



## Investigating the Security Outcomes of the Turkish GAP Project on Iran from the Copenhagen School Perspective

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### Abstract

Since 1970, Turkey has started a series of dams under the name of GAP project during six periods with the aim of developing its southeast regions. This plan has reduced the water resources coming out of Turkey and has had destructive consequences on the ecosystem of the countries that are in the path of the said water resources and has caused environmental, economic and social damages. Although Iran is not directly in the path of the outgoing waters, it has faced such threats as a result. Using the descriptive-analytical method and library and media sources, this research is looking for an answer to this question: How will Turkey's GAP plan cause a big crisis in the region? With the completion of Turkey's GAP project and the continuation of this situation, the consequences of this mega-project under the title of five threats to security (environmental, social, economic, political and military) from the perspective of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies have caused the following and threaten the lives of the people of the region. The drying up of the downstream rivers, floods, intensification and increase of the micro dust center, lack of water, unemployment, outbreak of disease, deepening of social damage, migration, damage to historical monuments, etc. The findings show that by implementing the GAP project, Turkey has turned water into a pressure lever in the country's foreign policy and one of the main factors of geopolitics and strategy in the Middle East. And contrary to their claims, this project is not in line with sustainable economic development and has caused threats and consequences in the countries affected by the project.

**Key words:** Iran, GAP plan, Turkey, Copenhagen school, Environmental threats

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## Introduction

Modern global challenges, including the desire for development and climate change, have made the connection between "politics, security, water and identity" stronger. In such a way that water resources have become a soft tool to advance political goals and influence. Like the Middle East, where the politicization of water, or in other words, hydro politics, has been brought up and intensified more clearly than before, in such a way that it has become one of the important and influential variables in the interactions of the region. That is, it has been one of the main factors of tension and conflict between the countries of the region in the past and present, and it will act as an influencing variable on the policies of the Middle East in the future. Some experts believe that in the future, water will replace oil as a rare and expensive commodity and will be the main focus of disputes and compromises in the coming decade. Because one of the characteristics of arid and semi-arid regions of the Middle East is its fragile ecosystems due to lack of water. That is, the pressures caused by dam construction, along with factors such as climate change and global warming, have increased this fragility (Seif, political economic criticism, 2013). For example, Turkey views water as a political and hegemonic tool for the exploitation of shared border waters with a series of dams known as the "Southeast Anatolia Project" known as GAP on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. And in terms of geopolitics, it claims absolute sovereignty over the waters originating from its soil and rejects the claims of its neighbors (Iran, Syria and Iraq) regarding the right to water. Turkey claims that just as the oil resources of each country belong to

that country, the water resources that originate from Turkey also belong to this country (Hussein, 2020). From the perspective of the Copenhagen school of security studies, this issue has directly affected the economic, social and environmental security, and in a chain-like fashion, the political and military security of these countries and has created a platform for creating tension between these countries. It should be noted that the consequences of the GAP plan include the countries of Iraq, Syria and even Turkey itself, but our case study in this research is the threats to Iran.

In this article, the Copenhagen school of security studies is considered as the main basis of the subject framework. In this school, the issue of "security" is the most key issue, because this concept is under threat in every way, and other issues are also examined around this issue. For this purpose, according to the multiplicity of the concept of security in this school, applying theories in the concept of sustainable development in environmental, social, economic and political aspects becomes important. Therefore, according to the claim of the Turkish government, which is based on the implementation of the GAP project in the path of sustainable economic development. This issue is examined in the framework of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies. And finally, we come to the conclusion that with the completion of Turkey's GAP project and the continuation of this situation, the consequences of this mega-project under the title of Copenhagen's five security threats (environmental, social, economic, political and military threats) will be deepened as follows. loss of underground water resources; Soil erosion; Desertification; deforestation; the dryness of

wetlands and lakes and hors; migration of birds and animal species; massive internal and external human migration; unemployment; outbreak of diseases; deepening social harms; Damage to historical monuments and weakening of Iran in the region and the world.

Today, humanities research is faced with many study methods to analyze political phenomena. In this research, an attempt is made to analyze the consequences and structural challenges of Turkey's GAP project and its political, social, economic and environmental effects on Iran and the region by presenting a descriptive-analytical method within the framework of Barry Buzan's Copenhagen School of Security Studies. In order to collect data, due to the newness of the topic, in addition to the documentary and library method, the views of journalists from media sources and internet sites are also used. In the findings of this article, an attempt has been made to use foreign sources of English, Kurdish, Turkish and German authors in addition to internal sources, considering the importance of the subject. In order to measure as much as possible, the dimensions and aspects of the issue from the point of view of the communities or countries involved in it.

