

## **A CAUSAL COMPARATIVE RESEARCH: BUILD BACK BETTER (B3W) AND GLOBAL GATEWAY (GG) PROJECTS FROM A GEOECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE**

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to examine the Build Back Better and the Global Gateway projects from a geoeconomic perspective. In the causal comparison study conducted as a quantitative method in the research, the geoeconomic analysis units created by Robert D. Blackwill and Jennifer M. Harris in their work “War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft” were used. In the first stage, the literature of the Belt and Road Initiative was examined in the context of the Build Back Better and Global Gateway projects; all primary sources were scanned and the question of whether the Belt and Road Initiative is a result of geoeconomic growth was focused on. In the second stage, the competitiveness of the B3W and GG projects with the Belt and Road Initiative was mentioned with the analysis units used in the comparison. In the conclusion section, the results of the comparison made in line with the geoeconomic analysis units are presented.

**Keywords:** *Geoeconomic perspective, Belt and Road Initiative, Build Back Better project, Global Gateway project.*

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## **NEDENSEL KARŞILAŞTIRMALI ÇALIŞMA: JEOEKONOMİK PERSPEKTİFTEN BUILD BACK BETTER (B3W) VE GLOBAL GATEWAY (GG) PROJELERİ**

**Öz:** Bu çalışmanın amacı, Build Back Better ve Global Gateway projelerini jeoekonomik perspektiften incelemektir. Araştırmada, nicel yöntem olarak yürütülen nedensel karşılaştırma çalışmasında Robert D. Blackwill ve Jennifer M. Harris'in "War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft" eserlerinde yarattıkları jeoekonomik analiz birimleri kullanılmıştır. İlk aşamada, Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi'ne ait literatür Build Back Better ve Global Gateway projeleri bağlamında incelenmiş; birincil kaynakların tamamı taranarak Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi'nin jeoekonomik büyümesinin bir sonucu olup olmadığı sorusuna odaklanılmıştır. İkinci aşamada, karşılaştırmada kullanılan analiz birimleriyle B3W ve GG projelerinin Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi ile rekabet edebilirliğine değinilmiştir. Sonuç bölümünde ise, jeoekonomik analiz birimleri doğrultusunda yapılan karşılaştırmanın sonuçları sunulmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Jeoekonomik perspektif, Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi, Build Back Better projesi, Global Gateway projesi.*

## Introduction

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also known as the New Silk Road, announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the end of 2013, has caused intense discussions with large investments.<sup>2</sup> As the Han dynasty's pursuit of alliance in the West due to the Hun pressure in history paved the way for the historical Silk Road; in the Indo-Pacific, it has been stated that the policy of containment of China has triggered China for alternative globalization projects. The desire to break the siege through alliances such as the Hunnic oppression has been coupled with China's increasing global competitiveness.<sup>3</sup> Since 2013, a huge enterprise network has emerged with its strengths and weaknesses. Belt and Road countries reached a trade volume of 7 trillion yuan in the first 6 months of 2022.

The BRI initially started as a network of infrastructure investments in Eurasia. Afterwards, it became a huge project that followed investments in space and poles. In this respect, it has been subjected to criticism of white elephant projects and debt-trap diplomacy with heavy financial burden.<sup>4</sup> It is known that, with the Covid-19 pandemic, BRI financing has decreased from \$75 billion to \$4 billion.<sup>5</sup>

Hillary Clinton in 2011 had an initiative called the “*U.S. Silk Road Project*”, which included encouraging Afghanistan to regional integration.<sup>6</sup> Even before that, Turkey has an initiative that includes the customs union of the Turkish Republics, which it called “*Caravansary*” in 2008.<sup>7</sup> The U.S.-China foreign trade deficit, which began with China's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), paved the way for the formation of the Pacific bloc after the global financial crisis that began in 2008. In 2017, with the rise of China to the position of the country receiving the most direct investment, additional customs duties on aluminum and steel exports to China were introduced. With the ongoing competition of the Digital Silk

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<sup>2</sup> Lucas Gualberto do Nascimento (2020), “The Beijing Consensus and The New Silk Road in Africa: Chinese Investments in New Disputes of Hegemony”, *Conjuntura Internacional*, 17 (1), p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Taner Sabancı (2018), “Yeni İpek Yolu Projesi: Tarihi Olanla Benzerlikleri ve Hakkındaki Bazı Çalışmaların Kısa Bir Değerlendirmesi”, *Doğu Asya Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 1 (2), p. 83.

<sup>4</sup> James Crabtree (2021), “Competing with the BRI: The West's Uphill Task”, *Survival*, 63 (4), August 2021, p. 81.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>6</sup> Nicola Contessi (2012), “The New Silk Road Diplomacy: China's Central Asian Foreign Policy Since The Cold War”, *Central Asian Survey*, 31 (1), p. 75.

<sup>7</sup> Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı, “Türkiye'nin Çok Taraflı Ulaştırma Politikası”, Date of Accession: 06.09.2022 from [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye\\_nin-cok-tarafli-ulastirma-politikasi.tr.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye_nin-cok-tarafli-ulastirma-politikasi.tr.mfa).

Road<sup>8</sup> (5G Investments) with Huawei sanctions, the BRI project, as will be stated in a moment, has created a new field of competition.

### **1. Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**

In the last 10 years, road, energy transmission lines, port and infrastructure projects, railway projects, and logistics facility projects have been built on the land route referred to as the ‘Belt’ and the sea route referred to as the ‘Road’. In the China-Mongolia-Russia, China-Central Asia-West Asia (Turkey is located in this corridor, which is also known as the ‘middle corridor’), the China-Indochina Peninsula, the New Eurasian Land Bridge, the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar, and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor more than one hundred sixty countries and international organizations have signed 195 management agreements between China.<sup>9</sup> The United Nations (UN), G20, and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) are involved in the BRI. The line consisting of sea routes; it starts from the shores of the cities of Sonya, Guangzhou, Wuhan, Quanzhou through the South China Sea and reaches Colombo and Malaysia in Sri Lanka. It passes through the South Indian Sea and proceeds with the Arabian Ocean to the interior of Pakistan and Iraq. Following the port of Djibouti and the southern coast of Iraq, it reaches the ports of Southern Europe via the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>10</sup>

The initial cost of the BRI which is expected to affect more than 60 countries and more than four billion people has been announced as \$900 billion. For its completion, an astronomical figure approaching \$8 trillion has been expressed. In the projects financed by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in different continents, 82 industrial zones were established. Host countries have generated more than \$2 billion in tax revenue. 300,000 new jobs were created.<sup>11</sup>

It is inevitable that such a large-scale project will bring a number of risks and opportunities. As a matter of fact, Sri Lanka Hambantota, Pakistan Gwadar Port, the oil pipeline built in Myanmar, Kenya Mombasa Port with the transfer of the operation to China; China’s takeover

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<sup>8</sup> R. K. Nichols et al. (2019), *Chinese UAS Proliferation along New Silk Road Sea/Land Routes: Unmanned Aircraft Systems in the Cyber Domain*, New Prairie Press, p. 535.

<sup>9</sup> Charlie Campbell (2017), “The New Silk Road”, *TIME Magazine*, 190 (20), p. 50.

<sup>10</sup> Hasan Siddiqui (2015), “Bridging Eurasia: The New Silk Road”, NATO Association of Canada, 19.06.2015, Date of Accession: 07.09.2022 from <https://natoassociation.ca/bridging-eurasia-the-new-silk-road/>.

<sup>11</sup> Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, “Approved Projects”, Date of Accession: 06.09.2022 from <https://www.aiib.org/en/projects/list/index.html?status=Approved>.

of 15 terminals in eight countries has drawn criticism of the debt trap.<sup>12</sup> It is known that 1/3 of the countries involved in the BRI before the Covid-19 pandemic were in debt distress. In particular; East Africa, the Port of Djibouti, and the Panama Canal where China's military base is located have been the focus of opposing views. Agricultural and energy projects carried out in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the ongoing demographic conflicts in East Turkistan have brought about discussions of Sinophobia.<sup>13</sup>

The BRI which at its total cost is 12 times greater than the Marshall Plan that rebuilt the post-war German economy, with its potential as the first initiative from Afro Eurasia to be presented and accepted into the international system and affecting 4.4 billion people and more than 100 countries, it brings with it opportunities.<sup>14</sup> One of them is the goal of preventing the world's unsustainable total debt and the risk of war and conflict arising from development inequality between regions through the harmony of interests in theory. Accordingly; the refugee crisis, financial risks, crises based on nuclear conflict and the hot conflict zone, hunger, epidemics and famine can only be overcome by a new paradigm shift with a new order in opposition to the Anglo-American system.

