352.
- Tutar, H. (2015). *Mobbing*. Ankara: Detay Yayınevi.
- Türkay, O. (2015). Çalışma yaşamı kalitesinin iş memnuniyeti ve bağlılık üzerine etkileri. *Yönetim ve Ekonomi Dergisi*, 22(1), 239–256.
- Umarova, D. (2021). Teacher's experience with mobbing in Baku schools. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, 8(1), 140–149.
- Usta, F. N., & İrge, N. T. (2020). Mobbingin Örgütsel Adalet Algısı Ve İşten Ayrılma Niyeti Üzerine Etkisi. *R&S Anatolia Journal*, 3(3), 237–249.
- Vandekerckhove, W., & Commers, M. (2003). Downward Workplace Mobbing: A Sign of the Times? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 45, 41–50.

- Vardalı, N. (2021). İş Güvenliği Uzmanlarının Maruz Kaldığı Mobbing'in Değerlendirilmesi. Üsküdar Üniversitesi.
- Vartia, M. (1996). The sources of bullying. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5(2), 203–214.
- Vveinhardt, J. (2012). Identification of Reliability in Diagnostic Instrument for Mobbing. *Transformations in Business & Economics*, 11(2), 218–232.
- Yalçın, İ., & Tekin, D. (2016). Çalışma Yaşamında Mobbingin Örgütsel Bağlılığa Etkisi. *Aksaray Üniversitesi İİBF Dergisi*, 8(1), 1–9.
- Yıldırım, F., & Ekici, O. (2019). Mobbing: Nedenleri, Aktörleri ve Etkileri. Gazi Kitabevi.
- Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L. L., & Parasuraman, A. (1996). The behavioral consequences of service quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 60(2), 31–46.

## Araştırma Makalesi

# MOBBİNGİN KÜLTÜREL DNA'SI VE BİR SAVUNMA MODELİ: KÜLTÜRE DUYARLI ÖRGÜTSEL BAĞIŞIKLIK SİSTEMİ

Erdem Yürekli<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi, Bandırma Onyedi Eylül Üniversitesi, Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, Çalışma İlişkileri ve İnsan Kaynakları Programı, erdemyurekli1@gmail.com

**Öz:** Bu çalışma, mobbing olgusunu bireysel bir sorun olmanın ötesinde, kökleri toplumsal normlara ve örgütsel dinamiklere dayanan sistemsel bir problem olarak analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Sistematik literatür taraması ve doküman analizi yöntemleriyle mobbingin tanımı, türleri (dikey, yatay, iş ve kişi odaklı), süreçleri, aktörleri ve nedenleri çok boyutlu bir çerçevede incelenmiştir. Çalışma, mobbingin ortaya çıkışında güç mesafesi, belirsizlikten kaçınma ve rekabet kültürü gibi toplumsal normların; örgütsel iklim, liderlik tarzları ve etik kültürü nasıl şekillendirdiğini vurgulamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Harald Ege'nin mobbing süreci modeli, Türkiye'deki örnek olaylar üzerinden analiz edilerek konunun kültürel bağlamdaki yansımaları somutlaştırılmıştır. Çalışmanın temel özgün katkısı, reaktif müdahalelerin yetersizliğine dikkat çekerek bir paradigma değişimi öneren "Kültüre Duyarlı Örgütsel Bağışıklık Sistemi" modelidir. Bu model, bir kurumun kültürel DNA'sını analiz ederek mobbinge karşı proaktif, bütüncül ve sürdürülebilir bir savunma mekanizması geliştirmeyi hedefler. Sonuç olarak makale, mobbinge etkin mücadelenin, sorunun kültürel ve örgütsel kökenlerini anlayan ve bu kökenlere yönelik özelleştirilmiş stratejiler geliştiren yapısal bir yaklaşımla mümkün olacağını savunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mobbing, Psikolojik Taciz, Mobbing Süreci, Mobbing Aktörleri, Mobbinge Mücadele

## CULTURAL DNA OF MOBBING AND A DEFENCE MODEL: CULTURALLY SENSITIVE ORGANISATIONAL IMMUNE SYSTEM

**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of mobbing beyond an individual issue, framing it as a systemic problem rooted in societal norms and organizational dynamics. Through a systematic literature review and document analysis, this paper examines the definition, types (vertical, horizontal, work- and person-related), processes, actors, and causes of mobbing within a multidimensional framework. The study highlights how societal norms—such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and a competitive culture—shape the organizational climate, leadership styles, and ethical culture, thereby influencing the emergence of mobbing. In this context, Harald Ege's mobbing process model is analyzed through case

studies from Turkey, illustrating the cultural manifestations of the phenomenon. The primary original contribution of this work is the proposal of a paradigm shift through the "Culture-Sensitive Organizational Immune System" model, which addresses the inadequacy of purely reactive interventions. This model aims to develop a proactive, holistic, and sustainable defense mechanism by analyzing an organization's cultural DNA. Ultimately, the paper argues that effectively combating mobbing is achievable through a structural approach that understands the problem's cultural and organizational roots and develops tailored strategies to address them.

**Keywords:** Mobbing, Psychological Harassment, Mobbing Process, Mobbing Actors, Combating Mobbing

**Atıf:** Yürekli, E. Mobbingin Kültürel DNA'sı ve Bir Savunma Modeli: Kültüre Duyarlı Örgütsel Bağışıklık Sistemi. MALUMAT, (1), 28–44.

Geliş Tarihi: 23/05/2025

Kabul Tarihi: 23/06/2025



**Telif Hakkı:** © 2024. (CC BY)  
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

## 1. GİRİŞ

Mobbing, kişinin hayatının sadece işle ilgili kısmını değil, genel yaşamını etkileyen bir sorundur. Mobbing mağduru kişi mobbing nedeniyle hem iş hayatında hem de özel hayatında büyük kayıplara uğrayabilir. Mobbing mağduru kişi iş yerindeki stresi iş yerinde bırakıp evine öyle gidemez. İşten çıktıktan sonra başlayan mobbingin etkileri özel hayatında da devam eder. Bu nedenle insanlar sadece iş hayatında huzur bulmaya



çalışmak için değil, aynı zamanda özel hayatlarını korumak için de mobbinge mücadele etmelidirler. Öte yandan mobbing hedef alınan kişinin sağlığına, psikolojisine, onuruna, gururuna, sosyal hayatına, ekonomik durumuna zarar verir. Mağdurun yanı sıra mağdurun yaşadığı sosyal çevre de dolaylı olarak etkilenmekte, mağdurla aynı boyutta olmasa bile mobbingin yaşandığı kurum -örgüt- ve mağdurun birlikte çalıştığı iş arkadaşları da zarar görmektedir. Dolayısıyla, bireylerin psikolojik esenliği ve yaşam kalitesi üzerinde derin ve olumsuz etkiler yaratan mobbing olgusunun önlenmesi kritik bir zorunluluktur (Sayan, Doğan ve Karaca, 2017, s. 28).

İş yerlerini bir hastalık gibi saran ve hem bireylerin ruh sağlığını hem de kurumların verimliliğini derinden aşındıran mobbing, yalnızca kötü niyetli bireylerin eseri değil, aynı zamanda kökleri daha derinde yatan sistemsel bir sorundur. Bu çalışma, mobbing olgusunu bireysel bir çatışma olarak görmenin ötesine geçerek, bu "sessiz salgını" besleyen toplumsal normları ve örgütsel yapıları merkeze alan bütüncül bir yaklaşımla ele almaktadır. Psikolojik analizlerin sınırlarını aşarak, olgunun yeşerdiği kültürel toprağı ve örgütsel iklimi analiz etmeyi hedeflemektedir.

Bu amaçla, sistematik literatür taraması ve doküman analizi yöntemleriyle, ilk olarak mobbingin farklı türleri ve süreçleri, özellikle Harald Ege'nin modeli Türkiye'den vakalarla somutlaştırılarak incelenecektir. Ardından, çalışmanın temel tezini oluşturan ve mobbingin neden bazı kurumlarda kolayca yayıldığını açıklayan kültürel dinamiklere odaklanılacaktır. Güç mesafesi, rekabet kültürü ve belirsizlikten kaçınma gibi toplumsal normların, bu zehirli iklimi nasıl beslediği ortaya konulacaktır.

Yapılan bu sistemsel teşhisin ardından, çalışma en özgün katkısını sunmaktadır. Klasik ve reaktif mücadele yöntemlerinin, çoğu zaman semptomları tedavi etmekten öteye gidemediği gerçeğinden yola çıkarak, literatüre yeni bir soluk getiren proaktif bir çözüm önerilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, kurumların kendi kültürel DNA'sını analiz ederek ona özgü bir savunma mekanizması yaratmasını hedefleyen "Kültüre Duyarlı Örgütsel Bağışıklık Sistemi" modeli detaylı bir şekilde sunulacaktır.

Sonuç olarak bu makale, mobbinge mücadelede bir paradigma değişimi yaratmayı ve yalnızca sorunu tanımlamakla kalmayıp, sağlıklı, dirençli ve insani çalışma ortamları inşa etmek için yöneticilere ve kurumlara stratejik bir pusula sunmayı hedeflemektedir.

## 2. YÖNTEM

Bu çalışma, mobbing olgusunu çok boyutlu bir perspektifle analiz etmeyi amaçlayan kavramsal bir derleme niteliğindedir. Araştırmanın temel amacı, mobbingin tanımını, süreçlerini, aktörlerini, nedenlerini ve mücadele stratejilerini mevcut literatür temelinde sentezleyerek bütüncül bir çerçeve sunmaktır. Bu doğrultuda, çalışmanın yöntemi sistematik literatür taraması ve bu tarama sonucunda elde edilen akademik çalışmaların doküman analizine dayanmaktadır.

### 2.1. Literatür Tarama Süreci

Araştırmanın veri toplama süreci, belirli bir sistematik izlenerek yürütülmüştür. Bu süreç, aşağıdaki adımları içermektedir:

**Veri Tabanları:** Akademik literatüre erişim için ulusal ve uluslararası indekslerde taranan çeşitli veri tabanları kullanılmıştır. Türkçe kaynaklara ulaşmada TR Dizin, ULAKBİM Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Veri Tabanı, DergiPark Akademik ve Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YÖK) Ulusal Tez Merkezi temel başvuru kaynakları olmuştur. Uluslararası ve İngilizce literatür için ise Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest, EBSCOhost, PsycINFO (psikoloji alanındaki çalışmalar için) ve Emerald Insight gibi kapsamlı veri tabanlarından yararlanılmıştır. Bu çeşitlilik, konunun disiplinlerarası doğasına (psikoloji, sosyoloji, işletme, hukuk) uygun zengin bir literatüre ulaşmayı mümkün kılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Tarama sürecinde, araştırmanın kapsamına uygun olarak hem Türkçe hem de İngilizce anahtar kelimeler kullanılmıştır. Başlıca anahtar kelimeler şunlardır: "mobbing", "psikolojik taciz", "yıldırma", "işyeri zorbalığı",

"mobbing süreci", "mobbing aktörleri", "mobbing mücadele", "mobbing process", "mobbing actors", "workplace bullying", "psychological harassment", "bossing". Bu kelimeler, arama motorlarının mantığına uygun olarak "AND", "OR" gibi Boolean operatörleri ile çeşitli kombinasyonlar oluşturularak kullanılmıştır.

**Yıl Aralığı ve Kriterler:** Çalışmanın güncel bir perspektif sunması hedeflendiğinden, literatür taraması ağırlıklı olarak 2010-2024 yılları arasında yayımlanmış çalışmalara odaklanmıştır. Ancak, mobbing kavramının kuramsal temelini oluşturan Heinz Leymann, Konrad Lorenz gibi öncü araştırmacıların temel eserleri ve bu eserlere referans veren klasikleşmiş çalışmalar, tarihsel ve kavramsal derinlik sağlamak amacıyla yıl sınırlaması olmaksızın incelemeye dahil edilmiştir.

#### **İçerme ve Dışlama Kriterleri:**

**İçerme Kriterleri:** Konusu doğrudan iş yerinde mobbing olan, hakemli dergilerde yayımlanmış makaleler, yayınlanmış lisansüstü tezler, kitaplar ve kitap bölümleri dahil edilmiştir. Çalışmanın kavramsal çerçevesini zenginleştiren hem kuramsal hem de ampirik (nitel ve nicel) araştırmalar değerlendirilmeye alınmıştır.

**Dışlama Kriterleri:** İş yeri bağlamı dışında (örn. okul zorbalığı, siber zorbalık) mobbingi ele alan, popüler basın organlarında yayımlanmış akademik niteliği olmayan yazılar, yayınlanmamış konferans bildirileri ve sunum özetleri gibi kaynaklar değerlendirme dışı bırakılmıştır.

### **2.2. Doküman Analizi**

Literatür taraması sonucunda ulaşılan kaynaklar, doküman analizi yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Bu analiz, sadece kaynakların listelenmesinden ibaret olmayıp, içeriklerin derinlemesine ve tematik olarak incelenmesini kapsamaktadır. İzlenen analitik süreç şu şekildedir:

1. Verilerin Sınıflandırılması: Elde edilen tüm akademik dokümanlar (makaleler, tezler, kitap bölümleri vb.), makalenin ana yapısını oluşturan temalara göre sınıflandırılmıştır. Bu temalar; "mobbingin tanımı ve tarihçesi", "mobbing türleri (dikey, yatay, iş odaklı, kişi odaklı)", "mobbing süreci ve aşamaları", "mobbingin aktörleri (fail, mağdur, izleyiciler)", "örgütsel ve toplumsal nedenler" ve "mücadele stratejileri" olarak belirlenmiştir.

2. Tematik Sentez: Her bir tema altında, farklı çalışmaların bulguları, argümanları ve vaka örnekleri karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenmiştir. Özellikle Öztürk-Türkmen ve Duygulu (2024), Gök (2011) ve Beycan (2014) gibi nitel çalışmalarda yer alan mağdur ifadeleri ve vaka analizleri, teorik bilgileri somutlaştırmak ve olgunun insani boyutunu vurgulamak amacıyla analize dahil edilmiştir.

3. Kavramsal Model Geliştirme: Doküman analiziyle elde edilen sentezlenmiş bilgiler, çalışmanın sonuç bölümünde önerilen "Kültüre Duyarlı Örgütsel Bağışıklık Sistemi" modelinin temelini oluşturmuştur. Bu model, tekil bulguların mekanik bir birleşiminden ziyade, literatürdeki boşlukları ve farklı dinamikler arasındaki ilişkileri (örn. Hofstede'in kültürel boyutları ile liderlik tarzları arasındaki ilişki) yorumlayarak geliştirilmiş özgün bir çıktıdır.

Bu yöntem sayesinde, çalışma dağınık haldeki literatürü sistematik bir biçimde bir araya getirerek okuyucuya hem kapsamlı bir bilgi sunmayı hem de mevcut bilgiden yola çıkarak yeni bir bakış açısı önermeyi hedeflemiştir.

### **3. KAVRAMSAL ÇERÇEVE**

### 3.1. MOBBİNGİN TANIMI ve TARİHSEL ARKA PLANI

Mobbing ile mücadele etmenin ilk adımı, bu davranışın ne olduğunu net bir şekilde anlamaktan geçer. Bunun için de ilgili davranışları dikkatle izleyerek doğru bir teşhis koymak şarttır. Kavramın derinliğini anlamak adına, kelimenin kökenine ve tarihsel sürecine bakmak faydalı olacaktır. "Mobbing" sözcüğü, kökenini Latince'de "düzensiz topluluk" anlamındaki "mobile vulgus" ifadesinden ve İngilizcedeki "mob" (kalabalık/çete) kelimesinden alır (Alcan, 2023, s. 7). Tarihte ise bu terim ilk kez 1960'larda, hayvan davranışları üzerine çalışan Avusturyalı bilim insanı Konrad Lorenz tarafından kullanılmıştır. Bayat ve Baykal'a (2015, s. 198) göre Konrad Lorenz, mobbing terimini hayvanlar alemindeki üç farklı davranış tanımlamak için kullanır:

- 1) Küçük hayvan gruplarının, kendilerinden daha büyük bir yırtıcıya karşı gösterdiği toplu savunma.
- 2) Hayvanların, kendi grup üyelerine veya sürüye yabancı bir canlıya yönelik tacizkar eylemleri.
- 3) Tür içindeki en zayıf bireyin, diğerleri tarafından beslenmesinin engellenerek zayıf düşürülmesi ve sonucunda öldürülmesi.

İsveçli bir çocuk doktoru ve aynı zamanda psikolog olan Peter Paul Heinemann, sınıf içi dinamikleri ve çocuk davranışlarını incelediği çalışmalarında, Konrad Lorenz'in ortaya attığı bu kavramdan faydalanmıştır. Heinemann'ın temel amacı, gözlemlediği özel bir davranış kalıbını isimlendirmektir: bir grup öğrencinin kasıtlı olarak tek bir öğrenciyi hedef alıp ona karşı sergilediği yıkıcı ve zarar verici davranışlar. Özellikle öğrencilerin ders sırasındaki etkileşimlerine odaklanan Heinemann, küçük grupların nasıl bir araya gelerek tek bir birey üzerinde baskı kurabildiğini ve onu dışlayabildiğini bu terimle açıklamıştır. Yaptığı gözlemlere dayanarak çok önemli bir sonuca varmıştır: Bu tür bir akran zorbalığına zamanında ve etkili bir şekilde müdahale edilmezse, şiddete maruz kalan mağdur çocuk için sonuçların psikolojik olarak ağırlaşarak intihara kadar varabileceği konusunda ciddi bir uyarıda bulunmuştur (Çetin, 2024).

"Mobbing" kavramını iş hayatına taşıyan kişi, 1980'lerin başında İsveçli Psikolog Heinz Leymann olmuştur. Leymann bu terimi, iş yerinde gözlemlediği düşmanca ve saldırgan tutumları tanımlamak için kullanmıştır. Ona göre mobbing, bir veya daha fazla kişinin, kendini savunamayacak durumdaki bir çalışana karşı sistematik olarak sergilediği düşmanca ve ahlak dışı davranışlardır. Planlı olarak devamlılık gösteren periyotlarda, mobbing mağduru kişinin özgüvenine karşı hedef alınan psikolojik, fiziksel davranış ve tutumları ifade etmektedir. Farklı bir tabirle, bir kişinin ya da grubun dışladıkları kişiyi sözlü olarak veya fiziksel tacizde bulunarak yıldırması, bıkırtmasıdır.

Dünya Sağlık Örgütü (WHO) ise mobbingi kişi veya grupların fiziksel, psikolojik, ahlaki ve sosyal gelişimlerini olumsuz etkileyen tutumlar olarak nitelendirmektedir. Avrupa Birliği İşyerinde Güvenlik, Hijyen ve Sağlığın Korunması ile ilgili danışma kurulunun tanımında ise mobbing, işyerinde fiziksel saldırıların dışındaki tüm olumsuz davranış biçimleri olarak ifade edilmekte ve bu tür davranışların kurumda çalışan amirler, astlar, çalışma arkadaşları tarafından sergilendiği belirtilmektedir. Bu değerlendirmeler çerçevesinde mobbingin hedef kişiyi psikolojik açıdan yıpratmak amacı taşıdığı anlaşılmaktadır (Alcan, 2023, s. 8; Mercanlıoğlu, 2010, s. 38).

### 3.2. MOBBİNG TÜRLERİ

Mobbing, uygulanma biçimi ve yönüne göre farklı şekillerde sınıflandırılabilir. En yaygın ayırım, mobbingin hiyerarşik yapıdaki yönüne göre yapılan dikey (vertical) ve yatay (horizontal) mobbing sınıflandırmasıdır.

**Dikey Mobbing:** Hiyerarşik olarak farklı seviyelerdeki çalışanlar arasında gerçekleşir. Bu tür, kendi içinde ikiye ayrılır:

**Aşağı Yönlü Mobbing (Downward Mobbing/Bossing):** Bir amirin veya yöneticinin astlarına yönelik uyguladığı mobbingdir ve en sık rastlanan türdür (Beycan, 2014, s. 28; Stefko vd., 2023, s. 2). Yapılan bir araştırmada, mağdurların %69,9'u failin yönetici olduğunu bildirirken (Gök, 2011, s. 324), bir başka nitel

çalışmada ise incelenen 10 vakanın tamamında mağdurların dikey mobbinge maruz kaldığı görülmüştür (Öztürk-Türkmen ve Duygulu, 2024, s. 78). Bu durum, yöneticinin sahip olduğu pozisyonel gücün mobbingi kolaylaştırdığını göstermektedir.

**Yukarı Yönlü Mobbing (Upward Mobbing/Staffing):** Astların birleşerek amirlerine veya yöneticilerine uyguladığı, daha nadir görülen bir mobbing türüdür (Beycan, 2014: 29).

**Yatay Mobbing (Horizontal Mobbing):** Benzer hiyerarşik statüdeki çalışanlar arasında gerçekleşir. Genellikle rekabet, kıskançlık veya kişisel anlaşmazlıklar gibi nedenlerden kaynaklanır (Şahin, 2022, s. 839).

Mobbing davranışları, içeriklerine göre de sınıflandırılabilir. Irak (2019), bu davranışları üç ana kategoriye ayırmıştır:

#### 1) İş Odaklı Mobbing:

İş odaklı mobbing, bireyin doğrudan profesyonel kimliğini, mesleki yeterliliğini, kariyerini ve işini yapma kapasitesini hedef alan sinsi ve yıpratıcı bir saldırı türüdür. Bu mobbing türünün temel amacı, kurbanı mesleki olarak yetersiz, beceriksiz ve değersiz hissettirerek özgüvenini kırmak, performansını sabote etmek ve nihayetinde onu iş yerinden ayrılmaya zorlamaktır. Bu saldırılar genellikle görev tanımları, bilgi akışı ve mesleki itibar üzerinden yürütülür.

Leymann'ın mobbing tipolojisinde "Kişinin Yaşam Kalitesi ve Mesleki Durumuna Saldırı" başlığı altında topladığı bu davranışlar, çok çeşitli biçimlerde ortaya çıkabilir (Beycan, 2014, s. 27). Bu davranışların en belirgin olanları şunlardır:

**Görevlerin Niteliğiyle Oynama:** Bu, en sık başvurulan yöntemlerden biridir. Failler, mağdura ya hiç görev vermeyerek onu atıl ve işe yaramaz hissettirir ya da tam tersi, kapasitesinin çok üzerinde, tamamlanması imkânsız veya mantıksız görevler vererek başarısızlığa mahkûm eder (Gök, 2011, s. 325). Mağdurlardan biri bu durumu, "Bana hiçbir görev vermediler. Ne masa ne sandalye, hiçbir şey yoktu... Yapacak işim yoktu" (Öztürk-Türkmen ve Duygulu, 2024, s. 80) diyerek ifade etmiştir. Benzer şekilde, kurbanı yetenek ve uzmanlık alanının çok altında, anlamsız ve rutin işler verilerek mesleki kimliği değersizleştirilebilir (Beycan, 2014, s. 27). Bir İnsan Kaynakları Müdürü olan mağdurun, "Hukuk müşavirliğinde bir avukatın yanında çalışmaya gönderildim ve unvanım düşürüldü... Orada yapabileceğim hiçbir iş yoktu" (Öztürk-Türkmen ve Duygulu, 2024, s. 80) şeklindeki ifadesi, bu duruma çarpıcı bir örnektir.

**Bilgi Akışını ve Kaynakları Engelleme:** Mağdurun işini düzgün yapabilmesi için gerekli olan kritik bilgilerin saklanması, kasıtlı olarak yanlış bilgi verilmesi veya kaynaklara (eğitim, ekipman vb.) erişiminin kısıtlanması, iş odaklı mobbingin en sinsi biçimlerindendir (Gök, 2011, s. 325). Bir akademisyen, "Dört yıl boyunca proje gemisini suya indirmemizi engelledi" (Öztürk-Türkmen & Duygulu, 2024, s. 80) diyerek yaratıcı çalışmasının nasıl engellendiğini belirtmiştir.

**Performansı Sabote Etme ve Değersizleştirme:** Mağdurun yaptığı işin sürekli ve haksız bir şekilde eleştirilmesi, çabalarının küçümsenmesi veya görmezden gelinmesi, en yıkıcı saldırılardan biridir (Gök, 2011, s. 325). Daha da ileri gidilerek, failin mağdurun emeğini veya başarısını sahiplenmesi ("fikir hırsızlığı") de sıkça rastlanan bir durumdur. Bu tür davranışlar, kurbanın mesleki özgüvenini doğrudan hedef alır ve onu sürekli bir yetersizlik ve başarısızlık hissine sürükler.

İş odaklı mobbing, genellikle diğer mobbing türlerine göre daha "meşru" bir zeminde yürütülür. Çünkü bu saldırılar "işin gereği", "performans yönetimi" veya "işletme kültürü" gibi gerekçelerin arkasına gizlenebilir. Bu durum, eylemin mobbing olarak tanımlanmasını zorlaştırır ve mağdurun kendini savunmasını güçleştirir (Irak, 2019, s. 61). Ancak sonuçları itibarıyla, bireyin mesleki varlığına ve kariyerine yönelik en doğrudan ve yıkıcı saldırılardan biridir.

#### 2) Kişi Odaklı Mobbing:

Kişi odaklı mobbing, saldırıların doğrudan bireyin sosyal varlığını, kişisel onurunu, itibarını ve özel hayatını hedef aldığı, son derece yıkıcı bir mobbing türüdür. İş odaklı mobbingden farklı olarak buradaki amaç, kurbanın mesleki yeteneklerini sorgulatmak değil, onun sosyal kimliğini ve benlik saygısını sistematik olarak yok etmektir (Irak, 2019, s. 56). Bu saldırılar, kurbanın iş arkadaşları, yönetimi ve hatta sosyal çevresi nezdindeki itibarını zedeleyerek onu tamamen yalnızlaştırmayı ve psikolojik olarak çökertmeyi hedefler. Leymann'ın tipolojisinde bu tür davranışlar "Sosyal İlişkilere Yönelik Saldırı" ve "İtibara Yönelik Saldırı" başlıkları altında incelenir (Beycan, 2014, s. 26).

Bu saldırıların temel mekanizmaları şunlardır:

**Sosyal Tecrit ve Dışlama:** Bu, kişi odaklı mobbingin en temel stratejilerinden biridir. Fail, kurbanın diğer çalışanlarla iletişim kurmasını engeller, onu toplantılara çağırılmaz, selamını almaz veya sanki orada değilmiş gibi davranır. Bu durum, mağduru görünmez kılarak sosyal varlığını inkâr etmektir. Mağdurlardan biri bu durumu, "Kimse benimle konuşmuyordu. Hiç kimse. Köşe köşe koridorda köşe köşe konuşmalar. Öbek öbek kadınlar" (Öztürk-Türkmen ve Duygulu, 2024, s. 82) diyerek, maruz kaldığı derin yalnızlığı ve sosyal tecridi ifade etmiştir. Bu sistematik dışlama, kurbanın örgüte ve iş arkadaşlarına olan aidiyet duygusunu tamamen yok eder.

**İtibarı Zedeleme ve Dedikodu:** Kurbanın arkasından konuşmak, hakkında asılsız söylentiler (dedikodu) yaymak, profesyonel veya kişisel hayatıyla ilgili yalanlar uydurmak bu kategorinin en yaygın davranışlarıdır. Bu saldırılar, kurbanın sosyal ağını zehirler ve meslektaşlarının ona karşı önyargılı veya mesafeli olmasına neden olur. Bir mağdurun yöneticisinin, "Boşandı, akli başında değil, benimle uğraşıyor" (Öztürk-Türkmen ve Duygulu, 2024, s. 80) şeklinde dedikodu yayması, kurbanın özel hayatını kullanarak onu profesyonel ortamda itibarsızlaştırma çabasının tipik bir örneğidir.

**Alay Etme ve Aşağılama:** Kurbanın dış görünüşü, giyim tarzı, konuşma biçimi, inançları veya özel yaşam tercihleriyle alay edilmesi, onu küçük düşürmeye yönelik doğrudan saldırılardır. Gök'ün (2011) araştırmasında banka çalışanları arasında en sık rastlanan mobbing davranışının "alaycı bir üslupla konuşma" olması (s. 325), bu taktiğin ne kadar yaygın olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu tür davranışlar, sürekli bir aşağılanma ve utanç hissi yaratarak kurbanın benlik saygısını derinden sarsar.

Kişi odaklı mobbing, saldırıların doğrudan bireyin kimliğinin özüne yönelik olması nedeniyle özellikle ağır psikolojik sonuçlar doğurur. Mağdur, işini kaybetme korkusunun ötesinde, bir birey olarak değersiz ve kusurlu olduğu hissine kapılır, bu da depresyon, anksiyete bozuklukları ve post-travmatik stres gibi ciddi ruhsal rahatsızlıklara zemin hazırlar.

### 3) Fiziksel Tehdit:

Fiziksel tehdit, mobbingin en somut ve açık şeklidir. Bu kategori, doğrudan fiziksel şiddet eylemlerini, şiddet tehditlerini ve kurbanın fiziksel güvenliğini tehlikeye atan her türlü gözdağı verme davranışını içerir (Irak, 2019, s. 56). Diğer mobbing türleri genellikle psikolojik ve sosyal manipülasyonlarla yürütülürken, fiziksel tehdit boyutu, saldırının somut bir tehlikeye dönüştüğü ve genellikle yasal olarak suç teşkil eden bir noktaya geldiği aşamadır. Leymann bu tür eylemleri "Kişinin Sağlığına Doğrudan Saldırı" olarak sınıflandırmıştır (Beycan, 2014, s. 27).

Bu tür mobbing iki ana biçimde görülebilir:

**Açık Fiziksel Şiddet ve Tehditler:** Bu, kurbanı yönelik doğrudan vurma, itme gibi fiziksel saldırıları veya bu tür saldırılarla tehdit edilmesini kapsar. Bu tür eylemler en nadir görülen mobbing biçimi olsa da, etkisi en travmatik olanıdır. Bir mağdurun, "Beni kimsenin olmadığı, köpeklerin havladığı, dağın tepesinde izole bir depoya gönderdiler... Orada biri başıma bir balta ile vursa kimsenin haberi olmazdı" (Öztürk-Türkmen ve Duygulu, 2024, s. 80) şeklindeki ifadesi, doğrudan bir saldırı olmasa bile, kurbanın fiziksel olarak ne denli savunmasız ve tehlikeli bir duruma sokulduğunu ve bunun yarattığı yoğun korkuyu gözler önüne sermektedir.

**Sembolik Şiddet ve Gözdağı Verme:** Bu kategori, doğrudan fiziksel temas içermeyen ancak fiziksel bir tehdit atmosferi yaratan davranışları kapsar. Failin, kurbanın yanında kapıları çarpması, eşyaları masaya fırlatması, kişisel alanını ihlal ederek üzerine yürümesi gibi eylemler sembolik şiddet örnekleridir. Görüşmecilerden biri, müdürünün davranışını "Dosyaya şöyle elinin ucuyla bakıp fırlatıyordu" (Beycan, 2014, s. 118'den aktaran nitel bir vaka) şeklinde tanımlarken, bir diğeri ise "masaya vurması, bağırması, telefonu kablolarını sökecek kadar şiddetli düzeyde fırlatmaları" (Öztürk-Türkmen ve Duygulu, 2024, s. 78'den aktarılan vaka) gibi eylemlerden bahsetmiştir. Bu davranışlar, kurban üzerinde sürekli bir gerginlik ve korku hali yaratarak, "bir sonraki adımda ne olacak?" kaygısıyla onu psikolojik olarak yıpratır.

Fiziksel tehdit içeren mobbing, mağdurda sadece anksiyete ve depresyon gibi psikolojik sorunlara değil, aynı zamanda post-travmatik stres bozukluğuna (PTSD) yol açma potansiyeli en yüksek olan türdür. Mağdur, iş yerini artık güvenli bir alan olarak görmez ve sürekli bir tetikte olma hali yaşar. Bu durum, mobbingin sadece bir iş yeri sorunu olmaktan çıkıp, bireyin temel güvenlik algısını sarsan bir travmaya dönüştüğünü gösterir.

### 3.3. Mobbing Süreci

Mobbing, yani psikolojik yıldırma, anlık bir olay değil, zamanla gelişen bir süreçtir. Her şey, iş yerinde bir çalışanın kasıtlı olarak hedef seçilmesi ve ona yönelik yıpratıcı davranışların başlamasıyla ortaya çıkar. Bu sistematik saldırılar sonucunda, hedef alınan kişinin hem profesyonel saygınlığı hem de kendine olan inancı ciddi şekilde zarar görür. Hedef seçilen kişinin itibarı ve özgüveni zedelenmektedir. Mobbingin dört farklı aşamada ortaya çıkan ve giderek tırmanan bir saldırı olduğunu anlamak önemlidir.

- Birinci aşama: (dolaylı, neredeyse fark edilmeyen saldırganlık): mağdur çeşitli durumlarda suçlanır ve aşağılanır.
- İkinci aşama: mağdur zaten suçlandığı için, doğrudan saldırganlık için bir bahane vardır; toplum içinde alay etme, aşağılama, izolasyon, fiziksel güç kullanma tehdidi.
- Üçüncü aşama: doğrudan fiziksel saldırı, mağdurun akıl hastası olarak sunulması (mağdurun kontrolünü kaybetmesi ve duygularıyla başa çıkamaması sağlanır).
- Dördüncü aşama: mağdurun kendi isteğiyle işten çıkarılması veya kovulması ya da en uç durumlarda mağdurun intihar etmesi (Yiğit, 2018, s. 37).

