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ÇİN'İN AFRİKA'DAKİ EKONOMİK HEGEMONYASI

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Öz

1950'den sonra yeni planlarını ortaya koyan Çin devleti, Soğuk Savaş'a rağmen bu planlarını sürdürdü. 1978 yılında dünyaya açılmaya başlayan Çin, uyguladığı ekonomik politikalarla yoksul bir ülkeden dünyanın ikinci büyük ekonomisi konumuna yükseldi. Daha sonra 'Bir Kuşak Bir Yol Projesi' ile dünya üzerindeki etkisini artıran Çin, sınırlarını aşmış durumda. Ulusal savunma ve silahlı kuvvetlerinin modernizasyonu ile askeri faaliyetlerini ilerleten Çin, diğer yandan ülkelerle ekonomik iş birliğini artırmaktadır. Kuzey Kutbu, Akdeniz, Avrupa ve Afrika ile ikili ilişkilerini artıran Çin, özellikle Afrika bölgesine yöneliyordu. Afrika'daki kamu diplomasisi ile hegemonyasını artıran Çin, kurduğu enstitülerle sosyal etkinliğini bölge halkına aktarmaktadır. Demiryolu sistemi ve ekonomik yatırımlar Çin'in Avrupa ülkelerinin önüne geçmesini sağladı. Böylece Çin, bölgede ekonomik hegemonyasını kurmuş oldu. Çin'in bu bölgede olmasının en önemli nedeni artan enerji ihtiyacıdır. Artan endüstriyel faaliyetler küresel arenada enerji kıtlığına neden oluyor ve Çin bu enerji ihtiyacı için Afrika ülkeleriyle iş birliğini artırmaktadır. Bu nedenle, Çin'in Afrika politikaları, gelecekteki küresel hegemonya yarışı için çok önemlidir. Bu çalışmada, Çin'in Afrika ülkeleri üzerindeki hegemonyasının ekonomik faktörlerini bağımlılık teorisi üzerinden inceleyeceğiz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çin, Afrika, Hegemonya, Ekonomi, Enerji, Karşılıklı Bağımlılık, Mearsheimer

CHINA'S ECONOMIC HEGEMONY IN AFRICA

ABSTRACT

The Chinese state, which revealed its new plans after 1950, continued these plans despite the Cold War. China, which started to open up to the world in 1978, rose from a poor country to the world's second largest economy with its economic policies. China, which later increased its influence on the world with the 'One Belt One Road Project', has reached beyond its borders. China, which advances its military activities with the modernization of its national defence and armed forces, on the other hand, increases its economic cooperation with countries. Increasing its bilateral relations with the Arctic, Mediterranean, Europe and Africa, China was increasing all its activities, especially in the African region. China, which has increased its hegemony with its public diplomacy in Africa, transfers its social activity to the people of the region with the institutes it has established. The railway system and economic investments enabled China to get ahead of European countries. Thus, China established economic hegemony in the region. The most important reason why China is in this region is its increasing energy need. Increasing industrial activities lead to a shortage of energy in the global arena and China is increasing its cooperation with African countries for this energy need. Therefore, China's African policies are crucial to the future race for global hegemony. In this study, we will examine the economic factors of China's hegemony over African countries through dependency theory.

Keywords: China, Africa, Hegemony, Economy, Energy, Theory of Interdependence, Mearsheimer

INTRODUCTION

In the post-Cold War period, China has increased its influence in many important regions from Central Asia to Latin America. Although there is an increasing Chinese presence on a global scale, China's commercial activities concentrated in the African continent attract more attention. China's increasing influence in regions such as Africa, which was previously dominated by Western states, is also depicted through concepts such as occupation, invasion, and silent conquest in connection with this perception.

With these breakthroughs made by China, a new hegemonic power has emerged, and this issue has been questioned more by international relations workers. China's investments in countries directly without establishing an interdependence relationship and the erasure of countries' debts with the Covid 19 period accelerated the steps China took on the path to dominant power (Güçyetmez, 2020).