As a matter of fact, opposition to hegemony will lead to a new competition. Barack Obama's return to Asia after the 2008 global crisis was the beginning of competition. Following the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2011, Hillary Clinton encouraged Afghanistan to pursue regional integration policies. For this reason, she mentioned an economic cooperation consisting of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, and India. The policy of containing China in the Hindi Pacific, which continues in the era of Donald Trump will be the scene of a new agenda in the Joe Biden era.

With the economic rise of China, regional-level cooperation has increased. Increased interdependence with international sanctions has led to increased geoeconomic research. The growing interest in geoeconomic research stems from the fact that globalization has changed the nature of conflicts. However, the units of geoeconomic analysis used need to be placed in a conceptual framework like geopolitical theories. The geoeconomic perspective used in this research emerged as a result of this problem.

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<sup>12</sup> Deborah Brautigam (2020), "A critical look at Chinese 'debt-trap diplomacy': The rise of a meme", *Area Development and Policy*, 5 (1), p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Sébastien Peyrouse (2016), "Discussing China: sinophilia and sinophobia in Central Asia", *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 7 (1), p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> Helga Zepp-LaRouche (2016), "The Silk Road as the New Paradigm for All Mankind", *Executive Intelligence Review*, 43 (10), p. 7.

## 2. Geoeconomic Perspective and Analysis Units

### 2.1. Geoeconomic Perspective

The concept of geoeconomy has started to be used frequently with the development of regional collaborations and international sanctions as cases in international relations. Some views focus on the use of military and economic means to achieve geopolitical power<sup>15</sup>, while others examine it from a broader perspective, combining strategy and political economy.<sup>16</sup> The history of economic tools used to achieve geopolitical goals in state administration also occupies an important place in the literature. Although there are no generally accepted definitions on geopolitics and geoeconomics, the boundaries in which it is separated attract attention.

In its most valid definition, “*geopolitics*” defines international politics with geographical variables, while “*geoeconomics*” deals with economic variables. But the areas where they unite and diverge to fully question and explain current issues such as cyber power remain the subject of research. In the causal comparison at the scale of the Belt and Road Initiative; I draw on Blackwill and Harris’ perspective in *War by Other Means Geoeconomics and Statecraft*.<sup>17</sup> In examining U.S. foreign policy, Blackwill and Harris expand on the theoretical framework they summarize as the conduct of the geopolitical struggle through economic means. It also explains proactive Chinese foreign policy through these subcategories.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, geoeconomy is; “*The use of economic means to support and defend national interests and produce useful geopolitical outcomes, and the effects of the economic actions of other nations on a country's geopolitical goals.*”<sup>19</sup>

The authors cite the analysis of tools such as cyber power as the reason for the growing interest in geoeconomics, as distinct from the Marshall Plan, which was a Cold War-era instrument. Accordingly; in theory, seven economic instruments are suitable for geopolitical practice. These are “*trade policy, investment policy, economic and fiscal sanctions, cyber instruments, aid, fiscal and monetary policy, and energy-commodities*”.<sup>20</sup> In the content of the analysis units; as a trade policy, it focuses on incentive and prevention practices. Economic

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<sup>15</sup> Ondrej Svoboda (2020), “War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft”, *Croatian International Relations Review*, 26 (86), p. 184.

<sup>16</sup> Vladimír Müller (2017), “War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft”, *Political Sciences / Politické Vedy*, 20 (4), p. 191.

<sup>17</sup> Robert D. Blackwill & Jennifer M. Harris (2016), *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*, Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

sanctions are the advantages of countries arising from their economic competitiveness. Cyber tools focus on cyber security elements and global cyber attacks. Economic aid is military, development, and humanitarian aid. Fiscal and monetary policy is the management of financial capital. Energy and Commodities are energy supply and agreements, nuclear investments and energy sanctions.<sup>21</sup>

Although I use these headings in comparison research, I expand the content of the analysis according to the theoretical framework carried out. The importance of this research, which examines the projects in question with an analysis method suitable for geoeconomic perspective unlike geopolitics; it is due to the limited work on these projects that currently dominate the foreign policies of the U.S., China, and the EU with the increasing interest in the literature.

## **2.2. Purpose and Method**

In this study, the main topics including the reflections of the BRI on the geoeconomic plane in international relations from the date of its announcement until today are mentioned. The relationship between the BRI of the Build Back Better (B3W) and Global Gateway (GG) projects, which currently shape the foreign policies of the U.S., the EU, and China and closely concern the remaining countries of the world has been resolved. In this framework, the purpose and method of study are structured as follows.

### ***Purpose***

With this study, it is aimed to reveal the relationship between the political transformations that have taken place since the announcement of the BRI with the B3W and GG projects from the geoeconomic perspective of Blackwill and Harris in the context of causal comparison. In line with this goal, the main breaking points since the launch of the BRI are also included. Thus, the sample of the study was determined as the projects carried out within the scope of B3W and GG. For the purpose, the following questions were sought to be answered in the geoeconomic analysis:

- Are the B3W and GG projects the result of the geoeconomic growth of the Belt and Road Initiative?
- Can the B3W and GG projects compete with the Belt and Road Initiative?

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 60-87.

## **Method**

Comparisons were made with the units of analysis in accordance with the geoeconomic analysis method applied by Robert D Blackwill and Jennifer M. Harris in their book *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*. B3W and GG projects were examined by content analysis method and text and discourse analysis was performed. New but limited research in secondary sources has been examined. In tertiary sources, news sources were scanned.

## **3. Findings**

In 2021, at the G7 Summit, Joe Biden announced the Build Back Better (B3W) initiative as a competitor to the BRI. The initiative envisaged an investment move of \$40 trillion in undeveloped or underdeveloped countries, which are increasingly lacking due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The final declaration highlighted \$12 trillion in aid to these countries during the pandemic, promoting green growth, justice in the global tax system, and employment and investment through emissions reduction. It was also stated that, unlike China, the aid would be given unconditionally.

The Global Gateway (GG) project, announced by the European Union in 2021, foresees an investment of 300 billion Euros in digitalization, climate and energy, transport, health, education, and research in partner countries between 2021 and 2027, similar to the BRI. EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen explained that the main focus of the project is to “close the global investment gap” worldwide. In addition, the EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package, climate resilience and disaster risk reduction, agri-food systems, renewable energy, biodiversity were announced as 150 billion Euros. In this section, these projects will be examined in detail.

### **3.1. Build Back Better Project (B3W)**

In his speech at the G7 Summit in June 2021, Joe Biden announced the Build Back Better project to build infrastructure in developing countries. Referring to China’s Belt and Road (BRI) initiative, he suggested that there could be a fairer way to meet the needs of developing countries. He even said the move was a challenge to China’s geoeconomic power.<sup>22</sup>

Unlike the Build Back Better plan, which also had major repercussions in U.S. domestic public opinion, competition with China was clearly defined. In a statement, the White House

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<sup>22</sup> James Crabtree (2021), “Competing with the BRI: The West’s Uphill Task”, p. 81.



stressed that Joe Biden met with the leaders of the G7 countries to “*discuss strategic competition with China*” and “*meet the need for infrastructure in low-middle-income countries*”.<sup>23</sup> The goals of creating 2.5 million new jobs in the first five years, combating climate change across borders and reducing child care costs were expressed in the plan. In the Build Back Better plan announced in the first months of the same year; the social spending package needed to care for children and the elderly, climate change, health care, and the financial support of middle-income households was also defined.<sup>24</sup> But the definition in the G7 communiqué is that “*a values-driven, high-standard, and transparent infrastructure partnership led by major democracies to help reduce the need for \$40+ trillion+ of infrastructure in the developing world*” differs from the plan unveiled for U.S. domestic public opinion. G7 countries’ data hubs and digital infrastructures such as sub-ocean cable network are included in the B3W plan.<sup>25</sup>

It is stated that B3W will not be limited to the G7, but will also establish a partnership with other like-minded countries and will give importance to infrastructure investments in the developing world. In particular, four focal points are underlined. These are climate, health security, digital technology, and gender.<sup>26</sup>

B3W focuses on attracting capital through investment attraction. This model is known to be a model that the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has tried, but failed. Model; it is based on the promotion of local projects through the transfer of capital from institutional investment funds. However, it is tested to fail to attract capital in different local conditions due to corruption, political interference, and the lack of corporate governance capacity. Capital is more interested in government-guaranteed renovation projects rather than new infrastructure investment projects in different countries.<sup>27</sup> However, B3W financial institutions stand out as leading institutions. These are; Development Finance Corporation,

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<sup>23</sup> The White House (2021), “Fact Sheet: President Biden and G7 Leaders Launch Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership”, 12.06.2021, Date of Accession: 09.09.2022 from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/12/fact-sheet-president-biden-and-g7-leaders-launch-build-back-better-world-b3w-partnership/>.