In relation to research limitations regarding Iran's internal policies regarding measures such as "policy of building dams inside" and "policy of water transfer between provinces" and "policy of location and distribution of water-bearing industries"; It is not clear how much the consequences are influenced by the external source, that is, Turkey's GAP project, and how much it is related to Iran's internal policies and performance.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Security from the perspective of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies**

The meaning of theoretical framework is the researcher's view of the research problem, which causes the researcher's intellectual concentration and his movement in the direction of a theory and avoiding generalizations and scatter shots. No one imagines the world as it is, we all look at the world from behind the curtain of theories, presuppositions and ideas. From this point of view, observation and interpretation are two inseparable categories. At the same time, when we look at the world, we get involved in giving it meaning. The reason for the importance of the theory of structure and giving a framework to the scattered, formless and confused reality is the form (Heywood, 2011, p. 87).

The Copenhagen school of security studies was specifically formed in 1985 by Barry Buzan in the book "People, State and Fear" and tried to move security studies beyond the military relations of countries. Buzan considers "security" as an "underdeveloped" concept and tries to provide a new definition of the concept of security (Buzan, 1983, p. 18). Buzan, as the founder of the Copenhagen school, criticizes what he calls a simplistic understanding of the concept of security and states that; Contrary to the realists' belief in obtaining security through "power" or the idealistic belief in providing security through "peace", it is now necessary to present a middle view based on both the concepts of power and peace, as the best definition for the concept of security. (Buzan, 1987, p. 34).

Instead of explaining the concept of security based on power, the Copenhagen school explains the concept of security based on "threat" and considers security to mean "freedom from threat". In this regard, according to Barry Buzan, the five angles of security are "environmental security", "economic security", "social security" and "military and political security". that each of these parts do not act independently of each other, but are interconnected and have a mutual influence on each other in a chain manner (Buzan and Eli Weaver, 2018: 87-93).

Supporters of the Copenhagen theory believe that environmental threats and pressures can lead to violence in the international system or within a specific territorial framework; That is, the environment can be a platform and a potential factor for creating crises. In such a way that environmental issues are a potential for future threats to human societies and the world is facing a new phenomenon called "common threat" and the first sign of environmental security threat is considered to be the limitation of the use of natural resources. Thus, economic crises and social identity arising from migration are rooted in the destruction of the environment, because the phenomenon of migration due to unemployment occurs in most cases due to environmental threats. Therefore, environmental threats are closely related to other aspects of security (Heshmati and others, 2016, p. 148).

The meaning of social security, from the perspective of the theorists of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, is the ability of society to maintain its basic characteristics against changing conditions and real or possible threats. In the framework of this definition, it is difficult and predictable to recognize

when a threat to social security occurs, because social security is a situation where communities feel threats in their identity components. Human activities such as dam construction or inter-basin water transfer and other activities in this regard have a visible and even irreparable impact on the environment. In this regard, destructive environmental phenomena as a platform for creating danger threaten the social security of societies, in a way that creates a common fate for them (Rahimli, 2017, p. 27).

Environmental issues and problems caused by human activity, such as the following, provide migration to other places in human communities, which itself leads to these problems, challenges and cultural gaps. global warming, water shortage crisis, reduction of natural resources, micro dust crisis; Extinction of rare plant, animal and even aquatic species; Soil erosion, deforestation, pollution of water resources, cause problems such as unemployment, ethnic tension and violence, protests, and the spread of infectious diseases. These problems disrupt the order and balance of the society and challenge the political system, and they consider it responsible, which leads to the crisis of political legitimacy as a chain (Urdu, 2017).