Mobbing konusunda tanınmış bir araştırmacı olan İtalyan Psikolog Harald Ege, mobbing olgusuna kültürel boyut konseptini eklemiştir. İtalya'daki çalışmaları, bu kültürel yönü fark etmesine ve mevcut modeli İtalyan bağlamına daha iyi uyacak şekilde revize etmesine yol açmış ve sonuçta mobbing süreci için altı aşamalı bir model önermiştir. Kültürel faktörlerin önemi çeşitli örgütsel teorilerde ve müdahale stratejilerinde vurgulanmaktadır. Bu, Tavistock Enstitüsü'nden bilim insanlarının ve kültürün önemini vurgulayan Amerikalı örgütsel gelişim uzmanlarının bakış açılarıyla da örtüşmektedir. Ege'ye göre mobbing süreci şu 6 aşamadan oluşmaktadır.

- Sıfır Aşaması (Psikolojik Çatışma): İtalya'da tanımlanan ve onaylanan ancak Kuzey Avrupa kültüründe bilinmeyen bu prestij aşaması psikolojik bir çatışma içerir. Bu noktada zarar verme niyeti yoktur; daha ziyade öne çıkmaya ve diğerlerinden üstün hissetmeye odaklanılır.

- Birinci Aşama (Çatışmaya Yönelme): Bu aşamada, çatışma kurban olarak tanımlanan belirli bir bireye odaklanır. Saldırganın hedefi "kişisel başarı elde etmek"ten "hedeflenen kişiyi zayıflatma"ya ve ortadan kaldırmaya kayar. Bu çatışma iş yerinin ötesine ve kişisel meselelere uzanır.

- İkinci Aşama (Mobbingin ortaya çıkışı): Bu aşamada mağdur, saldırılar nedeniyle rahatsızlık, endişe ve öfke yaşamaya başlar. Bunlar henüz psikosomatik

semptomlara veya hastalığa yol açmasa da, mağdurun iş arkadaşlarıyla ilişkileri bozulur, kafa karışıklığına ve sıkıntıya neden olur.

- Üçüncü Aşama (İlk Psikosomatik Belirtiler): Mağdur, uzun süre devam edebilecek sağlık sorunları geliştirmeye başlar. Yaygın semptomlar arasında güvensizlik hissi, uykusuzluk ve sindirim sorunları yer alır.

- Dördüncü Aşama (İnsan kaynakları yönetiminde hatalar ve suistimaller): Mobbing kamuoyunda tanınır hale gelir ve genellikle İK personelinin kötü yönetimi veya yargı hataları nedeniyle daha da kötüleşir. Mağdurun sık sık hastalanması ve işe devamsızlık yapması, meslektaşları arasında şüpheye yol açar ve durum kötüleşir.

- Beşinci Aşama (Bireyin psikofiziksel durumunun kötüleşmesi): Mağdur umutsuzluk ve çaresizlik durumuna ulaşır. Orta veya şiddetli depresyon başlar ve psikotropik tedaviler ve psikoterapi gerektirir. Ancak, iş ile ilgili sorunlar devam edip yoğunlaştıkça iyileşme zorlaşır. Bu aşama, şiddetli depresyonun bireyi gönüllü olarak işten ayrılmaya veya zorla çıkarılma yoluyla bir kaçış aramaya ittiği önceki aşamanın doğrudan bir sonucudur. En vahim senaryolarda, mobbingin amansız baskısı yıkıcı eylemlere yol açabilir (İlieva, Stoilkovska, Todosovski, 2024, s. 56-57).

#### 4. HARALD EGE MODELİ VE TÜRKİYE'DEKİ UYGULAMALAR

Mobbing, ani bir olaydan ziyade, zamanla gelişen ve belirli aşamalardan geçen sinsi bir süreçtir. İtalyan kültürüne özgü dinamikleri analiz etmek için Harald Ege tarafından geliştirilen altı aşamalı süreç modeli, temelindeki evrensel psikolojik ve sosyolojik mekanizmalar sayesinde, Türkiye'deki işyerlerinde yaşanan mobbing vakalarının anatomisini çıkarmak için de geçerli ve güçlü bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Bu model, sıradan bir anlaşmazlığın nasıl sistematik bir psikolojik savaşa dönüştüğünü ve mağdurun adım adım yalnızlaştırılarak sistem dışına nasıl itildiğini çarpıcı bir netlikle ortaya koyar. Türkiye'deki vakalar, bu modelin aşamalarıyla dikkate değer benzerlikler sergilemektedir.

**Aşama 1 (Tetikleyici Anlaşmazlık ve Çatışma):** Her mobbing süreci, genellikle masum görünen bir anlaşmazlık veya çatışma ile başlar. Bu ilk aşama, henüz mobbing değildir; ancak failin, hedef seçtiği kişiye karşı düşmanlık beslemesi için bir "bahane" oluşturur. Çatışma, genellikle profesyonel bir konuda ortaya çıkar fakat fail tarafından hızla kişiselleştirilir. Akademisyen bir bölüm başkanı olan V1 vakası, bu durumu mükemmel bir şekilde örneklemektedir. İki ayrı bölümün birleşmesiyle oluşan birimin, fakülte üyelerinin talebi üzerine tekrar ikiye ayrılmasını reddetmesi, tamamen mesleki ve idari bir karardır. Ancak bu karar, gelecekteki failer için süreci tetikleyen temel çatışma noktası olmuştur (Öztürk-Türkmen & Duygulu, 2024, s. 78). Fail, bu profesyonel anlaşmazlığı kişisel bir meydan okuma olarak algılar ve bu noktadan sonra hedef kişiyi "problem" olarak kodlar.

**Aşama 2 (Sistematik Saldırı ve Damgalama):** Tetikleyici olayın ardından, saldırılar organize ve sistematik bir hal alır. Fail veya failer, mağduru psikolojik olarak yıpratmak ve sosyal olarak itibarsızlaştırmak için aktif bir çabaya girer. Bu aşamada saldırılar çeşitlenir: mağdurun işi sabote edilir, sosyal olarak dışlanır ve hakkında dedikodular yayılır. Başka bir mağdurun, "imzalamayı reddettiğimde 'dağdaki yerin hazır' dediler ve beni ulaşım departmanının garajına sürdüler" (Öztürk-Türkmen & Duygulu, 2024, s. 79) şeklindeki ifadesi, sadece bir yer değişikliği değil, aynı zamanda kasıtlı bir sürgün ve sosyal tecriddir. Bu eylem, mağduru damgalamak ve diğer çalışanlara "ona yaklaşmayın" mesajı vermek için tasarlanmıştır. Benzer şekilde, bir yöneticinin hedef aldığı kişi hakkında "Boşandı, akıllı başında değil, benimle uğraşmıyor" (Öztürk-Türkmen & Duygulu, 2024, s. 80) şeklinde dedikodu yayması da, mağdurun özel hayatını kullanarak onu profesyonel ve sosyal çevrede itibarsızlaştırma ve "sorunlu" olarak damgalama stratejisinin bir parçasıdır.

**Aşama 3 (Yönetimin Sürece Dahil Olması ve Hatalı Atfı):** Mobbingin yıkıcı bir güce dönüşmesindeki en kritik dönemeç, yönetimin sürece dahil olma biçimidir. İdeal bir durumda, yönetimin adil bir arabulucu olarak çatışmayı çözmesi beklenir. Ancak

mobbing vakalarının çoğunda yönetim, sorunu çözmek yerine, genellikle durumu yanlış yorumlayarak ve gücünü kötüye kullanarak mobbingin bir parçası haline gelir. Öğretmenlerle yapılan bir çalışmada, mobbingin temel nedenleri arasında "idarecilerin kendi yetersizliklerini örtbas etme isteği" ve "yasal hakların suistimal edilmesi" gibi faktörlerin öne çıkması (Şahin, 2022, s. 844), bu durumu kanıtlar niteliktedir. Yönetim, çatışmanın gerçek nedenlerini araştırmak yerine, genellikle daha kolay olanı seçer: mağduru "sorunlu", "uyumsuz" veya "verimsiz" olarak etiketler. Bu hatalı atıf, failin eylemlerini meşrulaştırırken, mağdurun şikayetlerini ve yardım çılgınlıklarını geçersiz kılar. Bu aşamada yönetim, mobbingi durduran bir güç olmak yerine, onu kurumsallaştıran ve şiddetini artıran bir aktöre dönüşür.

**Aşama 4 (İşten Çıkarma veya Dışlanma ve Travma):** Süreç bu noktaya geldiğinde, mağdur için artık kurum içinde kalmak neredeyse imkansız hale gelir. Yalnızlaştırılmış, itibarı zedelenmiş ve yönetim tarafından suçlu bulunmuş olan mağdur, ya kendi isteğiyle istifa ederek ortamdaki kaçır ya da performansı kasıtlı olarak düşürülerek işten çıkarılması için zemin hazırlanır. Bir kadın çalışanın, yaşadığı yoğun psikolojik baskı sonucunda süreci sonlandırmak için istifa ettiğini belirtmesi (Beycan, 2014, s. 151), bu çaresizliğin bir sonucudur. Benzer şekilde, Şahin'in (2022) çalışmasında öğretmenlerin en yaygın başa çıkma yöntemi olarak "tayin isteme veya işyeri değiştirme" gibi yolları seçmesi (s. 845), mağdurun artık o ortamda barınmadığını ve sistem tarafından tamamen dışlandığını göstermektedir. Bu son aşama, mağdur üzerinde derin psikolojik travmalara, post-travmatik stres bozukluğuna ve hatta kalıcı kişilik değişikliklerine yol açarak, sadece bir iş kaybı değil, aynı zamanda derin bir kimlik ve benlik saygısı kaybı olarak yaşanır.

Sonuç olarak, bu örnekler, Ege'nin modelinin kültürel farklılıklara rağmen, mobbingin psikolojik ve sosyal ilerleyişini açıklama konusunda Türkiye'deki vakalar için de güçlü bir analitik araç olduğunu kanıtlamaktadır. Model, mobbingin bireysel bir kapris veya anlık bir öfke patlaması olmadığını; aksine, belirli adımları izleyen, hedefi sistematik olarak yok etmeye yönelik soğukkanlı bir süreç olduğunu göstermektedir.

## 5. MOBBİNGİN AKTÖRLERİ VE SEBEPLERİ

Mobbingin aktörleri; mobber (mobbing uygulayıcıları), mobbing mağduru ve mobbing izleyicileri şeklinde 3 kalem olarak sıralanabilir. Psikolog Heinz Leymann, mobbing uygulayan kişilerin (mobber) davranışlarını dört ana motivasyona dayandırır: Birini grup kurallarına uymaya zorlamak, başkalarına düşmanlık etmekten keyif almak, can sıkıntısını gidermek için heyecan aramak ve kendi önyargılarını pekiştirmek. Bu tür kişilerin genel profili; kendilerini diğerlerinden üstün göstermeye çalışan, ikiyüzlü, yöneticilerine karşı dalkavukluk yapan ve sahtekâr bir yapıya sahip olmalarıdır. Noa Davenport ve diğerlerine göre bu kişiler; sağlıksız veya kötü niyetli bir karaktere sahip, kendilerine verilmiş birtakım ilahi hakların olduğuna inanan, benmerkezci bir bakış açısına sahip, çevresine karşı tehdit algısı yüksek, şişirilmiş öz değer sahibi, narsist ve/veya sadist kişilerdir. Mobbing uygulayanların kötülük duyguları oldukça fazladır. Onlar için kendilerine rakip bulmak oldukça basittir. Rakip seçerken kendilerinden zayıf olan kişileri ele alarak düşmanlıkta bulunurlar. Güçlü rakiplerini de güçsüz durumuna düşürmek için büyük bir uğraş verirler. Artan anlaşmazlıklar ve düşünce farklılıkları yerini git gide düşmanlığa bırakır. Düşmanlık hissiyatı, düşman olunan kişiye veya bir topluluğa bedensel bir zarar vermese de direkt olarak kişilerin duygularını etkiler.

Mobber, mobbing mağduru kişinin sahip olduğu beceri ve kabiliyetinden kaygılandığı durumlarda o kişiyi kötüleyerek çamur atmaya yeltenir. Mağdurun yetenekli ve işinde iyi olması mobbing uygulayan kişiyi olumsuz etkileyen sebeplerdir, bu yüzden eline geçen her olanakta harekete geçer. Mobber'in sergilediği bu hareketlerin asıl nedeni bastıramadığı dürtü olarak açığa çıkan çekememezlik duygusudur. Mobbing uygulayan kişiler çalışma arkadaşları iyi çalıştığı ve kendilerine nazaran daha fazla sevdikleri için öfkelenebilirler. Rakip gördüğü kişilerin becerilerinden endişe edebilirler. Onların üstün başarılarını, kendileri için bir kıskırtma eylemi olarak algılayıp dehşete kapılabilirler. Mobbing çoğunlukla tek kişi aracılığıyla uygulanır; zamanla bu tek kişiye



dâhil olanların çoğalmasıyla mobbing uygulayanların alanı genişler. Öte yandan mobbing uygulayıcılarının, bir kişiden ziyade bir grup olduğu savunulabilir çünkü mobbing izleyicilerinin bir kısmı mobbing uygulayıcılarına yardım etmektedir. Mobbing uygulamasına katılan kişilerin; düşük zekâlı olması, önyargılı yaklaşımlarının fazla olması, aşırı gururlu, kindar ve ahlaki değerleri gelişmemiş olması, psikopat, paranoid, pasif agresif, gibi özelliklere sahip olması mobbing uygulamasına katılmasında veya öncülük etmelerinde belirleyici nedenlerdir. Bu kişi ve grubun sosyal becerileri de eksiktir, ancak kendi saldırgan grubu içinde bir anlam ifade eden sosyal becerilere sahiptirler (Alcan, 2023, s. 22; Çimen ve Saç, 2017, s. 187).

Mobbing mağdurları ise, mobbing saldırısının hedefinde olan kişilerdir. Ancak onları diğerlerinden ayıran kesin ve belirli özellikler yoktur. Aksine mobbing, iş yaşamında statüsü veya karakteri ne olursa olsun herkesin karşılaşabileceği bir durumdur. Ancak bazı kaynaklar, mağdurun kişilik özelliklerinin mobbing davranışına maruz kalmalarında etkili olduğunu savunmaktadır. Bu kaynaklara göre; mobbing mağduru, eğer örgütün diğer bireylerine göre çok farklı bir kişi ise (bu farklılık giyim tarzı bakımından olabileceği gibi dini inanç/felsefi görüş ve kanaatler bakımından da olabilir) bu farklılığı o kişinin mobbinge uğramasına neden olabilir. Yine başarılı bir kişi olması (daha iyi diplomalara sahip olması veya işyerinde daha yüksek performans göstermesi) veya herhangi bir nedenle yöneticinin takdirini kazandığı için çalışma arkadaşları tarafından kıskanılan bir kişi olması o kişinin mobbing mağduru olma olasılığını artırır. Mobbingin asıl amacı, mağduru kasıtlı olarak yıpratmak, yıldırma ve çaresiz bırakmak suretiyle onu işten ayrılmaya zorlamaktır. Bu süreçte başvurulan yöntemler tamamen kötü niyetli, düşmanca ve aşağılayıcıdır. Sonuç olarak, bu durumdan en büyük zararı gören taraf daima mağdurun kendisi olmaktadır. Mobbing mağdurları pek çok fizyolojik ve psikolojik sağlık sorunları ile karşılaşabilir. Bu sağlık sorunları ve belirtileri şöyle sıralayabiliriz; depresyon, korku ve heyecanlar, kalp aritmi bozuklukları ve yüksek tansiyon, ellerin titremesi, baş ve sırt ağrıları, kas ve eklem ile ilgili problemler, bağışıklık sistemi ile ilgili problemler (çabuk hasta olma, organizmanın savunma yapısında zayıflama), uykusuzluk ya da sürekli uyku hali problemleri, iştahsızlık, mide-bağırsak rahatsızlıkları, kızarma, kaşıntı, döküntü gibi cilt problemleri ve çeşitli alerjik reaksiyonlar (Karakale, 2018, ss. 32-58).

Mobbing sürecinde bir de "izleyiciler" vardır. Bunlar, olaya direkt müdahale etmeseler de olan bitenin farkında olan, hatta bazen dolaylı yoldan dahil olan kişilerdir. İzleyicilerin tutumu oldukça önemlidir, çünkü çoğunlukla "aynısı benim de başıma gelebilir" korkusuyla sessiz kalmayı ve duruma karışmamayı tercih ederler. Genellikle sorumluluk almaktan kaçınan bu kişilerden bazıları tarafsız bir arabulucu gibi davranmaya çalışırken, bazıları ise aslında zorbalığa aktif olarak destek verir. Hatta bu kişiler bazen çatışmanın asıl sebebi olabilir. Mobbing sürecindeki izleyicileri 6 grupta toplayabiliriz: Mobbing ortakları, kendi kendine arayan ortaklar, ilgili izleyiciler, diplomatik izleyiciler, kendi kendine arayan izleyiciler, ikiyüzlü izleyiciler, tarafsız izleyiciler, ilgili izleyiciler, diplomatik izleyicilerdir.

**Yardakçı izleyiciler:** Mobbing uygulayıcılarına, kendisi de hedef alınmaktan korktuğu için veya katılmanın verdiği birtakım hoşnutluklar sebebiyle destek verir ve iş birliği yaparak uygulayıcılara yardımcı olur.

**Dalkavuk izleyiciler:** Bu kişiler, zorbalığı yapan kişiyle aktif olarak iş birliği yaparak mobbinge doğrudan destek verenlerdir. Mobbing uygulayan kişiye körü körüne sadık olan bu kişiler, onun her isteğini sorgusuzca yerine getirirler. Hatta bu "en sadık destekçi" rolünü kıskanır ve başkasının bu konuma gelmesini istemezler. Dışarıya karşı kendilerini güvenilir bir iş arkadaşı gibi gösterebilirler de aslında yönetici konumundaki mobber'a, diğer çalışanlara zorbalık yapmasında yardımcı olurlar.

**İkiyüzlü izleyiciler:** Bu kişiler, dışarıdan bakıldığında olaya karışmıyor gibi görünseler de aslında perde arkasında zorbalığı yapanı desteklerler. Mağdura yardım ederlerse bir sonraki hedefin kendileri olabileceği korkusuyla hareket ederler. Bu yüzden öncelikleri, ne olursa olsun kendi güvenliklerini garanti altına almaktır.

**Tarafsız izleyiciler (ilgisiz kalanlar):** Bu kişiler, mobbinge sessiz kalarak müdahale etmezler ancak bazen bu durumdan gizlice keyif alabilirler. Bu yüzden, olayın her iki tarafıyla da ilişkilerini sürdürür ve olan biteni uzaktan, sessizce seyrederek.

**İlgili izleyiciler (rakipler):** İşyerindeki mobbing vakasından rahatsız olmakta ve mobbinge mücadele edebilmesi için mağdura yardımcı olmaya veya duruma bir çözüm bulmaya çalışmaktadır.

**Diplomatik izleyiciler:** Bu kişiler, çatışma ve yüzleşmeden kaçınarak her zaman uzlaşmayı ve orta yolu bulmayı tercih ederler. Üstlendikleri bu arabulucu rolü sayesinde genellikle çevrelerindeki herkes tarafından sevilirler. Ancak bu tür gözlemci, kuruluş içinde mobbing uygulayıcıları ve taraftarlarından aldığı tepkiler sonucunda gelecekte hedef alınarak mağdur statüsüne düşebilir (Altuntaş, 2010, ss. 3002-3003; Yiğit, 2018, ss. 37-38; Güler, 2020, s. 126).

Mobbingin aktörlerin kişiliklerine bağlı nedenleri olabileceği gibi sosyal ve örgütsel birtakım nedenleri de olabilir. Örgütlerde mobbing olasılığını artıran nedenleri şu şekilde sıralayabiliriz; aşırı kontrolsüz ve kuralsız iş ortamı, aşırı hiyerarşik ve kontrollü iş ortamı, başarısız liderlik, adaletsizlik, ahlak dışı uygulamalar, rol çatışması ve rol belirsizliği, örgüt içi iletişim kanallarının etkili çalışmaması, insan kaynaklarına yapılan harcamaların azaltılması, küçülme ve yeniden yapılanma benzeri değişiklikler, hatalı personel seçim ve işe alım süreci, takım çalışmasının azlığı ya da hiç olmaması, yoğun stresli işyeri, monotonluk (Tetik, 2010, s. 85; Çimen ve Saç, 2017, s. 187).

## 6. TOPLUMSAL NORMLARIN VE ÖRGÜTSEL DİNAMİKLERİN MOBBİNG İLE İLİŞKİSİ

Mobbing, evrensel bir sorun olarak kabul edilse de, ortaya çıkış biçimleri, algılanışı, sıklığı ve başa çıkma yöntemleri, içinde bulunduğu ulusal, sektörel ve örgütsel kültürden derinden etkilenir. Bu olgu, soyut bir eylem olmaktan ziyade, belirli bir bağlamın ürünüdür. Bu karmaşık ilişkiyi analiz etmek için, mobbingin kök saldı **toplumsal normları** ve bu normların iş yerindeki yansımaları olan **kurumsal dinamikleri** bir arada incelemek gerekir. Hofstede'in kültürel boyutlar teorisi gibi çerçeveler, bu ilişkinin temelini anlamada güçlü analitik araçlar sunmaktadır. Özellikle **güç mesafesi, belirsizlikten kaçınma ve rekabet kültürü (erillik-dişillik)** gibi toplumsal normlar, bir toplumun veya kurumun mobbinge ne kadar yatkın olduğunu anlamada kilit rol oynar.

### Toplumsal Normlar: Mobbingin Kültürel Zemini

Bir toplumun değerler sistemi, hangi davranışların normal, kabul edilebilir veya tolere edilemez olduğunu belirleyerek mobbinge zemin hazırlar veya onu engeller. Bu bağlamda üç temel toplumsal norm öne çıkmaktadır:

**Güç Mesafesi (Power Distance):** Bir toplumdaki daha az güçlü üyelerin, gücün eşitsiz bir şekilde dağıldığını ne ölçüde kabul ettiklerini ve beklediklerini ifade eder. Yüksek güç mesafesi olan kültürlerde hiyerarşi ve statü farkları doğaldır; astların üstlerini sorgulaması beklenmez. Bu durum, mobbing için son derece verimli bir zemin yaratır. Otoritenin sorgulanamaz olduğu bir ortamda, astların kendilerini taciz eden bir yöneticiye karşı çıkması veya şikâyetinde bulunması neredeyse imkânsızdır. Phoko (2018), Botswana'daki deneyimini analiz ederken, kültürün "yüksek güç mesafesi ve otoriteye saygı" gibi özelliklerinin, mağdurun otoriteye başkaldırmasını zorlaştırdığını ve failin elini güçlendirdiğini belirtmiştir (s. 9). Bu kültürel sessizlik, faile dokunulmazlık hissi verir ve gücünü kötüye kullanması için uygun ortamı sağlar.

**Belirsizlikten Kaçınma (Uncertainty Avoidance):** Bir kültürün üyelerinin belirsiz, yapılandırılmamış veya öngörülemez durumlardan ne kadar rahatsız olduğunu gösterir. Yüksek belirsizlikten kaçınma eğilimi gösteren toplumlarda katı kurallara, yasalara ve prosedürlere sıkı sıkıya bağlılık vardır ve "farklı" veya "tuhaf" olarak görülenlere karşı tolerans düşüktür. Bu kültürler, kurallara uymayan, farklı düşünen veya "grubun dışında" görülen bireyleri kolayca "günah keçisi" ilan edebilir ve hedef haline getirebilir. Türkiye'deki devlet okullarında mobbingin temel nedenleri arasında

"idarecilerin yetersizliklerini örtbas etme çabası" gibi bürokratik dinamiklerin öne çıkması (Şahin, 2022, s. 844), belirsizliği yönetemeyen liderlerin suçu astlarına yükleyerek durumu kontrol altına alma çabasının bir yansıması olarak okunabilir.

**Rekabet Kültürü (Erillik/Dişillik):** Bu boyut, toplumdaki temel değerlerin rekabet, başarı ve materyalizm (eril) mi, yoksa işbirliği, yaşam kalitesi ve ilişkilere verilen önem (dişil) mi olduğuna odaklanır. Yüksek rekabetçi (eril) kültürlerde, "kazanan her şeyi alır" anlayışı hâkimdir. Başarıya giden yolda her şeyin mubah görüldüğü bir ortamda, zayıf olarak algılanan çalışanları ezmek veya rakipleri ortadan kaldırmak için etik dışı yollara başvurmak meşru görülebilir. Neoliberal politikaların akademiye yansımasıyla ortaya çıkan "aşırı rekabetçilik" ve "performativite" (Hodgins vd., 2024, s. 9), bu kültürün en belirgin örneklerindendir. Bu ortamda, fon bulma, yayın yapma ve terfi etme yarışı, mobbingi neredeyse "oyunun bir parçası" haline getirir.

#### **Örgütsel Dinamikler: Kültürün İş Yerindeki Yansımaları**

Bu geniş toplumsal normlar, kurumların iç dinamiklerini şekillendirir ve mobbingin ortaya çıkıp çıkmamasında belirleyici olan örgütsel iklim, liderlik tarzı ve etik kültür gibi somut değişkenleri doğrudan etkiler.

**Örgütsel İklım:** Çalışanların iş yerlerindeki ortam, uygulamalar ve prosedürler hakkındaki ortak algıdır. Yüksek güç mesafesi ve yüksek rekabet kültürü, kaçınılmaz olarak güvensizlik, korku ve yoğun strese dayalı zehirli bir örgütsel iklim yaratır. Bu iklim, mobbing için uygun bir zemin oluşturur (Beycan, 2014, s. 36). Çalışanlar arasındaki güvensizlik, dayanışmayı engeller ve mobbinge karşı ortak bir duruş sergilemeyi imkânsız hale getirir. Mağdurların ifadelerinde, diğer çalışanların mobbingi gördükleri halde sessiz kalmaları veya failin yanında yer almaları, bu zehirli iklimin en acı sonuçlarından biridir (Öztürk-Türkmen & Duygulu, 2024, s. 81). Bu sessizlik, mobbingin daha da normalleşmesine ve yayılmasına neden olan bir kısır döngü yaratır.

**Liderlik Tarzı:** Liderlik, bu kültürel ve iklimsel kodların en önemli taşıyıcısı ve uygulayıcısıdır. Yüksek güç mesafesi olan kültürler, otokratik ve toksik liderlerin ortaya çıkmasına ve barınmasına olanak tanır. Araştırmalar, mobbing faillerinin ezici bir çoğunluğunun mağdurun doğrudan yöneticisi olduğunu tutarlı bir şekilde göstermektedir (Gök, 2011, s. 324; Uzun, 2023, s. 2227). Bu liderler, genellikle "narsist, megaloman ve asabi" (Öztürk-Türkmen & Duygulu, 2024, s. 82) gibi kişilik özellikleriyle tanımlanır. Bu liderlik tarzı, gücü astlarını kontrol etmek, aşağılamak ve kendi yetersizliklerini gizlemek için bir araç olarak kullanır. Liderliğin rolü sadece aktif saldırganlıkla sınırlı değildir. Yöneticinin mobbing karşısındaki kayıtsızlığı veya tepkisizliği de en az aktif saldırı kadar yıkıcıdır. Mağdurların büyük bir kısmının yönetimden destek görmemesi (Öztürk-Türkmen & Duygulu, 2024, s. 81), liderin bu pasif tutumunun mobbingi zımnen onayladığı ve meşrulaştırdığı anlamına gelir. Bu durum, faile cesaret verirken, mağduru ve diğer çalışanları çaresizliğe ve sessizliğe iter.

**Etik Kültür:** Bir organizasyonda "işlerin nasıl yapılması gerektiğine" dair paylaşılan ahlaki normlar bütünüdür. Rekabetin her şeyin üzerinde tutulduğu bir ortamda, etik normlar kaçınılmaz olarak aşılır. Beycan (2014), "ahlaki değerlerden yoksun bir çalışma ortamının" mobbing için uygun bir zemin hazırladığını belirtir (s. 35). Neoliberal üniversitelerde "kurum itibarının birey sağlığından daha önemli görülmesi" (Hodgins vd., 2024, s. 11), bu tür zayıf bir etik kültürün somut bir örneğidir. Böyle bir kültürde, mobbing gibi etik dışı davranışlar ya görmezden gelinir ya da önemsizleştirilir. Çalışanların tanık oldukları mobbing vakalarına karşı sessiz kalması (Öztürk-Türkmen & Duygulu, 2024, s. 81) da yine zayıf bir etik kültürün belirtisidir. Eğer kültür, doğru olanı söylemeyi ve yanlışa karşı çıkmayı desteklemiyor, aksine bunu yapanı cezalandırıyorsa, sessizlik bir hayatta kalma stratejisine dönüşür ve bu durum mobbing uygulayan faillerin cezasız kalmasını sağlar.

Sonuç olarak, bu değişkenler arasında karşılıklı ve döngüsel bir etkileşim vardır. Toplumsal normlar, bir kurumun iklimini, liderlik anlayışını ve etik kültürünü şekillendirir. Bu örgütsel dinamikler ise mobbingin ortaya çıkması, devam etmesi veya engellenmesi için gereken koşulları yaratır. Bu nedenle mobbinge etkili bir mücadele,

sadece bireysel davranışları hedef almamalı, aynı zamanda bu davranışları besleyen veya tolere eden daha geniş kültürel ve örgütsel yapıları da dönüştürmeyi amaçlamalıdır. Etkili bir önleme stratejisi, etik liderliği teşvik etmeyi, adil ve şeffaf süreçler oluşturmayı ve her şeyden önemlisi, sessizliği kıran ve dayanışmayı güçlendiren bir iklim yaratmayı hedeflemelidir.

## 7. MOBBİNGE KARŞI MÜCADELE

Mobbing önlenabilir bir hastalık olarak kabul edilebileceğinden, bu önemli konuda birincil, ikincil ve üçüncül müdahaleden bahsedebiliriz. Birincil müdahale, mobbing gerçekleşmeden önce alınan tedbirlerdir. İkincil müdahaleler mağdurların başa çıkma stratejileridir. Son olarak, üçüncül müdahale mobbing uygulandıktan sonra zararlı etkileri azaltan müdahalelerdir (Demirağ ve Çiftci, 2017, s. 3).

Mobbing yapılmaya başlandığı andan itibaren zamanla farklı aşamalara geldiğinde artık yapılacak bir şeyin kalmaması; kişide, kurumda veya grupta oluşturduğu olumsuz etkilere karşı müdahale etmek için geç kalınmış olması sebebiyle, mobbinge mücadele için öncelikle bilgilendirmenin yapılması ve bu konuda bir farkındalık oluşturulması gereklidir. Bu bilgilendirme ve farkındalık, işveren de dahil olmak üzere her bir seviyedeki çalışan kişi ve sonunda tüm toplum hedef alınarak yapılması gerekir (Alcan, 2023, s. 8).

Mobbinge bireysel olarak başa çıkabilmek için ikincil müdahale kapsamında bazı önerilerde bulunabiliriz. Eğer bir birey psikolojik tacize maruz kaldığını hissediyorsa, içinde bulunduğu durumu değerlendirmeli ve şu önlemleri almalıdır (Demirağ ve Çiftci, 2017, s. 3):

- Öncelikle sakin kalmalı ve çatışmadan kaçınmalıdır.
- Saldırı üst düzey yönetici kadrosundan geliyorsa, üst düzey yönetime uygun şekilde bilgi verilmelidir.
- Yazılar, notlar, mesajlar, e-postalar gibi kanıtlar birey tarafından korunmalı ve saklanmalıdır.
- Tanık olan iş arkadaşları ile bu konu hakkında konuşulmalı ve fikirleri alınmalıdır.
- Bireyler bu önerilerden sonuç alamazlarsa, Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı'nın iletişim numarası olan "170"i arayarak tıbbi ve hukuki destek almalı veya uzman psikologlardan yardım almalı veya yargı yoluna başvurmalıdır.

Mobbing, bir kişinin hem iş hem de özel hayatındaki dengeyi altüst eder. Bu yıkıcı etkiye karşı, kişinin kendini emniyette hissedeceği "denge bölgeleri" yaratmak çok önemlidir. Bu alanlar, her türlü belirsizlik ve güvensizliğin sona erdiği, kişiye sığınak olan ortamlardır. Bunu sağlamak için mağdur ya iş ortamını değiştirmeli ya da durumu düzeltebilecek yetkililerden yardım istemelidir. Mobbing doğrudan kişinin ruh sağlığına yapılmış bir saldırı olduğu için, bu durumla başa çıkma yollarını öğrenmek büyük önem taşır. Gerekirse, bir arkadaşla konuşmaktan profesyonel bir uzmandan destek almaya kadar farklı yardım seçeneklerine başvurulmalıdır. Bu adımlar sayesinde sorun kökleşmeden çözülebilir ve kişi hem bu zorlu süreçle başa çıkabilir hem de yaşadığı travmayı atlatabilir (Eğer, 2017, s. 11; Türkiye Psikiyatri Derneği, t.y.).