<sup>24</sup> Yunuen Trujillo (2022), “Build Back Better Plan Must Help Undocumented”, *National Catholic Reporter*, 58 (7), p. 20.

<sup>25</sup> James Crabtree (2021), “Competing with the BRI: The West’s Uphill Task”, p. 82.

<sup>26</sup> The White House (2021), “Fact Sheet: President Biden and G7 Leaders Launch Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership”,

<sup>27</sup> James Crabtree (2021), “Competing with the BRI: The West’s Uphill Task”, p. 84.

USAID, EXIM, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and U.S. Trade and Development Agency.<sup>28</sup>

The 'Blue Dot Network', known as the early stage initiative of the B3W initiative, is a program that aims to impose certification requirements on global infrastructure initiatives and to give blue dots to beneficiaries of such certification.<sup>29</sup> The OECD report mentions that the 'Blue Dot Network' is *“the key to a green, inclusive and resilient recovery and better quality growth after Covid-19”*.<sup>30</sup> Special incentives have been provided to the Blue Dot Network to mobilize capital to invest abroad during the Donald Trump era.

The pursuit of global infrastructure initiatives is not new. In 2014, in order to eliminate the growth irregularity in the world, the global infrastructure center is planned to be established by 2018.<sup>31</sup> The desire to follow global projects which are also closely related to U.S. domestic policy, with the aim of completing or renewing local infrastructure investments in the U.S. and creating business opportunities in the U.S.<sup>32</sup> has progressed to the development of the 'Chinese investments robot'.<sup>33</sup>

Chinese projects are too numerous and costly to follow, according to critics. In addition, it is not carried out transparently and has poor quality working standards. Therefore, it is not an alternative.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, China is carrying out 2,631 projects with a cost of more than \$3.7 trillion. Only China knows all the projects fully. As a matter of fact, Southeast Asian countries also complain about the lack of sufficient information.<sup>35</sup>

In 2019, Japan submitted a proposal to the G20 to introduce standards and the principle of quality in global infrastructure investments. This proposal was made on the basis that projects

<sup>28</sup> The White House (2021), “Fact Sheet: President Biden and G7 Leaders Launch Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership”.

<sup>29</sup> Steve Herman (2020), “US-Led Initiative Aims to Make Mark on Global Infrastructure Development”, *VOA News*, 31.01.2020, Date of Accession: 21.09.2022 from [https://www.voanews.com/a/economy-business\\_us-led-initiative-aims-make-mark-global-infrastructure-development/6183503.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/economy-business_us-led-initiative-aims-make-mark-global-infrastructure-development/6183503.html).

<sup>30</sup> OECD (2021), “Remarks by Mathias Cormann, Inaugural Meeting of the Blue Dot Network’s Executive Consultation Group”, 07.06.2021, Date of Accession: 10.09.2022 from <https://www.oecd.org/about/secretary-general/oecd-sg-remarks-at-blue-dot-network-meeting-7-june-2021.htm>.

<sup>31</sup> James Crabtree (2021), “Competing with the BRI: The West’s Uphill Task”, p. 84.

<sup>32</sup> The White House (2021), “Fact Sheet: President Biden and G7 Leaders Launch Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership”.

<sup>33</sup> BU Global Development Policy Center, “China’s Overseas Development Finance: Geospatial Data for Analysis of Biodiversity and Indigenous Lands”, Date of Accession: 21.09.2022 from <https://www.bu.edu/gdp/chinas-overseas-development-finance/>.

<sup>34</sup> Steve Holland & Guy Faulconbridge (2021), “G7 rivals China with grand infrastructure plan”, 13.06.2021, Date of Accession: 21.09.2022 from <https://www.reuters.com/world/g7-counter-chinas-belt-road-with-infrastructure-project-senior-us-official-2021-06-12/>.

<sup>35</sup> *Radio Free Asia* (2021), “Asian Countries Welcome G7’s Answer to China’s One Belt, One Road Program”, 23.06.2021, Date of Accession: 09.09.2022 from <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/program-06232021151152.html>.

of cheap infrastructure investments in accordance with the concept of white elephants become expensive in the long run.<sup>36</sup> That is why, the principles of “*Value-Oriented, Financially, Environmentally and Socially Transparent and Sustainability*” are particularly explained in B3W principles.<sup>37</sup>

While transparently informing to capital institutions about global infrastructure investments seems brilliant in theory, in practice it is stated that initiatives will not attract the expected attraction.<sup>38</sup> Focusing only on the quality of infrastructure investments may be lacking due to the need in poor countries. How B3W will manage its power, both to gain the confidence of capital and to directly execute expensive infrastructure investments, is a challenge. As explained in the B3W statement; developing dialogue with local administrations to identify real needs and mobilizing development financing.<sup>39</sup> Because competition based on regional cooperation is increasing. It is possible to see the trace of this in the quadripartite security dialogue ( QUAD) infrastructure financing plan.<sup>40</sup>

Other criticisms; “*The Great Reset*” and “*Rebuild a Better Thing*” initiatives are projects of “*promotion of world global governance*” by an unelected elite.<sup>41</sup> But dominant U.S. economists have expressed support for the bill with tax reforms that guarantee a fair tax system and social spending such as childcare that will reduce inflationary pressures in the long run.<sup>42</sup> Infrastructure modernization is planned in states with infrastructure in need of maintenance, such as New Jersey.<sup>43</sup> Infrastructures hit by natural disasters such as Puerto Rico, aging infrastructure states such as New Jersey, internet connectivity problems are included in the plan.<sup>44</sup> In this context, 4,000 new projects were planned to be pioneered. It was envisaged to create funds for repairs to more than 65,000 miles of highways and one thousand 500 bridges.

<sup>36</sup> James Crabtree (2021), “Competing with the BRI: The West’s Uphill Task”, p. 85.

<sup>37</sup> The White House (2021), “Fact Sheet: President Biden and G7 Leaders Launch Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership”.

<sup>38</sup> James Crabtree (2021), “Competing with the BRI: The West’s Uphill Task”, p. 87.

<sup>39</sup> The White House (2021), “Fact Sheet: President Biden and G7 Leaders Launch Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership”.

<sup>40</sup> James Crabtree (2021), “Competing with the BRI: The West’s Uphill Task”, p. 88.

<sup>41</sup> Kurt Williamsen (2021), “What Is Build Back Better Globalism”, *New American*, 37 (14), p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> Nicole Goodkind (2021), “17 Nobel Prize-winning economists back Biden’s \$3.5 trillion Build Back Better plan”, *Fortune*, 21.09.2021, Date of Accession: 08.09.2022 from <https://fortune.com/2021/09/21/nobel-prize-winning-economists-back-joe-biden-build-back-better-plan/>.

<sup>43</sup> Martin Daks (2021), “Walls and Bridges: President Biden’s ‘Build Back Better’ Plan Could Hit the State’s Families in the Wallet”, *Njbiz*, 34 (15), p. 11.

<sup>44</sup> Maria Miranda (2021), “U.S. House Discusses Infrastructure for Territories Under Build Back Better Plan: Puerto Rico Gov Stresses Need for Disaster Resiliency Construction”, *Caribbean Business*, Date of Accession: 09.09.2022 from <https://caribbeanbusiness.com/u-s-house-discusses-infrastructure-for-territories-under-build-back-better%E2%80%8Bplan/>.