As mentioned, Buzan challenged the one-dimensional view of the traditional theories of security and developed the dimensions of security into five dimensions. One of the dimensions of security, in its new form, is the issues related to environmental security. In this regard, the issue of water is one of the most important components of environmental security. Water is a vital resource with a shared nature between different stakeholders (local, regional, national and international) that does

not recognize political, economic and social boundaries. On the other hand, this strategic resource is not exclusive to humans and is vital for the entire ecosystem and the life of all elements and creatures on earth. The important thing about water issues is that achieving water security is not only a hostage of the governance of the intertwined issues in the water sector, but many drivers in this field affect water security from outside the water sector. For this reason, the water resources management process is often influenced by the decisions made in other sectors, including agricultural and food strategies and policies, energy security, infrastructure and technology. These issues have caused the intertwining of water and politics, and consequently, the intertwining of water and the security of countries, on each other. According to the Copenhagen school of security studies, water issues and challenges cannot be separated from political and security issues (Azarshab, 2017, p. 122). On the other hand, the competition for control, access and use of water is directly related to the identity of the people of a land. Since water issues are intertwined with the history and identity of societies and are also considered a part of the security of governments, therefore, strategic dealing with water relations and disputes will be a complex issue for policy makers in this field. Therefore, from the perspective of the Copenhagen theory, the intertwined link of "politics, security, water and identity" is an important and effective aspect in strategic policy-making as well as the exploitation of shared water resources. This link is important to such an extent that the superpowers have put environmental issues and especially water as a basic strategy in their agenda to gain hegemony over the region and the world (Moran, 2008, pp. 37-58). These challenges are

more pronounced in transboundary watersheds and international water resources, between two or more countries. Therefore, most of the government's efforts to control and control the waters of standard catchment basins are made either to gain political power to secure political-economic benefits or to gain dominance over common water resources to meet the needs of their communities by using political and economic power. (Bilgen, 2018, p. 151).

Many advanced countries tried to predict and prevent environmental crises, which are the basis and potential factor for other crises according to the Copenhagen school, by operationalizing sustainable economic development. Sustainable economic development is a multilateral and balanced development that emphasizes the three dimensions of social life, i.e. economic, socio-political, and environmental dimensions and society (Reinert, 2016, p. 256). According to the concepts of sustainable economic development, there is a clear link between progress in the environmental field such as optimal management, water management, and optimal economic progress, as well as issues such as citizen participation in power institutions and elimination of discrimination, and social and economic justice. Also, sustainable economic development is a type of understanding of development that, in addition to the development and progress of the life of the current generation, also pays attention to the support of future generations (Kpinar, 2013, p. 981). In this regard, socio-political, economic, and environmental conditions are taken into consideration at the same time, because it is not possible to differentiate between economic, environmental, and socio-political progress. Rather, it is necessary to have a balance between various aspects of

social life. But water management does not have a sustainable development approach. That is, its process is not designed according to a desirable future without harming the integrity, beauty, and stability of the vital systems, in which the living conditions and the use of resources, will meet the needs of human beings, along with changing the attitude towards economic growth and progress. (Rabi, 2016, p. 69).

### **Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP)**

The implementation of the hydraulic mission inside Turkey has several goals, including reducing Turkey's dependence on foreign sources of fossil energy, creating development and improving economic power, and it is also designed and planned in some areas to control the Kurdish issue. In line with the actions of the hydraulic mission inside the country, Turkey has defined ten super projects with the purpose of the hydraulic mission inside, which includes. 1- Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP). 2- Eastern Anatolia Project (DAP). 3- Central Anatolia project. 4- AGGAP project. 5- Thrace Development Project (TRAGAP). 6- Marmara GAP project. 7- Mediterranean Development Project (Akdeniz GAP). 8- West Black Sea Development Project (PAK GAP). 9- East Black Sea Development Project (DECAP) and 10- Konya Plain Project (QUP). (Mian Abadi, 2021). This importance has also been raised in line with the third component proposed for the doctrine of strategic depth. Considering that our case study is GAP project of Turkey, therefore, the explanation of ten projects is not in line with this article.

The Southeast Anatolia project is one of the most important projects of the Turkish

Ministry of Water and Forestry. which has been implemented in the southeast of Turkey, namely the southeast Anatolia region, which includes nine Kurdish provinces, including the cities of Adiyaman, Batman, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Kilis, Siirt, Mardin, Sanliurfa, Sirnak (Gürer and Ülger, 2007, p. 175). This project is the fifth largest dam construction project in the world, which includes 25 irrigation systems, 22 dams, 19 hydroelectric power plants, irrigation of 1058 million hectares of agricultural land and 9 drinking water supply projects. The largest dams are the Atatürk Dam on the Euphrates with a reservoir volume of 48 billion cubic meters, which has a capacity equal to 650 Iranian dams; And Ilisu Dam on the Tigris River with a capacity of more than 10 billion cubic meters, which is about three times more than the Karkheh Dam as the largest dam in Iran (Güncelleme, 2012). The first large structure that was built in this plan was the Atatürk Dam, which was completed in 1992. This dam is the fifth largest dam in the world in terms of the amount of construction work and the third in terms of hydropower production, and it is the largest dam in Europe and Turkey, which is the main cause of the drying up of the lands of Iraq and Syria. In such a way that the Mesopotamia plain has lost its moisture and has become a source of dust production (Abassi, 2018).