The principle of hegemony and interdependence, which draws attention with the Americanist approaches in the general politics of the world, started to be mentioned with a rising power from the Asian region this time. This is an unusual situation in terms of international relations. Also, Economic diplomacy alone is not sufficient to safeguard China's interests in African countries. therefore, China is also trying to be effective in public diplomacy with the institutes it has established. From a broader perspective, the areas of China- Africa cooperation include political affairs and regional peace and security, cooperation in international affairs, economic cooperation, cooperation in the field of development, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges with each field including many. In weaving a comprehensive network China with African countries, military and security ties stand out as becoming more active and dynamic in recent years. Military exchanges and cooperation between China and African countries involve mutual visits of high-level military officers, military training programs, financial aid, and joint military exercises.

So, literature as lacking the writing of this issue, it will be quite challenging in terms of international relations and economics employees. However, many scientists say that China's hegemony should not be ignored in this period when 'multipolar' hegemony transitions to multi-polar order. Related to the increasing comprehensiveness of China's diplomacy in Africa, another new feature in recent years is a transition from the pure bilateral diplomacy to increasingly conscious application of multilateral diplomacy and stronger support for African multilateralism and regionalism. It is very important for the literature to examine these issues economically and theoretically, respectively.

In the first part of this study, we will talk about the power shift of hegemony and explain that the western-centred power elements and interdependence are now felt more among the continental countries, but the emergence of new hegemon powers with globalization is inevitable.

In the second part, we will discuss how China-centred continental shifts evaluate the dominant power factor and the economic approach to countries with the Covid 19 pandemic. In the conclusion part, we will try to determine whether the Chinese economy is sufficient for hegemony.

Global Hegemony and Dependence on Economic Power

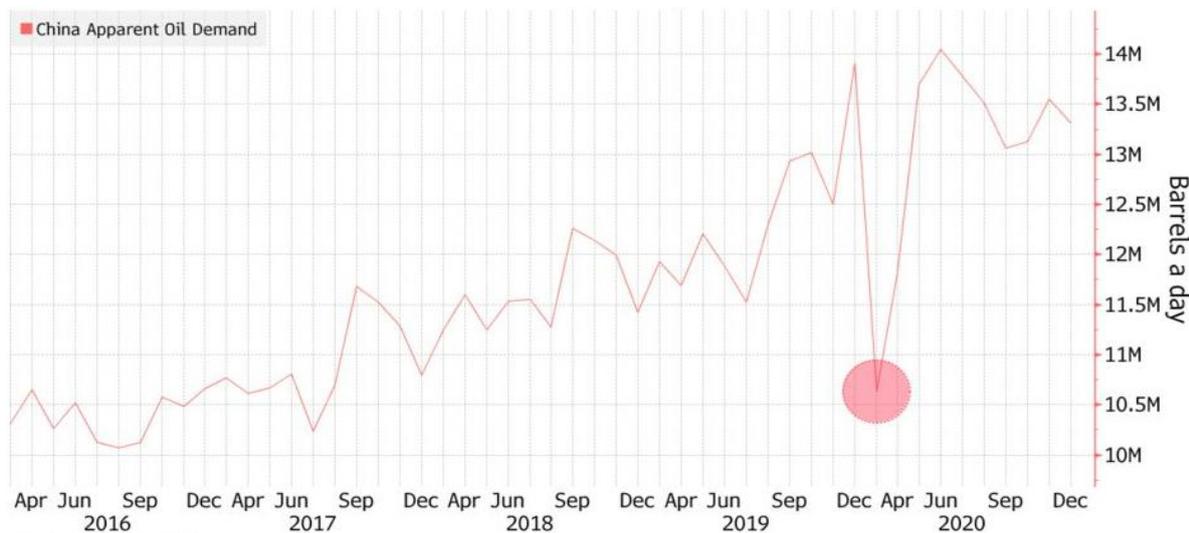
The international system has undergone constant changes with the civil wars in Europe. After the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, states began to give importance to their national interests. With the end of the Cold War, the international system has turned into a unipolar structure. At the end of this long process, the superpower of the unipolar structure was the United States of America (USA). Today, at the point reached in the international systemic structure, the USA is getting weaker day by day and other states are getting stronger. The USA may not be able to maintain its position as a superpower in the unipolar world forever and it will lose that power one day. Politicians like Henry Kissinger say that day is near. "The unipolar system is a hierarchical structure under the control of the dominant state. For this reason, the state that dominates the market has a hierarchical relationship with other states. This system could be considered a stable structure until now. However, it is not possible to sustain the unipolar system for a long time" (Uzer, 2013: 72-82).