The Build Back Better plan is a legal framework proposed by Biden between 2020 and 2021. It envisages equal opportunities in education, tax bracket justice, climate change, infrastructure modernization. B3W is proposed in 2021. However, it is understood that Build Back Better is connected with the global project presented by the U.S. to the world at the G7. Because similar to the fair infrastructure system proposed in the global B3W, the justice project in the tax system was also included in the Joe Biden plan in the U.S. In particular, increasing taxes on U.S. citizens with an annual income of more than \$400,000 has caused intense controversy.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to fair infrastructure investments, regional cooperation should also be mentioned. Japan's revival of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) between Japan, India, Australia, and the U.S. to counterbalance China's growing BRI geoeconomy during Shinzo Abe's premiership has set the stage for predictions that it will also be a regionally important partner and executive in the B3W initiative.<sup>46</sup> In the form in which the B3W initiative was first announced, it is important in this sense that the guest countries include India, Australia, and South Korea. The goal of offsetting China's growing influence in the Indochina Pacific has not changed since Hillary Clinton. For this purpose, it was announced in 2015 that \$110 billion of investment incentives would be provided to Asian countries during the Abe period. Partnership for "*Quality Infrastructure: Investing in Asia's Future Announcement*" (EPQI) is one of these initiatives.<sup>47</sup> An investment commitment of \$15.7 billion was made under the leadership of the Asian Development Bank which Japan founded.<sup>48</sup> Following these moves, Japan managed to convince countries at the G20 Summit in 2019 to introduce minimum quality standards for infrastructure projects carried out on a global scale specified in the objectives of Blue Dot Network.<sup>49</sup>

The People's Republic of China's response to all these steps has not been delayed.<sup>50</sup> With a skillful rhetoric, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that his country and the U.S. are

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<sup>45</sup> Martin Daks (2021), "Walls and Bridges: President Biden's 'Build Back Better' Plan Could Hit the State's Families in the Wallet", p. 11.

<sup>46</sup> Jagannath Panda (2021), "Can Japan Take Forward the B3W Initiative Ahead?", AIES, Date of Accession: 09.09.2022 from <https://www.aies.at/download/2021/AIES-Fokus-2021-15.pdf>, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2015), "Announcement of 'Partnership for Quality Infrastructure: Investment for Asia's Future'", May 2015, Date of Accession: 21.09.2022 from [https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page18\\_000076.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page18_000076.html).

<sup>48</sup> Asian Development Bank (2022), "Fact Sheet: Asian Development Bank and Japan", July 2022, Date of Accession: 01.09.2022 from <https://www.adb.org/publications/japan-fact-sheet>.

<sup>49</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Blue Dot Network", Date of Accession: 20.10.2022 from <https://www.state.gov/blue-dot-network/>.

<sup>50</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (2021), "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Regular Press Conference on June 15, 2021", 15.06.2021, Date of Accession: 25.10.2022 from

ready to work together in B3W.<sup>51</sup> According to some views, defining and limiting B3W as an anti-Chinese project will allow anti-U.S. rhetoric to develop in low and middle-income countries that are in close contact with China.<sup>52</sup> As a matter of fact, G7 countries such as Italy, Germany, India, South Korea, and Austria are wary of the B3W project as there are direct or indirect ties with China. Because B3W's logistics financing and concrete goals are unclear. Currently, the disadvantages of this continue. The ability to find the target of the claim of an alternative to a sophistic project such as BRI will vary according to the role that countries such as Japan, which have the potential to develop strategic alliances in the region where it is geographically located.<sup>53</sup>

In addition, as can be seen from France's reaction in the AUKUS alliance, the strategic competition between the G7 countries is among the disadvantages of B3W.<sup>54</sup> Differences of opinion are likely among the participants of the G7 countries, such as Germany, which have had important partnerships with China in the BRI. With formations such as AUKUS and QUAD, it is often stated that the U.S. aims to prevent the BRI with regional-level NATO-like alliances. There is a consensus that what motivates B3W is concerns about the BRI. These concerns are debt-trap diplomacy, lack of transparency, poor quality infrastructure, and Chinese proliferation.

The Biden administration has not been hesitant to define the B3W communiqué in this context.<sup>55</sup> It was also seen as a good opportunity for the G7 countries to offer alternative opportunities because the Covid-19 pandemic revealed the inadequacy of infrastructure. However, there is no application in the financial model other than QUAD and Japan initiatives and alternative models continue to be discussed.<sup>56</sup> The Blue Dot Network project has attracted attention, but has not been made operational in practice.<sup>57</sup> In line with these developments, it is also stated that developing countries should allocate resources to meet their infrastructure financing by reforming their tax systems in addition to official

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[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/2511\\_665403/202106/t20210615\\_9170765.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/202106/t20210615_9170765.html).

<sup>51</sup> *Asia Financial* (2022), "China Willing to Work With US on Build Back Better World Plan", 28.02.2022, Date of Accession: 21.09.2022 from <https://www.asiafinancial.com/willing-to-work-with-us-on-build-back-better-world-plan-china>.

<sup>52</sup> Jagannath Panda (2021), "Can Japan Take Forward the B3W Initiative Ahead?", p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> Matthew P. Goodman (2021), "U.S.-European Cooperation on China and the Broader Indo-Pacific", Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 20.07.2021, Date of Accession: 09.09.2022 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep37715>, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

development aid and foreign aid funds. That is because institutional investors such as pension funds, mutual funds, insurance companies, and government wealth funds manage a \$100 trillion budget, but only 1 % of them are spent on infrastructure investments.<sup>58</sup> Models and collaborations established to make B3W an alternative project to BRI. Although the Global Infrastructure Facility and the Global Infrastructure Hub New Partnership for Africa's Development are seen as promising initiatives, financing models continue to be discussed.

### 3.2. Global Gateway Project (GG)

#### *Gateway as a concept*

Before the Global Gateway project is explained, the concept of “gateway” should be explained. Because it has a wide accumulation on Europe's gateway and urban spatial designs. Research on the effect of production and industrial organizations on urban hierarchy in the world has also contributed to the accumulation of geopolitical concepts. Following the groundbreaking research of Castell and Harvey, the city began to be examined from the perspective of the organization of capitalist relations. With the effect of digitalization and globalization, the spatial perspective of cities has been linked to the world economy.<sup>59</sup> One of them, the “*World City Theory*”, is about the new relationships caused by change. In 1986, Friedman classified cities according to integration with the world capitalist system, functions assigned to him in the spatial division of labor, and structural changes. After these findings, Friedman classifies cities as “*core*” cities and “*semi-peripheral*” cities.<sup>60</sup>

The European Spatial Development Perspective, adopted by the EU in Postdam in 1999, has been the first concept of promoting polycentrism in the European urban network. The concept of polycentrism means the promotion of new centres alternative to gateway cities outside of Northwest Europe, bordered by the cities of Birmingham, Paris, Milan, Hamburg, and Amsterdam. By 2025, 80 % of employment is expected to be in the service sector and 60-70 % in the knowledge production sectors. It is foreseen that this change will cause a spatial

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<sup>58</sup> Jonathan E. Hillman & Erol Yayboke (2019), “The Higher Road Forging a U.S. Strategy for the Global Infrastructure Challenge”, CSIS, April 2019, Date of Accession: 01.11.2022 from [https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/190423\\_Hadley%20et%20al\\_HigherRoads\\_report\\_WEB.pdf](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/190423_Hadley%20et%20al_HigherRoads_report_WEB.pdf), p. 32.

<sup>59</sup> John Friedmann (1986), “The world city hypothesis. World cities in a world system”, *Development and Change*, 17, p. 70.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

change at least as important as the transition process from agriculture to manufacturing economy.<sup>61</sup>

One of the pioneering studies that contributed to the detection of this change is the German geographer Walter Christaller's study of central places in the territory of Southern Germany ("*Central Place Theory*"). Christaller describes the structuring of urban hierarchies, analyzing the capacity of a town and city to provide retail services to the surrounding rural areas.<sup>62</sup> Along with Christaller's work, Peter Hall's transnational planning research is also important. Hall has found that London spatial planning is linked to international mobility. Friedman, on the other hand, develops the definition of the city and classifies the cities of the world.<sup>63</sup> The rising paradigm of European polycentricity in the 1990s after this theoretical progress and accumulation arises from the "*Polynet*" research, which examines the development of megacity regions of emerging European cities in the headings of social inequalities, environmental sustainability, regional cohesion, and economic development.<sup>64</sup>

The Polynet research, which explores the effects that transform megacities, emerged as a research model that examines the restructuring of headquarter cities in North America and Europe.<sup>65</sup> The concept of "*gateway*", first defined in the Polynet research, examines how centralization and concentration in global megacity regions shape the urban services network. The concept of gateway is used to describe global megacities. Structural connections and physical virtual changes in gateway cities are examined. In the research, the international policy network to be established by examining spatial relations is mentioned.<sup>66</sup> While the concepts of passage and corridor were used to explain the geographical arrangements of cities in the pre-19th century period, they started to be used to define urban spatial organization with the effect of information and communication technologies in cities in the contemporary period. The relationship between the globalization effect and the concept of global gateway is

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<sup>61</sup> Peter Hall & Kathy Pain (2009), *The Polycentric Metropolis learning from mega- city regions in Europe*, New York: Routledge p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> Arthur Getis & Judith Getis (1966), "Christaller's central place theory", *Journal of Geography*, 65 (5), p. 222.