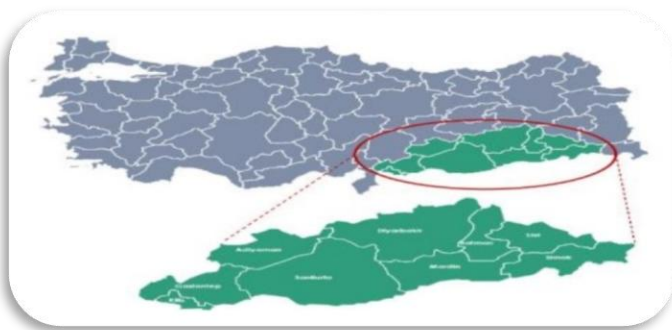
As part of the GAP project, Ilisu dam has the longest dam in the world and its surface is concrete and its height is 135 meters and the power of the power plant is 1200 megawatts and it is supposed to produce 4.120 billion kilowatt hours of electricity annually. The construction of this dam on Tigris River started in 1996 and was completed in early 2018. Ilisu dam hydropower plant will provide five percent of Turkey's electricity. "Ilisu" dam is the



fourth largest dam in Turkey after "Ataturk", "Karakaya" and "Kaban" dams (Qureishi, 2020, p. 182).

For the full implementation of the GAP plan, thirty years of time and a budget of 32 billion dollars were considered. Based on this, 14 dams will be built on the Euphrates, 8 dams on the Tigris, and a total of 19 hydropower plants will be built - which is now in its final stages in 2023. After completion, this plan was supposed to irrigate 1.8 million hectares of agricultural land. The total energy production power of the power plants is 7476 megawatts and produces 27 billion kilowatt hours of electricity annually. Based on the Master Plan in 1989, this developed project; It includes infrastructure development plans and the creation of road and railway network facilities, airports, tourist attractions, factories, health and treatment systems such as hospitals, universities and schools, and the development of information and news systems (Mianabadi and Amini, 2019). This plan has been implemented in six periods since 1970 until now (2023) and in each period its goals have

changed according to the conditions and requirements of Turkey, so that it has now become a political project in the guise of agricultural, social and economic development. Turkey has proposed the goal of the GAP project to improve the income level and quality of life of local people by using local resources, improving the national economy and social stability. Executive officials of the GAP project have introduced this plan as the human and regional development plan in order to exploit the power and capacities of the region. This human development plan aims to increase the level of general well-being, income and quality of life of the people of the region by implementing agricultural and service development plans and reducing the level of differences in the living standards of the people of the region with other regions and the transformation of the social structure and ensuring and maintaining social stability. (Khaki, 2019, p. 101). In the first picture, the green area shows the location of the project and the second picture shows the geographical location of the transboundary rivers "Tigris and Euphrates".



Source: GAP project website

### Security threats of Turkey's GAP project

An attempt is made to analyze and examine the consequences of the Turkish GAP project by applying the Copenhagen school, which emphasizes broad security against narrow security and a multi-dimensional view of security. Considering the multiplicity of the concept of security in this school, the application of the concept of sustainable economic development in bio-environmental, social, economic and political aspects becomes important; And specifically, in this article, according to the claim of the trustees of the GAP plan that this project is non-security and in line with sustainable economic development, their claim will be examined from this point of view. And finally, we come to the issue that based on the five dimensions of security in the Copenhagen school, the issue of environmental threats of Turkey's GAP plan has created a platform for the emergence and activity of currents that disrupt security in the region and has affected the security of the countries in the region. In such a way that part of the threats of security, political, social and economic issues of the Middle East are rooted in the environmental consequences of Turkey's GAP project.