Mobbing ile örgütsel mücadele bağlamında işyerlerinin yapabilecekleri pek çok şey vardır. Bu yapılabilecekleri şu şekilde sıralayabiliriz (Göymen, 2020, s. 50):

- Şirketin hedef ve amaçları, her çalışanın anlayabileceği şekilde net olarak aktarılmalıdır.
- Çalışanların kuruma aidiyetini güçlendirecek pozitif bir iş kültürü yaratılmalıdır.
- Herkesin görev tanımı, yetki ve sorumluluk alanları belirsizliğe yer bırakmayacak şekilde belirlenmelidir.
- İşletme, çalışanlarına saygı duyduğunu ve katkılarını önemseydiğini hissettirmelidir.
- Yöneticiler çalışanlarına karşı övgüde bulunmalı, onlara güvendiğini göstermeli ve adil davranmalıdır.
- Yapılacak tüm eğitim ve toplantı duyuruları, istisnasız her çalışana ulaştırılmalıdır.

- Çalışanların fikirlerine değer verildiği ve düşüncelerinin dikkate alındığı onlara hissettirilmelidir.
- Yöneticiler, ekiplerine iş etiği, şirket kültürü, kriz anında davranış ve kurum içi iletişim gibi konularda rehberlik etmelidir.
- Çalışanlar, işlerini dürüst ve doğru yaptıkları sürece kurumlarının kendilerini desteklediğini ve koruduğunu bilmelidir.
- Açık kapı politikası uygulanmalıdır (çalışanlar herhangi bir konuda -örneğin, iş sorunları, öneriler, şikayetler veya kişisel endişeler nedeniyle- doğrudan yöneticileriyle iletişime geçebilmeleri).
- Çalışanlara anlaşmazlıkların çözümü, stresle başa çıkma ve arabuluculuk gibi konularda eğitimler verilmelidir. Hatta bu amaçla kurum içinde özel bir birim oluşturulmalıdır.
- Bu destek için ya dışarıdan profesyonel bir arabulucuyla anlaşılabilir ya da kurum kendi bünyesinde hukuk veya tıp alanında uzman bir kişiyi tam zamanlı olarak görevlendirebilir.

## 8. SONUÇ: BİR PARADİGMA DEĞİŞİMİ OLARAK BÜTÜNCÜL MÜCADELE ve "KÜLTÜRE DUYARLI ÖRGÜTSEL BAĞIŞIKLIK SİSTEMİ" MODELİ

Bu çalışmanın ortaya koyduğu en temel bulgulardan biri, belki de en önemlisi, mobbingin soyut bir kötülük eylemi olmadığını, aksine içinde yeşerdiği toprağın kimyasal yapısını ve iklimini yansıtan somut, bağlama özgü bir olgu olduğudur. Hofstede'nin kültürel boyutları gibi çerçeveler, bu toprağın analizinde bize güçlü araçlar sunuyor; mobbingin neden bazı kurumlarda adeta bir salgın gibi yayılırken bazılarında barınmadığını anlamamızı sağlıyor. Bir toplumun **güç mesafesi** algısı, **belirsizlikten kaçınma** derecesi ve **rekabet kültürü** gibi derinlere işlemiş normları; iş yerlerindeki **örgütsel iklimi**, **liderlik tarzlarını** ve **etik kültürü** kaçınılmaz olarak şekillendiriyor. Bu bakış açısıyla, her mobbing vakasıyla tek tek uğraşmak, bir bataklık, onu besleyen suyun pH değerini, toksisite seviyesini ve yeraltı kaynaklarını anlamadan, sadece yüzeyde uçuşan sivrisinekleri avlayarak kurutmaya çalışmaya benziyor. Bu yaklaşım yorucu, etkisiz ve ne yazık ki sadece geçici bir çözüm sunuyor. Kalıcı çözüm ise bataklık besleyen bu temel dinamikleri anlamak, kurutmak ve o araziye verimli, sağlıklı bir ekosisteme dönüştürmekten geçiyor.

İşte bu noktada, klasik müdahale yöntemlerinin ötesine geçen ve bu kültürel-örgütsel teşhisi merkezine alan bir paradigma değişimi önermek kaçınılmaz hale geliyor: "**Kültüre Duyarlı Örgütsel Bağışıklık Sistemi Modeli**." Bu bakış açısıyla, organizasyonu canlı bir bedene benzetmek, soruna yaklaşımımızı kökten değiştiriyor. Bu beden, soyut bir laboratuvar ortamında değil, belirli bir ekosistem (kültürel bağlam) içinde yaşıyor. Dolayısıyla, bağışıklık sistemi de "standart" olamaz; bulunduğu çevreye adapte olabilen, esnek ve akıllı bir yapıya sahip olmalıdır. Bu modelin gücü, her katmanında kültürel teşhisin bulgularını kullanarak jenerik değil, o kuruma özel, adeta bir terzi elinden çıkmış stratejiler geliştirmesinden geliyor.

### 1. Katman: "Doğuştan Gelen Bağışıklık" - Kültürel Teşhis ve Stratejik Tasarım

Bu katman, organizasyonun ilk ve en sağlam savunma hattıdır; amacı, mobbinge karşı doğal olarak düşmanca bir ortam yaratarak, sorunu daha ortaya çıkmadan engellemektir. İlk adım, bir "kültürel kan testi" yaparak organizasyonun kendi genetik risk haritasını çıkarmaktır. Bu, sadece bir anket değil; anonim odak grupları, derinlemesine mülakatlar ve mevcut süreçlerin analiziyle gerçekleştirilen bütüncül bir teşhistir.

**Güç Mesafesi Riskimiz Yüksek mi?** (Pheko, 2018): O halde çözüm, hiyerarşiyi yok etmek değil, onu sorumlu kılmaktır. Astların üstlerine yapıcı ve güvenli geri bildirim verebildiği anonim kanallar, yöneticilerin ekiplerinden düzenli olarak geri bildirim almasını zorunlu kılan 360 derece performans değerlendirmeleri ve liderlere yönelik "hizmetkâr liderlik" eğitimleri, bu genetik zafiyete karşı en etkili panzehirdir. Örneğin, bir yöneticinin terfisi, sadece kendi performansına değil, ekibinin psikolojik güvenliğine ve gelişimine ne kadar katkıda bulunduğuna dair somut verilere de bağlanmalıdır.

**Belirsizlikten Kaçınma Riskimiz Yüksek mi?** (Şahin, 2022): O zaman kurallar ve prosedürler, "farklı" olanı damgalamak ve cezalandırmak için bir sopa olarak değil, adaleti ve şeffaflığı sağlayan bir kalkan olarak kullanılmalıdır. İnovasyonu ve yaratıcı aykırılığı teşvik eden "psikolojik güvenlik bölgeleri" oluşturmak – örneğin, ayda bir düzenlenen ve başarısız projelerden çıkarılan derslerin korkusuzca paylaşıldığı "Öğrenme Oturumları" gibi – farklı düşünen ve standart kalıplara uymayan bireyleri koruyan özel mentorluk programları geliştirmek, bu riski bertaraf eder.

**Rekabet Kültürümüz Yıkıcı mı?** (Hodgins vd., 2024): Eğer öyleyse, performans sistemlerini kökten değiştirmek gerekir. Örneğin, bir satış ekibinin primlerinin sadece bireysel hedeflere değil, aynı zamanda %30 oranında takımın ortak hedefine ve %10 oranında yeni başlayanlara yapılan mentorluk kalitesine bağlanması gibi somut değişiklikler yapılmalıdır. Bu, "kazanan her şeyi alır" anlayışı yerine, kolektif başarıyı ve dürüstlüğü öne çıkaran bir değerler sistemi inşa eder.

## **2. Katman: "Edinilmiş Bağışıklık" - Bağlama Uygun, Hızlı ve Etkili Müdahale Protokolleri**

Elbette, en güçlü bağışıklık sistemleri bile zaman zaman hastalanabilir. Bir patojen (mobbing vakası) ortaya çıktığında, sistemin onu hızla tecrit ederek yok etmesi gerekir.

**"Sığınak Kanalları" Oluşturmak:** Çünkü yüksek güç mesafesi olan ve yönetimin kayıtsızlığının (Öztürk-Türkmen & Duygulu, 2024) yaygın olduğu bir kültürde, İK'ya veya doğrudan amire raporlama yapmak, mağdur için bir tuzak olabilir. Bu yüzden model, hiyerarşiyi tamamen atlayabilen, tam gizlilik ve misillemeye karşı yasal ve kurumsal koruma garantisi sunan, bağımsız bir **ombudsmanlık** veya **etik kurulunu** zorunlu kılar. Buralar, mağdurun kendini güvende hissedeceği, hikayesinin ciddiye alınacağını ve sürecin adil işleyeceğini bildiği birer "sığınak" görevi görmelidir.

**Stratejik Bystander Aktivasyonu:** Çalışanların sessiz kalmasının (Öztürk-Türkmen & Duygulu, 2024) bir korku ikliminden kaynaklandığı durumlarda, bireysel kahramanlık beklemek gerçekçi değildir. Bu strateji, "yalnız kurt" yaklaşımı yerine, "güvenli sürü" taktiğini öğretir. Eğitimlerde, çalışanlara sadece "müdahale et" denmez; onlara güvenli müdahale senaryoları sunulur: Toksik bir toplantıda "Bu konuya daha sonra devam etmek daha verimli olabilir" diyerek ortamı dağıtmak, mağdura özelden gidip "Yaşanana gördüm ve bu doğru değildi. Senin yanımdayım" demek veya birkaç kişi bir araya gelerek durumu yazılı olarak belgeleyip sığınak kanalına iletmek gibi.

**Sistemin Güvenilirlik Testi Olarak Yaptırım:** Sistemin tüm güvenilirliği, aslında bu noktada test edilir. Yaptırım, sadece faile değil, mobbinge göz yuman, onu örtbas etmeye çalışan veya tepkisiz kalarak zımnen onaylayan liderliğe de odaklanmalıdır. "Kurum itibarının birey sağlığından önemli görülmesi" (Hodgins vd., 2024) gibi etik zafiyetler gösteren yöneticilerin bu tutumları da performans değerlendirmelerine dâhil edilmeli ve bunun terfi ve prim süreçleri üzerinde somut ve olumsuz yansımaları olmalıdır. Bir fail cezasız kaldığında, tüm bağışıklık sistemi çöker.

## **3. Katman: "Bağışıklık Hafızası" - Sistematik İyileşme ve Kültürel Evrim**

Bir vakanın çözülmesi, dosyanın kapanması anlamına gelmez; aksine, organizasyonun evrimindeki en kritik öğrenme anıdır.

**Örgütsel Otopsi:** Her ciddi vaka sonrası, suçlu aramak için değil, sistemdeki çatlakları bulmak için bir "örgütsel otopsi" yapılmalıdır. Bu süreçte şu derinlemesine sorular sorulmalıdır: "Bu olayın yaşanmasına yüksek güç mesafemiz mi izin verdi? Rekabetçi iklimimiz, narsist bir liderin (Öztürk-Türkmen ve Duygulu, 2024) barınmasına ve hatta başarılı olmasına nasıl olanak tanıdı? Zayıf etik kültürümüz (Beycan, 2014), tanıkların sessiz kalmasını rasyonel bir hayatta kalma stratejisi olarak görmesine mi neden oldu?"

**Yapısal Onarım:** Bu otopsiden çıkan bulgular, pansuman yapmak yerine, sorunu kökünden çözecek yapısal müdahalelere dönüşmelidir. Eğer sorun, "ahlaki değerlerden yoksun bir çalışma ortamı" (Beycan, 2014) ise çözüm, sadece bir etik eğitimi düzenlemek değil, işe alım ve terfi süreçlerine "etik yetkinlik" ve "empatiye dayalı liderlik" gibi

ölçülebilir kriterler eklemektir. Organizasyon, bu deneyimden bir yara iziyle değil, daha da güçlenmiş bir kas yapısıyla çıkmalıdır.

**Sürekli Sağlık Taramaları:** Yıllık "Örgütsel Sağlık Taramaları", artık basit "mutluluk anketleri" olmaktan çıkmalıdır. Güç mesafesi algısı, adalet algısı, rekabetin türü (yapıcı/yıkıcı), sessizlik sarmalının yaygınlığı ve etik iklim gibi spesifik boyutları ölçerek, bağışıklık sisteminin sadece genel sağlığını değil, aynı zamanda teşhis edilen kronik hastalıklara karşı ne kadar yol kat ettiğini de gösteren sofistike bir araç haline gelmelidir.

Sonuç olarak, mobbinge mücadele, standart bir mühendislik problemi değil, karmaşık ve sürekli dikkat gerektiren bir "kültürel bahçıvanlık" işidir. Tek bir çözüm her toprakta işe yaramaz. Önerilen "Kültüre Duyarlı Örgütsel Bağışıklık Sistemi" modeli, yöneticilere ve kuruluşlara ezbere bir "plan" değil, stratejik bir "pusula" sunar. Bu pusula, onların kendi özgün kültürel ve örgütsel arazilerini anlamalarını, endemic risklerini teşhis etmelerini ve bu toprağa en uygun, en dirençli ve en insani çalışma ortamını yaratmalarını sağlayacak dinamik bir çerçevedir.

## KAYNAKÇA

- Alcan, J. H. (2023) "Mobbing Nedir, Ne Değildir?", Mobbingin Bireysel-Örgütsel-Toplumsal Öncülleri ve Ardılları, Ed: Prof. Dr. Mehmet Serdar Erciş vd., Konya, Eğitim Yayınevi, 2023, 7-28.
- Altuntaş, C. (2010) "Mobbing Kavramı ve Örnekleri Üzerine Uygulamalı Bir Çalışma", Yaşar Üniversitesi E-Dergisi, 5(18), 2995-3015. <https://doi.org/10.19168/jyu.47309>
- Bayat, İ. K. ve Baykal B. (2015) "Ulusal ve Uluslararası Düzenlemeler Çerçevesinde İşyerinde Psikolojik Taciz (Mobbing) Olgusu ve Hukuki Sonuçları", Gazi Üniversitesi İktisadi İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi, 17(3), 196-218
- Beycan, B. (2014). "İşyerindeki psikolojik tacizin (mobbing) kadın çalışanlar üzerindeki etkisi", Uzmanlık Tezi, Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı.
- Çetin L. (29 Kasım 2024) "Mobbing Kavramının Tarihsel Arka Planı", Hukuku Haber, "Çevrimiçi" <https://www.hukukihaber.net/mobbing-kavraminin-tarihsel-arka-planı> Erişim Tarihi 10/12/2024.
- Çimen, H.; SAÇ, F. (2017) "Örgüt Başarısızlığının Nedenlerinden Biri: Mobbing", Karadeniz Uluslararası Bilimsel Dergi, 33(33), 183-191. <https://doi.org/10.17498/kdeniz.297857>
- Demirağ S., Çiftçi, S. (2017) "Psychological intimidation at workplace (mobbing)", Journal of Psychology & Psychotherapy, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.4172/2161-0487.1000305>
- Eğer, K. (2017) "İş Hayatında Uygulanan Mobbing'in Çalışanlar Üzerindeki Etkileri: Bir Uygulama Çalışması Türk Bilişim Sektörü", İletişim Çalışmaları Dergisi, 3(2), 1-26.
- Gök, S. (2011). "Prevalence and types of mobbing behavior: A research on banking employees", International Journal of Human Sciences, 8(1), 318-334.
- Göymen, Y. (2020) "İş Hayatında Mobbing ve Mobbinge Başa Çıkma Yolları" Toros Üniversitesi İİSBF Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 7(13), 31-60.
- Güler M. (2020) "Nedenleri ve Sonuçları Bakımından Mobbing", İş, Güç Endüstri İlişkileri ve İnsan Kaynakları Dergisi, 22(1), 124.
- Hodgins, M., Kane, R., Itzkovich, Y., ve Fahie, D. (2024) "Workplace bullying and harassment in higher education institutions: A scoping review", International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 21(9), <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21091173>
- Holátová, D. ve Březinová M (2021) "Impacts of Mobbing and Bossing in Human Resource Management", Beyond Human Resources, Ed.: Gonzalo Sánchez Gardey vd. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.97539>
- Ilieva J., Stoilkovska A. ve Todosovski A. (2024) "Enhancing Workplace Environment by Addressing Mobbing: Impacts on Motivation and Productivity", UTMS Journal of Economics, University of Tourism and Management, Skopje, Macedonia, 15(1), 54-63.
- Irak, D. U. (2019) "Personality and experience of mobbing: Three types of mobbing and the consequences at the workplace", İş ve İnsan Dergisi, 6(1), 55-66. <https://doi.org/10.18394/iid.457447>

- Mercanlıoğlu, Ç. (2010) "Çalışma Hayatında Psikolojik Tacizin (Mobbing) Nedenleri, Sonuçları ve Türkiye'deki Hukuksal Gelişimi", *Organizasyon ve Yönetim Bilimleri Dergisi*, 2(2), 37-46
- Karakale, B. S. (2011) "Mobbing ve Mobbinge Başa Çıkma Yöntemleri: Mobbing Mağdurlarına Yönelik Bir Araştırma", *Yayınlanmış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Yalova Üniversitesi S.B.E, Yalova, ss. 32,58.
- Öztürk-Türkmen, N. A., & Duygulu, E. (2024) "The mobbing process from the victims' perspective: A qualitative study", *Rahva Journal of Technical and Social Studies*, 4(2), 69-94.
- Pheko, M. M. (2018) "Autoethnography and cognitive adaptation: Two powerful buffers against the negative consequences of workplace bullying and academic mobbing", *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2018.1459134>
- Sayan Ş.; D. K. Doğan; M. Karaca (2017) "Psychological Violence in Business Life (Mobbing- Psychological Violence)", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 6(3), 23-29.
- Stefko, R., Birknerova, Z., Zbihlejova, L., & Nebesky, L. (2023) "Assessing manifestations of bossing in the context of personality traits of business managers", *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1115310>
- Şahin, B. (2022) "Devlet ve özel okul çalışanlarının mobbinge (yıldırma) maruz kalma durumları", *International Social Sciences Studies Journal*, 8(95), 836-850.
- Tetik, S. (2010) "Mobbing Kavramı: Birey ve Örgütler Açısından Önemi", *KMÜ Sosyal ve Ekonomik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 2010(1), 81-89.
- Türkiye Psikiyatri Derneği (t.y.), Yıldırma (Mobbing), "Çevrimiçi" <https://psikiyatri.org.tr/halka-yonelik/15/yildirma-mobbing> Erişim tarihi 15/12/2024.
- Uzun, H. (2023) "TR Dizin'de yer alan mobbing üzerine yazılan makalelerin incelenmesi", *Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli Üniversitesi SBE Dergisi*, 13(4), 2215-2236.
- Vveinhardt, J., Domarkaitė, S., ve Deikus, M. (2024) "Intentions of transport sector employees to leave the job: Is workplace mobbing truly a catalyst?", *Business: Theory & Practice*, 25(2), 603-613.
- Yiğit, B. (2018). "Mobbing Kavramı: Kavramsal Bir Çerçeve", *Avrasya Sosyal ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 5(1), 32-42.



## Araştırma Makalesi

# DİJİTALLEŞEN EMEK SÜREÇLERİNDE Z KUŞAĞI: ÖZEL SEKTÖR DENEYİMLERİNE DAYALI FENOMENOLOJİK BİR ÇALIŞMA

Elçin Süleymanov<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal bilimler, Endüstri İlişkileri ve İnsan Kaynakları, [elcin.suleymanov1109@gmail.com](mailto:elcin.suleymanov1109@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4054-3213>

**Öz:** Gerçekleştirilen bu nitel çalışma, Z Kuşağı üyelerinin Türkiye’de özel sektör bağlamlarında dijital emek deneyimlerini nasıl yaşadıklarını araştırmakta ve sıklıkla bu dijital yerliler kuşağının incelikli gerçekliklerini göz ardı eden mevcut literatürdeki önemli bir boşluğu ele almaktadır. Dijital çalışanların kuşaksal özelliklerine odaklanan araştırma, Z Kuşağı çalışanlarının dijitalleşme ile şekillenen emek koşullarını nasıl yorumladıklarını, içselleştirdiklerini ve bu koşullara nasıl yanıt verdiklerini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu genç profesyonellerin esneklik, özerklik ve teknolojiye bağımlılık gibi unsurları, akışkan ve çoğu zaman güvencesiz iş ortamlarında nasıl müzakere ettiklerine özel bir önem verilmiştir. Dijital kapitalizm altında emeğin yapısal dönüşümüne bağlı olarak, bu araştırma esneklik, teknolojik entegrasyon ve maddi olmayan emeğin Z Kuşağı çalışanları için profesyonel yaşamı nasıl yeniden tanımladığını irdelemektedir. Çalışma, fenomenolojik ve eleştirel kuramsal bir çerçeveye, özellikle Marksist emek kuramına dayanmaktadır. Veriler, yaşları 20–29 arasında değişen ve serbest çalışan tasarımcılar, içerik üreticileri ve platform temelli “gig” çalışanları gibi çeşitli dijital ya da hibrit rollerde aktif olarak çalışan 20 katılımcı ile yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış çevrim içi görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Görüşmeler birebir şekilde yazıya aktarılmış ve Braun ve Clarke’ın altı aşamalı tematik analiz yöntemiyle, MaxQda Pro 2024 yazılımı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu süreç sonucunda toplamda 5 ana tema (Emek, Dijital Emeğin Olumlu Yönleri, Dijital Emeğin Dezavantajları, Dijital Emeğin Gündelik Yaşama Katkıları, Dijital Emekle İlgili Gelecek Beklentileri), 20 kategori ve 101 özgün kod ortaya çıkmıştır. Bulgular, Z Kuşağı çalışanlarının dijital iş deneyimlerinin çok katmanlı doğasını yansıtmaktadır. Katılımcılar, mekânsal-zamansal esnekliği, görevleri yerine getirmedeki özerkliği ve küresel iş ağlarına erişimi yüksek oranda değerli bulduklarını belirtmiştir. Ancak aynı zamanda fiziksel yorgunluk, psikolojik tükenmişlik, sosyal etkileşim kaybı ve iş-yaşam sınırlarının aşınması gibi zorluklardan da söz etmişlerdir. Katılımcılar hem mesleki gelişimi hem de kişisel iyilik hâlini destekleyen, anlamlı ve değerlerle uyumlu işler yapma arzularını ifade etmişlerdir. Özellikle kişisel ve iş alanlarının iç içe geçmesinin güçlendirici bir yanının olmasının yanı sıra, sınırlar ve sürdürülebilirlik açısından da gerilimler yarattığı vurgulanmıştır. Bu çalışma, Z Kuşağı’nın dijital çağda emekle kurduğu ilişkiye dair sahaya dayalı bir anlatı sunarak dijital emek üzerine hem kuramsal hem de uygulamalı bilgiye katkı sağlamaktadır. Elde edilen bulgular; iş gücü dinamikleri, dijital kapitalizm ve kuşaksal beklentilere ilişkin içgörüler sunmakta ve değişen çalışma dünyasında örgütsel politikalar ile insan kaynakları yönetimi açısından önemli çıkarımlara işaret etmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Z Kuşağı, Dijital Emek, Fenomenoloji, Uzaktan Çalışma, Dijital Kapitalizm, İş Yaşam Dengesi

**Atf:** Süleymanov, E. Dijitalleşen

Emek Süreçlerinde Z Kuşağı:

Özel Sektör Deneyimlerine Dayalı

Fenomenolojik Bir Çalışma.

MALUMAT, (1), 45–68.

Geliş Tarihi: 14/05/2025

Kabul Tarihi: 28/06/2025



**Telif Hakkı:** © 2024. (CC BY)

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

## *Generation Z in Digitalizing Labor Processes: A Phenomenological Study Based on Private Sector Experiences*

**Abstract:** This qualitative study investigates how members of Generation Z experience digital labor in private sector contexts in Turkey, addressing a significant gap in existing literature that has often overlooked the nuanced realities of this digital-native cohort. Focusing on the generational characteristics of digital workers, the study aims to understand how Gen Z employees interpret, internalize, and respond to the shifting conditions of labor shaped by digitalization. Particular attention is given to how these young professionals negotiate flexibility, autonomy, and technological dependence within fluid and often precarious work environments. Given the structural transformation of work under digital capitalism, this research explores how flexibility, technological integration, and immaterial labor redefine professional life for Gen Z employees. The study was grounded in a

phenomenological and critical theoretical framework, especially drawing on Marxist labor theory. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 20 participants aged 20–29, all actively working in various digital or hybrid roles, including freelance designers, content creators, and platform-based gig workers. The interviews were conducted online, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s six-phase thematic analysis via MaxQda Pro 2024 software. Through this process, five overarching themes emerged Labor, Positive Aspects of Digital Labor,

Disadvantages of Digital Labor, Contributions of Digital Labor to Daily Life, and Future Expectations Regarding Digital Labor supported by 20 categories and 101 unique codes. These findings reflect the multifaceted nature of digital work experiences among Gen Z employees. Key results indicate that participants highly valued spatial-temporal flexibility, autonomy in task execution, and access to global work networks. However, they also reported challenges such as physical strain, psychological fatigue, loss of social interaction, and the erosion of work-life boundaries. Participants expressed a desire for meaningful, value-aligned work that supports both professional development and personal well-being. Notably, the blending of personal and work spaces while empowering also produced tension regarding boundaries and sustainability. This study contributes to both theoretical and practical understandings of digital labor by offering a grounded account of how Generation Z navigates work in the digital age. It provides insights into workforce dynamics, digital capitalism, and generational expectations, with implications for organizational policy and human resource management in the evolving world of work.

**Keywords:** Generation Z, Digital Labor, Phenomenology, Flexibility, Remote Work, Digital Capitalism, Work-Life Balance

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The transformation of labor through digital technologies has led to the emergence of new work dynamics, particularly impacting younger generations born into the digital age. Among these, Generation Z roughly those born between the mid-1990s and early 2000s has been characterized as digital natives who navigate professional environments with a high degree of technological fluency (Betz, 2003; Wolfinger & McCrindle, 2014). Unlike Generation X, who adapted to digital tools during adulthood, Generation Z has developed within them, shaping distinct expectations, values, and practices in the workplace (Dorschel, 2022; Machová et al., 2021).

This generational divide is especially visible in how digital labor is perceived and enacted. While Generation X approaches digital tools with a sense of pragmatism and nostalgia for analog methods (Fuchs & Sandoval, 2014), Generation Z sees them as integral to all aspects of life from work and education to socialization and entertainment. Consequently, digital labor for Gen Z is not just about efficiency; it is embedded in their identities and aspirations, encompassing issues such as work-life balance, autonomy, and digital privacy (Mahmoud et al., 2020).

Despite the growing relevance of this cohort, scholarly attention to Generation Z's engagement with digital labor especially in private sector settings remains limited. While some studies address this generation's sustainability behaviors (Orea-Giner & Fusté-forné), media use (Mude & Undale), or work intentions (Achmad et al., 2021), there is a notable lack of in-depth, qualitative research capturing the lived realities of Gen Z workers. This study responds to that gap by exploring how digitalization shapes labor experiences among young professionals in diverse private sector roles.

The primary aim of this research is to uncover the motivational factors, expectations, and values that define Generation Z's approach to digital work. By applying a phenomenological methodology, the study captures the subjective meanings and daily practices embedded in digital labor experiences. It also investigates the perceived advantages such as flexibility, efficiency, and global connectivity as well as challenges like social isolation, physical strain, and technology dependence (Göçer, 2022; Bencsik et al., 2016).

The significance of this study lies in its capacity to contribute both theoretically and practically. On a theoretical level, it enhances our understanding of digital labor through the lens of generational differences and immaterial work theory. Practically, it offers insights for HR professionals, managers, and policymakers on how to attract and retain Gen Z employees by aligning workplace practices with their values especially around autonomy, development opportunities, and psychological well-being (Mahmoud et al., 2020; Meret et al., 2018).

## 2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Generational classifications are considered an important theoretical tool in understanding the social, cultural, and economic structures of societies. Generations are shaped through shared life experiences, historical events, and social transformations that

mold the values, work perceptions, and lifestyles of individuals (Neves, 2025). The use of generations in sociological analysis provides insight not only into individual life courses but also into the formation of collective identities. Particularly in periods of rapid social change, differences between generations become more visible, keeping generational studies relevant. In the social sciences literature, the concept of generation is not merely defined by birth year but also reflects mental and cultural tendencies specific to that era (Costanza, Rudolph, & Zacher, 2023).

Karl Mannheim's theory of generations argues that cohorts are defined not just by chronological proximity but by their capacity to develop shared responses to historical events (Mannheim, 1993). According to Mannheim, generations are cultural structures composed of individuals who experience a specific historical period similarly. This theoretical approach emphasizes the formation of generations through collective historical consciousness rather than individual differences. While individuals may live through the same period, their social positions and cultural contexts can lead to differing interpretations of the same events. This makes generations internally diverse rather than homogeneous. Mannheim's approach deepens generational analysis by situating it within both sociological and historical contexts (McCourt, 2012).

Sociological as well as psychological factors are taken into account in the analysis of generations. Shared life experiences shape individuals' worldviews and attitudes. Thus, the concept of generation is defined more as an extension of social identity than a purely individual construct. At the same time, generations act as carriers of collective memory, shaping individuals' value systems and behavioral patterns (McCrindle, 2018). Psychologically, individuals who share similar fears, hopes, and goals may develop a sense of generational belonging. Values and attitudes distinctive to each generation influence individual preferences across domains such as education, work, family, and politics. Hence, generational classifications are functional for predicting social behavior.

The impact of generations on work life is increasingly addressed in the organizational behavior literature. Each generation brings distinct attitudes, expectations, and values into the workplace. These differences can cause intergenerational conflict but also enrich organizational culture through diversity (Ng, Lyons, & Schweitzer, 2012). In today's fast-changing technological environment, generational differences have become more pronounced. For Generation X, work is central to identity, whereas Generations Y and Z tend to view work as a meaningful part of life. This divergence influences approaches to leadership, work styles, and motivation (Adıgüzel, Batur, & Ekşili, 2014).

The structure of the modern workforce has evolved into a multigenerational model. The coexistence of different generations in the same workplace necessitates new management strategies. While Baby Boomers tend to favor hierarchical and authoritative structures, Generations Y and Z prefer more horizontal, participatory, and flexible systems. This distinction does not simply reflect generational culture but also entails the redefinition of concepts such as productivity, loyalty, and engagement (Saha & Kiran, 2022).

With digitalization transforming work, the gap between generations has widened further. Generation Z, born into the digital world, has developed an integrated approach to work that relies on technology. They demand flexible hours, remote access, and digital work platforms. In contrast, Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation place more value on physical presence and traditional communication. These differing preferences can create adaptation issues in the workplace but also offer opportunities for innovation when managed effectively. Properly leveraged, this diversity fosters flexibility, creativity, and multi-perspective thinking in organizations (Seemiller & Grace, 2015).

One of the most prominent characteristics of Generation Z in the workplace is the pursuit of meaning. For this generation, work is not just a source of income but a field of contribution, self-development, and value alignment. They often prefer project-based, creative, and entrepreneurial opportunities over traditional career paths. Furthermore, autonomy, real-time feedback, and non-hierarchical relationships are more appealing to

Generation Z. These tendencies require organizations to redesign their human resource policies. If expectations are unmet, Gen Z employees are more likely to change jobs, making talent retention a growing challenge (Narayanan, 2022).

From a social-psychological perspective, Generation Z individuals exhibit a higher degree of individualization. With a globally integrated identity, they are more sensitive to diversity and adopt egalitarian perspectives. This drives their expectations for inclusive work environments. Their active involvement in collective movements through social media also increases their demand for meaningful social interaction in the workplace. These orientations compel traditional organizational structures to transform. Issues such as gender equality, environmental awareness, and social justice significantly influence Generation Z's employment choices (Fan, Shin, Shi, & Wu, 2023).

Generation Z's digital skills offer competitive advantages in the workplace. They not only use technology effectively but also integrate it into work processes and develop innovative solutions. As such, they tend to perform well in areas such as digital marketing, software development, data analytics, and remote collaboration. However, their technological proficiency can sometimes be offset by limited interpersonal communication skills. While they may struggle with face-to-face interaction and patience, their ability to compensate via digital tools is notable (Sidorcuka & Chesnovicka, 2017).

One of the challenges in integrating Generation Z into the workforce is their distant attitude toward authority. This generation adopts a more critical and questioning stance toward traditional hierarchies. Expectations for rapid promotion, focus on individual achievement, and a desire for autonomy may clash with classical management models. To engage effectively with Gen Z, more flexible, inclusive, and transparent leadership styles are needed (Leslie, Manchester, Rogelberg, & Landis, 2021).

Generation Z places strong emphasis on continuous learning and growth opportunities. They are driven by a desire to renew themselves and advance their careers through education. Lifelong learning is one of their core values. This increases the relevance of mentorship systems, ongoing training programs, and personalized career paths within organizations. A workplace culture that values their ideas and provides space for expression enhances engagement. Institutions must recognize and cultivate the potential of young employees through responsive policies (Konakay, 2018).

Generation Z's multitasking ability and rapid decision-making make them well-suited for high-paced sectors. However, their short attention spans and impatience can undermine long-term sustainability. When work processes are perceived as too slow or meaningless, motivation tends to decline. As a result, speed, transparency, and flexibility have become organizational priorities. To meet Gen Z's expectations, companies are designing innovative job structures and streamlining processes (Spitznagel, 2020).

The pandemic introduced remote work to Generation Z at an early stage, encouraging a new model of employment. This shift has accelerated the adoption of hybrid work models and reshaped workplace norms. Flexible hours, location-independent roles, and digital platforms support productivity and autonomy. Yet unstructured flexibility may jeopardize work-life balance (Albrychiewicz-Słocińska, 2024).