On the other hand, in the multipolar system, the powers of the dominant states are close to each other (Sayın, 2019). In this structure, security and power systems can be easily controlled. Mearsheimer emphasized a very important issue in this regard. In the unbalanced multipolar structure, when one of the dominant powers in the international system is stronger than the others, a hegemony is sought. This situation makes war and instability inevitable (Mearsheimer, 2001: 44). In a multipolar system, if there are conventional forces close to each other's strengths, even the slightest conventional power superiority or advantage can easily lead to a decision such as the destruction of rivals (İşyar, 2013: 346).

When China's close relations with the current international system after 1980 are reviewed; Although it is the second largest economy in the world and also the first in the manufacturing industry, it does not show an aggressive structure for the sake of being a hegemonic power.

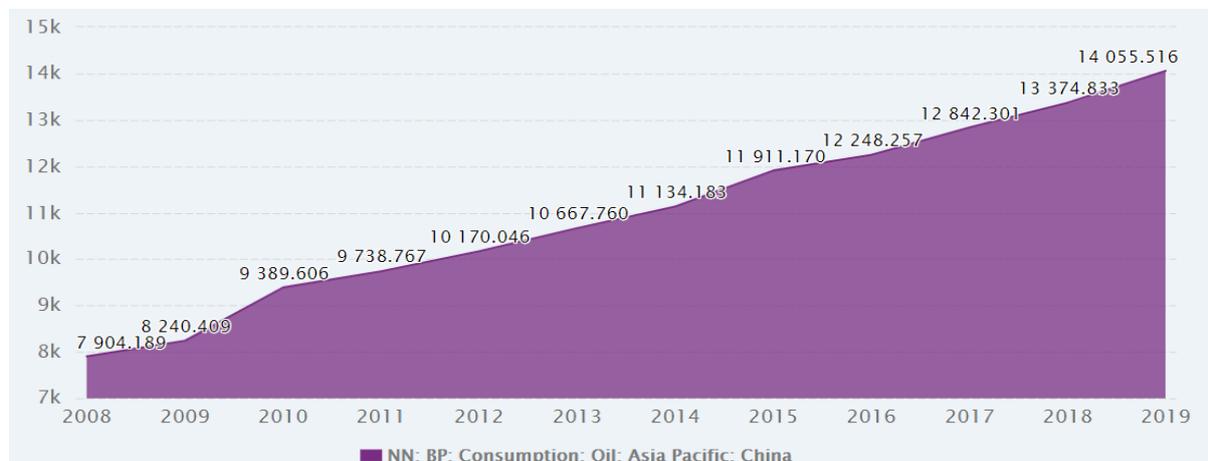
In a study presented at the World Economic Forum, for the private sector's place in China, it was stated that "China's private sector, which has been on the rise since the global financial crisis, is the main driver of China's economic growth today. This example is often used to describe the private sector's contribution to the Chinese economy. Namely; private sector companies contribute 60% of China's GDP and are responsible for 70% of innovation, 80% of urban employment and 90% of new jobs. Private wealth is also responsible for 70% of investments and 90% of exports. Today, China's private sector contributes to about two-thirds of the country's growth and nine-tenths of new jobs, according to the All-China Industry and Trade Federation, an official business group (Guluzade, 2019).

Table 1. China’s Fuel Demands Has Continued Trend Above Pre-Covid 19 Levels (Bloomberg, 2020).



As can be seen in the table below, oil consumption in China has been increasing over the years. This issue makes African countries more attractive to China. The reason for this is that the African continent has 8% of the world's crude oil reserves. In addition, it includes the countries of Algeria, Nigeria and Libya, which are members of OPEC. Therefore, it is natural for China to want to invest in oil in Africa. China meets most of its total oil imports from Africa. China's main suppliers are Sudan, Angola, Algeria, Gabon and Chad.