<sup>63</sup> Peter Hall & Kathy Pain (2009), *The Polycentric Metropolis learning from mega- city regions in Europe*, p. 7.

<sup>64</sup> Ludovic Halbert et al. (1978), "European Polycentricity and Emerging Mega-City Regions: 'One Size Fits All' Policy?", *Built Environment*, 32 (2), p. 211.

<sup>65</sup> Kathy Pain (2011), "New Worlds" for "Old"? Twenty-First-Century Gateways and Corridors: Reflections on a European Spatial Perspective", *International Journal of Urban & Regional Research*, 35 (6), p. 1156.

<sup>66</sup> Keep.eu, "POLYNET - Sustainable Management of European Polycentric Mega-City Regions", Date of Accession: 21.09.2022 from <https://keep.eu/projects/1252/POLYNET-Sustainable-Manageme-EN/>.

remarkable. In other words, while pre-globalization cities are explained with the concepts of gateways and corridors, the concepts of global gateway begin to be used after globalization.<sup>67</sup>

While the metaphors directed at spatial organizations in terms of cities sometimes explain commercial organizations and sometimes relational contexts in the historical process they belong to, the concepts of road, gateway, and corridor define a new process. In its simplest form, the focus of European policy is to identify how the concepts of cities and corridors have changed in the post-globalization world.<sup>68</sup> The question of what structural properties are the result of globalizing gateways or corridors which differs from the German geographer Walter Christaller's Theory of Central Places; it forms the basis of the European spatial strategy.<sup>69</sup> As a matter of fact, in the first half of the 20th century, urban systems connected by means of transportation are defined.<sup>70</sup>

Currently, how to invest in regional megacities and metropolitan economies as regional gateways, especially in the aviation corridor<sup>71</sup> is the subject of research. Because 200 megacities, 14 % of the world's population, account for more than 48 % of global gross domestic product. The idea of achieving global development by connecting the actors of metropolitan economies with global aviation networks and economic and social forces forms the infrastructure of the concepts of gateway and corridors.<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, no matter how strong the social and human resources of a metropolis are, it will not be able to realize its net impact capacity if it does not have transport connections and destinations that will provide global economic connections and provide a source for the mobilization of the new economy.<sup>73</sup> Cities, which are the destination and logistics center of metropolitan economies, also affect non-transport sectors. Apart from this, recreational and entertainment-oriented cities and financial cities are also home to gateway economies.<sup>74</sup> Castells' concept of the 'space of flows', which Castells defines as the production of new cities that collectively

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<sup>67</sup> Kathy Pain (2011), "New Worlds" for "Old"? Twenty-First-Century Gateways and Corridors: Reflections on a European Spatial Perspective", p. 1157.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1155.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1156.

<sup>70</sup> Charles F. J. Whebell, (1969), "Corridors: A theory of urban systems", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 59 (1), p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> Adie Tomer et al. (2012), "Global Gateways: International Aviation in Metropolitan America", 25.10.2012, Policy Briefing, Brookings Institute, Date of Accession: 09.09.2022 from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/global-gateways-international-aviation-in-metropolitan-america/>.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.



transform personal learning and power-people relations, supports this.<sup>75</sup> Graham and Marvin's research on how internationalizing capitalism shapes urban infrastructures and gateway cities with the elements of transportation, telecommunications, and energy is among the most important post-globalization researches.<sup>76</sup>

In 1999, the Postdam Declaration outlined a comprehensive framework on the European spatial development strategy. It is reported that the economic and social integration of Europe may make baseless and unbalanced progress between regions and cities in the member states and that a development scale should be established against this. The spatial guideline for the geographical distribution of human capital was outlined. In geographic distribution, global gateways were identified as centers that needed to be well distributed.<sup>77</sup> The report of the Working Group on Spatial Vision for North West Europe, the other document of the European Spatial Strategy, records the definition and strengthening of global gateways and development corridors. The characteristics of gateway cities in Europe have been determined.<sup>78</sup> In the development index between 1995 and 2002, the connections between the low-performing central regions (Germany and the northwest) and the high-performing central regions (southeast and the UK) were defined as “*eurocorridors*”.<sup>79</sup>

The ultimate purpose of conveying this theoretical and conceptual background is to emphasize that the reference to polycentrism and global gateways in European spatial development is not new. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the polycentrism laid by urban sociologists has been transferred as gateways to European spatial planning.<sup>80</sup>

### ***Global Gateway Project***

The global gateway project, announced on December 1, 2021; “*Defined as strengthening smart, clean, secure connections in digitalization, energy and transport. In addition, it has been defined as the new European Strategy to establish health, education and research*

<sup>75</sup> Manuel Castells (2013), *Enformasyon Çağı: Ekonomi, Toplum ve Kültür: Binyılın Sonu, Cilt III*, Çev. Ebru Kılıç, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, p. 503.

<sup>76</sup> Stephen Graham & Simon Marvin (2001), *Splintering Urbanism networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and urban conditions*, New York & London: Routledge, p. 26.

<sup>77</sup> Avrupa Komisyonu ESDP *European Spatial Development Perspective Raporu* (1999), Luxembourg, p. 8.

<sup>78</sup> NWMA Spatial Vision Group (2000), *Spatial vision for the North Western Metropolitan Area (NWMA)*, University of the West of England, Bristol, p. 33.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Simon Davoudi (2003), “Polycentricity in European spatial planning: from an analytical to a normative agenda”, *European Planning Studies*, 11 (8), p. 980.

*systems worldwide.*<sup>81</sup> They also highlighted climate change, health security, improving competitiveness and the global supply chain. The statement underlined sustainable and reliable connections for these goals. In the aforementioned titles, it was announced that an investment of up to 300 billion Euros will be mobilized with the private sector to overcome global challenges. By 2040, \$13 trillion is reported to be needed to close the global infrastructure gap.<sup>82</sup> Ursula von der Leyen said in a statement that similar to the European spatial strategy described above, how the world is connected to be better rebuilt must be designed.<sup>83</sup> In Europe's connection with the world, international standards were emphasized in the fields of digitalization, climate and energy, transport, health, education, and research.

In addition to the European Green Deal, the Next Generation EU program<sup>84</sup> focuses on an investment mechanism that will bring together development and financing institutions under the leadership of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). It aims to mobilize the private sector through the EU financial frameworks Instrument for Development and International Cooperation (NDICI), the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) III, Interreg, InvestEU, and the EU research and innovation programme Horizon Europe. The European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD+) and Horizon Europe (2021-2027) programmes will also be used.<sup>85</sup> It is reported that technical assistance will be provided at the same time for the sustainability, transparency, and reliability of the debt grants and loans to be given to the private sector.

One of the important points is the reference to the G7 Summit. It is underlined that the Global Gateway project is a contribution to a transparent infrastructure investment partnership based on values and standards in developing countries announced at the G7 Summit in June of the same year. It is clear that the EU is ready to work with similar working partners and will

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<sup>81</sup> European Commission (2021), "Global Gateway: up to €300 billion for the European Union's strategy to boost sustainable links around the world", Date of Accession: 13.09.2022 from [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_6433](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_6433).

<sup>82</sup> Mark Furness & Niels Keijzer (2022), "Europe's Global Gateway: A new geostrategic framework for development policy?", Briefing Paper, No. 1/2022, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), Date of Accession: 10.12.2022 from <https://www.idos-research.de/en/briefing-paper/article/europes-global-gateway-a-new-geostrategic-framework-for-development-policy/>, p. 1.