Generation Z's career goals are less about climbing traditional hierarchies and more about making an impact, gaining visibility, and realizing personal potential. They seek feedback, want inclusion in decision-making, and expect personal development opportunities (Bejtkovsky, 2016).

The conceptual foundations of the notion of digital labor are assessed in conjunction with multidimensional approaches to the historical transformation of labor. The evolution of labor from physical exertion to cognitive production is being reconsidered, particularly through the lens of Marx's labor theory of value. Marx's concept of surplus value production parallels the commodification of user-generated content on digital platforms, often created without users' awareness. Unlike traditional forms of labor, digital labor produces value not through physical goods, but through data, knowledge, and attention

economies. This characteristic of digital labor processes is critically important for understanding new configurations of capitalist production relations within the information society (Fuchs, 2015; Törhönen et al., 2019).

The concept of “immaterial labor”, which emerged alongside digitalization, focuses on areas such as the production of knowledge, cultural content, and emotional capital. User activities on digital platforms are increasingly defined as invisible forms of labor, challenging conventional understandings of productivity. The content creation activities of social media users not only generate economic value but also directly contribute to capital accumulation. These forms of labor, which are not based on material production yet yield economic outcomes, have become characteristic of post-Fordist regimes of production (Savul, 2015; Göçer, 2022).

One of the key distinguishing features of digital labor is its formation under flexible yet precarious working conditions. Models such as remote work and on-demand labor, enabled through digital platforms, hinder labor organization and restrict access to traditional union rights. As a result, labor becomes detached from formal systems of job security and is instead framed as an individual responsibility. These new work structures, while promising flexibility, simultaneously impose the expectation of constant availability (Huws, 2018; Güven, 2023).

The concept of digital labor is also closely related to emerging terms such as *playbour*, *audience labor*, and *crowdsourcing*. *Playbour* denotes the generation of economic value through activities initially undertaken for entertainment. *Crowdsourcing*, on the other hand, adds a collective dimension to digital labor by enabling platforms to generate value through the voluntary contributions of many individuals. The fact that such labor is often performed without monetary compensation raises important questions about the visibility and value of work. (Fuchs, 2014; McCutcheon & Hitchens, 2020).

Another frequently discussed aspect in digital labor debates involves the effects on knowledge production, access, and intellectual property. As knowledge dissemination in digital environments accelerates, the economic value of labor becomes increasingly tied to access to information. The commodification of knowledge benefits those with ownership, while the tightening of copyright laws weakens the collective nature of labor and emphasizes individual ownership (Erdoğan, 2018; Kayın, 2019).

Classifying labor based on productivity is also being reconsidered in the context of digital labor. While Marx’s definition of productive labor includes only labor that creates surplus value, many forms of labor in today’s service sector directly contribute to capital. Consequently, the distinction between productive and unproductive labor has largely lost its relevance, as all forms of labor subordinated to capital now fulfill similar functions. Data generation and content contributions within digital environments directly serve capital accumulation and are therefore regarded as productive (Altnok, 2011; Savran et al., 2012).

The theoretical framework of digital labor is not limited to economic analyses; it also encompasses sociological and cultural dimensions. Digital labor processes reshape forms of subjectivity, everyday practices, and social roles. With the rise of the platform economy, individuals become integrated into the economic system without fully grasping the value of their own production. This aligns closely with Marx’s concept of alienation (Fuchs, 2016; Zhou & Liu, 2021).

### 3. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in critical theory, with a particular emphasis on the Marxist conceptualization of labor and its transformation within digital economies. The approach is interpretivist in nature, aiming to uncover the subjective experiences and perceptions of individuals engaged in forms of digital labor. Given that digital labor encompasses not only economic but also social and cultural dimensions such as alienation, value creation through data, and blurred lines between

leisure and work qualitative methodology enables a holistic exploration of these phenomena.

A thematic analysis was selected as the primary analytic strategy due to its flexibility in capturing patterned meanings across participant narratives. The research further aligns with a socio-materialist perspective, which views digital labor not merely as an economic exchange but as a complex interplay of technological infrastructure, user participation, and capitalist value extraction processes (Fuchs, 2015; Huws, 2018). Accordingly, the study does not treat digital labor as a homogenous experience but rather seeks to examine its diverse articulations ranging from remote freelance work to unpaid content generation on social platforms.

This methodological orientation also allows for a critical interrogation of key concepts such as surplus value, commodification of knowledge, and the erosion of formal labor protections, all of which are integral to understanding the political economy of the digital age (McCutcheon & Hitchens, 2020; Kayın, 2019).

#### Study Group

The study group consisted of 20 participants aged between 20 and 29, all of whom were members of Generation Z currently employed in private-sector digital or hybrid work environments in Turkey. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring representation across a spectrum of digital labor types, including content creators, social media moderators, freelance designers, online customer service agents, and platform-based gig workers.

The sample composition was guided by the conceptual interest in exploring how digital labor manifests in flexible yet precarious working arrangements particularly among young adults who are often expected to navigate self-responsibility, constant connectivity, and insecure employment in digital capitalism (Güven, 2023; Zhou & Liu, 2021). All participants had at least six months of experience in digital labor roles and were engaged in either paid or unpaid tasks contributing to digital value creation.

In line with ethical standards, informed consent was obtained, and anonymity was ensured throughout the data collection and reporting processes. Participants' diverse experiences were essential for tracing how digital labor shapes contemporary work identities and reproduces broader socio-economic inequalities.

#### Data Collection Tool

The primary data collection tool employed in this research was a semi-structured interview form. This form was developed to elicit in-depth insights into participants' experiences with digital labor, with particular attention to themes such as flexibility, job insecurity, content production, platform governance, emotional exhaustion, and perceptions of exploitation.

The interview guide included both open-ended and thematically focused questions, structured around the conceptual pillars of digital labor theory, including surplus value extraction, playbour, and immaterial labor. The questions were designed to capture not only concrete job-related experiences but also participants' reflections on the social meaning, autonomy, and precarity of their digital labor roles (Fuchs, 2016; Göçer, 2022).

Prior to the main study, the interview form was piloted with two participants to ensure clarity, thematic relevance, and adequacy in addressing the research questions. Based on feedback, minor modifications were made to improve flow and eliminate redundancy.

#### Data Collection Process

Data collection took place was conducted through one-on-one online interviews via secure video conferencing platforms (Zoom or Google Meet). The virtual format was chosen to accommodate participants' digital work habits and ensure flexibility, especially considering the geographic dispersion and hybrid work conditions of the sample group.

Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participant's permission. All interviews were conducted in Turkish, the participants' native language, and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, their rights as research subjects, and the voluntary nature of their participation.

Ethical protocols such as confidentiality, anonymity, and data protection were rigorously upheld throughout the process in compliance with institutional review board (IRB) standards and national data protection regulations.

#### Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed as the principal method for analyzing the transcribed interview data. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, the analysis began with familiarization through repeated readings, followed by initial coding of salient features across the dataset. Codes were then clustered into potential themes, which were refined and defined to best reflect the research questions and theoretical framework.

Thematic categories were generated both deductively guided by the literature on digital labor (e.g., immaterial labor, playbour, algorithmic management) and inductively, allowing emergent meanings from participants' own narratives to shape the final thematic map. MaxQda 2024 Pro software was used to organize, code, and visualize the qualitative data, ensuring systematic and transparent analytical procedures.

The analysis sought to connect micro-level experiences of digital labor with macro-level theoretical concepts such as alienation, surplus value, and commodification, thereby providing both empirical depth and conceptual coherence (Törhönen et al., 2019; Savran et al., 2012). Triangulation was also ensured through cross-case comparisons and peer debriefing, enhancing the credibility and robustness of the findings.

#### 4. FINDINGS

In this study, participants' experiences related to digital labor were analyzed through qualitative data analysis methods. Initially, the interview transcripts were coded by identifying meaningful units from participant statements, which were organized into lower-level codes. These codes were then grouped into broader categories based on thematic similarities. Subsequently, the categories were clustered into overarching themes, reflecting the multi-dimensional structure of digital labor as perceived by participants. As a result of the coding process, a total of 5 themes, 20 categories, and 101 codes were generated. The full structure of themes, categories, and related codes is presented in detail below in Table 1. Codebook.

**Table 1.** Codebook

Theme	Category	Codes
Labor	Perseverance	Continuous self-improvement, Commitment to progress, Overcoming challenges, Resilience, Client satisfaction as motivation
	Effort	Cognitive investment, Emotional labor, Attention to detail, Routine dedication, Value of diligence
	Routine	Personal work structure, Daily rituals, Focus maintenance, Time consistency, Predictable workflow
	Discipline	Self-regulation, Goal orientation, Time management, Accountability, Autonomous planning
	Success	Client satisfaction, Personal achievement, Emotional fulfillment, Spiritual reward, Professional recognition

	Personal Satisfaction	Autonomy, Work-life integration, Meaningful labor, Growth mindset, Intrinsic motivation
Positive Aspects of Digital Labor	Motivation	Desire for quality, Professional dedication, Client-oriented performance, Work enthusiasm, Resilience
	Perceived Freedom	Spatial autonomy, Temporal flexibility, Independent scheduling, Choice of work environment, Freedom of expression
	Professional Development	Upskilling, Learning access, Technological adaptability, Certification pursuit, Specialization
	Global Connectivity	Cross-border collaboration, International clients, Multilingual work, Global projects, Remote teamwork
	Flexibility	Personalized workflows, Energy-based scheduling, Custom routines, Role integration, Freelance adaptability
Disadvantages of Digital Labor	Physical Health Issues	Eye strain, Neck/back pain, Sedentary fatigue, Need for breaks, Physiological toll
	Technology Dependency	Constant connectivity, Blurred boundaries, Emotional fatigue, Online compulsion, Work-life merging
	Social Isolation	Reduced interaction, Loneliness, Weakened collaboration, Loss of social routines, Team disconnection
Contributions of Digital Labor to Daily Life	Work-Life Balance	Family engagement, Less commuting, Personal well-being, Integrated routine, Psychological ease
	Everyday Efficiency	Time use improvement, Home comfort, Autonomous flow, Focus enhancement, Daily energy alignment
Future Expectations Regarding Digital Labor	Importance of Digital Skills	Lifelong learning, Platform fluency, Continuous development, Competence in tools, Learning mindset
	Flexibility Normalization	Custom scheduling, Freedom from offices, Task ownership, Well-being promotion, Autonomy structure
	Capacity Development	Self-growth, Cross-functional learning, Digital literacy, Online education, Career empowerment
	Rising Competition	Market saturation, Performance pressure, Need for distinction, Peer benchmarking, Excellence pursuit

### Labor

Increased interaction capacity is identified by participants as one of the most transformative aspects of digital labor. Digital tools and platforms are seen to significantly enhance communication speed, task coordination, and responsiveness. Especially in team-based or client-facing roles, these capabilities allow for smoother project execution, real-time feedback, and collaborative creativity. Participants describe this as a shift from hierarchical, delayed decision-making processes to more agile and interconnected modes of working. The immediacy of communication enables a more dynamic and fluid workflow, empowering employees to respond quickly and iterate efficiently.

“Digital tools allow me to complete my projects more efficiently. I can communicate with clients quickly and effectively.” (Participant 2)

“The ability to give and receive feedback in real time has completely changed the way we work as a team.” (Participant 5)

“We don't have to wait for meetings anymore—decisions happen instantly through chat tools.” (Participant 13)



The interactive potential of digital platforms also facilitates global connectivity. Several participants highlight that they now collaborate with international teams, serve clients across continents, and exchange knowledge in multilingual settings. This expanded reach not only diversifies their work experiences but also strengthens their sense of relevance in the global economy. The globalized interaction infrastructure provided by digital labor makes participants feel professionally empowered and socially integrated.

"Digital labor gives me access to global job opportunities. I work with clients from different parts of the world." (Participant 10)

"Just last month, I worked on a project with a client from the UK. We managed everything smoothly through digital platforms." (Participant 12)

"The global communication network we operate in now is something unimaginable just a decade ago." (Participant 7)

Participants also link increased interaction capacity with improved teamwork and project alignment. Especially in remote and hybrid teams, the use of collaborative platforms helps synchronize efforts, distribute tasks clearly, and track progress transparently. This enhances mutual accountability and reduces misunderstandings. Moreover, it supports flatter hierarchies, allowing junior team members to contribute more freely.

"I can now coordinate tasks with teammates seamlessly, even when we're not in the same country." (Participant 6)

"It's easier to assign responsibilities and keep track of who is doing what thanks to project management tools." (Participant 14)

Nonetheless, some participants caution that the high volume of interaction can lead to cognitive overload and emotional fatigue. Constant notifications, simultaneous conversations, and overlapping deadlines can overwhelm individuals, making it difficult to focus deeply or unplug from work. For these participants, the challenge lies in learning to manage the very tools that were meant to empower them.

"Sometimes I feel mentally drained by the endless pings and messages. It's hard to concentrate." (Participant 3)

"The downside of always being connected is never being able to disconnect." (Participant 9)

Despite these concerns, most participants express that the benefits of increased interaction outweigh the drawbacks. They emphasize that successful use of interaction tools requires learning digital etiquette, setting boundaries, and fostering mutual trust in teams. With these supports in place, participants describe themselves as more connected, capable, and efficient.

"If you know how to manage the flow, it really boosts productivity. It's all about knowing when to engage and when to pause." (Participant 4)

"We've developed our own rhythm as a team. The tools are just enablers—the real value is how we use them." (Participant 18)

Remote work has emerged as a defining feature of digital labor, and participants frequently emphasized its transformative role in their professional lives. For many, the shift away from traditional office settings has brought not only logistical convenience but also a sense of autonomy and control over their daily routines. Participants highlighted that being able to work from home or any other preferred location allows them to save commuting time, reduce stress, and channel their energy more directly into productive tasks. This relocation of labor into domestic or flexible environments is considered to improve focus and personal well-being.

"Remote work gives us a better work-life balance. Working from home helps us manage tasks more comfortably and spend more time with our families." (Participant 15)

"The freedom to work without going to the office is a great advantage. During the pandemic, I continued my job from home thanks to digital platforms and tools." (Participant 8)

Participants also associated remote work with improved time management and increased job satisfaction. The ability to plan one's own schedule, take breaks when necessary, and engage in deep work without office-related distractions was described as empowering. Particularly for those with caregiving responsibilities or those who live in areas with limited employment opportunities, remote work has opened doors to previously inaccessible career paths. However, this perceived benefit is contingent upon the individual's ability to maintain structure and discipline in an unsupervised setting.

"Being able to work from home gives me the freedom to organize my day around my energy levels. I'm much more productive this way." (Participant 14)

"It used to be hard juggling work and family. Now I manage both better because I can work from home." (Participant 11)

Despite its advantages, remote work also presents challenges, particularly related to social connection and team cohesion. Several participants noted that prolonged isolation from colleagues can lead to feelings of loneliness or disconnection from the workplace culture. The absence of face-to-face interaction, spontaneous conversations, and physical cues was seen to diminish the richness of professional relationships. To address this, participants mentioned the importance of scheduling regular virtual meetings and engaging in non-work-related chats to maintain camaraderie.

"One downside is that working remotely sometimes makes me feel isolated. I miss interacting with my teammates in person." (Participant 9)

"To prevent burnout and loneliness, I try to have video calls with my colleagues regularly. It helps keep the connection alive." (Participant 5)

Participants also reflected on how remote work requires the development of new communication skills and digital competencies. In the absence of in-person supervision, clarity, self-motivation, and accountability become essential. Mastering digital collaboration tools and adopting asynchronous workflows were mentioned as vital for maintaining efficiency and transparency across geographically dispersed teams.

"Managing tasks remotely means being extra clear in communication. I've had to improve my written skills and stay more organized." (Participant 6)

"We work across time zones, so I had to learn how to contribute asynchronously and still feel part of the team." (Participant 17)

Ultimately, remote work is portrayed by participants as a liberating yet demanding practice. While it offers considerable flexibility and work-life balance, it also places greater responsibility on the individual to regulate their time, maintain motivation, and nurture professional relationships. Participants generally view these trade-offs as worthwhile and believe that remote work will remain a permanent fixture of the evolving labor landscape.

"Working from home has become more than a necessity—it's a lifestyle. I don't see myself returning to an office full-time anymore." (Participant 4)

"The digital transformation has shown us that remote work is both possible and sustainable if done right." (Participant 13)

Flexibility is one of the most emphasized benefits of digital labor according to participant narratives. The freedom to choose when and where to work significantly enhances the sense of autonomy and control among digital workers. This autonomy allows participants to align their work routines with personal energy rhythms, family responsibilities, and lifestyle preferences, which would be impossible in traditional fixed-schedule jobs. Flexibility was particularly valued by participants who juggle multiple responsibilities, such as caregiving or freelance work across multiple projects. Rather than adhering to rigid work hours, they reported being able to optimize productivity during their personal peak hours.

"I can work anytime, anywhere, and manage our projects through digital platforms. My achievements and earnings during this period have truly satisfied me." (Participant 15)

"Digital labor means flexibility. The ability to work from home without going to the office is a huge advantage." (Participant 8)

This freedom is closely tied to higher job satisfaction and psychological well-being. Participants described how flexible working conditions help reduce burnout and increase their capacity for creativity and innovation. The lack of commuting and office distractions creates a mental space conducive to deep work. Several participants also noted that the ability to control their schedule improves their ability to concentrate, leading to higher-quality outputs and more positive client feedback. These improvements in productivity further reinforce their perception of flexibility as a professional advantage.

“Digital labor allows me to work with flexibility and freedom. The freedom to work when and where I want is a great advantage for me.” (Participant 11)

“I can work from anywhere, anytime, and that gives me a lot of flexibility.” (Participant 14)

Yet, flexibility is not without its tensions. Participants acknowledged that working without set hours can blur the boundaries between work and rest. In the absence of external structure, some reported a tendency to overwork, skip breaks, or find it difficult to disconnect. Others discussed how the flexibility that initially felt liberating could evolve into an expectation to always be available. These contradictory experiences highlight the importance of self-regulation and time management in flexible digital labor environments.

“Sometimes I find myself still working late at night, even when I planned to take the evening off.” (Participant 7)

“The freedom can be a double-edged sword. If you don’t set boundaries, work starts to seep into every part of your day.” (Participant 12)

To mitigate the risks associated with excessive flexibility, participants developed personal strategies to create structure in their workdays. These included setting start and end times, taking scheduled breaks, and using productivity tools to track progress. Flexibility, then, is not perceived as an unstructured or chaotic experience, but rather one that empowers the individual to take ownership of their workflow—provided they establish clear personal boundaries.

“I’ve had to learn how to manage my time better. I use timers and to-do lists so I don’t get overwhelmed.” (Participant 9)

“It took me a while, but now I have a system where I know when to stop. That’s how I stay productive and healthy.” (Participant 6)

Flexibility also fosters inclusivity by making work accessible to those who might otherwise be excluded from the labor market. This includes individuals with disabilities, caregivers, and those living in rural areas. Participants viewed digital labor’s flexible structures as leveling the playing field, enabling diverse populations to participate in meaningful work and maintain financial independence. The democratizing potential of flexibility was consistently framed as a societal good.

“Without flexible work, I wouldn’t be able to care for my kids and still earn an income. Digital tools make it possible.” (Participant 5)

“I live far from major cities, but I can still find clients and complete projects online. That’s what flexibility means to me.” (Participant 16)

Overall, flexibility stands out as a cornerstone of digital labor, perceived not only as a logistical convenience but as a source of empowerment and equality. However, the benefits of flexibility are maximized only when accompanied by disciplined self-management and supportive digital infrastructure. Participants agreed that flexibility should not mean availability around the clock, but rather the ability to align professional life with personal values and capacities.

“Digital labor gives us freedom, but we also need discipline to use that freedom wisely.” (Participant 13)

“It’s all about balance. Flexibility helps me stay focused, but only if I make time for rest too.” (Participant 18)

### Positive Aspects of Digital Labor

The theme on the positive aspects of digital labor reveals how deeply participants appreciate the affordances that digital tools offer in shaping meaningful, satisfying, and productive work experiences. One of the most emphasized benefits is the psychological empowerment participants gain from their digital working environments. Motivation, in particular, emerges as a consistently reinforced emotional driver. Participants report that the sense of control, efficiency, and recognition they experience enhances their willingness to perform and fuels a cycle of engagement. This motivation is not superficial or short-lived; it is rooted in the personal relevance of their tasks, the autonomy they exercise, and the visible outcomes they produce. Such motivational energy seems to grow stronger as participants witness how digital platforms enable smoother communication and faster execution, which in turn solidifies their confidence in the system and in their own capabilities.

"I love what I do, and I feel deeply motivated when working. Software development constantly requires me to follow innovations and keep improving myself." (Participant 15)

"Each project is a reflection of my effort, and my clients' satisfaction proves that my work is meaningful." (Participant 11)

"In the end, the client's satisfaction and the success of the project confirmed that my effort paid off." (Participant 10)

A related psychological benefit is the intensified sense of freedom that digital labor fosters. Participants describe the ability to work from any location and at any time not merely as a logistical convenience but as a symbolic shift in agency. This sense of spatial and temporal autonomy allows them to structure their days around personal rhythms and non-work priorities, leading to a heightened feeling of independence. Importantly, this freedom supports not just mental comfort but also productivity, as participants find themselves more focused, creative, and in tune with their tasks when freed from rigid office schedules. The fusion of freedom and responsibility appears to reframe work from being an obligation to an opportunity.

"Digital labor gives me flexibility and freedom while working. The ability to work from wherever I want, whenever I want, is a huge advantage." (Participant 11)

"It means flexibility and independence to me. I can plan my time and work from home without leaving the house." (Participant 14)

"I can work from anywhere, anytime, and this gives me great flexibility." (Participant 13)

The psychological gains of digital work are not only inwardly experienced but also intersect with broader aspects of everyday life. The clearest manifestation of this lies in the ways digital labor enhances work-life balance. Participants consistently refer to how working from home or on their own schedule allows them to invest more in family life and personal well-being. This balance is not a secondary bonus; it is a core benefit that many actively strive to preserve. The luxury of easing into work with morning routines, the absence of commutes, and the capacity to integrate social interaction throughout the day are often celebrated as transformative improvements. However, some also acknowledge that without mindful strategies, the same conditions that support balance can lead to physical strain or social withdrawal, especially in long-term remote settings.

"Digital labor helps us achieve a better work-life balance. Working from home lets us manage tasks more comfortably and spend more time with our families." (Participant 15)

"Waking up and starting work while sipping coffee is a luxury. Thanks to digital tools, I can complete my projects more efficiently and quickly." (Participant 9)

"Being constantly at the computer tires my eyes and back. Working on digital platforms sometimes reduces face-to-face communication with colleagues." (Participant 10)

This perceived work-life balance facilitated by digital labor not only improves day-to-day experiences but also strengthens long-term job satisfaction and emotional well-being. Participants feel less constrained by traditional work structures and more in control

of their time, which allows them to incorporate leisure, caregiving, and personal development into their schedules more fluidly. Importantly, this sense of equilibrium is not limited to convenience it also serves as a foundation for sustainable work engagement. Many participants describe how this balance prevents burnout, fosters emotional resilience, and enhances their overall quality of life. Yet, this positive effect depends on the ability to manage boundaries effectively; without discipline, some admit that the lines between work and home can blur, diluting the advantages they initially celebrated.

"Digital labor lets me keep work-life balance intact. Remote work enables us to manage our workflow more comfortably and spend more time with our families." (Participant 13)

"It's important to protect work-life balance. Remote options help us manage our routines while still being with family." (Participant 15)

"I now have time for both work and social life. This reduces my stress and makes me feel psychologically better." (Participant 9)

Contributions of digital labor to professional development are also striking. Many participants emphasized how digital tools give them direct access to learning platforms, online courses, and global communities of practice. This access supports a culture of continual self-improvement and career advancement. Particularly in fields like software development and digital marketing, staying current with technological trends is not optional it is a necessity. Participants value how online environments offer low-barrier entry to specialized knowledge and real-time skill application. These opportunities increase not only their competence but also their sense of self-efficacy and professional identity. Development, in this sense, is not an abstract goal but a daily practice embedded in their digital work routines.

"I keep taking new courses and trying to improve myself. Last year I took a class on AI and machine learning, which taught me many new skills." (Participant 12)

"Digital platforms help me complete projects more efficiently. I can communicate quickly and effectively with clients." (Participant 17)

"I'm constantly working on improving myself. The digital world's competitiveness pushes us to be more creative and innovative." (Participant 14)

The global connectivity enabled by digital labor marks another critical benefit. For many participants, the ability to work with clients and teams across borders has expanded their professional horizons in ways that traditional work environments could not. They describe this connectivity as both practical and aspirational it allows for immediate collaboration on international projects while also offering a sense of global citizenship. Exposure to diverse cultural practices and professional standards is cited as an enriching experience that builds intercultural competence and broadens their perspectives. Digital platforms act not only as tools for task management but as bridges to a transnational labor market where geographical limitations no longer apply.

"Digital labor offers global work opportunities and adds richness to my career. Tools help me finish projects efficiently and make my efforts more valuable." (Participant 10)

"I had a project last month with a client in England. We completed it smoothly through digital platforms." (Participant 12)

"Last month I worked with a financial advisor from the U.S. It was a great experience that enriched my career globally." (Participant 14)

This sense of global connectivity intertwines seamlessly with the flexibility that digital labor affords. Many participants articulated how flexibility is not merely a matter of adjusting work hours but reflects a broader redefinition of autonomy and agency in the workplace. They described being able to choose not only when to work, but how to work setting their own pace, designing their own workflows, and tailoring their environments to personal productivity rhythms. This flexibility is frequently cited as a crucial factor in sustaining long-term engagement and creative output. For those working in creative or cognitively demanding roles, flexibility enables them to align their peak mental energy with their most challenging tasks. It also contributes to a more humane work model, one

that accommodates daily fluctuations in motivation, health, and external responsibilities without compromising performance.

“Working from home helps us manage our processes more comfortably and allows us to spend more time with our families. Tools and software help us run things more efficiently, which gives us real freedom.” (Participant 15)

“I can work whenever and wherever I want, and we manage our projects on digital platforms. That makes the success and earnings in my job more fulfilling.” (Participant 15)

“Flexibility and freedom are key. I plan my time and work without leaving home.” (Participant 14)

The efficiency gains made possible through digital platforms are another central element shaping participants’ positive evaluations. Rather than viewing digital tools as mere conveniences, participants frame them as productivity accelerators and essential instruments in their professional toolkit. With the help of project management software, collaborative platforms, and AI-supported tools, they are able to streamline communication, reduce redundancy, and execute complex tasks more rapidly. Many noted that digital labor reduces bureaucratic overhead and logistical delays, allowing them to focus on what they consider the “real” work. This efficiency leads to shorter turnaround times, higher output, and greater satisfaction for both the workers and their clients. However, a few also cautioned that this increased efficiency can sometimes raise expectations and intensify deadlines, requiring them to self-regulate their pace.

“Thanks to digital tools, I can finish my projects more quickly and efficiently. I manage my time better, and that gives me a big advantage.” (Participant 9)

“We use digital tools to improve efficiency and offer better service. It made me realize how effective digital platforms really are.” (Participant 7)

“For example, I joined a digital illustration course last year, which really helped me. I’m always trying to improve myself in this field.” (Participant 12)

Collectively, the participants’ reflections present digital labor not simply as a novel form of employment, but as a transformative mode of working that reconfigures professional identities, daily habits, and long-term aspirations. By enabling mobility, continuous learning, creative autonomy, and access to a global market, digital labor represents more than a shift in tools it represents a shift in values. The promise of freedom, self-direction, and expanded opportunity resonates deeply with participants, many of whom express not only satisfaction but gratitude for the structures that digital labor affords. And yet, this ideal is not unbounded; its benefits depend heavily on the user’s ability to self-regulate, stay updated, and set firm boundaries between work and rest.

### **Contributions of Digital Labor to Daily Life**

While digital labor brings flexibility and opportunity, participants consistently highlighted the bodily toll of prolonged computer use, especially the lack of physical movement. Many described sitting for extended hours, staring at screens without interruption, and experiencing fatigue that accumulates over time. These routines seem to gradually erode not just physical stamina but also motivation. The repetitive nature of screen-based tasks appears to cause discomfort in the neck, back, and eyes, suggesting that digital labor even when efficient has unintended physiological consequences. For some participants, this tension manifests as a strain that diminishes overall life quality, especially when proper ergonomic practices and breaks are neglected.

“Constantly being in front of the computer tires my eyes and back. Sitting for long hours sometimes causes headaches and neck pain.” (Participant 12)

“Working continuously at the computer can lead to health problems. Eye fatigue, back pain, and general physical discomfort are some of them.” (Participant 11)

“This is why I try to take regular breaks and engage in physical activities.” (Participant 9)

Beyond the physical dimension, participants reported psychological tension stemming from the intense digital immersion their work requires. As their daily routines

become increasingly technology-centered, a subtle form of dependency begins to emerge. This dependency, while enhancing efficiency, has a darker edge: many expressed the feeling of being "always online." The blurred boundary between work and personal time especially for freelancers or remote workers can foster a compulsive relationship with technology. Such relationships often reduce the space for rest, socializing, and even basic disconnection, ultimately undermining mental clarity and emotional resilience.

"Technological developments allow us to manage work processes more effectively. But the problems brought by digitalization, like social isolation and technological dependency, cannot be ignored." (Participant 8)

"Because of digitalization, I'm sometimes isolated. I feel like I have to always be connected, and it affects my stress levels." (Participant 9)

"My interest and skills in technology led me to this field. But having to constantly adapt to new technologies can sometimes be stressful." (Participant 15)

These mental and physical pressures of digital labor are not isolated experiences but rather echo throughout the participants' accounts. Many described how the ongoing exposure to digital platforms amplifies stress, reduces recovery time, and sometimes leads to burnout. The demand to be technologically agile and perpetually responsive contributes to an always-working mindset. Over time, the body's signals such as muscle tension or persistent fatigue serve as warnings that this rhythm is unsustainable without intentional intervention like scheduled breaks or structured offline time.

Social withdrawal emerged as another significant challenge shaped by digital labor. Many participants noted a gradual erosion of in-person contact and spontaneous social exchange due to prolonged remote work. While virtual communication tools exist, they often lack the emotional immediacy of face-to-face interaction. This decline in direct socialization can intensify feelings of loneliness, and in more extreme cases, foster alienation from professional communities or peers. The absence of everyday workplace interactions seems to deprive workers of support structures that are critical for emotional wellbeing.

"Sometimes working on digital platforms reduces face-to-face communication with my colleagues. This leads to a decrease in social interaction." (Participant 9)

"The social isolation brought by digital labor and technological dependency are issues that must not be overlooked." (Participant 12)

"Being deprived of office interactions sometimes makes me feel lonely. To minimize these effects, I take breaks and participate in social activities." (Participant 11)

As these reflections suggest, the downsides of digital labor lie not only in the physical realm but in deeper psychological and social layers as well. The cumulative impact of physical discomfort, constant digital exposure, and weakened social ties can gradually diminish the sense of personal wellbeing. Despite these challenges, many participants also showed a proactive attitude, indicating an awareness of the need to balance the affordances of digital work with self-care strategies. Still, the findings underline that digital labor, while efficient and accessible, requires deliberate structuring to avoid long-term health and social costs.

### **Disadvantages of Digital Labor**

While digital labor offers flexibility and autonomy, it simultaneously imposes subtle and accumulative physical burdens that often go unnoticed until they manifest in serious health issues. Participants recurrently emphasized that remaining sedentary for prolonged periods had become an unavoidable consequence of their work, leading to physical discomfort and even chronic conditions. The absence of movement and sustained focus on screens created a persistent strain, diminishing their physical well-being over time. These discomforts extended beyond momentary fatigue, evolving into a constant backdrop of tension that interfered with their work satisfaction. Even though many participants attempted to mitigate these effects with breaks and stretches, their statements revealed a shared sense of resignation, suggesting that digital work environments, despite

their freedom, silently tax the body. This physical toll, in turn, feeds into the psychological landscape of digital workers, intertwining bodily discomfort with cognitive depletion and emotional disengagement.

"Sitting for long hours in front of the screen really tires my eyes and my back. I try to take breaks, but the pain comes back every day." (Participant 12)

"Staring at the screen for hours often gives me neck pain and headaches, especially when I'm under deadline pressure." (Participant 15)

"Sometimes I feel like my body is deteriorating even though I don't do physically hard work. It's this strange paradox of working digitally." (Participant 9)

"I know I need to move more, but when you're caught up in a task, time flies and suddenly you've been sitting for five hours." (Participant 10)

These embodied experiences of fatigue are not isolated but rather amplified by the cognitive demands and continuous exposure to technology. A recurring concern among participants was the creeping sense of dependency on digital platforms not just as tools, but as environments they felt unable to disconnect from. The need to remain constantly available online generated a form of psychological confinement, where the line between voluntary engagement and compulsive connectivity blurred. The persistent flow of notifications, updates, and tasks left many participants in a state of vigilance, where disengaging from work felt like a dereliction of duty. Over time, this tethering to digital interfaces cultivated feelings of restlessness, mental fatigue, and even guilt associated with stepping away. This internalized pressure diminished the restorative value of personal time, undermining the flexibility that digital labor ostensibly promised.