According to the Copenhagen school in Turkey's GAP plan, the perspective of sustainable economic development is not seen in environmental, economic and social policies not only for the people of Turkey, but also for the countries affected by this plan. Examining the GAP project from the perspective of development and sustainable development discourse shows that GAP was mainly a technical, governmental, infrastructural and economic development

project in the 1970s, but the project has evolved and turned into a mainly social, political, commercial and human-oriented project. This evolutionary change of GAP is related to the instability of the development space and the discourse of development and sustainable development in the world. The GAP plan is largely a product of concepts, norms and criteria borrowed from other places without considering its suitability to Turkey's own internal conditions, sensitivities, concerns and internal demands of this country. Many concepts, goals, and activities conflict with each other.

This country is trying to use its water resources against the oil resources of the Persian Gulf countries by defining and implementing numerous water projects in the form of hydraulic mission strategy and regardless of its environmental, social, economic and political dimensions and consequences. In such a way as to disrupt the hydrological system of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which are the vital arteries of West Asia (Laffert, Sala, 2022, p. 14). That is, the process that, from Copenhagen's point of view, has created a potential for conflict and threat in the region and has caused environmental crises by reducing the amount of water input in the downstream section. Iran, as a country affected by this issue, is facing a problem. While the effects of the environmental assessment show that the GAP project does not fit into the internal governance of countries and has extra-regional effects, therefore, on the one hand, depending on water security on water resources outside the country, is actually depending on a part of national security on the region. The lack of management structures in joint exploitation and water



governance has turned it into a factor for creating crises between countries.

In this regard, it is possible to point out the connection between the ideological understanding of Turkey's GAP project of politics and economy with the concept of security and sustainable development in the framework of the Copenhagen school; In such a way that the relationship between these two categories has an inverse state and the growth of one of them leads to a negative decrease of the other. In other words, considering that in ideological understanding, the existence of the principle of excellence and its reproduction takes precedence over other cases. And elements such as the environment, economic growth, social welfare, etc., which represent the concept of security and sustainable development in the Copenhagen school, are victims of this sublime principle of the GAP Turkey project. And when security standards are reduced in various aspects, the structural ideological function in the public domain increases and concepts such as security in all its aspects undergo a fundamental transformation.

Therefore, in carrying out the hydraulic mission of Turkey, it can apparently bring water security for different sectors. But the price from Copenhagen's point of view is creating new security challenges for other stakeholders. As we can see that the continuation of Turkey's hydraulic mission strategy, regardless of the dimensions and political, social, economic, and environmental consequences of these plans, has brought irreparable consequences. This vital resource has been transformed into a means to gain political power and influence in Turkey, and the reverse of the claim that the GAP project is in line with human-centered development and sustainable

economic development has been proven. Rather, it has been aimed at creating economic power, advancing political goals and achieving water hegemony, a process that leads to multilateral damages with wide consequences in Iran and other countries in the region affected by this project. As a result, it is consistent with the theory of Copenhagen security and what is known as the discourse of neo-Ottomanism in Turkey's foreign policy based on the theory of strategic depth. It can be predicted that due to the current climatic conditions in the Middle East, the water artery is in the hands of Turkey and in the waterless future of the region, the role of this country in the field of environmental security will become more prominent than ever before.

## Research findings

### Security implications of the GAP plan on Iran from the perspective of Copenhagen

Iran is geographically diverse compared to other countries in the Middle East. But a significant part of it is under the control of two large deserts "Lut" and "Kavir Desert" and despite the start of the desertification program since the 1930s, it is still facing drylands and deserts (Kordwani, 2019).

Although Iran does not have the same situation as Iraq and Syria regarding the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in terms of water, environmental threats have a chain effect on economic, social and political consequences. Iran is connected with the Tigris River in the western part, and this river leaves the border with a short passage on the border and is enriched by several internal rivers, and finally it flows into the Persian Gulf by joining the Euphrates

River and connecting with the Arvandroud and Karun rivers. In other words, the decrease in the amount of water input in the lower part of the river has led to the instability of the water chain downstream of the Tigris and Euphrates basins and its projection to the abandonment of a large part of the agricultural lands in the region and has caused the consequences of environmental erosion in Horul Azim (Rouhi, 2019, p. 88). Iran, as a country affected by this issue, has faced problems. The spread of wind erosion due to the lack of vegetation on the one hand and the role of the Horul Azim wetland in neutralizing the dust of storms that come from the Rab al-Khali desert to Iran, on the other hand due to the drying of these wetlands, has been lost and has become the biggest center of fine dust crisis. that after the operation of the "Ilisu" dam, a dust tsunami occurred (Rahmani, 2020, p. 87).