Table 1. View China's Oil Consumption from 2008 to 2019 in the Chart, (CEIC, 2019).



In the global economic plane, most of the world countries want to grow economically and increase their welfare level by exporting more. Thus, countries want to reduce their dependence on foreign countries. Therefore, governments activate the strategies they want to implement by using foreign trade policy tools. As it is known, many countries tried to move from a closed economic order to an open economic order after the Second World War. This trend, which started among developed economies at the beginning, spread to developing economies in the following periods and gained momentum with the integration of financial markets and globalization trend after 1980.

The People's Republic of China, which started to open up as a result of the economic reforms in 1979, has been one of the countries that benefited most from the globalization trends. China, one of the most populous countries in the world with its ever-increasing economic size and developing export promotion policies, is one of the most important actors of the global economy. The increase in exports will support economic growth, and economic growth will stimulate the growth of exports. However, it should be noted that this situation may not always create an increase in exports. (Lee & Huang, 2002: 14). That is to say, the rate of increase in exports will also affect the demand from other countries, the competitiveness of the country and the exchange rate.

It can be stated that China's strong growth rate is primarily due to its strength in the Chinese manufacturing sector. Although China is one of the world's largest economies, it is the world's largest exporting country. In this case, exports increase economic growth.

Economic Interdependence Theory and China-Africa Relations

Improving access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services is widely regarded as an urgent and critical challenge that is key to unlocking Africa's development potential. Africa's economy and accompanying energy demand has almost doubled in size since the turn of the century and it is estimated that it will see further increases in energy demand of up to 80% by 2030 (IEA, 2014).

Table 3. Oil and gas production in Africa and Other Regions (BP, 2011)

| Region | Oil (in '000 bpd) | (%) | Gas (in billion m ³) | (%) |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------|----------------------------------|-------|
| Africa | 10098 | 12.2 | 209.0 | 6.5 |
| Middle East | 25188 | 30.3 | 460.7 | 14.4 |
| South & Central America | 6989 | 8.9 | 161.2 | 5.0 |
| Europe & Eurasia | 17661 | 21.8 | 1043.1 | 32.6 |
| North America | 13808 | 16.6 | 826.1 | 26.0 |
| Asia Pacific | 8350 | 10.2 | 493.2 | 15.4 |
| World Total | 82095 | 100.0 | 3193.3 | 100.0 |

Of all the resources the continent produces and exports, oil is 'Africa's most strategic and sought-after commodity in global market. In 2010, for instance, Africa produced an average of 10.098 million barrels of crude oil per day (mbpd), or 12.2% of the world's total of 82.095 mbpd. This placed Africa in the fourth position of the world's major crude oil producers after the Middle East, Europe and Eurasia, and North America (BP, 2011).

Table 4. Oil and Gas Reserves in Africa and Other Regions (BP, 2011).

| Region | Oil (in billions of barrels) | (%) | Gas (in trillion m ³) | (%) |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Africa | 132.1 | 9.5 | 14.7 | 7.9 |
| Middle East | 752.5 | 54.4 | 75.8 | 40.5 |
| South & Central America | 239.4 | 17.3 | 7.4 | 4.0 |
| Europe & Eurasia | 139.7 | 10.1 | 63.1 | 33.7 |
| North America | 74.3 | 5.4 | 9.9 | 5.3 |
| Asia Pacific | 45.2 | 3.3 | 16.2 | 8.7 |
| World Total | 1383.2 | 100.0 | 187.1 | 100.0 |

According to the same 2011 BP survey, Africa's proven natural gas reserves are similarly placed, as at the end of 2010 they stood at 14.7 trillion cubic metres (tcm) or 7.9% of the global total of 187.1 tcm, behind the Middle East, Europe and Eurasia, and the Asia Pacific

Interdependence creates some of the classic problems of political strategy because the behaviour of state and non-state actors imposes a burden on other actors of the system. These affected actors, if their capacities are sufficient, will react politically to avoid the imposition of a compliance obligation on them. From a foreign policy perspective, the problem facing governments is how to benefit from international trade while maintaining as much autonomy as possible. When evaluated in terms of the international system, the problem is how to create and maintain a pattern of mutually beneficial cooperation despite the competitive efforts of state and non-state actors to manipulate the system in their own interests (Holsti, 1978: 47).