<sup>83</sup> European Commission (2021), "Global Gateway: up to €300 billion for the European Union's strategy to boost sustainable links around the world",

<sup>84</sup> Zane Šime (2022), "Scoping the Ambassadorial Potential of the EU's Global Gateway", ENTER Policy Brief Series, Policy Brief No. 11 – May 2022, Date of Accession: 30.12.2022 from [https://foreignpolicynewrealities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Policy\\_Brief\\_No11\\_revised.pdf](https://foreignpolicynewrealities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Policy_Brief_No11_revised.pdf).

<sup>85</sup> Simone Tagliapietra (2022), "The Global Gateway: An Overview", Wilson Center, August 2022, Date of Accession: 17.09.2022 from <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/global-gateway-overview>.

mutually strengthen each other through the Build Back Better World initiative.<sup>86</sup> It is also emphasized that the Global Gateway is “*built on the 2018 EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy, the Interconnection Partnerships signed with Japan and India, fully aligned with the UN’s 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement*”.<sup>87</sup>

In many places, the main emphasis of the project is defined as “*creating sustainable connections and a new future for young people*” instead of the dependency relationship. A financing model is envisaged in which EU institutions, Member States, European financial institutions, governments in partner countries, civil society, the private sector, and European enterprises are commemorated together. The most important global challenges in the European Commission’s official fact sheet are; it is referred to as “*climate change, global health security, sustainable development, stronger supply chains*”.<sup>88</sup> In her State of the Union address, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stresses ‘connectivity not dependence’ to connect goods, people, and services worldwide.<sup>89</sup> It is announced that up to 300 billion Euros are foreseen until 2027 to accelerate the transition to green and digitalization in order to support infrastructure investments in the world. The areas of investment priorities consist of the following headings; transport, digitalisation, health, climate and energy, education, and research.<sup>90</sup> The main principles consist of the following headings: promoting democratic values and high standards, equal partnerships, green and clean infrastructures, security-oriented, good governance and transparency, accelerating private sector investment. These principles are interpreted by many analysts as the EU’s desire to differentiate itself from China.<sup>91</sup>

EU-Africa with a budget of 150 billion Euros announced in February: Global Gateway Investment Package – consists of 3 main headings. These are strategic transport corridors, digital infrastructure, and energy infrastructure. In strategic corridors; Africa’s Great Green Wall Initiative aims to increase climate resilience through greening. Accordingly, it is aimed

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<sup>86</sup> European Commission (2021), “Global Gateway: up to €300 billion for the European Union’s strategy to boost sustainable links around the world”.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

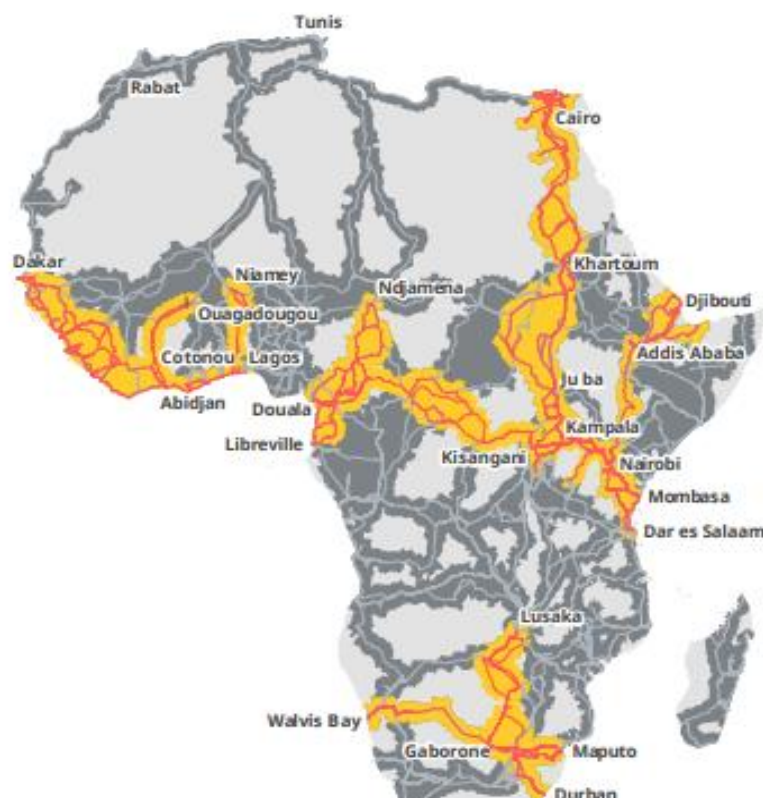
<sup>89</sup> Stuart Lau & Hanne Cokelaere (2021), “EU launches ‘Global Gateway’ to counter China’s Belt and Road”, 15.09.2021, Date of Accession: 07.09.2022 from <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-launches-global-gateway-to-counter-chinas-belt-and-road/>.

<sup>90</sup> European Commission (2021), “Global Gateway: up to €300 billion for the European Union’s strategy to boost sustainable links around the world”.

<sup>91</sup> Maaïke Okano-Heijmans (2022), “Global Gateway: Positioning Europe For a Sustainable Future”, 23.02.2022, Date of Accession: 08.08.2022 from <https://www.clingendael.org/publication/global-gateway-positioning-europe-sustainable-future>.

to increase land productivity, food and nutrition security, support livelihoods, protect biodiversity and improve energy security through the greened African wall.<sup>92</sup>

**Figure I:** *Global Gateway African Strategic Corridors*<sup>93</sup>



Digital infrastructure consists of the following headings: strategic corridors, digital infrastructure, creating regional fiber optic backbones in Africa, Africa European digital innovation bridge, satellite-based connectivity in Africa (European secure satellite communications program), green data centers, secure digital connectivity in the Mediterranean basin. Digital data investments are a competitor to the investments of Huawei ZTE companies in Africa and with 5G investments.<sup>94</sup> Because the spread of Chinese technology use practices in Africa may lead to the spread of the use of the internet for surveillance and supervision in Africa. Announced “*EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package Infrastructure*” aims to develop transport networks and multimodal transport in

<sup>92</sup> European Commission (2022), “Factsheet: EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package – Africa’s Great Green Wall Initiative”, Date of Accession: 14.09.2022 from [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/FS\\_22\\_1121](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/FS_22_1121).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Marta Granados Hernandez (2022), “Global Gateway and the EU’s Digital Ambitions”, 19.05.2022, CSIS, Date of Accession: 24.08.2022 from <https://www.csis.org/blogs/development-dispatches/global-gateway-and-eu-digital-ambitions>.

strategic corridors identified in Africa. In addition, the international submarine fiber optic cable connection project called Euro Africa Gateway, which will connect Africa and Europe, is being developed. The same project also aims to develop fiber optic connections in sub-Saharan Africa. Accordingly, “*a secondary backup connection to the Ella Link cable connecting Brazil to Europe via the African continent*” is envisaged. Investment financing is defined to support startups and SMEs for the development of the digital innovation ecosystem in African countries. It is stated that “*300 million Africans live more than 50 km away from fiber or cable connection*” and that satellite-based connectivity will be developed in the European secure satellite communication program. With green data centers focused on privacy and data privacy, secure digital connection titles are also added in the Mediterranean basin.<sup>95</sup> With the EU Digital compass, it is aimed that African countries and other stakeholders align their internal management standards with the project.<sup>96</sup>

Europe’s lag behind China in international standardization processes is also<sup>97</sup> seen as an obstacle to Europe’s digital expansion. Considering China’s progress in this regard, it can be said that the EU’s standardization strategy in the global gateway has a long way to go. In the title of energy infrastructure, three focal points are expressed in the Continental power system master plan. The first is “*a 200 km transmission line project between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia connecting the Zambia Electricity Supply Company Limited network and the Congo National Electricity Company network*” to be carried out with EU funds. The second is the 400 KV interconnection project that will connect the countries of East Africa and South Africa. The third is the Angola-Namibia connection (ANNA) project.<sup>98</sup> In addition, under the heading of sustainable food systems, it is aimed to produce a sustainable cocoa value chain in the Ivory Coast, which accounts for 67 % of EU cocoa imports. Under the heading of flexible food systems, it is aimed to integrate the food chain and the value chain in Senegal.<sup>99</sup> It is significant that Huawei has invested in ICT in

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<sup>95</sup> European Commission (2022), “Factsheet: EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package – Africa’s Great Green Wall Initiative”.