"Even when I'm not working, I find myself checking my emails and messages just in case. It's like I'm wired to be on alert all the time." (Participant 8)

"I chose this field because I love technology, but now I feel like I can't escape from it. It's always there, waiting for me." (Participant 15)

"The freedom to work from anywhere turns into an obligation to work from everywhere." (Participant 13)

"I sometimes feel anxious if I'm away from my laptop too long, even if there's nothing urgent." (Participant 9)

The isolating nature of digital labor emerged as one of the most deeply felt disadvantages among participants, particularly in how it disrupted social rhythms and eroded a sense of belonging. While remote work allowed autonomy, it also meant the disappearance of spontaneous interactions, shared moments, and collective work culture. Several participants reflected on the loneliness that slowly crept into their routines, replacing communal experiences with solitary labor. This solitude, unlike chosen privacy, was marked by emotional flatness and the fading of interpersonal warmth that typically energizes in-person work. Some individuals acknowledged that their social skills had dulled or that their motivation waned in the absence of co-workers' physical presence. The digital environment, while efficient, seemed to lack the emotional texture that face-to-face collaboration provides leading to a kind of psychological thinning of the workday. This condition, over time, contributed to decreased engagement, lower morale, and in some cases, mild depressive states.

"Working online means I don't talk to anyone all day, and after a while, it gets really lonely." (Participant 9)

"There's no small talk, no spontaneous conversations—just tasks and screens. It feels very mechanical." (Participant 12)

"Sometimes I miss the simple act of having lunch with colleagues. Even that felt like a break from stress." (Participant 11)

"I've noticed that I speak less now, even outside of work. It's like my social muscles are getting weak." (Participant 10)

This growing isolation intersected with another recurring theme: the psychological wear caused by the lack of clear work-life boundaries. Digital labor, despite its flexibility, often extended beyond conventional work hours and invaded participants' personal time.



Without the physical transition between home and workplace, individuals struggled to mentally disengage from tasks. As a result, many experienced a constant undercurrent of stress and cognitive overload, which in turn impacted their sleep, focus, and overall sense of well-being. The home once a space of rest became infused with professional obligations, and this merging of spheres blurred identity boundaries as well. Some participants voiced confusion about when they were “on” or “off” the clock, leading to guilt for not being productive or anxiety over unfinished work even late into the evening.

“I used to enjoy my evenings, but now it feels like I never really stop working. There’s always something left to do.” (Participant 8)

“The days blur together. I can’t tell where work ends and personal life begins.” (Participant 15)

“Even my living room feels like an office now. It’s hard to relax in a space that also causes stress.” (Participant 13)

The physical toll exacted by prolonged digital labor was another frequently emphasized disadvantage, closely linked to participants’ routines of extended screen exposure and sedentary lifestyles. Many reported developing chronic bodily discomforts particularly eye strain, back and neck pain, and joint stiffness as a direct consequence of spending long, uninterrupted hours at their desks. These physical complaints, while sometimes normalized, often disrupted workflow and diminished overall productivity. Participants frequently noted that although digital work increased accessibility and efficiency, it did so at the cost of movement and bodily well-being. A few even mentioned needing medical intervention or physiotherapy to alleviate the long-term effects of their work posture. The irony was not lost on them: in a system meant to increase productivity, their bodies were wearing out faster than before.

“Sitting all day has given me neck and back pain. I used to walk during breaks, now I just sit and scroll.” (Participant 12)

“I never thought working from home would send me to a physical therapist.” (Participant 10)

“Even with ergonomic chairs and screens, I still feel stiff by the end of the day. I miss moving around more.” (Participant 15)

Closely tied to physical strain was the creeping emergence of emotional fatigue—a less visible, but equally profound disadvantage of digital labor. Emotional fatigue manifested through a sense of monotony, reduced creativity, and a growing feeling of psychological detachment from one’s work. The absence of real-time social feedback and camaraderie created an emotional vacuum that many struggled to fill. For creative professionals especially, the lack of shared enthusiasm or collaborative brainstorming sessions reduced the vibrancy of their work. Instead of inspiration, routine often took over, and participants described their days as repetitive, uninspired, and draining. A few admitted that they missed the simple joy of being seen or appreciated by peers a subtle but powerful motivator in traditional workspaces.

“I used to get inspired just by watching others work. Now, I don’t even know what my team is doing.” (Participant 9)

“Everything feels repetitive. There’s no spark, just deadlines.” (Participant 13)

“It’s like I’m producing work, but not really engaging with it emotionally.” (Participant 11)

Cumulatively, these physical and emotional disadvantages of digital labor underscored the paradox faced by participants: the freedom and convenience offered by digital tools often came entangled with costs to health, social connection, and mental clarity. While participants appreciated the autonomy that came with remote digital work, they also expressed a strong need for balance through structured routines, periodic in-person meetings, or digital wellness strategies. Several emphasized the importance of intentional rest, physical exercise, and building virtual communities that mimic the emotional safety of traditional workplaces. Their reflections pointed toward a future

where digital labor must be humanized, not just optimized, in order to sustain long-term productivity and well-being.

### **Future Expectations Regarding Digital Labor**

Participants' perspectives on the future of digital labor reveal a mixture of optimism and concern. Many foresee that digital skills will become increasingly indispensable across a wide range of professions, not only in technology-related sectors but also in fields such as education, design, and communication. The rapid pace of technological advancement has led to a sense of urgency among participants, who feel the constant pressure to remain up-to-date. Digital literacy is no longer perceived as an asset but as a fundamental requirement. Participants associate the mastery of digital tools with increased employability, smoother project execution, and broader access to global markets. The capacity to adapt quickly to evolving tools and platforms is considered essential for long-term success in digital work.

"In the digital world, you have to keep yourself constantly updated and adapt to new technologies. That's why I'm always in a process of learning and development." (Participant 3)

"Digital labor gives me global work opportunities. I can work with clients from different parts of the world, and this adds tremendous richness to my career." (Participant 3)

"With digital tools and platforms, I can complete my projects more efficiently and communicate with clients more effectively." (Participant 2)

Another key expectation for the future involves the normalization of flexible working conditions. Many participants emphasized that the flexibility afforded by digital labor is not just a convenience but a major improvement in quality of life. The ability to choose when and where to work has allowed workers to organize their tasks around personal schedules, family obligations, and preferred work rhythms. This level of autonomy is associated with reduced stress and increased job satisfaction. Participants widely agreed that this flexibility boosts their motivation and creativity, ultimately enhancing the quality of their outputs. They expressed hope that such flexibility will become the default rather than the exception in the years to come.

"Digital labor also means flexibility. I can start working whenever I want without having to go to an office in the morning. It helps me establish a better work-life balance." (Participant 2)

"I can work anytime, anywhere and run our projects through digital platforms. My achievements and earnings in this process are highly satisfying." (Participant 3)

"Digital labor allows me to work with flexibility and freedom. Being able to work anytime and anywhere is a great advantage." (Participant 4)

A closely related expectation is the expansion of personal capacity through constant development. Participants noted that digital labor encourages them to learn continuously and refine their skills in line with industry trends. They spoke about actively engaging in online courses, attending virtual workshops, and exploring interdisciplinary knowledge areas. This self-directed growth was often seen as both a necessity and a reward essential for staying competitive but also intrinsically fulfilling. The intersection of technical competence, global communication, and self-paced learning defines what many saw as the new professional standard. Participants believed that those who invest in skill-building will be the ones to thrive in the evolving digital economy.

"I constantly have to keep myself up to date and adapt to new technologies. So I'm always in a process of learning and development." (Participant 12)

"Digital labor provides a great opportunity to make work processes more efficient and faster. Technological advancements allow us to manage our work more effectively and give us greater flexibility." (Participant 18)

"I've joined multiple training programs to enhance my skills. Last year, I took a course on artificial intelligence and machine learning, which really helped me improve." (Participant 10)

Alongside this drive for growth, participants expressed heightened awareness of increasing competition within digital labor markets. As digital opportunities expand, so too does the number of professionals entering these spaces. Participants noted that while technology lowers the barrier to entry, it simultaneously raises the bar for excellence. This has led to a competitive environment where differentiation through innovation and specialization is critical. Several participants acknowledged the emotional toll of having to consistently outperform peers in a saturated market. Yet, they also viewed competition as a motivating force that drives excellence, fuels learning, and keeps digital professionals sharp.

"But as everyone enters this field, competition increases. That's why we constantly need to improve ourselves." (Participant 5)

"Digital platforms and tools make our work faster and more efficient. That's a huge advantage for expanding our business and entering new markets." (Participant 11)

"The increasing competition pushes us to be more innovative and creative, even though it's exhausting at times." (Participant 12)

Taken together, these expectations portray a future in which digital labor becomes both more inclusive and more demanding. Participants anticipate greater freedom and opportunity, paired with continuous adaptation and high performance standards. While they welcome the expanding global reach and personalized workflows that digital tools enable, they remain acutely aware of the pressures involved. This duality between empowerment and obligation will likely define the next phase of digital labor. Those able to maintain balance between skill acquisition, self-care, and strategic positioning are seen as the ones most likely to succeed. For the participants in this study, the future of digital labor is not simply a matter of technological evolution, but of human resilience and intentional growth.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants' conceptualization of labor not merely as physical effort but also as a mental and emotional investment aligns with contemporary interpretations of classical labor theories. Labor is regarded not only as a productive input but also as a space of self-expression, emotional engagement, and value production, especially in digital contexts. This interpretation reflects a shift from purely transactional understandings of work toward a more subjective, identity-laden model, which has become increasingly salient in post-industrial societies (Dąbrowska et al., 2022). In line with this, participants emphasized that digital tools enable them to execute tasks with greater speed, precision, and autonomy. This supports findings on the instrumental role of digital transformation in enhancing task efficiency and perceived self-efficacy (Davidson & Vaast, 2010).

A core theoretical contribution of this study lies in foregrounding how digital labor, when interpreted through Gen Z's lens, becomes both a site of liberation and a terrain of tension. The values of autonomy, mobility, and continuous development are not abstract ideals but lived practices that shape Gen Z's daily labor experiences. This aligns with, yet also extends, existing literature by demonstrating that the intersection of digital capitalism and generational identity produces distinct subjectivities a phenomenon underexplored in empirical studies to date.

Despite these positive evaluations, the findings reveal underlying physical and psychological costs. Many participants expressed concern about ergonomic strain and cognitive overload due to prolonged screen time and lack of physical movement. These experiences confirm prior studies linking sedentary digital work to physical health risks such as eye strain, musculoskeletal discomfort, and chronic fatigue (Andersen et al., 2011; Owen et al., 2010). However, unlike in older generations, Gen Z workers tend to normalize such conditions as part of the "price of freedom," thereby internalizing risk in exchange for autonomy an insight that sharpens critical readings of digital precarity.

One of the most original empirical insights concerns participants' narratives of digital dependency and emotional exhaustion, which reflect a blurring of personal and

professional boundaries. The always-on culture, reinforced by mobile technologies and performance expectations, transforms flexibility into an obligation, echoing concerns raised in critical digital labor theory (Kim & Chon, 2022; Andreassen et al., 2012). This paradox between control and control loss emerges as a central tension shaping Gen Z's work experience.

Social isolation was another recurring theme, with participants describing feelings of disconnection, emotional flatness, and loss of informal support networks due to the absence of face-to-face interaction. While prior studies have acknowledged this outcome, especially in the post-pandemic landscape (Annamalai, Vasunandan, & Mehta, 2024; Turkle, 2011), this research reveals a generation-specific sensitivity to these dynamics. Gen Z participants raised on digital media do not necessarily reject digital tools, but express a strong desire for hybrid relationality: they want the option to choose when and how they engage socially, rather than being forced into digital exclusivity.

From a practical standpoint, this finding suggests that organizations targeting Gen Z talent should not assume that digital-native employees are indifferent to social presence. Designing digital labor infrastructures that integrate opportunities for informal socialization, virtual community-building, and periodic in-person interaction may improve retention, cohesion, and well-being among younger workers.

Participants also underscored the importance of continuous learning and skills development in navigating the dynamic demands of digital labor. Unlike traditional work structures where career advancement followed predefined paths, Gen Z workers view professional growth as a self-directed and platform-mediated journey. Many participants described using digital labor not only to earn income but to build personal brands, acquire certifications, and join global learning communities. This finding expands upon existing literature on lifelong learning (Ellis & Goodyear, 2010) by showing that for Gen Z, skill development is not supplemental but central to labor identity. The perceived link between employability and adaptability encourages a proactive learning mindset, which can be leveraged by organizations through micro-learning modules, mentoring systems, and open-access educational resources (Lazar, Zbuche, & Pinzaru, 2023).

Another significant contribution of this study lies in its attention to global connectivity as both an opportunity and a form of empowerment. Participants frequently highlighted how digital platforms allowed them to collaborate with international clients, expand cultural competencies, and access new labor markets. While prior research has examined the globalizing effect of digital tools (Chesbrough, 2010; Lopez, Lopez, & Abadiano, 2023), this study uniquely captures how Gen Z perceives global engagement as a baseline expectation rather than an exceptional benefit. They see the global stage not as a stretch goal, but as an everyday working reality. This perspective redefines the boundaries of labor and positions Gen Z as boundaryless digital professionals who value location-independent autonomy and cross-cultural fluency.

Closely related to this is the central theme of flexibility and autonomy, which participants consistently framed not merely as perks but as non-negotiable conditions for job satisfaction. The freedom to organize time, select projects, and define personal productivity rhythms contributes significantly to motivation and psychological well-being. While existing literature affirms the positive effects of flexible work on job satisfaction (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Kossek et al., 2010), this study deepens that understanding by showing how Gen Z internalizes flexibility as a moral and professional right, not just a circumstantial benefit. Consequently, rigid organizational systems are perceived not as stable, but as alienating or even obsolete. Employers hoping to retain young talent must therefore shift from control-based to trust-based models of management.

Nevertheless, this autonomy comes at a cost. Participants also described the pressures of increasing competition in digital environments, where visibility, innovation, and self-promotion become prerequisites for survival. Unlike traditional labor markets that reward tenure or hierarchy, digital platforms reward performance, differentiation,

and constant presence. This accelerates the pace of self-optimization and intensifies the emotional labor associated with maintaining a professional identity. Several participants described experiencing burnout, self-doubt, or imposter syndrome findings that align with critical studies on platform labor and entrepreneurial anxiety (Johnson et al., 2016). Importantly, however, participants did not reject competition; instead, they viewed it as a disciplinary mechanism that pushes them to excel. This paradox of empowerment through pressure constitutes one of the most complex features of Gen Z's relationship to digital labor.

In sum, the findings of this study present a nuanced portrait of Generation Z as digitally fluent yet emotionally taxed; autonomous yet structurally vulnerable; globally connected yet socially isolated. From a theoretical standpoint, the study contributes to labor sociology by showing how digital capitalism and generational habitus intersect to shape new forms of labor subjectivity. Empirically, it offers granular insights into how flexibility, precarity, and identity formation co-evolve in digital work settings.

From a practical perspective, the implications for organizational policy and HR strategy are substantial. Companies aiming to recruit and retain Gen Z workers must design work environments that prioritize autonomy, continuous development, psychological safety, and hybrid interaction spaces. This includes rethinking performance evaluation systems, investing in digital wellness initiatives, and offering transparent career progression pathways. Above all, employers must recognize that for Gen Z, work is not just a task to complete it is a domain of self-actualization, social meaning, and value alignment.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study offers a generationally informed perspective on how digital labor is experienced, negotiated, and internalized by members of Generation Z within Turkey's private sector. By integrating phenomenological insights with critical labor theory, the research reveals that digital labor is not merely a mode of task execution for Gen Z but a domain through which identity, autonomy, and values are expressed. This intersection of flexibility, precarity, and digital fluency constitutes the foundation of a new labor subjectivity one defined by both empowerment and vulnerability.

The findings carry several practical implications. First, organizations must recognize that Gen Z workers place high value on autonomy, meaningful work, and continuous development. Designing roles and workflows that enable temporal flexibility, learning integration, and cross-functional mobility is likely to enhance both engagement and retention. Second, the negative effects of digital immersion such as social isolation, emotional fatigue, and physical strain necessitate proactive human resource strategies. These may include hybrid interaction opportunities, digital wellness programs, and periodic in-person gatherings that restore a sense of collective belonging.

At the policy level, companies and institutional stakeholders should revisit performance metrics, onboarding processes, and leadership models to align with Gen Z's expectations of participation, feedback, and personal relevance. Hierarchical, static systems are increasingly at odds with the expectations of a generation raised in fast-paced, interactive digital ecosystems. Equally important is ensuring that digital upskilling is accessible and responsive, as the ability to adapt to new tools remains essential for long-term employability.

This study also opens avenues for future inquiry. Comparative cross-national research could illuminate how digital labor is differently experienced by Gen Z cohorts across diverse economic or cultural contexts. Additionally, more longitudinal studies are needed to understand how sustained exposure to digital work environments affects career trajectories, mental health, and social integration over time. Ultimately, this research demonstrates that Generation Z is not simply adapting to the digital economy they are actively shaping its contours. To support this transformation constructively, labor systems

must evolve in ways that foster not only productivity, but also dignity, adaptability, and psychological sustainability.

## REFERENCES

- Achmad, L., Noermijati, Rofiaty, & Irawanto, D. (2023). Job satisfaction and employee engagement as mediators of the relationship between talent development and intention to stay in Generation Z workers. *International Journal of Professional Business Review*.
- Adıgüzel, O., Batur, H. Z., & Eksili, N. (2014). Kuşakların değişen yüzü ve Y kuşağı ile ortaya çıkan yeni çalışma tarzı: Mobil yakalılar. *Süleyman Demirel University Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 1(19), 165–182.
- Albrychiewicz-Słocińska, A. (2024). Knowledge exchange in the context of remote work—Generation Z perspective. *European Conference on Knowledge Management*, 25(1), 10–17.
- Altınok, M. (2011). Üretken ve üretken olmayan emek ayırımı üzerine bir değerlendirme: Adam Smith'in "emeği" mi? Karl Marx'ın "değeri" mi? *Cumhuriyet University İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi*, 12(1).
- Andersen, L. L., Mortensen, O. S., Hansen, J. V., Burr, H., & Holtermann, A. (2011). A prospective cohort study on severe pain as a risk factor for long-term sickness absence in manual and sedentary occupations. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 21(3), 330–342.
- Andreassen, C. S., Griffiths, M. D., Gjertsen, S. R., Krossbakken, E., Kvam, S., & Pallesen, S. (2012). The relationships between behavioral addictions and the five-factor model of personality. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 2(2), 90–99.
- Annamalai, S., Vasunandan, A., & Mehta, A. (2024). Social isolation and loneliness among Generation Z employees: Can emotional intelligence help mitigate? *Cogent Business & Management*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2441474>
- Bejtkovsky, J. (2016). The employees of baby boomers generation, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z in selected Czech corporations as conceivers of development and competitiveness in their corporation. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 8(4), 105–123.
- Bencsik, A., Juhász, T., & Horváth-Csikós, G. (2016). Y and Z generations at workplaces. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 6, 90–106.
- Betz, F. (2003). *Managing technological innovation: Competitive advantage from change*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Chesbrough, H. (2010). Open innovation: A new paradigm for understanding industrial innovation. In *Open innovation: Researching a new paradigm* (pp. 1–12). Oxford University Press.
- Costanza, D. P., Rudolph, C. W., & Zacher, H. (2023). Are generations a useful concept? *Acta Psychologica*, 241, 104059. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2023.104059>
- Dąbrowska, J., Almpapoulou, A., Brem, A., Chesbrough, H., Cucino, V., Di Minin, A., Giones, F., Hakala, H., Marullo, C., Mention, A.-L., Mortara, L., Nørskov, S., Nylund, P. A., Oddo, C. M., Radziwon, A., & Ritala, P. (2022). Digital transformation, for better or worse: A critical multi-level research agenda. *R&D Management*, 52(5), 930–954. <https://doi.org/10.1111/radm.12531>
- Davidson, E., & Vaast, E. (2010). Digital entrepreneurship and its sociomaterial enactment. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 34(5), 763–790.
- Dorschel, R. (2022). Reconsidering digital labour: Bringing tech workers into the debate. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 37(2), 288–307. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ntwe.12225>
- Ellis, R. A., & Goodyear, P. (2010). *Students' experiences of e-learning in higher education: The ecology of sustainable innovation*. Routledge.
- Erdoğan, T. (2018). *Sosyal bilimler: İnsan ve toplum*. Akademisyen Kitabevi.
- Fan, A., Shin, H. W., Shi, J. (Jade), & Wu, L. (2023). Young people share, but do so differently: An empirical comparison of peer-to-peer accommodation consumption between Millennials and Generation Z. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 64(3), 322–337. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19389655221119463>
- Fuchs, C. (2013). *Digital labour and Karl Marx*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315880075>
- Fuchs, C. (2014). Digital prosumption labour on social media in the context of the capitalist regime of time. *Time & Society*, 23(1), 97–123. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X13502117>
- Fuchs, C. (2015). Dallas Smythe today – The audience commodity, the digital labour debate, Marxist political economy and critical theory. In *Brill Companion to Marxism and Media Studies* (pp. 494–529). [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004291416\\_019](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004291416_019)
- Fuchs, C. (2016). Digital labor and imperialism. *Monthly Review*, 67(8), 14–22. [https://doi.org/10.14452/MR-067-08-2016-01\\_2](https://doi.org/10.14452/MR-067-08-2016-01_2)
- Fuchs, C., & Sandoval, M. (2014). Digital workers of the world unite! A framework for critically theorising and analysing digital labour. *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique*, 12(2), 486–563. <https://doi.org/10.31269/triplec.v12i2.549>

- Fuchs, C., & Sevignani, S. (2013). What is digital labour? What is digital work? What's their difference? And why do these questions matter for understanding social media? *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique*, 11(2), 237–293. <https://doi.org/10.31269/triplec.v11i2.461>
- Gajendran, R. S., & Harrison, D. A. (2007). The good, the bad, and the unknown about telecommuting: Meta-analysis of psychological mediators and individual consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(6), 1524–1541.
- Göçer, F. (2022). Gerçekliğin içinde sanalın gölgesinde: Öznenin gayri-maddi ve dijital emeği. *NOSYON: Uluslararası Toplum ve Kültür Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 9, 11–23.
- Güven, Ö. (2023). Dijital emek ve alışveriş: Kamusal bir deneyim ve müştereklik talebi olarak kullanıcı incelemeleri. *İletişim Kuram ve Araştırma Dergisi*. <https://doi.org/10.47998/ikad.1288753>
- Güzel, D., & Aydın, G. (2021). Covid-19 döneminde uzaktan çalışma sisteminde iş performansını etkileyen faktörler: Banka çalışanları üzerine bir uygulama. *Ardahan University İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 3(2), 128–133.
- Huws, U. (2018). *Küresel dijital ekonomide emek* (M. Şahin, Trans.). Yordam Kitap.
- Johnson, R. D., Gueutal, H. G., & Falbe, C. M. (2016). Technology, trainees, metacognitive activity and e-learning effectiveness. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 23(6), 545–564.
- Kayın, M. (2019). Gayri maddi emeğin görünimleri: “Freelance tasarımcılar”. *ARTS: Artuklu Sanat ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*(1), 42–59. <https://doi.org/10.46372/arts.570196>
- Kim, K., & Chon, M.-G. (2022). When work and life boundaries are blurred: The effect of after-hours work communication through communication technology on employee outcomes. *Journal of Communication Management*, 26. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ICOM-06-2022-0073>
- Konakay, G. (2018). Y kuşağı değerlerinin kariyer tercihleri açısından incelenmesi. *Girişimcilik ve Kalkınma Dergisi*, 13(1), 79–92.
- Kossek, E. E., Lautsch, B. A., & Eaton, S. C. (2010). Telecommuting, control, and boundary management: Correlates of policy use and practice, job control, and work-family effectiveness. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 68(2), 347–367.
- Lazar, M.-A., Zbucnea, A., & Pinzaru, F. (2023). The Emerging Generation Z Workforce in the Digital World: A Literature Review on Cooperation and Transformation. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Business Excellence*, 17(1), 1991–2001. <https://doi.org/10.2478/picbe-2023-0175>
- Leslie, B., Anderson, C., Bickham, C., Horman, J., Overly, A., Gentry, C., ... King, J. (2021). Generation Z perceptions of a positive workplace environment. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 33(3), 171–187. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10672-021-09366-2>
- Lopez, E. N., Lopez, B., & Abadiano, M. (2023). *Understanding Generation Z, The New Generation of Learners: A Technological-Motivational-Learning Theory*. 44, 770–784.
- Machová, R., Korcsmáros, E., Šeben, Z., Fehér, L., & Tóth, Z. (2021). Developing the competences of Generation Z with innovative teaching methods in the context of the requirement of labour market by Industry 4.0. *International Journal of Advanced Corporate Learning (ijAC)*, 14(2), 17–26. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijac.v14i2.24993>
- Mahmoud, A. B., Fuxman, L., Mohr, I., Reisel, W. D., & Grigoriou, N. (2020). “We aren’t your reincarnation!” workplace motivation across X, Y and Z generations. *International Journal of Manpower*, 42(1), 193–209. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-09-2019-0448>
- Mannheim, K. (1993). *From Karl Mannheim*. Transaction Publishers.
- McCourt, D. M. (2012). The “problem of generations” revisited: Karl Mannheim and the sociology of knowledge in international relations. In B. J. Steele & J. M. Acuff (Eds.), *Theory and application of the “generation” in international relations and politics* (pp. 47–70). Palgrave Macmillan US. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137011565\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137011565_3)
- McCrindle, M. (2018). *The ABC of XYZ: Understanding the global generations*.
- McCutcheon, C., & Hitchens, M. (2020). eSport and the exploitation of digital labour. *The Journal of Fandom Studies*, 8(1), 65–81. [https://doi.org/10.1386/jfs\\_00010\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jfs_00010_1)
- Meret, C., Fioravanti, S., Iannotta, M., & Gatti, M. (2018). The digital employee experience: Discovering Generation Z. In C. Rossignoli, F. Virili, & S. Za (Eds.), *Digital technology and organizational change* (pp. 241–256). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62051-0\\_20](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62051-0_20)
- Miller, N. (2014). Workplace trends in office space: Implications for future office demand. *Journal of Corporate Real Estate*, 16(3), 159–181. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCRE-07-2013-0016>
- Mude, G., & Undale, S. (2023). Social media usage: A comparison between Generation Y and Generation Z in India. *International Journal of E-Business Research*.



- Narayanan, S. (2022). Does Generation Z value and reward corporate social responsibility practices? *Journal of Marketing Management*, 38(9–10), 903–937. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2022.2070654>
- Neves, H. D. C. (2025). The Anxious Generation Theory and Generation Z Behaviour in the Workplace: A Correlation Analysis. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 16(1), 74. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijba.v16n1p74>
- Oral, T. (2024). Dijital emek platformlarında algoritmik yönetim ve sendikalar. *Sağlık Akademisyenleri Dergisi*, 11(1), 170–180.
- Orea-Giner, A., & Fusté-Forné, F. (2023). The way we live, the way we travel: Generation Z and sustainable consumption in food tourism experiences. *British Food Journal*.
- Organ, İ., & Yavuz, E. (2017). Emek ve sermayenin vergilendirilmesine yönelik uygulamaların analizi. *Pamukkale Journal of Eurasian Socioeconomic Studies*, 4(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.5505/pjess.2017.30502>
- Owen, N., Healy, G. N., Matthews, C. E., & Dunstan, D. W. (2010). Too much sitting: The population-health science of sedentary behavior. *Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews*, 38(3), 105–113.
- Saha, P., & Kiran, K. B. (2022). What insisted baby boomers adopt unified payment interface as a payment mechanism?: An exploration of drivers of behavioral intention. *Journal of Advances in Management Research*, 19(5), 792–809. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JAMR-01-2022-0022>
- Savran, S., Tonak, E. A., & Satlıgan, N. (2012). *Kapital'in izinde*. Yordam Kitap.
- Savul, G. (2015). Gayri-maddi emeğin üretkenleşmesi: “Talihsizliğin” görünümüleri. *Çalışma ve Toplum*, 1(44), 293–322.
- Seemiller, C., & Grace, M. (2015). *Generation Z goes to college*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Sidorcuka, I., & Chesnovicka, A. (2017). Methods of attraction and retention of Generation Z staff. *CBU International Conference Proceedings*, 5, 807–814. <https://doi.org/10.12955/cbup.v5.1030>
- Spitznagel, E. (2020). Generation Z is bigger than millennials—and they're out to change the world.
- Törhönen, M., Hassan, L., Sjöblom, M., & Hamari, J. (2019). Play, playbour or labour? The relationships between perception of occupational activity and outcomes among streamers and YouTubers. In *Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences 2019 (HICSS-52)*.
- Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. Basic Books.
- Wolfinger, E., & McCrindle, M. (2014). *The ABC of XYZ*.
- Zhou, M., & Liu, S.-D. (2021). Becoming precarious playbour: Chinese migrant youth on the Kuaishou video-sharing platform. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 32(3), 322–340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10353046211037090>



## Araştırma Makalesi

# A STRATEGIC ACTOR IN THE ENERGY CORRIDOR: AN ANALYSIS OF TÜRKİYE'S GEOPOLITICAL POSITION IN THE CONTEXT OF GEOPOLITICAL THEORIES

Seniyye Kalyoncuoğlu<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Doktora Öğrencisi, [seniyyebayram@gmail.com](mailto:seniyyebayram@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9287-165X>

**Abstract:** Located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, Türkiye holds a strategic position in the transportation of energy resources from supplier regions such as the Caspian, the Middle East, and Russia to major consumer markets in Europe. This study analyzes Türkiye's geopolitical role in global energy politics within the framework of classical and contemporary geopolitical theories. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as Mackinder's Heartland Theory, Spykman's Rimland Theory, Mahan's Sea Power Doctrine, Seversky's Air Power Theory, Huntington's Clash of Civilizations, Fukuyama's End of History, and Brzezinski's Grand Chessboard Strategy, the study argues that Türkiye's energy policy is shaped by a multidimensional geopolitical structure. The study employs a qualitative content analysis based on classical and contemporary geopolitical theories to examine Türkiye's energy strategy in a theoretical-historical context. While classical geopolitical theories emphasize geographic determinism and military capabilities, contemporary approaches highlight ideological orientations, civilizational identities, and soft power instruments. Within this theoretical framework, Türkiye's involvement in projects such as TANAP, BTC, and TurkStream reflects its strategic ambition not only to act as a transit country but also to become a regional energy hub. The study concludes that Türkiye's geopolitical importance in energy security arises from a combination of multilayered factors including its geographic location, infrastructural investments, regional diplomacy, and military modernization. Therefore, understanding Türkiye's strategic position in the context of energy politics requires an interdisciplinary perspective that integrates geography, international relations, and energy economics.

**Keywords:** Geopolitics, Geopolitical Theories, Energy Security, Strategic Energy Corridors

## ENERJİ KORİDORUNDA STRATEJİK BİR AKTÖR: JEOPOLİTİK TEORİLER BAĞLAMINDA TÜRKİYE'NİN JEOPOLİTİK KONUMUNUN ANALİZİ

**Öz:** Avrupa, Asya ve Orta Doğu'nun kesişim noktasında yer alan Türkiye, Hazar, Orta Doğu ve Rusya gibi tedarikçi bölgelerden Avrupa'daki büyük tüketici pazarlara enerji kaynaklarının taşınmasında stratejik bir konuma sahiptir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin küresel enerji siyasetindeki jeopolitik rolünü klasik ve çağdaş jeopolitik teoriler çerçevesinde analiz etmektedir. Mackinder'in Kalpgâh Teorisi, Spykman'ın Kıyı Kuşak Teorisi, Mahan'ın Deniz Hakimiyeti Doktrini, Seversky'nin Hava Hakimiyeti Teorisi, Huntington'ın Medeniyetler Çatışması, Fukuyama'nın Tarihin Sonu ve Brzezinski'nin Büyük Satranç Tahtası stratejisi gibi kuramsal çerçevelerden yararlanarak, Türkiye'nin enerji politikasının çok boyutlu bir jeopolitik yapı tarafından şekillendirildiğini öne sürmektedir. Çalışma, Türkiye'nin enerji stratejisini kuramsal-tarihsel bir bağlamda incelemek için klasik ve çağdaş jeopolitik teorilere dayanan nitel bir içerik analizi yöntemi kullanmaktadır. Klasik jeopolitik teoriler, coğrafi determinizm ve askerî kapasitelere odaklanırken; çağdaş yaklaşımlar ideolojik eğilimler, medeniyet temelli kimlikler ve yumuşak güç unsurlarına dikkat çekmektedir. Bu kuramsal perspektifler çerçevesinde değerlendirildiğinde, Türkiye'nin TANAP, BTC ve TurkStream gibi projelere katılımı, ülkenin yalnızca bir enerji geçiş ülkesi olmadığını, aynı zamanda bölgesel düzeyde bir enerji merkezi olma yönündeki artan stratejik hedeflerini yansıtmaktadır. Araştırma, Türkiye'nin enerji güvenliğindeki jeopolitik öneminin; coğrafi konumu, altyapı yatırımları, bölgesel diplomasisi ve askerî modernizasyonu gibi çok katmanlı faktörlerin birleşiminden kaynaklandığı sonucuna varmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, Türkiye'nin enerji siyaseti bağlamındaki stratejik pozisyonunu anlamak, yalnızca mekânsal avantajlarla sınırlı olmayan; coğrafya, uluslararası ilişkiler ve enerji ekonomisini bütünleştiren disiplinlerarası bir bakış açısını gerekli kılmaktadır.