Macroeconomic-political costs of the micro dust crisis which directly affects several provinces of Iran. Imposing large-scale political-economic costs through changing Iran's regional biases due to the increase in tensions and disturbances resulting from Turkey's recent water policies, such as selling water to Israel, in Iraq and Syria, which has a direct impact on internal developments; The increase in socio-economic gaps and political costs, especially in the south of Iran, causes the drying up of wetlands and farmlands and the reduction of industrial aquaculture due to the decrease in the input of the Persian Gulf and the increase in the salinity concentration of its water, all of which are the consequences of Turkey's GAP project; which speeds up the creation and intensification of the super challenges facing Iran. Thus, according to the opinion of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, part of the threats facing Iran today, including threats

to economic, social, political and even military security, in environmental issues, are related to Turkey's GAP project.

In other words, one of the most important results of the decrease or drying up of the two rivers "Tigris and Euphrates" is the increase of dust that enters Iran from Iraq. Also, due to the complete dryness of the "Horul Azim" wetland, considering that most of it is in Iraq, it has adverse environmental consequences (Kurdish TV channel Rodav, 2019). Dryness and increase in temperature caused by the drying up of wetlands in the region and as a result the death and loss of plant and animal species in the region brought about a big change in the region's ecosystem, and currently we are witnessing the disease and the gradual loss of regional buffaloes in the wetlands of Khuzestan. This change of the ecosystem by destroying its environment causes the migration flow of other organisms such as birds to disappear during the seasons of the year, which was their food supply route. This problem itself helps to destroy and remain abandoned in the region to increase the growth of dry and heat-generating animals such as scorpions and poisonous snakes.

Therefore, dusts caused by drought minimizes the possibility of human, plant and animal life. Involvement of human lungs is the most important human risk caused by these dusts in the region. There is also the possibility of harming the environment of other regions of the country that are close to dry deserts, with the accumulation of dust in the region, and it leads to the impossibility of living in the region. Especially since a large part of these dusts arise from areas contaminated with radioactive chemicals during the American invasion of Iraq (Qa'em Maqami, 2016).

As we are now witnessing water scarcity and water cut in the areas covered by fine dust, this issue leads to the migration of the people of this region to other cities and provinces. Considering the unstable economic situation in the last few years and the increase in unemployment in Iran, the migration caused by the lack of safe water and micro-nutrients aggravates the challenge of unemployment. The increase in dissatisfaction caused by the lack of work for immigrants, the emergence of slum immigrants; Being forced to do hard work with minimum wages and not having the most basic labor rights, or turning to false and illegal work, is one of the possibilities of the impact of environmental change caused by the increase of fine dust in Iran, the main root of which goes back to the Turkish GAP project. Because the evidence indicates that the water crisis in the Middle East following the consequences of this project will become a serious security and civilizational threat until it transforms the existing political order in the region. It aggravates ethnic conflicts and civil wars and involves the countries of Iraq, Syria, Iran and Turkey in regional conflicts. Below we briefly mention the five security threats (environmental, social, economic, political and military) from the perspective of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies in Iran as a country affected by this project.

#### **A: Environmental consequences**

There has been an increase in the crisis of fine dust, sandstorms, and dust centers compared to before the construction of the Turkish GAP project, as well as the spread of wind erosion, extensive drought, loss of moisture in fertile lands, and an increase in salt deposition in the soil compared to the past (Chizari, 1400). In addition to the loss of underground water

resources, this has caused the crisis of land subsidence, soil erosion, desertification and the creation of vast dry and desert areas, which itself has resulted in a long and excruciating heat wave.

Deforestation and the possibility of large forest fires due to dry and waterless weather and the destruction of thousands of hectares of agricultural land and the scarcity of edible crops and the destruction of cotton fields and edible trees such as palm trees, figs, etc. The loss of plants and herbal medicines and damage to the medicinal plant industry (Bahrami, 2021).

The drying up of wetlands and the gradual destruction of the lake ecosystem and the destruction of coral reefs, especially in the south of Iran. The extinction of rare biological species and the loss of plant, animal and aquatic life means the destruction of food sources and habitats of endangered and rare animals, and on the contrary, the increase in the growth of dry and hot land animals such as scorpions, poisonous snakes and pathogenic insects. And finally, the permanent migration of seasonal birds and the death of a large mass of edible fish and aquatic animals (from plankton to small fish) and the loss of animal husbandry and food animals due to lack of water, which itself is the reason for damaging the food cycle of natural living organisms. And it has also caused sediments and nutrification (algae) of waters (Jilvan publication, 2018).