In this process, in which we come to address transnational concepts, we see that in the last decade, research on international regimes has shown a great improvement.

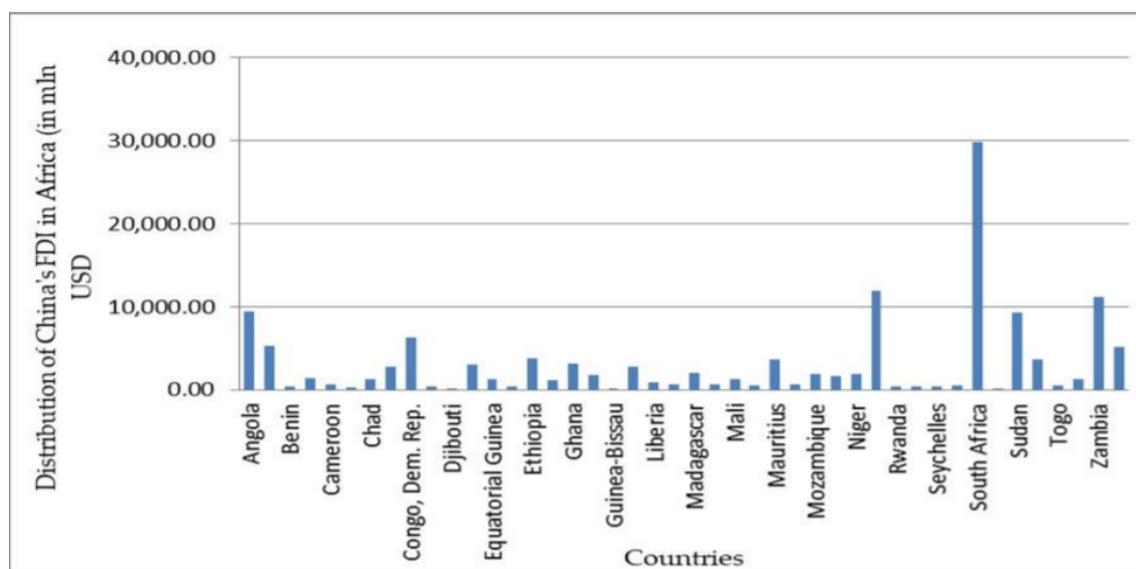
In defining international regimes as principles, rules, norms, and procedures that integrate around expectations in a particular area of international relations, a large degree of consensus has been achieved. There are problems in implementing this definition: especially when the concept of an international regime exceeds the institutionalized consequences of formal Interstate formal agreements, the boundaries between the regime and non-regime situations become ambiguous (Haggard & Simmons, 1987: 16)

China, which has started to take its place more firmly in the post-cold war system in which international concepts and theories have changed, seems to continue to change the theories in the literature with its global initiatives. China seems to respond to the question of what caused the change in the global system that Waltz and Mearsheimer mentioned.

In this context, it is necessary to mention an important point. China-Africa bilateral trade has been growing steadily for the past 16 years. However, weak commodity prices since 2014 have greatly affected the value of Africa's exports to China, even as China's exports to Africa have remained stable. Our data includes North Africa. The value of China-Africa trade was \$185 billion in 2018, up from \$155 billion in 2017.2018'de Angola

was the largest exporter from Africa to China. After that, it became South Africa and the Republic of the Congo. In 2018, South Africa was the largest buyer of Chinese goods, followed by Nigeria and Egypt.

Table 5. Distribution of Chinese FDI in Africa (Umejei, 2015).



China has become Africa's largest trading partner since overtaking the United States in 2009. Trade between the parties lastly amounted to \$208.7 billion in 2019. Beijing has also supported its relations with Africa with the Belt and Road Initiative, which it has built on the continent under many highways, hydroelectric power plants, railways and much more.