**Atf:** Kalyoncuoğlu, S. A Strategic Actor in the Energy Corridor: An Analysis of Türkiye's Geopolitical Position in the Context of Geopolitical Theories. MALUMAT, (1), 69–106.

Geliş Tarihi: 10/06/2025

Kabul Tarihi: 08/07/2025



**Telif Hakkı:** © 2024. (CC BY) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Enerji Güvenliği, Jeopolitik, Jeopolitik Teoriler, Stratejik Enerji Koridorları

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The growing global demand for energy has transformed access to energy resources and their secure transportation from merely technical and economic issues into strategic and geopolitical matters. In this context, energy has become one of the central elements in 21<sup>st</sup>-century geopolitical competition. The scarcity of energy resources has led to new areas of cooperation and conflict between consumer and producer countries, while transit countries have found an opportunity to redefine their geopolitical value through energy. At precisely this point, Türkiye assumes a critical position as a bridge between the energy-rich regions of the Middle East, the Caspian Basin and Russia, and the energy-consuming markets of Europe.

Türkiye's geopolitical location renders it not only a significant transit route but also a potential energy hub that could enhance its regional power projection. When this potential is evaluated considering both classical geopolitical theories and contemporary approaches, it necessitates a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between energy and politics. Classical theories such as Mackinder's Heartland, Spykman's Rimland, and Mahan's theory of sea power offer a fundamental framework for explaining Türkiye's energy geopolitics, while modern energy security perspectives emphasize the fragility of energy supply chains and the need for new diplomatic initiatives. This study aims to analyze Türkiye's energy geopolitics within the axis of geopolitical theories and opens for discussion Türkiye's regional and global position through energy transit routes, pipeline projects, and the implications of foreign policy. In doing so, it seeks to provide both a theoretical contribution and a more systematic evaluation of current energy-politics relations.

In recent years, the growing complexity of global energy politics has underscored the need to reevaluate how countries like Türkiye navigate their geopolitical environments. Although Türkiye is frequently portrayed as a natural energy bridge due to its location, such descriptions often remain at a descriptive level and fail to provide a theoretically grounded understanding of its strategic agency. Most existing studies either emphasize the technical infrastructure of energy transit or analyze bilateral relations without incorporating a coherent theoretical framework. This study addresses this gap by integrating classical and contemporary geopolitical theories with empirical observations to offer a more nuanced analysis of Türkiye's energy diplomacy. In doing so, it critically interrogates the assumptions underlying traditional geopolitical thinking while proposing a multidimensional approach to understand Türkiye's evolving role in the global energy landscape.

The primary reason for incorporating theoretical frameworks into this study is to evaluate Türkiye's strategic position in energy geopolitics not only through empirical observations, but also through more conceptually grounded and analytically consistent framework. Although classical geopolitical theories are reductionist and historically

contested, they nonetheless offer certain analytical insights. In the case of Türkiye, these theories can be employed to conceptualize elements such as energy transit corridors and its position as a continental bridge. Rather than being treated as absolute truths, these theories are used as analytical frameworks whose limitations are fully acknowledged. Classical theories help explain Türkiye's geopolitical relevance through its control of key land and maritime routes. Meanwhile, contemporary perspectives highlight the multidimensional nature of energy politics by drawing attention to cultural identities, ideological orientations, and soft power instruments. The integration of these theories serves to demonstrate that Türkiye is not simply a passive transit country, but an active and dynamic actor that constructs and navigates its energy diplomacy strategically. By engaging with these theoretical lenses, the study underscores that geopolitical processes are not solely the product of practical reflexes, but are shaped by historical legacies, spatial positioning, and normative strategies. To guide the analytical trajectory of this study and ensure a structured theoretical evaluation, several working hypotheses are proposed. These hypotheses aim to assess Türkiye's position within the global energy landscape not merely through geographic determinism but by incorporating diplomatic agency, infrastructural strategy, and normative orientations. The study posits that Türkiye's geographical location and transit infrastructure are essential, yet insufficient, for its emergence as a strategic energy actor; that classical geopolitical theories remain relevant but require revision in light of contemporary complexities; that Türkiye actively constructs its geopolitical role through multilateral diplomacy and regional balancing; and finally, that cultural and ideological frameworks such as Huntington's and Fukuyama's offer useful, albeit partial, lenses for interpreting Türkiye's energy diplomacy. These hypotheses will be evaluated throughout the analysis and reflected upon in the concluding section.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Energy

Energy has always held significant importance for states due to its role in economic development, national defense, and security. Especially in the post-war era, for many policymakers, the importance of energy grew in proportion to the belief that governments must exert control over its production and distribution. As a result, energy has evolved from being a mere necessity of life into a strategic asset that states must secure. Developments centered around energy typically stem from basic needs and derive meaning through the processes of production, consumption, and distribution (Yücel, 1994, p. 3). In general, energy resources are classified into two categories: non-renewable and renewable. Renewable energy sources are defined as those that allow the continuous utilization of naturally replenished energy without altering its qualitative and quantitative characteristics, and that can persist in the same form through nature's cyclical processes (Özkaya, 2004, p. 3). The essential role of energy in enhancing and sustaining quality of life across various sectors, combined with the relative scarcity of renewable resources, brings forth the issue of sharing limited energy supplies. During the Cold War,

in a bipolar international system, which became evident that states sought to consolidate power through the control of oil—an indispensable component of industrialization—and even resorted to colonizing underdeveloped regions for this purpose (Yılmaz & Kalkan, 2017, p. 170).

Despite the growing popularity of renewable resources in recent years due to the depletion of non-renewable ones, the absence of viable substitutes for natural gas and petroleum in numerous sectors has resulted in continued reliance on these energy sources to meet demand (Karagöl & Kaya, 2014, p. 9). While energy offers significant advantages, increasing reliance on natural gas has elevated it to a central issue on global policy agendas. Energy, long used as a political tool, became explicitly inseparable from politics after the 1973 oil crisis. Fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas may not provide direct military superiority, but they confer considerable economic leverage as strategic commodities. On a global scale, there is no clear correlation between a country's energy wealth and its overall development. For example, countries rich in energy resources—such as Venezuela and many in the Middle East—have generally lagged Western powers in terms of military capability and broader development indicators. Moreover, the potential of energy to influence military advantage, the economic and political instability caused by disruptions in supply, and the need for political intervention in response to price volatility are among the key reasons why energy cannot be disentangled from political considerations (Yücel, 1994, p. 9).

## 2.2. Energy Security

Energy security refers to the capacity to satisfy energy needs from uninterrupted and reliable sources at affordable prices. Numerous studies have examined the origins of this concept. According to Yergin, energy security emerged as a political concern in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, primarily due to the challenge of ensuring oil supplies for military operations (Yergin, 2009). He attributes this transformation to Winston Churchill's decision on the eve of World War I to switch the British navy's fuel from coal to oil. This shift, favoring oil from then-Persia over domestic coal from Wales, underscored the strategic importance of fuel diversity in ensuring secure and predictable energy supplies (Yergin, 2006, p. 70).

Although it has been implicitly addressed in classical works, energy security has re-emerged as a prominent topic of research in recent decades (Cherp & Jewell, 2014, p. 416). Following the oil crises of the 1970s, the concept evolved to encompass a broad range of energy sectors and policy dimensions. The Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre defines energy security as the ability of an economy to maintain a stable and timely energy supply at prices that do not hinder economic performance. To evaluate energy security, APERC outlines four dimensions: availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability (APERC, 2007). Building on this framework, Cherp and Jewell argue that the various interpretations of energy security do not indicate the presence of multiple concepts but rather reflect how a single concept adapts to different circumstances. In essence, energy security embodies multiple contextual meanings rather than distinct definitions, leading to varied national strategies and priorities. As a result, establishing a universally precise

definition suitable for international comparisons is neither feasible nor necessary (Cherp & Jewell, 2014, p. 416).

One contributing factor to this conceptual ambiguity is the broad range of risks identified across different categories in the literature. The International Energy Agency broadly defines energy security as the ability to access uninterrupted energy sources at affordable prices (IEA, 2020). Under this definition, supply, demand, geopolitical tensions, and market dynamics emerge as the fundamental components of energy security (World Economic Forum & CERA, 2006). A more nuanced analysis—one that considers the questions “Security for whom?”, “Security of what values?”, and “Security against which threats?”—offers a more comprehensive view, often lacking in classical energy security studies (Cherp & Jewell, 2014, p. 420). The World Bank Group, for example, categorizes countries by their economic development levels, domestic energy resources, and their role in global energy demand when assessing their energy security profiles (World Bank Group, 2005, p. 3). While major wars and Cold War dynamics have shaped the historical trajectory of energy security, the modern conceptualization of the term crystallized during the oil embargoes that followed the Arab-Israeli conflicts. In the 1970s and 1980s, energy security was largely defined by the principles of supply diversification and continuity, particularly concerning oil for OECD and oil-importing countries (Çelikpala, 2014, p. 81). In 1975, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger famously declared his willingness to go to war to protect critical oil resources and prevent disruptions in Persian Gulf energy flows (Klare, 2001, p. 33).

By the 1990s, a series of geopolitical and economic developments—including the Gulf Wars, the Arab Spring, revolutionary movements in the Middle East, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict—broadened the scope of energy security to include resources beyond oil (Yılmaz & Kalkan, 2017, p. 176). Other major turning points—such as globalization-driven industrialization, the formation of OPEC and IEA, the Soviet collapse and end of bipolarity, the 9/11 attacks, the Iraq War, and China’s rise as a global economic actor—have all contributed to evolving understandings of energy security (Hatipoğlu, 2019, p. 3). Unlike in the 1970s, contemporary energy concerns are no longer limited to oil but now prominently include natural gas. Larsson identified 40 incidents involving Russia’s de facto gas cutoffs to CIS countries between 1991 and 2008 (Larsson, 2008). Cherp and Jewell highlight that these concerns are particularly acute in the Eurasian context, where gas is distributed through long-term pipeline contracts. The 2009 Russia-Ukraine gas crisis remains one of the last major examples of large-scale supply disruption with tangible effects on the EU (Cherp & Jewell, 2011, p. 2). As Russia—home to the world’s largest gas reserves—remains the dominant supplier to both the EU and the global market, natural gas has gained increased geopolitical salience in energy security discussions, representing a growing strategic vulnerability (Çelikpala, 2014, p. 81). At this point, supply-side energy security refers to the technical feasibility, economic affordability, operational reliability, and environmental safety of energy delivery systems (Sovacool & Mukherjee, 2011, pp. 5343–5355).

### 2.3. Geopolitics

The term geopolitics originates from the ancient Greek words *geo* (earth) and *politika* (governance), and it has generally been used to describe political actions shaped by geography (Ulaş, 2011, p. 21). First introduced in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by Kjellén, the meaning and implications of the term have shifted over time and across regions. As inferred from academic literature, geopolitics refers to the interaction between geography and power, often manifesting in political struggles (Defay, 2005, p. 7). It is also considered a subfield of political geography concerned with region-based ideologies (Montbrial, 2013). In contemporary international relations, understanding how geopolitical theory interprets transformations in global politics has become increasingly challenging, as the theory's explanatory power has diminished over time. According to the ancient Greek geographer Strabo, much of geography exists to serve the interests of the state (Deudney, 1997, p. 91).

The historical evolution of geopolitics can be divided into three main phases: the Classical Period, which remained influential until the end of World War II and anticipated the Cold War; the Cold War Period, during which the concept was largely sidelined; and the Contemporary Phase, shaped by the dynamics of globalization (Ulaş, 2011, p. 26). While global geopolitical thinking began with Mahan—whose theory reflected the political and economic realities of his era—it influenced both globalist theorists like Mackinder and Spykman, as well as German organic-state geopoliticians such as Ratzel and Haushofer (Yıldızoğlu, 2017, p. 87). In contrast to early theorists, Henry Kissinger reframed geopolitics in terms of power relations rather than the geographical determinants of politics (Howard, 1994, pp. 132–140). When Kissinger revived the term in 1979, which had largely fallen out of use during the Cold War, he described it as a model designed to maintain strategic balance. Although the immediate post-World War II period saw a departure from geographical determinism, the resurgence of critical thinking reversed this trend. Yves Lacoste attributed the revival of geopolitics in 1979 to a series of political developments—discussed in detail below—that convinced the public that regional rivalries between nation-states remained just as significant as ideological conflicts (Defay, 2005, p. 36). Several transformative events in the 1970s—including China's ascent, Sino-Soviet tensions, the U.S. decision to abandon dollar convertibility in 1971, oil crises in 1973 and 1979, Germany's Ostpolitik efforts to assert independence from U.S. influence, the Iranian Revolution, France's military withdrawal from NATO, and the Third Indochina War—could not be adequately explained through Cold War ideological frameworks. These developments spurred both political and academic communities to explore alternative geopolitical paradigms (Ulaş, 2011, p. 70). Understanding post-Cold War geopolitics, particularly in the aftermath of defining events like 9/11, requires recognizing the broader global shifts and patterns. In this regard, Russia's reemergence as a major actor in Eurasian geopolitics—driven by its geographical imperatives and energy resources—marks a significant realignment in global power dynamics (Çakmak & Öztürk, 2011, p. 216).

The concept of geopolitics, which had fallen into disfavor following the defeat of Hitler's geopolitics-centered ambitions, began to regain popularity toward the end of the

20<sup>th</sup> century. The renewed interest in geopolitics reflected various world order transformations, which can be broadly categorized under two main themes: first, the effects of the Great Depression and the broader impacts of capitalism; and second, the rise of new global powers such as the United States, Germany, China, and Japan as British hegemony waned (Yıldızoğlu, 2017, p. 76). During this period, with a few exceptions, geopolitical thought was presented in a methodologically inconsistent and unstable manner. As a result, the term “geopolitics” gained renewed traction but at the cost of acquiring a wide array of meanings, often leading to conceptual ambiguity (Ulaş, 2011, p. 71). Deudney underscores this ambiguity by stating (1997, p. 93): *“The term geopolitics has been used in so many different contexts that its meaning is neither clear nor precise. It could mean almost anything—and perhaps nothing at all.”*

### 3. ENERGY GEOPOLITICS: STRATEGIC THEORIES AND TÜRKİYE’S ROLE IN THE GLOBAL ENERGY

Energy geopolitics refers to the strategic intersection of resource distribution, geographic constraints, and power relations in shaping global and regional energy dynamics. Energy and geopolitics are not simply overlapping domains; they are mutually constitutive forces that shape and reinforce one another in both theoretical and practical terms. While energy constitutes a material asset required for industrial growth, domestic development, and technological advancement, it also serves as an instrument of geopolitical leverage. States that control energy supply routes, storage infrastructure, or pricing mechanisms often wield disproportionate influence in international affairs, regardless of their military or economic size (Cherp & Jewell, 2014, p. 417; Klare, 2001, pp. 29–30). This intrinsic link is visible in every phase of the energy cycle: from resource extraction and transit to consumption and security. Pipeline routes are never determined solely by geology or engineering logic—they are designed with strategic foresight, often to bypass adversarial states or to solidify alliances. The BTC pipeline, which links Azerbaijan to the Mediterranean via Georgia and Türkiye, bypasses Russian territory deliberately—an energy project with geopolitical intent (Bilgin, 2009, p. 4487). Likewise, TurkStream and TANAP exemplify how Türkiye uses energy infrastructure to diversify its supply sources while increasing its own strategic indispensability to Europe and neighboring regions. This reflects Mackinder’s logic that geographical control over pivotal transit routes equates to geopolitical leverage—reaffirming Türkiye’s attempt to convert its location into strategic influence.

Geopolitics, in turn, is increasingly defined by energy dynamics. In the post–Cold War era, traditional security concerns have been expanded to include access to critical resources, energy supply security, and infrastructure resilience. The 1973 oil embargo, the Gulf War, the Russia-Ukraine gas disputes, and current competition in the Eastern Mediterranean all reflect this transformation. Consequently, energy is no longer a background condition—it is a foreground driver of foreign policy choices, alliance configurations, and even conflict scenarios (Yergin, 2006, pp. 70–72; Sovacool & Mukherjee, 2011, pp. 5343–5345). Türkiye, as an energy corridor and emerging hub, occupies a central role in this interplay, where energy flows are inseparable from

questions of security, alliance formation, and strategic autonomy (Bilgin, 2010, p. 82; Yergin, 2006, p. 74). Despite lacking significant domestic oil or gas reserves, Türkiye's geographic location enables it to accumulate geopolitical capital by serving as a convergence point for East–West and North–South energy corridors. This allows Türkiye to project influence beyond its immediate borders—not through coercive means, but through infrastructural and diplomatic connectivity. In other words, Türkiye's energy geopolitics is not resource-driven, but route-driven and strategy-driven.

Türkiye's geographical significance in energy geopolitics is best understood through the application of classical and contemporary geopolitical theories, which will be systematically elaborated in Section 4. However, even at this stage, a preliminary synthesis shows that Türkiye's positioning corresponds to several key theoretical constructs. For instance, as suggested by Mackinder's Heartland thesis, Türkiye lies on the southwestern edge of the Eurasian pivot area and serves as a terrestrial bridge connecting Eurasia to the Mediterranean world. Its land-based energy infrastructure—such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline and the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP)—reinforces Türkiye's role in the overland energy flows envisioned by Heartland theorists (Mackinder, 1904, pp. 432–434; Bilgin, 2009, p. 4485). Simultaneously, Türkiye's littoral access to the Black Sea, Aegean, and Mediterranean positions it within the maritime belt described by Spykman's Rimland theory. As projects like TurkStream and the Ceyhan terminal demonstrate, Türkiye's maritime capacities are not only economic assets but also tools of strategic leverage, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean (Spykman & Nicholl, 1944, p. 43; Oral & Özdemir, 2017, p. 952). Mahan's emphasis on sea power further supports this interpretation: naval control over critical chokepoints and ports enhances Türkiye's ability to influence regional energy flows (Mahan, 1890, p. 61). The evolving role of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and airspace control in Türkiye's energy infrastructure security—especially in high-risk areas—also reflects the continuing relevance of Seversky's Air Power theory in a 21<sup>st</sup>-century context (Seversky, 1942, p. 49).

Moreover, Türkiye's diplomatic balancing between Western institutions (such as the EU and NATO) and non-Western energy partners (such as Iran, Russia, and Azerbaijan) highlights the duality at the core of its geopolitical identity. This duality is consistent with Huntington's classification of Türkiye as a torn country, situated at the intersection of Western and Islamic civilizations, and is mirrored in Türkiye's energy alliances and conflicts (Huntington, 1996, p. 138). Brzezinski's concept of Türkiye as a geopolitical pivot—a state whose location grants it outsized strategic significance—also aptly captures Türkiye's role in the global energy matrix (Brzezinski, 1997, p. 53). Energy enables Türkiye to exercise what may be termed “strategic ambiguity”—the capacity to navigate between Western and non-Western actors without full alignment with either. Energy cooperation with both Russia and NATO countries, engagement in the Southern Gas Corridor while participating in China's Belt and Road Initiative, and its naval posture in the Eastern Mediterranean all illustrate Türkiye's attempt to transform structural geography into diplomatic flexibility. In sum, energy and geopolitics are best understood not as parallel



tracks but as an intertwined system. Türkiye exemplifies how infrastructural positioning, diplomatic agility, and regional security concerns converge in energy policy formulation. The ability to convert geographical transit potential into durable strategic influence is not automatic; it depends on regulatory frameworks, military deterrence, economic investment, and international legitimacy. Türkiye's evolving approach to energy geopolitics will thus not only determine its economic resilience, but also its strategic identity in an increasingly fragmented global order. A comprehensive elaboration of the geopolitical theories referenced here is provided in Section 4, where each framework is analyzed in its historical and conceptual depth.

#### 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section outlines the theoretical foundation on which the study is built, combining both classical and contemporary geopolitical approaches. Rather than treating these theories as timeless truths, the study uses them as heuristic devices to interpret Türkiye's strategic positioning in energy geopolitics. Classical geopolitical theories—despite their imperial legacies and deterministic assumptions—offer useful tools for conceptualizing spatial dynamics and infrastructural strategies. Contemporary theories, on the other hand, bring attention to ideational, cultural, and institutional dimensions of geopolitics. Together, these frameworks help move beyond purely descriptive accounts and allow for a more systematic and critically informed analysis of Türkiye's foreign policy behavior in the energy domain.

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, schools of geopolitical thought began to emerge in the world's leading countries. These groups analyzed the geographical conditions, population structures, energy resources, and physical, economic, and social frameworks of various states, developing geopolitical theories and scenarios aligned with their own national interests. At the same time, they formulated geopolitical strategies and objectives based on international economic and political developments, again in pursuit of national advantage. Although differing by region, it can be argued that these policies were generally shaped by the goals of sustaining capitalism—whose influence intensified through globalization—securing access to energy resources and seeking regional power status. Classical geopolitical theories, which emphasized the drive to control the resource-rich regions of Eurasia and the Middle East, began with thinkers such as Kjellén and Ratzel and were further developed through Mackinder's Heartland Theory, Spykman's Rimland Theory, Mahan's Sea Power Doctrine, Seversky's Air Power Theory, and Haushofer's concept of Lebensraum (Living Space). During the same period, alternative theories shaped by scholars such as Bowman and Kennan—and later synthesized in the works of Kissinger—defined much of the Cold War geopolitical landscape. In the post-Cold War era, contemporary geopolitical thinking evolved with contributions such as Brzezinski's Grand Chessboard, Huntington's Clash of Civilizations, and Fukuyama's End of History theses. The inclusion of classical and contemporary geopolitical theories serves more than a descriptive function in this study and goes beyond providing historical context; it provides an analytical framework through which Türkiye's energy position can be

strategically situated. These theories allow us to understand not only where Türkiye is located geographically, but why that location matters in the evolving global energy order.

#### **4.1. Classical Geopolitical Theories: Space, Power and Strategy**

##### **4.1.1. Mackinder's Heartland Theory**

John Mackinder proposed a model of global and political order. He defined the entire Eurasian continent, which he called the "pivot area," as a natural sphere of power (Flint & Taylor, 2011, p. 4). Following later developments, he introduced his famous Heartland thesis in his 1904 article. The pivot region refers to a landmass that is geographically enclosed and rich in resources, making it a key area for establishing global domination (Mackinder, 1904, pp. 421–437). With this presentation, Mackinder emphasized the importance of land power and possessing vast territories. He divided the world into three zones: the pivot area (later known as the Heartland), the inner crescent (inner rimland), and the outer crescent (outer rimland). In his later works, he referred to the pivot area as the Heartland—a region that, due to its geographical characteristics, deserves to be considered the center. According to the Heartland Theory, there are two major geographical regions that must be controlled by those who seek to dominate the world: the Heartland and the World Island. He stated that the World Island consists of Asia, Europe and Africa; Eurasia consists of Asia and Europe; and the Heartland, located at the center of this continent, is the region that must be conquered to control the World Island (İşcan, 2004, p. 60). He introduced to the academic community the pivot area theory—a definition of the core region of Eurasia that is protected from sea power. He believed that the development of this region's potential power could enable the continental power that controls it to dominate the world. The reason Mackinder attributed such importance to the pivot area was that, with the railways laid across Eurasia, the region contributed to economic, social, and military power elements, elevating land power above sea power. Thus, he argued that by expanding from the pivot area toward the inner crescent, the state situated in this region—thanks to its rich resources and geographical advantages—could establish a major naval force and thereby achieve global dominance (Ulaş, 2011, p. 35). Expanding on this concept and drawing from the recent experience of World War I, he revised the pivot area as the Heartland and expressed the Heartland thesis with the following words (Mackinder, 1942, p. 50):

*Who rules Eastern Europe commands the Heartland;*

*Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island;*

*Who rules the World Island commands the World.*

Heartland, which stretches from the Baltic-Black Sea line to the east of the Yenisei and from the Arctic Ocean down to the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea (Ulaş, 2011, p. 37), possesses ideal security and defense potential thanks to its fertile lands, which ensure agricultural continuity, and its inaccessibility by sea. Since this region is only vulnerable to land attacks through the Eastern European plains, the control of Eastern Europe signifies the dominance over the pivot area and, ultimately, global domination through control of the World Island, which includes Eurasia and Africa, where most of the world's population resides (Mackinder, 1943, pp. 595–605).



**Figure 1. Mackinder's Heartland**

Source: [https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/14v23ty/the\\_heartland\\_theory\\_of\\_geopolitics\\_and\\_wars\\_for/](https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/14v23ty/the_heartland_theory_of_geopolitics_and_wars_for/)

The main objective of Mackinder's work on the pivot area was to identify potential threats that could undermine Britain's power and dominance within the global system and to demonstrate the foundations of these threats (Venier, 2004, p. 332). According to him, the first of these threats was the rise of new powers entering into competition with Britain due to shifting balances; the second was the exertion of pressure over the inner crescent by a strengthening Russia; and the third was the potential alliance between Germany—emerging as a rising power in Europe—and Russia (Taşkesen, 2009, p. 73). Mackinder's Heartland Theory enables us to frame Türkiye's overland energy transit function, particularly its connections to the Caspian and Central Asia, as part of a broader struggle for influence over the Eurasian core.

Türkiye's facilitation of East-West energy flows via TANAP and BTC enhances its importance in this context, aligning with Mackinder's view that control over strategic land corridors equates to control over regional dynamics. It conceptualizes geopolitical power as originating from control over the central landmass of Eurasia. In the context of this study, the theory is instrumental in highlighting Türkiye's overland connections to the Caspian Basin, Central Asia, and Europe—especially through pipeline projects such as TANAP and BTC. It frames Türkiye as a critical bridge between the energy-rich zones of the East and the consuming markets of the West. However, Mackinder's model reflects the geopolitical conditions of its time, emphasizing territorial conquest and rail-based mobility. It tends to overlook the complexities introduced by contemporary technological advancements, non-state actors, and transnational energy governance mechanisms that shape today's energy geopolitics beyond mere land control.

#### 4.1.2. Spykman's Rimland Theory

Spykman did not use geopolitics as a discipline rooted in geographical determinism but rather as a practical tool to shape American foreign policy. He believed that

understanding geography was essential for assessing a nation's power and, therefore, proposed viewing the world from a polar-centered perspective, with the Northern Hemisphere offering strategic advantages. According to him, the United States—surrounded by Eurasia—could avoid the threat of any single Eurasian hegemon by preserving the continent's internal balance and fragmentation during potential overseas engagements (Ulaş, 2011, p. 55). Spykman criticized Mackinder for placing excessive emphasis on land power and the Heartland, overlooking the strategic potential of the surrounding maritime belt. He identified the Rimland, comprising regions such as Eastern Siberia, Türkiye, Iran, Afghanistan, India, China, and Pakistan, as the true pivot of global power (Karabulut, 2005, p. 21)

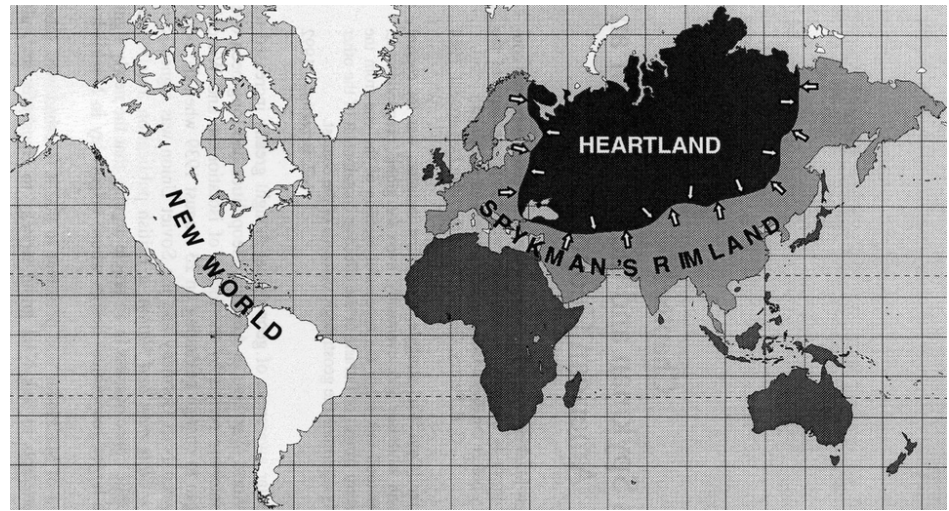


Figure 2. Spykman's Rimland

Source: (Mayborn, 2014, p. 85).

For this reason, Spykman asserted that the critical area to dominate was not Mackinder's central region, but the surrounding belt—the Rimland stretching from the Balkans to China—and that the issue was about who would control the rimland states in Europe and Asia. Accordingly, he claimed that if a power other than the United States were to dominate this area, the West-centric plan led by America would be placed at risk (İşcan, 2004, p. 63). Contrary to Mackinder's discourse, he argued that with the advancement of technology, this region was losing its defensive power and failing to become the most economically developed part of the world. Spykman, who insisted on linking the causes of both world wars not to the Heartland but the Rimland region, concluded that global hegemony did not depend on control over Eastern Europe. (Spykman & Nicholl, 1944, p. 43):

*If there is to be a slogan for the power politics of the past world, it should be:*

*"Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia;*

*Who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world."*

The Rimland thesis reflects America's geopolitical priorities and highlights the strategic role of the Middle East and maritime peripheries in global power dynamics (Arı, 2004, p. 188). Spykman advocated for American influence over the Rimland not only to maintain maritime supremacy but also to secure control over Eurasia. His ideas

significantly influenced the formation of NATO during the Cold War (İlhan, 1985, p. 615). Unlike Mackinder, Spykman emphasized projecting power from the periphery inward, not the reverse. In his view, modern civilizations could only sustain their dominance if they implemented their political agendas globally. This confirms that security strategies cannot be decoupled from geopolitical calculations. As an American strategist, Spykman developed a theory that served to institutionalize and extend U.S. hegemony after World War II.

Spykman's Rimland Theory places strategic value on the coastal peripheries encircling the Heartland, emphasizing the importance of maritime boundaries and littoral influence. Türkiye's access to the Aegean, Black Sea, and Eastern Mediterranean situates it squarely within the Rimland zone. This access allows Türkiye to shape maritime energy routes, assert its presence in contested regions like the Eastern Mediterranean, and engage in naval diplomacy that reinforces its regional energy ambitions. The Rimland framework underscores Türkiye's leverage not just over pipelines, but over sea-based energy corridors. While Spykman's model is highly functional in conceptualizing the geopolitical significance of Türkiye's energy diplomacy conducted through maritime routes, pipeline corridors, port infrastructure, and transportation initiatives, the theory may underestimate the influence of regional cooperation mechanisms, multinational corporations, and international regimes—factors that increasingly shape energy security in a world where financial, environmental, and technological considerations are gaining prominence.

#### **4.1.3. Mahan's Sea Power Theory**

To complete the classical geopolitical framework, Alfred Mahan's theory—emphasizing the critical importance of sea power—must be considered. This theory remains highly relevant in today's increasingly globalized world, particularly due to the maritime configuration of the Rimland, which contains key trade routes and critical chokepoints. Alfred Mahan argued that, in addition to diplomatic influence, a nation requires naval military power to ensure its development. He maintained that sea power facilitates overseas and intercontinental trade, and that sustaining foreign relations for access to resources and markets—as well as maintaining trade networks and projecting power—necessitates merchant fleets, naval forces, and military ports.

The coastal belt of the Rimland and surrounding maritime regions occupy a highly strategic position, serving both as supply routes for goods that support economic growth and as global trade arteries extending from Europe to Asia and beyond. Control over these sea routes grants substantial power and strategic leverage to the actors who possess them. Advocating that sea power was more significant than land-based dominance, Mahan asserted that the United States could achieve global hegemony by establishing continental bases around Eurasia. He envisioned an alliance comprising the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan to counterbalance Russia and China, claiming that only through such a coalition could China be contained and Russia encircled. He argued that maritime nations, more so than landlocked ones, possess a greater ability to allocate national resources toward naval development. He also emphasized that geographic

features influence maritime policy, with location providing distinct strategic advantages. Mahan considered physical geography to be among the most critical elements determining state power. If stability could be achieved through naval strength, then long coastlines, numerous ports, and proximity to key trade routes would not only facilitate maritime commerce but also support land-based logistics—acting as a force multiplier in global trade (Gülmez, 2009, p. 29).

In summary, Alfred Thayer Mahan played a pivotal role in shaping naval strategies prior to World War I. With his famous assertion, “Whoever rules the seas rules the world,” Mahan revolutionized traditional doctrines and paved the way for the United States to become a dominant maritime power. Summarizing Mahan’s geopolitical vision, he stressed the role of not only geography but also leadership in establishing sea power. He believed that a strategic partnership between the UK and the US would ensure maritime dominance, as both possessed the material capacity to sustain large naval fleets and had vital interests along global sea lanes. He also envisioned a global, peace-oriented free-market economy as an economic structure that would complement the logic of sea power (Ulaş, 2011, p. 30). In light of these interpretations, it can be argued that Mahan’s Sea Power Theory was designed primarily to advance U.S. interests, particularly in strategic rivalry with the United Kingdom.