<sup>96</sup> Marta Granados Hernandez (2022), “Global Gateway and the EU’s Digital Ambitions”.

<sup>97</sup> Valentino Pop et al. (2021), “From Lightbulbs to 5G, China Battles West for Control of Vital Technology Standards”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 08.02.2021, Date of Accession: 19.07.2022 from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/from-lightbulbs-to-5g-china-battles-west-for-control-of-vital-technology-standards-11612722698>.

<sup>98</sup> European Commission (2022), “Factsheet: EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package – Africa’s Great Green Wall Initiative”.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

Ivory Coast<sup>100</sup> and that Senegal also has a Chinese data center.<sup>101</sup> Under the heading of health security, a budget of 1 billion Euros is foreseen with the specific target of “*Vaccine production and access to vaccines, medicines and health technologies*”. In the section of vocational skills and education, it is aimed to strengthen the digital skills and mobilization of young Africans. A budget of 40 million Euros has been determined under the title of investment in young enterprises in Africa. Education and research (science) diplomacy, on the other hand, is seen as a completely new strategy that reads international exchange, unlike other programs.<sup>102</sup>

It is among the critical opinions that the total budget of 300 billion Euros against the stated budgets is far beyond the potential of the EU and that it has updated the 2020-2027 EU development package as a global gateway package. It seems clear that breaking the long-standing foreign trade deficit and cycle of dependence between African countries and the EU is an EU initiative to transform relations into mutual benefit. It can be said that the priorities of the Globale Gateway project are to make its asymmetrical trade relations with Africa sustainable and thus to offer an alternative to the Belt and Road Initiative, to ensure competition in international standardization processes and to expand EU technical-trade standards. But the view that the dispersed funding model will cause geopolitical uncertainty is important.<sup>103</sup>

### 3.3. Comparison: Geoeconomic Analysis Units

In this section, a comparison is made with the geoeconomic analysis units applied by Robert D. Blackwill and Jennifer M. Harris in their *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft* work. Comparisons of the Build Back Better and Global Gateway projects in the context of their described activities will be examined.

#### **Trade Policy**

B3W's goal of attracting private sector capital to developing countries through investment appeal and GG's model of financing the private sector through debt grants and loans are very similar. Another similar aspect; B3W is the similarity between the Blue Dot Network project and GG's international standardization policy. It is seen that the goal of bringing an

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<sup>100</sup> *Ecofin Agency* (2020), “Côte d’Ivoire reaches deal with Huawei to boost the ICT sector”, 09.10.2020, Date of Accession: 24.08.2022 from <https://www.ecofinagency.com/telecom/0910-41914-cote-d-ivoire-reaches-deal-with-huawei-to-boost-the-ict-sector>.

<sup>101</sup> Marta Granados Hernandez (2022), “Global Gateway and the EU’s Digital Ambitions”.

<sup>102</sup> Zane Šime (2022), “Scoping the Ambassadorial Potential of the EU’s Global Gateway”.

<sup>103</sup> Simone Tagliapietra (2022), “The Global Gateway: An Overview”.

international standard to the projects to be carried out in developing countries stands out as the quality of infrastructure investments. However, GG does not yet have an initiative such as Blue Dot Network. In fact, the complementary aspect of the GG to the Build Back Better initiative is clearly emphasized in the declaration texts. While the financing models pioneered by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency and the European Investment Bank are quite similar, the trade policy of the GG seems to be quite detailed. In other words, the fact that it expresses a desire to balance the dependency relationship between Ivory Coast and cocoa imports and food systems is an indication of this.

### ***Investment Policy***

While B3W's emphasis on investment policy is meeting \$40 trillion in needs in the developing world, led by the Covid-19 pandemic and major democracies, GG's goal of mobilizing up to 300 billion Euros in investment through sustainable and reliable connections overlaps. However, the criticism that the budget expressed by the GG is unrealistic is often expressed. While the U.S. aims to create job opportunities for Americans in this way, there is the opposing idea that the private sector cannot channel investments only through transparent information. In the B3W initiative, the focus of investments is climate, health security, digital technology and gender, while in the GG the topics of digitalization, climate and energy, transport, health, education, and research. Unlike the GG initiative, B3W's contribution to domestic policy is evaluated and it is aimed to generate 2.5 million new jobs. The emphasis on "*a fairer alternative to development*" in the B3W initiative and the emphasis on connectivity, not dependence, on sustainable reliable connections or dependency in the GG initiative are known to be references to BRI projects.

Moreover, while the GG initiative mentions the technical assistance to be made for the transparent and reliable execution of the debt grants and loans to be given to the private sector, it is not yet clear how it will be carried out. Apart from the theoretical objectives, the "*EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package*" announced by the SSC for Africa is worth discussing. The package envisages a total digital investment of 300 million Euros with fiber connection investments between Africa and the European continent. In addition, an investment of 40 million Euros is foreseen for investments to be made in Senegal in food systems, health security, education, and research investments. In all these aspects, it is seen that the GG, where B3W makes more important references to domestic politics, attaches importance to African connections.

### ***Economic and Financial Sanctions***

B3W has made no secret of its anti-China sentiment. At the G7 Summit, it was clearly stated that there is a fair alternative to the needs of developing countries, a geostrategic competition with China and a geoeconomic challenge to China. GG makes a slightly smoother transition in that detail. While it says it is completing B3W, a clear challenge to the BRI is at a distance at the level of texts and discourse.

However, the announcement that the GG is “*fully aligned with the 2018 EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy, the Connectivity Partnerships signed with Japan and India, the UN’s 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement*” reveals that it is an indirect balancing act for the BRI. Indeed, Japan is regionally leading the way in balancing the BRI. The steps taken immediately after the start of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) between Japan, India, Australia, and the U.S. prove this. Because, together with QUAD, it has been widely stated by analysts that the U.S. has launched attempts to block the BRI with regional NATO-like alliances. In addition, the breaking of the long-standing foreign trade deficit and dependency relationship between Africa and Europe can be expressed as a geoeconomic move made in response to China’s influence in Africa as the focal point. While B3W’s open anti-China sentiment is understood to stem from the motivation for debt-trap diplomacy and lack of transparency in countries where BRI initiatives are conducted, it is also predicted to fuel anti-U.S. rhetoric in countries that are closely cooperating with China. The EU also has handicaps, as can be seen from France’s reactions to the AUKUS alliance and the close cooperation of Germany and China under the BRI. As a result, it can be said that the U.S.-China competition from the Huawei trade wars has come to concept form with B3W and the EU is also involved in the competition. Although it seems good in theory for the EU to get rid of its dependence on China by strengthening its supply chain, how it will revive in practice is a matter of debate.

### ***Financial and Monetary Policy***

In financial policy, B3W aims to mobilize the private sector with “*Development Finance Corporation, USAID, EXIM, Millennium Challenge Corporation and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency*”. The GG aims to mobilize the private sector with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). These two models are quite similar. The model in which the GG differs is the EU financial frameworks 2021-2027 plan. The EU has an important know-how with its civilian



R&D programs, which can be called the largest in the world. The U.S.'s linking the tax reforms in domestic policy, which it aims with the motto of justice in the tax system, with the B3W initiative with the goal of justice in the global tax system can be expressed as a search for legitimacy. In response to the statements that the Great Reset and B3W are a deterministic elitist movement, this discourse will have an important place. It is known that the BRI initiative started with private sector financing, but after the model failed, it switched to the public-private semi-financing model.

### ***Energy and Commodities***

Green growth climate change is the focus of B3W and GG. The European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement are the focal points of energy policy discourse. The main difference is, it is also included in the EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package, which also has a budget of 150 billion Euros. GG aims to increase land productivity and climate resilience with the initiative called the big green wall in the strategic corridors it has defined in Africa. Supporting nutritional security and livelihoods and guaranteeing energy security through the green wall can be addressed in the heading of commodities. More importantly, the steps taken with the energy infrastructure stand out. The electricity transmission line projects established between Congo, Zambia, Angola, and Namibia are locomotive projects in the field of energy. It is noteworthy that GG's energy investments in Africa are planned with the BRI model.