The rapid growth performance in the Chinese economy significantly affects the share of China in the world economies. China has close relations with countries that will provide opportunities for sustainable economic growth and development. Therefore, it wants to benefit from the natural wealth of African countries. Having a large market volume, increasing technological development and gaining an advantageous position in foreign markets, and in order to benefit from its local economies, cause China's strategy to be established by the world countries closely. In addition, the development of African countries in terms of international policies has increased the focus on African countries. Therefore, this rapprochement between China and Africa makes other countries quite uneasy due to the natural resources, energy and raw material power of Africa.

Under this close relationship, China, which wants to increase its power in the foreign market and production efficiency, may have thoughts such as creating an economic union and political power apart from economic factors, playing a more active role in international politics against the countries outside the union, and completely eliminating some countries. Free trade policies, in which the conditions of perfect competition are valid and the barriers to trade are removed, are the best policies in terms of maximizing world welfare, and such policies in the economy are called "first best". There are differences in development between countries. Some countries have superiority over other countries in terms of qualified workforce, technology and capital. The entry of countries that have not yet completed their development, such as African countries, to free

foreign trade may bring some negative consequences for them. Namely, the scarcity of factors such as qualified labour and capital will accelerate the migration of African countries to other countries. China is aware of the profits it will gain from African countries with the policies it wants to implement. Therefore, China is trying to keep African countries by preventing migration and providing the necessary support. It can be said that China needs African countries at this stage in order to achieve its goals in the next century. In addition, African countries are a market for China to sell their products.

China's support to African countries will of course be reflected in the economic picture of African countries. Thanks to the economic aids and supports, it was possible to sell the goods of African countries, which are economically small countries, in the world markets, and African countries were able to buy cheaper products. In terms of international economy, it is possible to state that the classical point of view of economic thought, which is dominated by the notion that one side wins and the other loses (negative-sum game), but that one side can win while the other side wins (positive-sum game), is valid for China and Africa at this stage.

It is possible to understand why the African continent is important for China, referring to the statements of Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, about raising the development level of the Chinese people in 2012. The fact that the African continent has a wide geographical importance and is an important market for China, as well as being seen as valuable in terms of the world economy, causes the countries of the world to set their eyes on this continent. Africa is the place for China to keep on hand in order to achieve its goals.

With the collapse of colonialism after the Second World War, many countries in Africa gained their independence. After this stage, the developments in the African continent, the efforts to clean up the remnants of colonialism, nationalism and economic development initiatives gained importance (Seyidoğlu, 2007: 267). While the relationship of African countries with Western countries depends on colonialism and economic dependence, African countries see China as anti-colonial and evaluate it as an important place in terms of economic development (Kılıç, 2013: 94). The withdrawal of Western countries from the region due to reasons such as administrative problems in African countries, lack of strong infrastructure, and internal turmoil created an opportunity for China. In other words, China gained the chance to benefit from the underground resources in the region and created a market opportunity for itself. (Yılmaztürk, 2015: 6). This provided mutual dependency. Therefore, China's solution to the problems in African countries lies in the opportunities it will create for itself, the profits it will generate, and the feeling of showing its power to the world even more.

Hegemony Reading on China's Economic Aid to Africa

The state model that China wants to create is a resistance to the US-based political and economic system in the international arena. Due to its economic power, China provides financial support to countries with low level of development without any conditions. China's aim here is to abolish the confinement of neo-liberal policies, which are required for their underdeveloped countries to receive loans from the International Monetary Fund

and the World Bank. The new model to be established based on China envisages the development of every country in the world both politically and economically within its own field and ensuring political stability.

This new model proposal, also called the Beijing Consensus, differs from the previous models, thus affecting the countries of the world as a new model. It should be determined whether the model that China wants to establish will work. For this reason, China wants to test it in the African countries it cooperates with. African countries support the model that China wants to establish. Therefore, China is gradually increasing its influence in African countries.