Mahan’s Sea Power Doctrine complements Spykman’s approach by asserting that naval strength and control of chokepoints determine a state’s geopolitical influence. In Türkiye’s case, this doctrine offers valuable insights into its geostrategic control over key maritime chokepoints such as the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, as well as its growing port infrastructure in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Furthermore, the development of port infrastructure in Ceyhan and Filyos, and the growing capabilities of the Turkish navy, reflect a deliberate policy of maritime empowerment consistent with Mahan’s principles. Türkiye’s ability to influence regional maritime energy dynamics thus stems from both geography and deliberate naval strategy. It emphasizes the strategic importance of maritime dominance for global influence. However, like Mackinder’s theory, Mahan’s framework is anchored in a state-centric and military-based understanding of power, which may underrepresent softer forms of influence such as diplomatic energy initiatives, multinational consortia, or regulatory authority over energy markets.

#### **4.1.4. Seversky’s Air Power Theory**

This theory, which emerged to emphasize the importance and demonstrate the impact of air superiority in the implementation of Mackinder’s Heartland Theory—the foundation of all geopolitical theories—was pioneered by Giulio Douhet, William Mitchell, and Colonel Harry A. Schaklian. Alexander de Seversky later developed the theory and underscored the significance of air dominance in military conflicts. With the outbreak of World War II, Seversky drew public attention to the growing importance of aviation, an issue that had previously been overlooked. He argued that the rapidly increasing range and striking power of military aviation could render the United States as vulnerable to aerial destruction as the British Isles. Although Britain was the world’s

dominant naval power, Seversky contended that the United States should become the preeminent air power (Seversky, 1942, p. 45). According to the theory, the geographic factors that once guaranteed a country's territorial security lost their strategic value as air power began reaching previously inaccessible regions, thereby reinforcing the role of aerial dominance in geopolitical thought. The advancement of air power triggered not only tactical but also strategic shifts in defense mechanisms. For instance, one could argue that what ultimately prevented Soviet Russia—superior in both land and sea power—from dominating the World Island after the war was the potential deterrent posed by opposing air forces (İşcan, 2004, p. 67). At this point, theorists who contributed to the development of the Air Power Theory revised Mackinder's famous dictum as follows (Mütercimler, 2000, p. 103):

*Who controls Eastern Europe rules the Heartland. If not stopped by air forces, he rules the World Island. But for that, air power superiority is also required.*

According to Seversky, the United States was unprepared to confront the revolutionary nature of aerial warfare, and American aircraft lagged behind those of its potential adversaries in terms of speed, range, altitude, and firepower—contrary to official government claims. Seversky examined the world from a polar perspective, identifying the coastal zone spanning Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East—situated between North America and Soviet Russia—as the “decision zone.” He argued that dominance over this region required subordinating land and sea forces to air power (Özey, 2000, p. 29). Seversky's Air Power Theory gains renewed relevance in light of Türkiye's increasing reliance on UAVs and aerial surveillance systems to safeguard its energy infrastructure. This perspective adds a 21st-century layer to energy geopolitics, wherein infrastructure protection and strategic depth are contingent on technological control of the airspace. The theory is significant in that it emphasizes the strategic value of airspace dominance in geopolitical power projection, suggesting that geographic superiority extends beyond land and sea to include the aerial domain. However, like other classical geopolitical models, Seversky's theory adopts a state-centric and militarized conception of power. As such, it tends to overlook the rising importance of softer instruments of influence, including energy diplomacy, economic interdependence, and international legal norms. These dimensions play an increasingly vital role in shaping contemporary energy geopolitics, where control and influence are exercised not solely through military projection but also through negotiation, regulation, and cooperative governance.

While classical geopolitical theories interpret Türkiye's role in energy geopolitics largely through geographic positioning, military capability, and infrastructure control, they fall short in explaining the ideological orientations and civilizational interactions that influence a state's foreign policy. Yet energy diplomacy is shaped not only by pipelines and security strategies, but also by a country's identity alignments, regime preferences, and civilizational affiliations. At this juncture, the study turns to contemporary theoretical approaches—particularly Fukuyama's End of History, Huntington's Clash of

Civilizations and Brzezinski's The Grand Chessboard—to provide a more comprehensive framework that incorporates ideological and cultural dimensions into the analysis.

## 4.2. Contemporary Theories: Civilizations, Ideology and Global Order

### 4.2.1. The End of History Thesis

Finding most analyses of the post-Cold War era lacking the broad conceptual framework necessary to distinguish what is essential in world history from what is accidental or coincidental, Fukuyama introduced his *End of History* thesis. In his famous 1989 article titled *The End of History*, Fukuyama proclaimed the definitive triumph of liberal democracy, arguing that humanity had reached the culmination of its ideological evolution and that this form of government could represent the final stage of human governance—thus marking the end of history itself (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 3). The article was written during a period marked by unpredictable and profound changes in world history. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, communism—liberalism's principal rival and alternative—was defeated, and Fukuyama interpreted this process as the victory of liberal democratic values. According to him, humanity had finally discovered the ideal political order it had long been seeking, and as such, history had come to an end.

In his thesis, Fukuyama attempted to outline the framework of this newly emerging order, asserting that societies would now focus more on economic matters than on ideology. He predicted that ideological disputes in international relations would be replaced by economic concerns and that the legitimacy of using military force would eventually diminish (Barkut, 2009, p. 212). According to Fukuyama, a peaceful and dynamic system based on modern Western civilization would be established, whose most important components would be Western thought, the free market, and the ideology of liberal democracy. He described this as the threshold of the final, contented state that humanity had been striving to reach throughout its historical journey (İşcan, 2004, p. 73). However, Fukuyama's views were criticized on several grounds: that the notion of the end of history is inherently flawed; that human nature inevitably seeks novelty; that ideologies cannot be eradicated as long as humanity exists; and that development is by nature a continuous process. Moreover, the political events that unfolded after the introduction of Fukuyama's thesis have demonstrated that history, in fact, did not end (Ulaş, 2011, p. 170). Fukuyama's thesis, though controversial, contributes by illustrating the ideological dimensions of Türkiye's energy diplomacy. Türkiye's energy relations straddle both liberal-democratic Western institutions and more authoritarian Eastern regimes. This positioning allows Türkiye to operate within what could be seen as a post-ideological pragmatism, transcending the binary of Fukuyama's framework while also reflecting the competitive coexistence of different governance models in energy partnerships. This theoretical reference adds a normative layer to the discussion but also risks overstating the idea of ideological closure. The theory, based on the assumption that liberal democracy represents the final form of human governance after the Cold War, does not fully align with the empirical reality of Türkiye's energy diplomacy. Türkiye's strategic engagement with both democratic and authoritarian regimes challenges



Fukuyama's premise and suggests that ideological competition and ambiguity remain central features of international politics, especially in the energy domain.

#### 4.2.2. The Clash of Civilizations Thesis

Amid the geopolitical uncertainty following the dissolution of the USSR, the most popular geopolitical thesis addressing the debates of the era was put forward in Huntington's 1993 article, *"The Clash of Civilizations?"* Expanding on these ideas, Huntington's book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* proposed a redefined global structure for the post-Cold War era. He argued that before the conclusion of the Cold War, societal divisions were primarily shaped by ideological conflicts, particularly the opposition between democracy and communism. However, henceforth, the primary divisions among people would not be ideological, political, or economic, but cultural. According to Huntington, new models of conflict would emerge along cultural boundaries, and patterns of harmony would be found within those same cultural lines (Huntington, 1996). The core argument here is that culture and cultural identity shape models of conflict in the post-Cold War world, indicating a shift away from ideological identification toward cultural self-definition. Through this assertion, Huntington emphasized the cultural dimension of geopolitics, highlighting its geocultural aspect (İşcan, 2004, p. 74). Summarizing the key features of civilizations that matter geopolitically, Huntington argued that civilizations are dynamic: they may divide, merge, or even disappear. Civilization boundaries are not fixed—they are real but mutable. Civilizations may consist of a single nation-state or multiple ones and may overlap or intersect (Akkaya, 2009, p. 184). In his book, Huntington developed a "civilizational paradigm" to offer a fresh perspective for the post-Cold War order and to address the conceptual shortcomings of earlier models. As a starting point, he divided the world into eight major civilizations (Huntington, 1996, p. 25).

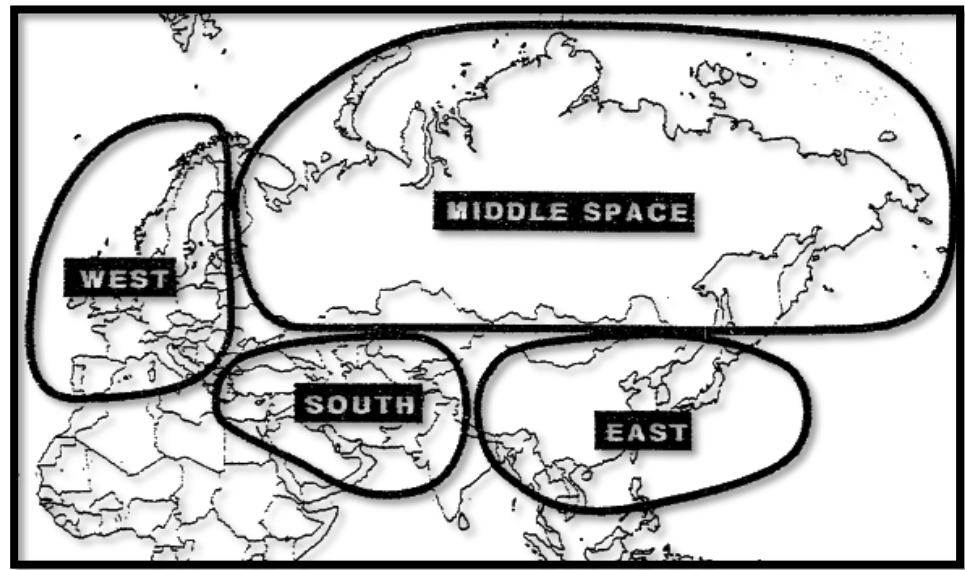
- **Sinic Civilization (Confucian):** Includes Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, China, Vietnam, and Korea.
- **Japanese Civilization:** Defined by a culture distinct from the rest of Asia.
- **Hindu Civilization:** Core Indian civilization.
- **Islamic Civilization:** Originating in the Arabian Peninsula and extending across North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, and Central Asia, encompassing various sub-regions like Arab, Turkish, and Persian zones.
- **Slavic-Orthodox Civilization:** Centered on Russia and distinct from the Western Christian world.
- **Western Civilization:** Centered on Europe and North America.
- **Latin American Civilization:** Includes Central and South American countries with a legacy of authoritarian culture and predominantly Catholic populations.
- **African Civilization:** Although Africa lacks a strong pan-African identity, Huntington claimed a sense of civilizational belonging is steadily emerging among African populations.

In a later revision, he added a ninth, the Buddhist Civilization, encompassing Tibet, Mongolia, and Cambodia (Ulaş, 2011, p. 172). Huntington (1996) foresaw major clashes

between civilizations and suggested that Islamic and Sinic cultures might align or collaborate in opposition to a shared rival—the West (p. 9). He identified five main types of countries (pp. 207–220). A member state is fully integrated into a single civilization—for example, Egypt in the Arab-Islamic world or Italy in the Western context. Core states are the strongest and most culturally essential within their civilizations. The West, according to Huntington, has two core states: the United States and the United Kingdom. In contrast, Islam, Latin America, and Africa lack core states due to the delaying effects of imperialism on their development. A lone country, such as Ethiopia or Japan, shares no strong cultural commonality with its neighbors and exists in relative isolation. A cleft country, such as Sudan, contains populations belonging to different civilizations (e.g., the Muslim north and largely Christian south) and may face internal divisions and separatist movements. Torn countries possess a dominant culture that aligns with one civilization but are governed by political elites seeking alignment with another. Examples include Mexico, Türkiye, Australia, and Russia. Russia, for instance, has been a torn country since its Westernization efforts in the 17th century. Türkiye, caught between Islam and the West, has been considered both a torn and cleft country due to its failure to complete its transition to the West—despite its potential to become a core state of the Islamic world (Ulaş, 2011, p. 176).

#### **4.2.3. The Grand Chessboard Theory**

In 1997, Zbigniew Brzezinski discussed post-Cold War geostrategy and emphasized that the U.S. must remain the global leader and continue to act as the mediator of Eurasian geopolitics. His theory is essentially based on maintaining American hegemony and minimizing the risk of other potential superpowers from Eurasia rising to global prominence, thereby ensuring that the U.S. dominates both economic and political spheres. Brzezinski divided Eurasia into four distinct regions and discussed how the U.S. should formulate its foreign policy to maintain global supremacy. Brzezinski (1997) claimed that after the decline of the Soviets, the U.S. had become the only comprehensive superpower and was now the arbiter of Eurasia. He stated that the Eurasian issue could not be resolved without U.S. involvement or in ways that contradict American interests (p. 194). According to him, although Russia and China possess nuclear arsenals that could threaten U.S. hegemony and interests, they could not win a nuclear war. Because they lack the capacity to use their power to impose their political will and are technologically far behind the U.S., it is not possible for them to exert sustainable political influence globally (1997, pp. 21–24).



**Figure 3. The Eurasian Chessboard**

**Source:** (Brzezinski, 1997).

Brzezinski referred to Eurasia as the main geographical setting of modern geopolitics, highlighting that until now, the struggle to dominate Eurasia was fought by regional countries themselves, but for the first time, an actor from outside Eurasia had joined the contest. He likened Eurasia to a chessboard where these struggles continue (Sandıklı, 2011, p. 352), and asserted that America's ability to maintain global power entirely depends on the policies it pursues in Eurasia. In this context, Brzezinski argued that how the U.S. manages Eurasia is of critical importance. This is because Eurasia is the world's largest continent and is home to the most politically ambitious and dynamic states. Most of the world's nuclear powers are located in Eurasia. Therefore, Brzezinski (1997) characterized Eurasia as the chessboard where the contest for global dominance persists (p. 30). Brzezinski classified countries that directly influence the game on the chessboard as geostrategic players (France, Russia, China, Germany, and India), and countries that are important to the game solely because of their location as geopolitical pivots (Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Iran, Türkiye, and South Korea). He defined the area including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan—regions that are the subject of ethnic conflicts and regional rivalries among powerful states in Eurasia—as the Eurasian Balkans, and noted that Russia, Türkiye, and Iran all have influence in the region (Sandıklı, 2011, p. 353).

Brzezinski's Grand Chessboard enhances the study by portraying Türkiye as a geopolitical pivot—a state whose location makes it indispensable for the projection of power in Eurasia. Türkiye's involvement in energy projects that link the West to the East, and its balancing act between Russia, the EU, and China, exemplify the kind of strategic flexibility Brzezinski attributes to pivot states. While Brzezinski's concept of the "geopolitical pivot" strikingly highlights Türkiye's structural significance, it also tends to frame countries like Türkiye primarily as strategic instruments in the service of great

powers. This perspective does not sufficiently acknowledge their autonomous strategic capacities.

In sum, these theories do not merely function as illustrative references. They shape the analytical foundation of this study and demonstrate that Türkiye's role in global energy politics cannot be understood solely through infrastructure or trade figures. Rather, it must be situated within a strategic cartography of power, where geography, ideology, infrastructure, and diplomacy converge. The theoretical insights offered by these models collectively strengthen the argument that Türkiye is not just a transit country, but a transformative actor in the energy geopolitics of the 21st century. Even though the classical and contemporary geopolitical theories employed in this study offer valuable conceptual tools for understanding Türkiye's strategic position within global energy dynamics, they also present certain limitations as mentioned above.

#### 4.3. Critical Geopolitics and Ideological Reflection

While classical geopolitical theories such as those of Mackinder, Spykman, and Mahan emphasize geographic determinism, territorial control, and state-centric paradigms, they often lack critical reflection on their ideological underpinnings. As scholars of critical geopolitics argue, these classical models are not ideologically neutral but are historically situated discourses that reflect specific Western-centric, often imperial worldviews. Gearóid Ó Tuathail (1996) laid the groundwork for critical geopolitics by showing how geopolitical knowledge is not discovered but constructed through discourse. He demonstrated that geopolitical narratives—especially those originating from dominant powers—function as ideological tools that shape foreign policy through spatialized imaginaries of threat, power, and order. Similarly, Simon Dalby (1998) argued that security discourses and geopolitical practices are deeply embedded in cultural representations and identity politics. His work emphasizes that geopolitical reasoning often relies on simplified binaries (us/them, civilized/uncivilized) that justify interventionist policies. In the context of Türkiye, which seeks to navigate a hybrid geopolitical identity between East and West, Dalby's perspective enables a more nuanced understanding of Türkiye's foreign policy that avoids replicating these binaries.

John Agnew's (2003) critique of the "territorial trap" further refines this perspective by cautioning against the assumption that states are the only relevant actors in geopolitics and that sovereignty is spatially fixed. Türkiye's multi-vector energy diplomacy—with actors ranging from international corporations to regional blocs—confirms the importance of moving beyond state-centric assumptions and embracing a relational view of power and space. In recent years, Jean-François Drolet and Michael C. Williams (2021) have highlighted how classical geopolitical narratives are being reappropriated by ideological movements such as the European New Right to construct exclusionary visions of global order. This insight is crucial in preventing the uncritical application of geopolitical models in non-Western contexts like Türkiye, where national strategy must be framed in a way that avoids reinforcing divisive civilizational logics. Likewise, Joseph MacKay and Nick LaRoche (2017) offer a meta-theoretical reflection on how historical narratives in international relations shape the very assumptions we make about global

order. They argue that geopolitical theories often present themselves as objective models while encoding specific normative and ideological commitments. Integrating their insights encourages scholars to treat geopolitical knowledge not as neutral cartography but as contested and contingent narratives. Incorporating these critical perspectives allows this study to avoid the pitfalls of geographic determinism and engage in a more reflexive geopolitical analysis. By doing so, Türkiye's energy diplomacy can be framed not just as a reaction to structural constraints but as an active, discursive, and ideational practice shaped by history, identity, and normative preferences. This reflexivity is essential for understanding Türkiye's strategy of balancing between Western institutions and Eastern partners, not as an ambivalence, but as a deliberate geopolitical agency in a multipolar world.

While Mackinder's Heartland Theory remains influential in discussions of Eurasian geopolitics, it is important to recognize its ideological origins and historical context. The theory was developed in the early 20th century as Britain faced strategic anxieties about the rise of rival continental powers. As such, it reflects the imperial worldview of the time, prioritizing territorial control and power projection in line with Western hegemonic interests. The spatial determinism embedded in the theory—suggesting that geography alone dictates political power—ignores the agency of smaller states and non-state actors, as well as the role of economic interdependence, diplomacy, and environmental constraints. Applying this model uncritically to Türkiye's current energy strategy risks reducing the country's foreign policy to a binary logic of domination and containment. Moreover, it may inadvertently legitimize expansionist or militaristic postures under the guise of strategic necessity. To avoid these pitfalls, the theory should be contextualized with insights from critical geopolitics (see Ó Tuathail, 1997; Dalby, 2002) and recent scholarship that interrogates the ideological functions of classical geopolitical thought (Drolet & Williams, 2021; MacKay & LaRoche, 2017). These critical perspectives reveal that classical geopolitical theories are not ideologically neutral frameworks, but rather discursive constructs historically embedded in imperial power politics. For instance, Mackinder's Heartland theory functioned not merely as academic models but as strategic narratives that legitimized the expansionist policies of Western empires. As MacKay and LaRoche (2017) argue, such theories often serve to naturalize geopolitical hierarchies by portraying the global order as a competitive arena where dominance and territorial control are preordained imperatives. Similarly, Drolet and Williams (2021) emphasize how these frameworks have been repurposed in contemporary policy discourse to support right-leaning geopolitical imaginaries that frame global politics through civilizational antagonisms and security dilemmas. By uncritically adopting these theories, scholars risk reproducing the ideological assumptions they embed—such as the valorization of territorial conquest, the marginalization of non-Western agency, and the normalization of militarized statecraft. Hence, integrating critical geopolitical insights allows for a more reflexive and historically conscious engagement with geopolitical theory, particularly when applying these models to non-Western contexts such as Türkiye.

Spykman's Rimland theory, though influential in Cold War-era strategic thinking, is deeply embedded in the geopolitical anxieties of mid-20th century U.S. foreign policy. Formulated during the rise of American global ambition, the theory reflects a historical moment characterized by bipolar rivalry and the institutionalization of U.S. hegemony, particularly through NATO. Its emphasis on controlling the coastal peripheries surrounding Eurasia to contain rival powers illustrates a classical form of strategic containment rooted in military logic. Ideologically, the theory aligns with a Western-centric worldview that reduces global dynamics to zero-sum competitions between great powers, marginalizing regional voices and non-state actors. It also reflects an underlying belief in determinism—where geography rigidly defines strategic outcomes—and reinforces a militarized understanding of international relations. In today's multipolar and interdependent global landscape, the Rimland model faces significant limitations: it underestimates the role of economic interdependence, multilateral diplomacy, and the rising importance of soft power. In the context of Türkiye, applying Spykman's logic too literally risks promoting a narrow vision of foreign policy centered on rivalry and confrontation. It obscures Türkiye's potential for cooperative regional diplomacy, multivector engagement, and energy diplomacy that transcends binary alignments. Moreover, it ignores Türkiye's growing interaction with non-Western actors and may inadvertently legitimize policies favoring military posturing over civilian and sustainable energy development (see Bilgin, 2004; Dodds, 2019; MacKay & LaRoche, 2018).

Alfred Thayer Mahan's theory of sea power was conceived during the height of American and British imperial expansion in the late 19th century, reflecting the geopolitical logic of maritime empire-building. Developed in a period when naval supremacy was equated with global power, the theory sought to justify colonial expansion through the control of key maritime chokepoints and oceanic trade routes. Its historical context is deeply tied to industrial capitalism's demand for overseas markets and raw materials—rendering the theory a strategic blueprint for imperialist domination through naval projection. Ideologically, Mahan's work exhibits a strong belief in hierarchical power structures and civilizational superiority, presenting maritime dominance as both a strategic necessity and a moral imperative for Anglo-American powers. Unlike Mackinder or Spykman, whose theories focused more on land-based control and containment, Mahan places commerce, capital, and conquest within a singular naval paradigm that prioritizes militarized seaborne infrastructure. In today's world, however, Mahan's framework proves increasingly anachronistic. While control over maritime trade routes remains relevant, the dynamics of global energy flows and supply chains have evolved—now influenced by cyber networks, multinational corporations, and international regulatory bodies. Mahan's narrow focus on naval force overlooks the ecological costs of militarized sea control and the growing centrality of maritime environmental governance, such as Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), pollution agreements, and climate-driven migration routes. In Türkiye's context, uncritical adoption of Mahanian logic may legitimize an overemphasis on naval militarization in regions such as the Eastern Mediterranean or Black Sea. These risks sidelining Türkiye's diplomatic capacity in

multilateral maritime platforms like the Montreux Convention or the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum. Moreover, it may reinforce a securitized view of maritime policy that marginalizes cooperation-based energy strategies and escalates regional tensions—particularly in contested waters shared with NATO allies and regional rivals alike (see Öniş & Yılmaz, 2009; Dalby, 2002; Brömmelhörster & Paes, 2004).

Alexander de Seversky's Air Power Theory emerged in the interwar and World War II period, when the rapid advancement of aviation technology dramatically reshaped military thinking. Rooted in the technological optimism of early 20th-century American military-industrial ideology, Seversky's vision reflected the strategic concerns of a newly rising global hegemon. His emphasis on air superiority as the primary determinant of geopolitical power was not simply a military argument, but an ideological one: it redefined territorial sovereignty through the lens of technological reach, projecting American strategic interests into the global commons. Unlike Mackinder and Mahan, Seversky viewed the airspace as a limitless domain—immune to traditional geographic constraints—thus advocating for a deterrence-based model of security centered on aerial dominance. Historically embedded in Cold War logic, Seversky's air-centric determinism underestimated the resilience of land and sea-based power structures and over-relied on the assumption of perpetual technological superiority. Moreover, it embodies a form of "aerospace essentialism," which prioritizes hard power projection at the expense of socio-political or economic diplomacy. In the contemporary world, such a framework struggles to accommodate the emergence of hybrid threats, non-state actors, drone diplomacy, and cyber vulnerabilities that are not addressable through air dominance alone. While Türkiye's technological progress in drone warfare (e.g., Bayraktar TB2) is strategically significant, interpreting this development purely through Seversky's lens may obscure the broader policy implications: such as the need for international airspace regulation, export controls, and ethical frameworks for AI-enabled warfare. Furthermore, it may create a false dichotomy between aerospace power and multilateral diplomacy, sidelining Türkiye's role in international disarmament forums, regional confidence-building measures, and NATO's evolving strategic concept (see Buzan & Hansen, 2009; Neocleous, 2013; Cooley & Nexon, 2020). In short, Seversky's vision, if applied in isolation, risks reinforcing a techno-nationalist worldview that neglects Türkiye's complex diplomatic and normative engagements in the 21st-century security environment.

Francis Fukuyama's "End of History" thesis, articulated in the post-Cold War moment, exemplifies what Gearóid Ó Tuathail (1996) defines as a dominant geopolitical discourse that naturalizes liberal modernity as the destination of historical progress. By presenting liberal democracy not only as triumphant but as historically inevitable, Fukuyama's argument obscures the ideological operations of this narrative, which aligns closely with what John Agnew (2003) criticizes as the "territorial trap" of Western-centric teleology in geopolitical thinking. The thesis constructs a linear, unidirectional model of political development, erasing the multiplicity of historical experiences and presenting the Western liberal order as both norm and end point. As Simon Dalby (1998) observes in his critique of post-Cold War security discourse, such theories operate within a culturalist

framework that displaces structural violence and power asymmetries by framing global order as a civilizational achievement. Fukuyama's claim that ideological struggle has ended obscures the continued existence of geopolitical contestations rooted in inequality, marginalization, and postcolonial resistance. Furthermore, as Drolet & Williams (2021) demonstrate, the universalist aspirations of liberalism often mask its entanglements with conservative political projects and disciplinary forms of governance that police ideological deviation under the guise of stability. From the perspective of International Relations historiography, MacKay & LaRoche (2018) argue that narratives like Fukuyama's represent a form of "closure rhetoric" that delegitimizes alternative visions of global order by embedding philosophical assumptions of finality and consensus. This historiographical closure has tangible geopolitical implications. In the context of Türkiye, for example, the application of the End of History thesis would marginalize Türkiye's pursuit of multipolar alignments, regional autonomy, or alternative democratic models that do not strictly emulate the Western liberal template. Thus, Fukuyama's thesis operates less as a descriptive account of global politics and more as a normative vision designed to secure the intellectual hegemony of liberal capitalism at a moment of geopolitical flux. As critical geopolitics scholars contend, such visions demand deconstruction—not because they are analytically irrelevant, but because their ideological foundations must be made visible and contestable.

Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis, emerging in the early 1990s, reflects the anxieties of the post-Cold War West and seeks to reframe global conflict not in ideological or economic terms but along cultural and civilizational fault lines. Developed during a time when American unipolar dominance faced uncertainty after the Soviet collapse, the theory can be seen as an attempt to provide a new strategic lens for Western hegemony—one that essentializes cultures and reifies civilizational identities as static, internally coherent, and externally incompatible. Huntington's framework lacks historical nuance and is deeply ideologized: it aligns with a neoconservative worldview that views the "West" as the pinnacle of modernity and positions other civilizations—especially Islamic and Sinic cultures—as potential threats rather than equal participants in shaping global order. From a critical perspective, the civilizational determinism underlying the theory has been widely challenged for reproducing Orientalist binaries and simplifying complex political and socio-economic processes (Said, 2001; Sen, 2006). It overlooks hybrid identities, transnational solidarities, and the internal diversity within so-called civilizations. Moreover, the theory serves a strategic function: it can be used to justify militarized foreign policies, immigration restrictions, and securitization discourses in Western societies under the guise of cultural defense. In Türkiye's case, Huntington's categorization of the country as a "torn" or "cleft" state imposes an artificial binary between Islam and the West, ignoring Türkiye's historical role as a cultural intermediary and diplomatic actor engaging multiple axes simultaneously. This reading marginalizes Türkiye's proactive regional diplomacy, economic outreach to Asia and Africa, and institutional participation in both Western (NATO, Council of Europe) and non-Western (OIC, SCO Dialogue Partner) platforms. Uncritically applying Huntington's lens risks



reducing Türkiye's strategic flexibility and encouraging exclusionary or confrontational narratives about national identity and foreign policy orientation. Recent studies in critical geopolitics and postcolonial international relations strongly caution against adopting civilizational frameworks that foreclose pluralism and agency in global politics (Bilgin, 2004; Inayatullah & Blaney, 2004; Mamdani, 2005).

Zbigniew Brzezinski's Grand Chessboard thesis conceptualizes Eurasia as the central arena of global power politics and posits the United States as the indispensable extra-regional arbiter of its balance. While strategically influential, this framework embodies what Gearóid Ó Tuathail (1996) critiques as "practical geopolitics" rooted in a managerial, top-down view of space and power. Brzezinski's depiction of states as pieces on a chessboard reinforces a deterministic, zero-sum understanding of international politics that privileges hegemonic control over cooperative security arrangements or pluralist regional orders. From a critical perspective, Brzezinski's geostrategic mapmaking is not a neutral exercise but a political act of territorialization, constructing regions and actors in ways that serve specific ideological purposes. As John Agnew (2003) argues, such visions tend to entrench the spatial logic of empire by framing global leadership as a burden or moral imperative of the United States. This aligns with what Drolet and Williams (2021) identify as the enduring influence of Cold War-era strategic rationality within contemporary Western grand strategy, where geopolitical stability becomes a euphemism for liberal imperial maintenance. Brzezinski's emphasis on controlling geopolitical pivots like Türkiye, Ukraine, or Central Asia positions these countries not as autonomous agents but as strategic variables within a unipolar order. This perspective sidelines the agency of regional actors and reduces their foreign policy choices to functions of great power management. As MacKay & LaRoche (2018) note, such linear strategic thinking flattens historical complexity and suppresses alternative trajectories that do not conform to hegemonic expectations. In the case of Türkiye, adopting Brzezinski's framework uncritically risks reinforcing a foreign policy vision overly reliant on its status as a Western-aligned pivot state, thereby downplaying the country's evolving multi-vector diplomacy, its normative ambitions in regional mediation, and its institutional diversification beyond NATO and the EU. As Simon Dalby (1998) warns, this kind of realist mapping often fails to account for the political ecology of global change—where non-state actors, technological transformations, and normative regimes increasingly shape power beyond state-centric balances. Ultimately, Brzezinski's Grand Chessboard offers a compelling strategic metaphor, but as a geopolitical doctrine, it reproduces an outdated imperial gaze that limits the imaginative possibilities of a multipolar and cooperative Eurasian order. A critical geopolitics lens reveals the necessity of challenging its structural assumptions and re-centering regional voices in shaping their own security futures.

These critical assessments reveal the significant theoretical and ideological risks of directly applying classical and contemporary geopolitical theories to Türkiye's energy strategy. From Mackinder's land power thesis to Spykman's containment logic, from Mahan and Seversky's military-centered models to Huntington's and Fukuyama's

cultural and ideological determinism, many of these approaches were shaped under specific historical conditions and aimed to legitimize the strategic agendas of great powers. Most of these theories contain reductionist assumptions that are ill-suited to today's multi-actor, multi-level, and asymmetric international structure. These approaches often fail to account for the multidimensional nature of Türkiye's foreign policy, its emphasis on regional diplomacy, and its flexible role in energy negotiations. Therefore, geopolitical analysis requires a critical distance, especially when classical geopolitical models risk obscuring Türkiye's strategic agency. To this end, classical geopolitical thought must be balanced with the historical, ideological, and theoretical critiques offered by the critical geopolitics literature. Such a framework provides not only analytical depth but also a more accurate reflection of the strategic subjectivity of actors like Türkiye.

While this section critically interrogates the historical context, ideological underpinnings, and analytical limitations of classical geopolitical theories, the broader study does not apply these models in a deterministic or uncritical fashion. Instead, it adopts a critically adaptive approach, acknowledging the partial heuristic value of these theories for analyzing energy geopolitics. Although developed in specific historical and imperial contexts, classical geopolitical frameworks still offer conceptual tools that, when used reflectively, can contribute to understanding Türkiye's geostrategic posture. Accordingly, this study employs these theories not as prescriptive doctrines, but as analytical instruments filtered through the lens of critical geopolitics.

## 5. TÜRKİYE'S ENERGY GEOPOLITICS

In this study, the concept of geopolitics is used in both classical and expanded senses. In the classical sense, it refers to the spatial and strategic positioning of states in relation to territorial control, as theorized by Mackinder, Spykman, and Mahan. In the expanded sense, it includes ideological, cultural, and normative dimensions that shape the power dynamics of global order, as reflected in Huntington, Fukuyama, and Brzezinski's theories. Furthermore, this article distinguishes between energy transit corridors, which refer to countries that merely allow the passage of energy resources, and energy hubs, which not only transmit but also regulate and influence energy flows. While the term energy diplomacy emphasizes the strategic use of bilateral and multilateral relations to secure energy supply, energy security refers to a state's ability to ensure stable, affordable, and sustainable access to energy. In analyzing Türkiye's role, this study treats these concepts not as fixed categories but as evolving practices shaped by geography, infrastructure, and foreign policy agency. The conceptual clarification of these terms allows for a more rigorous and multidimensional evaluation of Türkiye's position in regional and global energy geopolitics.