### ***Foreign Aids***

In the title of aid, which is the first of the two most critical topics (aid and cyber security) due to the BRI antithesis, B3W's discourse on domestic politics stands out. Reducing child care costs, caring for the elderly, supporting the middle class, and improving U.S. transportation infrastructure (ranked 13th in the world) and social spending are evident here. There is also talk of reforming the tax system, but the uncertainty in B3W's global logistics plan persists here. Because the GG Initiative foresees 1 billion Euros in health security with the goal of accessing vaccines and 40 million Euros in vocational skills and training, and in supporting businesses. The topic of education and research diplomacy can be called the use of EU soft power in a different field from BRI and B3W. However, the EU's dominant weight in the world's total aid is known. However, the lack of any improvement in B3W and GG for Asian countries will significantly affect competitiveness. As a matter of fact, Japan, which is seen as an important stabilizer of the BRI, announced an incentive of \$110 billion to Asian

countries during the Shinzo Abe period within the scope of the EPQI announcement. The Asian Development Bank also has commitments of approximately \$16 billion.

### ***Cyber Elements***

In the field of cyber elements; The U.S. planned to establish a global infrastructure center in the early period. This center, it is an extension of the Blue Dot Network project that BRI has launched to compete with its low quality and closed standards. However, there is no discourse or definition in the B3W initiative beyond the emphasis on the strong digital infrastructure of the G7 countries. The cyber title of GG can be mentioned as the most detailed and planned defined title. Examples include sub-ocean fiber connections between Africa and Europe, locally planned fiber optic backbones, green data centers, and satellite communications links. As in the energy title, it would not be wrong to say that 5-G investments, which are the guarantors of China's strong connections in the African continent, are modeled. It is noteworthy that Senegal and Ivory Coast are mentioned as the leading center of ZTE's 5-G investments in the project as the place where the data center investment will be made.

There are two important points of the digital focus. First, the EU sees China's lagging behind in digital transformation competition as the reason for lagging behind in international standards. The second is the EU, in contrast to China's surveillance and surveillance practices, it believes that transparency and sustainability will be ensured with an exemplary digital infrastructure. It is possible to read this intention on the EU Digital Compass.

**Table I:** *Comparison at the level of geoeconomic analysis units*<sup>104</sup>

<b>Analysis Units / Projects</b>	<b>Belt and Road (BRI)</b>	<b>Build Back Better (B3W)</b>	<b>Global Gateway (GG)</b>
<b>Trade policy</b>	Bilateral cooperation	Open Standards	Open Standards
<b>Investment Policy</b>	Public- Private Sector	Private	Private
<b>Economic and</b>	Interdependence	Anti – China	Indirect Policy

<sup>104</sup> Created by the author.

<b>financial sanctions</b>	model		
<b>Financial and monetary policy</b>	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	US	EU
<b>Energy and commodities</b>	Green Transformation	Green Transformation	Green Transformation
<b>Foreign Aids</b>	Infrastructure and Foreign Assistance	Domestic Policy - Infrastructure and Foreign Assistance	Infrastructure and External Assistance
<b>Cyber elements</b>	5-G Land and sea infrastructure	Blue Dot Network Global infrastructure hub G7 Countries' digital infrastructure capacity	Intercontinental Fiber optic connection

It is important to note that these projects are not only put forward by the U.S., the EU and China. In addition to India's Cotton Road, Kazakhstan's Road Program, Mongolia's Steppe Road projects, Japan and Taiwan have connection initiatives. Even before the Belt and Road Initiative, it is important to mention the Silk Road project developed by the U.S. to integrate Afghanistan into global trade and even Turkey's Caravanserai projects. All these plans have been tried to be implemented at the national level and have not reached the level of coordination at the Belt and Road initiative level.

### **Conclusion**

The statement of the Build Back Better project clearly states that it is a challenge to China's geoeconomic growth. From this point of view, it can be said that the B3W project is a result of the geoeconomic growth of the Belt and Road Initiative, at least at the level of discourse. Previous U.S. initiatives expressed in this study prove this. According to Blackwill and Harris' analysis units used in this research (trade and investment policy, economic and

financial sanctions, monetary and fiscal policy, energy and commodities, foreign aid, and cyber elements), B3W appears to be a result of the growth of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The Global Gateway project does not present a clear challenge to the Belt and Road Initiative at the level of discourse. However, it seems to give more functional responses to the Belt and Road Initiative. The Global Gateway is seen as an extension of the B3W project. However, when its content and applications are taken into consideration, it is seen that its competitiveness is higher. B3W wants to ignite anti-China cooperation at the G7 level. Their discourse on domestic policy and the tax reform in domestic policy and the steps taken with the social expenditure package aim to carry them to foreign policy. But it is unclear at what level it will be reciprocated at the level of the field of cooperation.

GG's Team Europe approach and response to urgent needs will increase the level of competitiveness. Focusing only on unconventional health, education, and research infrastructures outside the fields of infrastructure, energy, digitalization, and climate gives a new level to geoeconomic competition. His experience in funding systems will allow him to develop cooperation with international organizations. However, cooperation at the local level has its drawbacks, as seen in Chinese diplomacy. The European Union will want to overcome China's post-funding problems with foreign aid. An important problem here is how to develop just conditions. Because many developing countries in the target geography of the GG are in debt trouble.

China has many concept projects in Asia, Europe, Africa, and America. The competition of GG and B3W with BRI depends on the development of cross-continental cooperation, not only in Africa. Energy transport, transport of commercial goods and infrastructure investments to Asia, the main geography of the BRI, are uncertain in the GG and B3W. Uncertainty in Asian policies will play an important role in the level of competition.

How to develop BRI competitor standards, which are expressed as the observance of human labor and environmental rights in investment projects, is one of the important problems in the field. It seems that the antithesis of the criticisms called debt-trap diplomacy cannot be carried out only with foreign aid. The finding of a financial and investment model that will not cause collection problems in the BRI competition will be the most important problem of the coming years. Building a market economy dominated by transparent standards to replace debt-trap diplomacy caused by clandestine auctions and corruption at home is a challenge.

It is seen that the GG will prioritize both commercial and strategic investments such as BRI. The strategic corridors defined by the GG in Africa and its investments in Ivory Coast and Senegal are both strategic and commercial projects, as seen in the China-Pakistan economic corridor and the port city of Sri Lanka. With India not participating in the BRI, the GG is likely to bring up potential projects. However, one of the most important handicaps of the EU will be the investment partnerships of Germany-China and the Balkan countries-China.

The objective of the GG to shape the digital economy and global standards with the EU Digital Compass is a response to the surveillance and supervision practices of the BRI and 5-G investments. Africa's digital transformation and global leadership in the digital economy will open up a significant space for GG in BRI competition. Because the digital economy will serve as a key to exporting EU standards to the world in order to shape global standards. The fact that EU data law is modeled by different countries in different geographies of the world can be seen as an example of this. But the EU is faced with a reality that tech giants like Google and Huawei are driving many fronts of digital transformation. The dominance of ZTE and Huawei in Africa shows that the 'Digital Silk Road' competition will surpass the physical Silk Road competition. The EU's concern about Africa is the potential for China's digital dominance to evolve into a new kind of digital authoritarianism. European officials have stated in many places that pure transport policies in Africa will only connect Chinese investments, and that digital diplomacy should be carried out in addition to transportation investments.

The decline of EU dominance in international technical standards will create a new field of competition. The new European standardisation strategy published in 2022 aims to reinforce the EU's diminishing influence. Europe will pursue an aggressive enforcement policy to shape digital standards on the ground. In the Globale Gateway project, it is possible to see the traces of this in intercontinental fiber optic connection projects.

The total budget of GG seems to be much more limited compared to the total budgets of B3W and BRI. But unlike GG and BRI, B3W aims to mobilize private sector capital. In June 2022, the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment network (PGII), which is structured for this purpose, is aimed to be built with the Asian infrastructure investment bank model but with private funds. It is clear that this will be a challenging and new model. However, it is seen that B3W, like BRI, has the goal of stabilizing domestic policy through overseas investments and collaborations. Despite the debt economy concerns directed at the BRI, it is observed that it does not appear to be negative worldwide.

Another critical point from a geoeconomic perspective is the question of whether GG and B3W are complementary or competing projects. The practices carried out in the field will determine at which points the increasing demand for global infrastructure construction will complement or compete with each other. The meaning of these determinations is as follows. It is also possible to see GG and B3W competing in the future. Strategic local collaborations will affect geoeconomic competition at the level of nations and systems.

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