The pandemic process has caused the world's countries to change their perspective on China negatively. However, China, which continued its activities in this process, provided support especially to African countries in the field of health sector and deepened its relations in these countries. The Extraordinary China-Africa Summit held in Beijing on 17 June 2020 with the theme of "Solidarity against Covid-19" can be considered as important feedback on Africa's view of China. In particular, the monetary support of Beijing to African countries has produced positive results.

The COVID-19 outbreak has spread to 52 countries in Africa. The increase in the number of cases and the epidemic situation are mostly in South Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Cameroon and Tunisia among African countries. African countries, which could not cope with the epidemic alone, were affected in many ways. In particular, the service and aviation industries, crude oil and agriculture sectors to which it exports were greatly affected. Moreover, foreign trade data further increased the already existing foreign trade deficit. Political instability in countries and especially sudden decreases in commodity prices caused financial pressures in countries such as Algeria, Nigeria and Egypt. The recession in the country's economy due to the epidemic had a shock effect on the markets, and the central banks in Egypt, Ghana, South Africa and Kenya reduced the interest rates in order to alleviate the pressure on the economy. In addition, economic incentive measures such as tax reductions and exemption from payment processing fees have been taken in many countries. African countries that want to improve their economy have started to develop online and digital economies in many industries for the process. China has shown that it is with Africa during the epidemic process, as well as in many areas, in the field of health, by holding medical supplies, respirators, clothes, gloves and various video conferences.

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

In this research we have done, we tried to reveal what is the connection of China's rising hegemony with Covid 19. China uses its investments as a strategic move. China, which increased its activities after 1980, continued to maintain its influence with Covid 19. The investment process that started with Central African countries is now moving towards the South. The data we obtained revealed that with these investments, China not only progressed in the economy but also in the military and education fields. China has also advanced the education sector in Africa with the institutes it has established. On the other hand, growing China needs more energy. In the global world where industrial developments are increasing, China wants to use African countries for this

need. The manufacturing industry, which started from a single point in the 18th century, has spread to different regions today, and China has succeeded in taking successful steps in this regard. As a result, it has been observed that its effectiveness in Africa has increased after the epidemic that started with Covid 19.

METHOD

This study was conducted through qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Data from the US Department of Defence and field reports were used in the study. On the other hand, the US Department of State field data was compiled and the interpretation technique was used. Quantitative data used were interpreted with international relations theories and had a qualitative feature.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In our study, we clearly stated that China has come to a very important position in the world economy and politics with the breakthroughs it has started since the 1980s. In the axis of power that started to shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific, China's expansionism policy, not in the military field, but commercially, started to create an unprecedented balance in the global system and left the military defences of other countries defenceless in the region. The result of the interventions of the USA and European countries in the countries on the African continent has created a chaotic situation and led to the uncontrolled migration movements of the people living in that country. This movement caused a shift of axis in Africa and China started a new era by making breakthroughs in the areas where manpower was gathered.

In regions where hard power elements are seen in the global system, China's display of soft power policies, which is a different power element, and its economic approach to countries also caused it to take more critical steps during the global crisis. At a time when countries announced aid packages to get out of the crisis with the Covid-19 pandemic, China stipulated those African countries with debts should make health investments by cancelling their debts. The steps taken by local governments for the purpose of health, education and commercial development will turn out to be positive for the Chinese government, which turned the crisis into an opportunity. At present, as well as Pakistan and India, China, which has islands problems with Japan, can be called as "Smart Power" to deal with and establish hegemony in transnational regions with economic policies rather than militarily. China, which has increased its military defence expenditures to protect its own borders, especially the artificial islands it has built within its own borders, it knows how to challenge globally with its dollar reserves that will put the USA in trouble, despite the depreciation of its currency against the dollar. For all these reasons and in the world of this century, where global breakthroughs are followed one after the other, this step was taken by China, which has no action and claim to hegemony, the COVID -19 pandemic, which emerged as a global crisis, should be read and be analysed well by the countries of the world.

ETHICS TEXT

"In this article, the journal writing rules, publication principles, research and publication ethics rules, journal ethical rules has been complied with. Responsibility for any violation that may arise regarding the article belongs to the authors.

Authors' Contribution Statement: "The first author contribution 50% and the second author contributed 50%.."

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