The third chapter outlined the conceptual integration of energy and geopolitics and positioned Türkiye within that theoretical framework. Building on this foundation, this section not only shifts the focus toward empirical analysis but also develops an original argument by highlighting Türkiye's proactive role in shaping regional energy dynamics through infrastructure, diplomacy, and strategic positioning. While much of the existing literature emphasizes Türkiye's role as a transit state, this study argues that Türkiye is not

merely a conduit but a geopolitical actor actively constructing its energy strategy through multi-vector diplomacy and infrastructure development. Rather than passively responding to external dynamics, Türkiye employs energy policy as a tool of regional balancing—leveraging its location, regulatory choices, and diplomatic alignments to enhance its autonomy. In doing so, Türkiye seeks to transform spatial advantage into strategic agency, making energy not just an economic but a geopolitical asset. It explores Türkiye's actual engagement in energy geopolitics through major transnational projects such as TANAP, BTC, and TurkStream, as well as through its strategic relations with key actors including Russia, the European Union, Iran, and China. The analysis will examine how Türkiye leverages its geography, infrastructure, and diplomacy to assert influence in regional energy dynamics, while also addressing the challenges it faces in maintaining energy security and strategic autonomy. Türkiye, located partly in Asia and partly in Europe, is a country with a unique geographical position, historically serving as a bridge between the two continents. The Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits are the only maritime routes through which countries bordering the Black Sea can access the world's oceans, making Türkiye critically important in global maritime transportation. Strategically positioned at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Türkiye plays an undeniably pivotal role in Eurasian energy geopolitics. Eurasia, beyond being the continental expanse covering much of Europe and Asia and home to nearly 70% of the global population, also symbolizes land-based power—a core idea in classical geopolitical theory—rendering it central to global influence.

Despite lacking substantial energy reserves of its own, Türkiye's distinctive location enables it to serve as a regional energy bridge, transit corridor, or hub (Çelikpala & Erşen, 2019, p. 584). Türkiye plays a vital role as an energy transit corridor, serving not only its domestic market but also facilitating the delivery of oil and natural gas to European and Mediterranean markets via multiple pipelines and transport routes originating from Russia, the Caspian Basin, and the Middle East. However, beyond merely describing Türkiye's role as a transit country, it is critical to interrogate the strategic rationale underlying this position. Türkiye's policy choices are not only shaped by geography but also by its diplomatic agency and long-term energy visions. For instance, Türkiye's insistence on hosting infrastructure projects like TANAP, TurkStream and BTC is part of a broader attempt to enhance its strategic autonomy within the regional energy architecture. TANAP project aligns with Brzezinski's conception of Eurasia as a geopolitical chessboard, where Türkiye seeks to position itself as an indispensable geostrategic player within transcontinental energy dynamics. The BTC pipeline can be interpreted through the lens of Mackinder's Heartland theory, reinforcing the idea that control over the inner frontiers of Eurasia contributes to regional stability and influence. The TurkStream project reflects Spykman's emphasis on Rimland control, as Türkiye enhances its strategic leverage by regulating energy flows along the periphery of Eurasia. These decisions reflect Ankara's pursuit of status and influence in energy diplomacy, demonstrating that infrastructure is both a physical and symbolic asset in geopolitical competition. In this capacity, Türkiye earns transit revenues but lacks the authority to

prioritize domestic consumption or re-export a large share of the energy flowing through its territory. In contrast, the energy hub model enhances Türkiye's role by enabling it to influence not just transit conditions but also the re-export of hydrocarbons transported via pipelines and the liquefied natural gas (LNG) trade. The study contends that Türkiye's energy diplomacy reflects a dual logic: while it is constrained by structural asymmetries—such as dependency on Russian gas and limited pricing power—it simultaneously demonstrates strategic innovation in institutionalizing new corridors, engaging with alternative suppliers, and positioning itself as a normative actor in energy governance. This tension between structural dependency and strategic agency defines Türkiye's complex role in Eurasian energy geopolitics and offers a unique lens to examine mid-sized powers navigating a weaponized interdependence environment. Nonetheless, realizing this model requires more than infrastructure; it involves regulatory capacity, pricing power, and the ability to coordinate regional energy flows. Türkiye's aspiration to become a hub necessitates overcoming asymmetries in its energy partnerships, especially its dependency on Russian and Iranian gas. The strategic challenge lies in converting geographic advantage into institutional leverage, enabling Türkiye to shape not only routes but also market dynamics and governance regimes. Realizing this vision requires substantial infrastructure development—including nuclear energy projects, renewable energy initiatives, additional refineries, gas storage facilities, LNG terminals, and transport vessels. Maritime-based projects such as LNG terminals and nuclear energy investments echo Mahan's and Seversky's views on sea and air power, signaling Türkiye's ambition to expand its geopolitical influence beyond terrestrial corridors.

To function effectively as a hub, Türkiye must achieve adequate energy density and maintain a diversified, sustainable energy portfolio. Moreover, Türkiye's aspiration to become a regional energy hub necessitates overcoming structural asymmetries in its energy relationships, particularly its dependency on Russian and Iranian natural gas. These asymmetric ties limit Türkiye's room for maneuver in energy pricing and re-export capacity, constraining its ability to act independently in regional energy diplomacy. While Türkiye has made significant investments in transit infrastructure, the transformation from a corridor to a hub requires not only physical assets but also regulatory autonomy, pricing competence, and governance capabilities. Without the institutional mechanisms to coordinate regional supply, negotiate long-term contracts, or influence spot markets, the ambition to become a hub risk remaining rhetorical. This highlights a broader strategic challenge: converting geographical centrality into geopolitical agency. Achieving this requires Türkiye to assert itself not only as a passageway but also as a rule-maker in regional energy governance structures. Moreover, it must carefully manage the relationship between its international obligations, pipeline networks, domestic energy system, and overall energy composition. Successfully balancing these elements offers Türkiye both strategic leverage and economic gains, reinforcing its position as a key regional actor (Bilgin, 2010, p. 114). Although Türkiye's geographical position is generally regarded as a major advantage in the energy sector, its proximity to the Middle East—a region that has been a petroleum-centered conflict zone since the early 1900s and has

struggled to achieve political stability—along with its proximity to the Caspian Region, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Africa, places Türkiye in a geopolitically sensitive and potentially risky position (Oral & Özdemir, 2017, p. 952). Yet Türkiye's geopolitical risks are not solely the product of its neighborhood. They also stem from its strategic balancing acts between global powers. While Türkiye engages in institutional frameworks with the EU and NATO, it simultaneously deepens energy cooperation with Russia and China. This strategic balancing act also reflects Huntington's classification of Türkiye as a "torn country," oscillating between Western alliances and its civilizational affinities in the Islamic world. This multidirectional strategy presents both opportunities and constraints, particularly in an era of weaponized interdependence where infrastructure and energy security are increasingly politicized.

In the context of Mackinder's Heartland Theory, Türkiye is located on the southwestern border of the Heartland, making it a critical transit point for transporting Eurasia's energy resources to the West. This location supports Türkiye's goals of becoming an energy transit country and a potential energy hub. Mackinder's theory emphasizes the superiority of land power over sea power and underlines the strategic importance of land-based transportation. From this perspective, the energy pipelines passing through Turkish territory increase the country's geopolitical significance. Projects like the BTC pipeline, TANAP, and TurkStream raise Türkiye's importance as an energy transit country. Moreover, Türkiye's effort to be an energy hub goes beyond being a mere transit country, aiming to become a determining actor in energy trade. This objective aligns with Mackinder's thesis that control over the Heartland is essential for world domination. Investments in Türkiye's energy infrastructure and regulations in its energy market are part of this strategic goal. In conclusion, Mackinder's Heartland Theory offers a significant framework for understanding Türkiye's energy geopolitics. Türkiye's geographical location and energy policies enable it to be a key actor in regional and global power dynamics, as anticipated by the theory.

When evaluated within the framework of Spykman's Rimland Theory, Türkiye is located at a central point of the Rimland region and, as a country with coastlines on the Black Sea, Aegean Sea, and the Mediterranean, it holds a strategic position in terms of maritime trade and energy transportation. Moreover, its location at the intersection of the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East makes Türkiye a significant transit country for energy corridors. This has led Türkiye to adopt a strategy in its energy policies that balances both maritime and land power. Türkiye's role in energy geopolitics is particularly reinforced by large-scale energy projects such as TANAP, BTC, and TurkStream. These projects support Türkiye's goal of being not only an energy transit country but also a potential energy hub. TANAP is the backbone of the Southern Gas Corridor and transports Caspian gas to Europe through Türkiye. The natural gas carried by this pipeline represents an energy source alternative to Russia for both Türkiye and Europe. As Spykman emphasized, the control of the Rimland serves as a balancing mechanism against land power (Spykman, 1944, p. 51). In this context, TANAP elevates Türkiye to the position of a geopolitical "balancer state" in the transportation of Caspian

resources to Europe (Bilgin, 2009, p. 124). TANAP is also significant in terms of Türkiye's diversification of its energy policies. In this sense, Türkiye's goal of being not only a transit country but also an energy hub is directly related to Spykman's paradigm of the power struggle among littoral (coastal) countries. The BTC Pipeline is a project that transports Azerbaijani oil to the Ceyhan port via Georgia and Türkiye. This route completes the westward flow of energy by sea, bypassing traditional land-based Russian energy routes. In alignment with Spykman's emphasis on maritime power and dominance over coastal regions, BTC transforms Türkiye into a strategic actor that "provides access to the oceans" (Yergin, 2011, p. 394). Moreover, BTC enables Türkiye to conduct energy trade via the Caucasus, thereby strengthening a maritime-oriented energy architecture in the East-West energy equation. This architecture, differing from Mackinder's land power axis, positions Türkiye as a Rimland player.

When evaluated in the context of Mahan's theory, which emphasizes the decisive role of sea power on national and global strength, Türkiye, as a country with coastlines on the Black Sea, Aegean Sea, and Mediterranean Sea, possesses the strategic geographical location highlighted by Mahan for sea power. The Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits are the only routes through which countries bordering the Black Sea can access the world's oceans. This makes Türkiye a critical transit country in terms of maritime trade and energy transportation (Yapp & Dewdney, 2021). Additionally, Türkiye's maritime tradition and its developing maritime transportation sector align with Mahan's elements of sea power. The size of Türkiye's merchant fleet and the advancement of its port infrastructure support the economic dimension of sea power. Türkiye's role in energy geopolitics is also shaped by sea power strategies. For example, the Port of Ceyhan is the exit point of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) Oil Pipeline to the sea and plays a key role in transporting Caspian oil to global markets via the Mediterranean. This situation aligns with Mahan's approach that emphasizes the economic aspect of sea power (Bilgin, 2010, p. 114). Furthermore, Türkiye's energy exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean and its policies regarding maritime jurisdiction zones are indicators of the strategic use of sea power. The Eastern Mediterranean region has recently become central to energy geopolitics due to increasing natural gas discoveries, deepening competition over maritime jurisdiction areas in the region. In this context, the Maritime Boundary Delimitation Memorandum between Türkiye and Libya is a significant turning point both legally and geopolitically (Kanat & Gürdal, 2022, p. 27). This memorandum outlines the intended demarcation of maritime jurisdiction zones between Türkiye and Libya in the central Mediterranean region. In doing so, Türkiye nullifies Greece's attempt to establish an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Eastern Mediterranean based on the island of Meis and redefines its continental shelf rights through the maritime boundary created with Libya (Acer, 2020, p. 15). This move, when evaluated through the lens of Mahan's Sea Power Theory, is a typical example of Türkiye's strategy to establish dominance in maritime areas within energy geopolitics. Türkiye's effort to expand its maritime jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean is, in this regard, a modern reflection of Mahan's formula that links sea supremacy to strategic dominance. Türkiye defends its interests in

the hydrocarbon reserves of the Eastern Mediterranean not only through diplomacy but also by utilizing sea power. With this agreement, Türkiye positions itself not only as a littoral state but also as an actor directing energy geopolitics via maritime routes. This positions Türkiye as a multi-dimensional geopolitical actor, beyond the traditional dichotomy of land power vs. maritime power. The Turkish Navy's NAVTEX declarations, the protection of seismic research vessels by military units, and the exercises conducted within the scope of the Blue Homeland (Mavi Vatan) doctrine directly align with Mahan's perspective that emphasizes the influence of naval capacity on foreign policy (Türkiye Tribune, 2024). Türkiye's Blue Homeland doctrine includes goals such as the expansion of maritime jurisdiction areas and the effective utilization of marine resources (Oral & Özdemir, 2017, p. 952). Naval strength is of critical importance, especially for the exploration and protection of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean. Türkiye's seismic survey and drilling vessels—Oruç Reis, Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa, and Abdülhamid Han—operate under the escort of the Turkish Navy. This practice directly corresponds with Mahan's fundamental assumption that maritime trade routes and energy resources must be secured through military control (Mahan, 1890, p. 61). Furthermore, through maritime patrol aircraft, anti-submarine warfare capability, and regional naval bases, Türkiye positions its sea power not only for defense but also as an implementer of energy policies. In this respect, Türkiye is developing a multi-dimensional naval power doctrine capable of securing energy transport routes.

According to Seversky's theory, control of airspace is vital for national security and global influence. In this context, Türkiye, due to its geostrategic position, lies at the intersection of energy transit routes. This necessitates the effective control of its airspace and the use of air power in energy security strategies. Especially, the discovery and security of energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean has increased the need to boost Türkiye's air power capacity. Türkiye's air power capacity is supported by technological developments such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and air defense systems. These technologies play a crucial role in protecting energy infrastructure and securing energy transit lines. The domestically produced UAVs, such as Bayraktar TB2 and Akıncı, stand out with their high altitude and long-range capabilities. These platforms are effectively used for reconnaissance, surveillance, and target elimination. Furthermore, the domestic and national production of these systems has reduced Türkiye's dependency on foreign defense industries. Türkiye's energy security strategies encompass the discovery, protection, and transportation of energy resources. In this context, UAV/UCAV systems play a critical role in ensuring the security of energy infrastructure and countering potential threats. Alexander P. de Seversky's Air Power Theory emphasizes the decisive role of air power in modern warfare. According to Seversky, airspace control is vital for a nation's security and global influence. Türkiye's advancements in UAV/UCAV technologies can be considered practical reflections of this theory. Especially in regions with energy resources, control of the airspace enhances Türkiye's regional influence.

Brzezinski initially defined Türkiye as a geopolitical pivot and later noted that the country had become a geostrategic player. Türkiye's location at the intersection of the

Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and the Eastern Mediterranean makes it a critical country for energy corridors. In this context, Türkiye's energy policies align with Brzezinski's strategy of maintaining the balance of power in Eurasia (Brzezinski, 1997, p. 53). Through projects like the BTC oil pipeline and the TANAP, Türkiye functions as a bridge transferring energy resources from the Caspian and the Middle East to Europe. These projects support Türkiye's goal of being an energy hub as a transit country. Brzezinski's emphasis on the influence of control over Eurasian energy resources on global power balances makes Türkiye's role in these projects even more significant (Brzezinski, 1997, p. 145).

Huntington defines Türkiye as a "torn country". This is because, although Türkiye historically and culturally belongs to Islamic civilization, it has tried to integrate into Western civilization through the process of Westernization (Huntington, 1996, p. 138). This dual identity is also reflected in Türkiye's energy policies. For instance, Türkiye's energy cooperation with the European Union and projects such as the TANAP represent efforts toward integration with the West. However, its cooperation in the energy sector with countries like Iran and Russia shows that Türkiye also maintains ties with Islamic and Eurasian civilizations. According to Huntington, the regions where civilizational clashes are most intense are those at the intersections of different civilizations. Türkiye is located at one such intersection, and this reality is felt in its energy geopolitics. The disputes over energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean and the drilling activities in the region have caused tensions between Türkiye and countries like Greece and Southern Cyprus, which belong to Western civilization. This situation overlaps with Huntington's prediction that civilizational conflicts would intensify in strategic areas like energy resources.

According to Fukuyama's thesis, with the spread of liberal democracy, ideological conflicts in international relations would diminish, and economic cooperation would come to the fore. Türkiye's energy policies can also be evaluated within this framework. Especially, its cooperation in the energy field with the European Union and projects like TANAP can be interpreted as indicators of Türkiye's attempts to integrate into the liberal democratic world order. However, Türkiye's energy policy is not limited to cooperation with the West. It also continues to engage with Iran and Russia in the energy domain. This shows that, contrary to Fukuyama's prediction, a unipolar liberal world order has not emerged, and a multipolar and complex energy geopolitics still exists. Fukuyama's "End of History" thesis has faced various criticisms. Events such as 9/11, the Iraq War, and the Russia-Ukraine War have shown that ideological conflicts have not ended and that liberal democracy has not become a universal system (Ateş, 2024, p. 108). Furthermore, Fukuyama's thesis has been criticized for maintaining a Western-centric perspective and for not sufficiently considering other cultural and political systems (Gürbüz, 2023, p. 180).

## 6. CONCLUSION

With its geopolitical location at the crossroads of Eurasia, the Middle East, and Europe, Türkiye has historically been at the center of great power rivalries and regional



energy strategies. In this study, Türkiye's energy geopolitics has been addressed within the framework of classical and contemporary geopolitical theories, and an analysis has been made in the light of theories based on land, sea, air, culture, and ideology. In the context of Mackinder's Heartland Theory, Türkiye is of strategic importance due to its proximity to the Heartland region of Eurasia and its position as a transit point for land-based energy routes. Spykman's Rimland Theory emphasizes Türkiye's role as a connector between Europe and the Middle East, as a Rimland country balancing land and sea power. According to Mahan's Sea Power Theory, Türkiye—thanks to its triple maritime access to the Black Sea, Aegean Sea, and the Mediterranean—is one of the few actors that can convert maritime power into energy security. In this regard, the MİLGEM project, TCG Anadolu, seismic research vessels, and naval modernization constitute the infrastructure of Türkiye's maritime strategy centered on energy. Seversky's Air Power Theory is directly related to Türkiye's recent advancements in UAV/SİHA technologies, which have increased surveillance and monitoring capacity over energy infrastructures. Türkiye's advances in air power serve as a deterrent instrument in the protection of energy zones.

In Brzezinski's "Grand Chessboard" thesis, Türkiye is described as a geopolitical pivot on the western edge of Eurasia, with its balancing role between East and West emphasized due to its location at the intersection of energy corridors. Türkiye's critical role in projects transporting energy resources from the Caspian, the Middle East, and the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe is a concrete reflection of this geostrategic position. Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis defines Türkiye as a "torn country" located at civilizational boundaries, synthesizing different cultural identities. This aligns with Türkiye's energy diplomacy that involves both cooperation with the West and engagement with the Eurasian-Islamic world. The Eastern Mediterranean, with its potential for civilizational conflicts over energy resources, illustrates the resonance of Huntington's thesis in energy policy. According to Fukuyama's "End of History" thesis, the universalization of liberal values should facilitate energy-based cooperation. However, Türkiye's energy policies are built on pragmatic rather than ideological grounds. Energy agreements with Russia, Iran, and Azerbaijan demonstrate the limitations of Fukuyama's thesis in explaining the current state of international energy geopolitics.

The hypotheses formulated in the introduction have been addressed throughout the analysis and can now be assessed considering the empirical and theoretical findings. First, the argument that Türkiye's geographical location and energy transit infrastructure are necessary but not sufficient conditions for strategic agency is confirmed. While geography provides structural advantages, Türkiye's proactive diplomatic initiatives, alliance-building strategies, and infrastructure investments have proven essential in transforming spatial potential into geopolitical leverage. Second, classical geopolitical theories such as Mackinder's and Mahan's remain relevant in framing Türkiye's position but require critical updating. Their state-centric and territorial focus must be complemented by insights from contemporary theories that account for economic interdependence, soft power, and multilateral governance. Third, the study supports the hypothesis that

Türkiye actively constructs its geopolitical role through strategic agency. Its balancing between actors like Russia, the EU, and the US, and its use of multilateral energy platforms demonstrate an intentional and dynamic geopolitical posture. Lastly, the hypothesis that cultural and ideological theories offer partial, yet valuable frameworks is validated. While Huntington's and Fukuyama's perspectives illuminate identity-based tensions and ideological narratives, they fall short in capturing the hybrid and pragmatic nature of Türkiye's energy diplomacy.

In conclusion, Türkiye's energy geopolitics is of such a multi-dimensional nature that it cannot be explained by a single geopolitical theory. In addition to land, sea, and air power, Türkiye's position at the intersection of civilizations and its capacity for ideological flexibility are key factors that could elevate it to the status of a regional energy hub. In this context, the success of energy diplomacy depends not only on pipeline transit but also on the balanced management of military capacity, foreign policy flexibility, regional harmony, technological competence, and legal-international legitimacy. If Türkiye successfully integrates these parameters, it may rise from being merely a transit country to becoming a decision-making energy actor in the energy equation of the 21st century. Building on the theoretical insights and Türkiye's empirical trajectory, a comprehensive set of policy recommendations can be proposed to enhance the country's strategic agency in energy geopolitics. Türkiye should aim to diversify its supply and demand partnerships by deepening cooperation with both traditional energy providers such as Azerbaijan and Iraq, and emerging suppliers in the Eastern Mediterranean, while simultaneously strengthening its ties with consumer markets in Europe and Asia to reduce dependency on any single vector.

In parallel, regional multilateralism must be reinforced by leveraging participation in platforms like the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation to institutionalize Türkiye's intermediary role and bolster its regulatory credibility. As global energy systems shift toward decarbonization, it is also critical for Türkiye to invest in renewable energy diplomacy by incorporating green hydrogen, offshore wind, and other sustainable technologies into its strategic energy planning, positioning itself as a forward-looking green energy corridor. Given the strategic importance of maritime chokepoints and national airspace, Türkiye should further enhance its naval and aerial defense capacities to ensure the security of energy transit routes and assert regional stability. Furthermore, adopting a hybrid power strategy that combines classical geopolitical tools with soft power mechanisms—such as technology transfer, regulatory harmonization, and development diplomacy—would allow Türkiye to extend its influence across energy networks more effectively. Finally, aligning energy policy with a coherent foreign policy vision and communicating this alignment with clarity to international partners will be essential to building trust, reinforcing predictability, and consolidating Türkiye's long-term strategic relevance in global energy affairs.

These findings suggest three theoretical conclusions regarding Türkiye's role in energy geopolitics. First, while Türkiye's geographic location offers structural advantages,

these alone do not translate into strategic influence without deliberate diplomatic and regulatory strategy. The case of TANAP and TurkStream illustrates how infrastructure needs to be embedded in broader regional visions to yield geopolitical leverage. Second, although classical geopolitical theories offer useful conceptual tools for understanding spatial dynamics, they fall short of capturing the complexities of the current multi-actor energy landscape. Their state-centric and determinist assumptions must be revisited in light of evolving alliances, non-state actors, and technological transformations in the energy sector. Third, Türkiye's geopolitical projection should not rely solely on Western-centric paradigms; instead, it must be informed by hybrid frameworks that integrate cultural diversity, regional pluralism, and normative agency. In this context, Türkiye emerges not as a passive subject within great power strategies, but as an active constructor of its own energy diplomacy shaped by strategic pragmatism and normative flexibility.

## REFERENCES

- Acer, Y. (2020). Doğu Akdeniz'de Yunanistan-Mısır deniz sınırı antlaşması ve Türkiye. *Adalet Dergisi*, (65), 13-26.
- Agnew, J. (2003). *Geopolitics: Re-Visioning World Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Akkaya, H. (2009). Çatışan medeniyetler: Samuel Phillips Huntington. In M. S. Palabıyık (Ed.), *Batıda jeopolitik düşünce* (pp. 181–200). Ankara: Orion.
- APERC. (2007). A quest for energy security in the 21st century. Japan: APERC.
- Arı, T. (2004). *Irak, İran ve ABD: Önleyici savaş, petrol ve hegemonya*. İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları.
- Ateş, O. (2024). Tarihin sonunu 30 yıl geçse. *Çankırı Karatekin Üniversitesi Karatekin Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 12(1), 105-120. <https://doi.org/10.57115/karefad.1450458>
- Barkut, B. (2009). Tarihin sonunda jeopolitik. In M. S. Palabıyık (Ed.), *Batıda jeopolitik düşünce* (pp. 201–216). Ankara: Orion.
- Bilgin, M. (2009). Geopolitics of European natural gas demand: Supplies from Russia, the Caspian and the Middle East. *Energy Policy*, 37(11), 4482–4492. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2009.05.070>
- Bilgin, M. (2010). Energy and Türkiye's foreign policy: State strategy, regional cooperation and private sector involvement. *Turkish Policy*, 9(2), 81–92.
- Bilgin, P. (2019). *Regional Security in the Middle East: A critical perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Brzezinski, Z. (1997). *The grand chessboard: American primacy and its geostrategic imperatives*. New York: Basic Books.
- Buzan, B. & Hansen, L. (2009). *The evolution of international security studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Çakmak, C. & Öztürk, A. (2011). Jeopolitik, Soğuk Savaş sonrası Avrasya ve uluslararası ilişkiler teorileri. In H. Çomak (Ed.), *Dünya jeopolitiğinde Türkiye* (pp. 215–229). İstanbul: Hiperlink.
- Çelikpala, M. (2014). Enerji güvenliği: NATO'nun yeni tehdit algısı. *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 10(40), 75–99. <https://doi.org/10.33458/uidergisi.553370>
- Çelikpala, M. & Erşen, E. (2019). Türkiye and changing energy geopolitics of Eurasia. *Energy Policy*, 128, 584–592. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2019.01.036>

- Cherp, A. & Jewell, J. (2011). The three perspectives on energy security: Intellectual history, disciplinary roots and the potential for integration. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 3(4), September. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2011.07.001>
- Cherp, A. & Jewell, J. (2014). The concept of energy security: Beyond the four As. *Energy Policy*, 75, October. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2014.09.005>
- Cooley, A. & Nexon, D. (2020). *Exit from hegemony: The unraveling of the American global order*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dalby, S. (1998). Geopolitics and global security: Culture, identity, and the 'pogo syndrome'. In S. Dalby & Gearoid Tuathail (Eds.), *Rethinking Geopolitics*, (pp.219–237). London: Routledge.
- Dalby, S. (2002). *Environmental security*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Defay, A. (2005). *Jeopolitik*. İ. Yerguz (çev.). Ankara: Dost Yayınevi.
- Deudney, D. (1997). Geopolitics and change. In M. Doyle & G. J. Ikenberry (Eds.), *New thinking in international relations theory* (pp. 91–123). Boulder: Westview.
- Dodds, K. (2019). *Geopolitics: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Drolet, J. F. & Williams, M. C. (2021). *The radical right and the end of politics: On post-truth and the challenge of ideological politics*. London: Routledge.
- Flint, C. & Taylor, P. J. (2011). *Political geography: World-economy, nation-state and locality*. London: Routledge.
- Fukuyama, F. (1989). The end of history?. *National Interest*, 16, 3–18.
- Gülmez, S. B. (2009). Denizlerin jeopolitiği: Alfred Thayer Mahan. In M. S. Palabıyık (Ed.), *Batıda jeopolitik düşünce* (pp. 21–34). Ankara: Orion.
- Gürbüz, K. (2023). Fukuyama'nın tarihin sonu liberal demokrasi iddiası ve liberalizme giden yolda devlet inşası. *Universal Journal of History and Culture*, 5(2), 178-198. <https://doi.org/10.52613/ujhc.1344722>
- Hatipoğlu, E. (2019). Enerji güvenliği. *Güvenlik Yazıları Serisi*, 44. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.30702.56643>
- Howard, M. (1994). The world according to Henry: From Metternich to Me. *Foreign Affairs*, 73(3), 132–140. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20046663>
- Huntington, S. P. (1996). *The clash of civilizations and remaking of world order*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- İlhan, S. (1985). Jeopolitik ve tarihle ilişkileri. *Belleten Dergisi*, 49(195), 607-624. <https://doi.org/10.37879/ttkbelleten.998444>
- Inayatullah, N. & Blaney, D. L. (2004). *International relations and the problem of difference*. London: Routledge.
- International Energy Agency. (2020). Energy security. <https://www.iea.org/topics/energy-security> (accessed January 11, 2024).
- İşcan, İ. H. (2004). Uluslararası ilişkilerde klasik jeopolitik teoriler ve çağdaş yansımaları. *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 1(2), 47–79.
- Kanat, S., & Gürdal, T. (2022). Doğu akdeniz'de deniz yetki alanı uyumsuzluğu ve Türkiye-Libya mutabakatı. *Hakkari Review*, 6(2), 25-45. <https://doi.org/10.31457/hr.1141257>
- Karabulut, B. (2005). *Strateji-jeostrateji-jeopolitik*. Ankara: Platin Yayınları.
- Karagöl, E. T. & Kaya, S. (2014). *Energy supply security and the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC)*. İstanbul: Seta Yayınları.
- Klare, M. T. (2001). *Resource wars: The new landscape of global conflict*. New York: Owl Books.

- Larsson, R. L. (2008). *Energikontroll: Kreml, Gazprom och rysk energipolitik*. Stockholm: FOI Swedish Defence Research Agency.
- MacKay, J. & LaRoche, C.D. (2017). The conduct of history in International Relations: rethinking philosophy of history in IR theory. *International Theory*, 9(2), 203-236. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S175297191700001X>
- Mackinder, H. J. (1904). The geographical pivot of history. *The Geographical Journal*, 23(4), 421–437. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1775498>
- Mackinder, H. J. (1942). *Democratic ideals and reality*. Washington: NDU Press.
- Mackinder, H. J. (1943). The round world and the winning of the peace. *Foreign Affairs*, 21(4), 595–605.
- Mahan, A. T. (1890). *The influence of sea power upon history: 1660–1783*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company.
- Mamdani, M. (2005). *Good Muslim, bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the roots of terror*. Easton: Harmony.
- Mayborn, W. (2014). The pivot to Asia: The persistent logics of geopolitics and the rise of China. *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 15(4), 76-101.
- Montbrial, T. de. (2013). *Action and reaction in the world system: The dynamics of economic and political power*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Mütercimler, E. (2000). *21. Yüzyıl ve Türkiye*. İstanbul: Güncel Yayıncılık.
- Neocleous, M. (2013). *War power, police power*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Öniş, Z. & Yilmaz, Ş. (2009). Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign policy activism in Turkey during the AKP era. *Turkish Studies*, 10(1), 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683840802648562>
- Oral, M. & Özdemir, Ü. (2017). Küresel enerji jeopolitiğinde Türkiye: Fırsatlar ve riskler. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(4), 948–959. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v6i4.1054>
- Özey, R. (2017). Mackinder'ın Heartland teorisinin düşündürdükleri. *Marmara Coğrafya Dergisi*, (35), 95–100. <https://doi.org/10.14781/mcd.291163>
- Özkaya, S. Y. (2004). Yenilenebilir enerji kaynakları. *Uluslararası Ekonomik Sorunlar Dergisi*, (14), 15–21. <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/yenilenebilir-enerji-kaynaklari.tr.mfa>
- Said, E. W. (2001). *Orientalism*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Sandıklı, A. (2011). Jeopolitik teoriler ve Türkiye. In H. Çomak (Ed.), *Dünya jeopolitiğinde Türkiye* (pp. 345–370). İstanbul: Hiperlink.
- Sen, A. (2006). *Identity and violence: The illusion of destiny*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Seversky, A. P. (1942). *Victory through air power*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Sovacool, B. K. & Mukherjee, I. (2011). Conceptualizing and measuring energy security: A synthesized approach. *Energy*, 36(8), 5343–5355. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.energy.2011.06.043>
- Spykman, N. & Nicholl, H. R. (1944). *The geography of the peace*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- Taşkesen, S. (2009). Dünyanın kalbini arayan adam: Halford John Mackinder. In M. S. Palabıyık (Ed.), *Batıda jeopolitik düşünce* (pp. 55–76). Ankara: Orion.
- Tuathail, G.Ó. (1996). *Critical Geopolitics*. London: Routledge.
- Türkiye Tribune. (2024). The blue homeland doctrine: Türkiye's naval strategy. (October 23), <https://www.Turkiyetrybune.com/tr/the-blue-homeland-doctrine-Turkiyes-naval-strategy/> (accessed February 17, 2025).

- Ulaş, B. (2011). *Jeopolitik: Türkiye'nin milli güvenliği ve Avrupa Birliği üyelik süreci*. İstanbul: Başlık Yayın Grubu.
- Venier, P. (2004). The geographical pivot of history and early twentieth century geographical culture. *The Geographical Journal*, 170(4), 330–336. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0016-7398.2004.00134.x>
- World Bank Group. (2005). *Energy security issues*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Economic Forum & CERA. (2006). The new energy security paradigm. <http://www.zonaeletrica.com.br/downloads/energy.pdf> (accessed January 18, 2024).
- Yapp, M. E. & Dewdney, J. J. (2021). Türkiye. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved February 10, 2021, from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Türkiye> (accessed January 5, 2025).
- Yergin, D. (2006). Ensuring energy security. *Foreign Affairs*, 85(2), 69-82. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20031912>
- Yergin, D. (2009). *The epic quest for oil, money & power*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Yergin, D. (2011). *The quest: energy, security, and the remaking of the modern world*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Yıldızoğlu, E. (2017). *Emperyalizm ve jeopolitik: Kısa bir tarihsel teorik giriş*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi.
- Yılmaz, S. & Kalkan, D. K. (2017). Enerji güvenliği kavramı: 1973 Petrol Krizi ışığında bir tartışma. *Uluslararası Kriz ve Siyaset Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 1(3), 169–199.
- Yücel, F. B. (1994). *Enerji Ekonomisi*. Ankara: Akay Ofset Matbaacılık.