Climate changes and global warming and the super-crisis of water scarcity in the Middle East reduce the resilience of countries in the region against new crises. Turkey, with the GAP project, by blowing into the water tensions at the first level, causes widespread environmental consequences in the region. The

point and nationalistic and not the macro view of the environmental issue has made us in this arid region cause desertification and drying up of the rivers and the biological hazards of the people of the region every day, and no project with a macro view of compatibility with the environmental situation of the region is formed. In this way, megaprojects like GAP cause the spread of previous crises such as micro dusts and the creation and deepening of new crises.

### **B: Economic security consequences**

Imposing macroeconomic costs to reduce the environmental crises caused by the GAP project, especially in the west and south of Iran. Reduction of industrial aquatic catch and reduction of exports and economic damage due to the disease and loss of buffaloes in the southern provinces and widespread unemployment and the loss of many jobs related to agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing and as a result, the reduction of income and profit. Increasing false and illegal jobs and finally increasing economic gaps and polarization of Iranian society into rich and poor (Sohrabi, 2020).

Shortage of foreign currency due to the decrease in domestic exports and high consumption of foreign currency from oil income due to extensive imports into Iran as a result of increased imports and decreased exports in the drawers affected by the negative consequences of GAP and the transformation of the Iranian market into a market for the consumption of Turkish products.

A decrease in the price of waterless agricultural land, a change in the planting of crops or a change in the use of agricultural land, and the desire to sell agricultural land and the

desire to migrate from the south to the north of Iran. Or migration of specialized forces from different economic sectors, especially in the oil extraction sector and causing disruption in this sensitive industry (Zamani Dehkordi, 2021).

The decrease in tourist attractions due to drought and desertification and the decrease in the presence of tourists who have economic interests in Iran (Darvish, 2020).

If we see the cyclical crises of capital and the global economic recession due to crises such as the Ukraine war or the corona pandemic, the inflationary stagnation in Iran, the reduction of Iran's foreign exchange earnings due to sanctions, and Iran's high reliance on oil revenues in one system, they are intertwined and affect each other. Environmental crises as a focal component can spread the crisis in each of these areas. Reliance of a part of the economic system of the downstream countries of the GAP project, including Iran, on agriculture, tourism, and the fishing industry has caused; Any disturbance in the flow of this right, the economic situation of these areas, which have already become critical in the larger context that was mentioned above, will lead to a disaster at a faster rate.

### **C: Social security consequences**

The massive migration of the population to the interior and the countries of the region, Europe, etc., and the intensification of cultural challenges in the regions that accept immigrants. The emptying and abandonment of many settlements and other areas due to lack of water and the increasing growth and heterogeneous distribution of the population that are facing water shortage. The increase of marginalization and slum living in big cities

and the problem of unemployment and jeopardizing people's livelihood and the increase of gaps and social harms in Iran. The increase in the number of child marriages (child abuse) due to poverty and the increase in drug addiction and trafficking, especially in the south of Iran (Heshmati Jadid, 2016, p. 79).

The spread of infectious, respiratory and bronchial diseases through dust contaminated with chemical and radioactive substances during the American-Iraq war. The threat to the health of residents who are directly related to it and the concern of the medical community and health officials about the occurrence and exacerbation of various diseases due to dehydration. The criticality of public health and community health and people's lack of access to safe drinking water and the reduction of body metabolism and skin and digestive problems.

The decline of citizens' sense of responsibility towards the problem of drought and being encouraged to lack cooperation and collective cooperation and the loss of social capital as one of the main indicators of social development. The increase of extreme despair in the society and the decrease of the collective conscience and the lack of responsibility of the majority of the people to comply with the environmental behaviors and the decrease of the social and civil participation of the people in the society due to the contradiction between the demands of the people and the authorities and the preference of individual interests over collective interests at the regional level. The spread of breaking social norms and increasing the number of crimes and social problems and spreading the feeling of insecurity (Noori, 2021, p. 118).

The destruction of thousands of years of historical and ancient monuments in Iran and the abandonment of historical and ancient buildings and monuments due to land subsidence due to lack of water (Darvish, 2012).

The war of several years in Syria with all its consequences is still ongoing in front of everyone's eyes as an experience. In one case, several million citizens were displaced, which was a burden on the shoulders of European countries and Turkey itself, which at times used against them as a card against Europe. Any new major security risk in the region, where the migration resulting from water scarcity due to the GAP project and climate change in the dry region of the Middle East as an imagined consequence, could have consequences more terrible than a full-scale war. In addition to the Syrian war, during the American invasion of Iraq, we also saw that with every security gap, whether it was about social relationships, the state of public health, the fate of ancient monuments, and macro indicators of social development; which even in some analyzes consider the desire to join ISIS as the biggest security-social danger of the last century resulting from deep social frustrations. This fundamental point should be taken into account; the consequences of the GAP mega-project can rise from the level of a technical project to a plan with wide social-security consequences in a short period of time.

#### **D: Consequences of political security**

Weakening Iran's position as a regional power because instability in Iran will directly affect the security of neighboring countries.

Multiploidization of the countries affected by the GAP project in relation to this plan. The possibility of military tension with Turkey



over the sale of water to Israel and an increase in political costs in Iran and an increase in water tensions between Iran and Iraq over common resources and basins due to the negative consequences of GAP.

Creating an advertising environment for Western, Arabic and Hebrew media in relation to Iran's ineffectiveness in the water governance system and increasing tension and unrest in Iran. Intensification of political and civil protests and more distrust of the people to the management of the existing political structure and the activation of gaps and the increase of widespread protests of environmentalists and NGOs to the current situation in Iran. Recruiting and recruiting unemployed Iranian forces by extremist groups in the region such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) due to the negative consequences of Turkey's GAP project (Abbasi, Firouzi, 2019).

Any change or security risk in regional powers such as Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia causes wide consequences on other countries and the region. As the traditional power of the region, Iran is one of the countries with a high level of impact from the GAP mega-project, and this factor itself can affect the security components of this country. Perhaps the Shia-Sunni ideology plays a big role in the competition and conflict and even hostility between these regional powers with each other and with Israel now, but with the expansion of water diplomacy between Turkey and Israel, in the meantime, we should witness tensions on a macro level. The tension between Iran and Afghanistan over Hirmand, or the difference between Iran and Iraq, which until now has been in the language of diplomacy, or the expansion of internal tension in these countries, such as the further rupture between the central

government and the Kurds in Iraq with the GAP project; Each of them can reach a new level of security risks, which will also involve Turkey itself as the agent of this project.

## Conclusion

The structural and conceptual transformation of development from the quantitative meaning of economic growth to the multifaceted qualitative meaning of human life (sustainable development) led to the change of other ideas related to the issue of development. The issue of security, which is the key concept of the Copenhagen school, therefore distanced itself from its quantitative military and physical meaning and adopted a multilateral qualitative meaning (environmental, economic, social and political security); which we see today in the theories of the Copenhagen school. For this reason, bringing the term sustainable development in the conceptualization group of the Copenhagen school is from the term "security". In order to achieve sustainable development, security must be evaluated from the perspective of Copenhagen.

Based on this interweaving of the aforementioned categories, the Turkish GAP project, which claims to create sustainable development in the country and even in the region, was evaluated in this research; which was specifically more about Iran's domestic and international issues and it was pointed out that this project has direct and indirect destructive effects on the region, the most striking of which is the environmental damage to the Middle East, especially the countries affected by the Turkish GAP project. Following the direct effect, its indirect effects emerge as its necessary results over time, i.e., the indirect effects on



the economy, culture, health, and politics—domestic and foreign. It should be noted that these indirect effects are not absolutely neutral, but create a platform for other issues. Although in some cases they are not the cause, but they are the cause of intensity and acceleration for social phenomena. We can point to the process of environmental impact on the destruction of the ecosystem and migration due to economic reasons, which in the current conditions of the country and the lack of employment resources, the fields of crime and delinquency arise.

As a result, it can be said that due to the destructive effects of Turkey's GAP project on

the region's environment and consequently Iran's ecosystem and other effects caused by the change of the Middle East ecosystem, the process of making development sustainable and creating security from the perspective of the Copenhagen school has been seriously disrupted; And it has an upward trend and targets people's security from different aspects. Contrary to the belief of domestic politicians on the existence of security based on the creation of military power, Iran is under a serious threat in terms of security, not by foreign hostile forces, but by internal recklessness towards the issue of the environment in general and the GAP issue of Turkey in particular.

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