China and Neo-Techno Nationalism

The concept of techno-nationalism was first used by Robert Reich in 1987, at a time when Japan was seen as a strong threat to the US. The concept generally refers to strategies and policies implemented by governments to minimize technological dependence on foreign states. This concept, which emerged along with the 20th-century nationalist development models and economic protectionism, has made its comeback after the US-China trade wars since 2018. However, today's new techno-nationalism has turned into a systematic competition that allows states to intervene against states and non-state actors by using technology. Under new techno-nationalism, countries try to make critical gains in competition with rival geopolitical power centers. In order to achieve these gains, they resort to ways such as data privacy violations, espionage, violation of transparency, censorship and violation of intellectual property rights. States that aim to benefit from cooperation in the global world, while strengthening their own economies with traditional techno-nationalism, are trying to weaken the national competitiveness of rival countries with new types of techno-nationalism practices at the point reached today.

In recent years, with the development of local technology and the rise of nationalism, China has become the center of new techno-nationalist policies. The characterization and evaluation of techno-nationalism as China's national instrument also has its historical roots. Since the rule of Mao Zedong, the state has played an active role in the country's technological and scientific development and has been involved in almost all processes. The close links between the public and private sector are evaluated based on national identity and nationalism. Especially in recent years, during the Xi Jinping era, great importance has been attached to technological developments. China is investing heavily in the development of technology companies in every field in order to completely end its foreign dependency. However, the only goal of these initiatives is not just about reducing China's dependence on foreign countries in the field of technology. In this process, claims that China has been involved in data privacy violations and espionage activities, violating intellectual property rights in order to gain an advantage against rival countries and achieve geopolitical goals by using its own technology have also come to the fore. These claims are mostly provable because state capitalism is successfully implemented in China and there are deep ties between the state and the private sector. It is quite easy and possible for China to operate by using its own technology to threaten the national security of countries it sees as rivals, compared to Western countries such as the US, where the government has little influence on the private sector. For example, the "Made in China 2025" program, a 10-year strategy launched in 2015, was crafted with the Chinese government's goal of developing domestic innovation in key technology sectors and ultimately capturing global markets. Western countries, especially America, have taken actions to adapt or respond to all these harsh techno-nationalist practices. What these responds and opposing practices may trigger has been seen in the trade wars between the states especially since 2018. As a result of this process, many sanctions were imposed on China, trade bans were initiated, and serious measures were taken against some companies. These emerging sanctions and the process of trade wars have brought with it the prediction that the new type of nationalist policies implemented may weaken China rather than strengthen it technologically and economically.

At this point, it can be said that the policies that have been carried out for a while may now do more harm than good to China. In the coming period, this situation may result in the exclusion of China from international academies-universities, the impairment of Chinese-owned companies in the international arena, and finally, China's political isolation in the international arena and the increase points of conflict. For instance, relations between Chinese-American students and universities, which have lasted for nearly 40 years, have been damaged by espionage, technology theft, and cybersecurity hazards. Especially in the American academy, Chinese students and academicians began to be perceived as a threat; therefore, sanctions implemented in this area may have very negative consequences for China because China's technology developed within the scope of techno-nationalism has progressed largely with the contributions of the students it sent abroad. Among the measures mentioned in this area involve canceling the visas of Chinese academicians, shortening the visa period of students in specific sectors, and conducting research on suspected students. In this context, the US blacklisted some of China's leading universities, including Harbin Engineering University, not to mention that it also prevented students from using R&D and software programs in June 2020. In addition, student exchange programs of universities such as Arizona, California, and Berkeley and the activities of Confucius institutes in Western universities were canceled.

In the future, new techno-nationalist policies may result in China's political isolation in the international arena. Complete technological independence aimed by China may lead to the formation of more rigid state structures and sensitization of alliances by eliminating interdependence. This situation may combine factors such as economy, national security, and ideology and cause them to be used together as a tool.

While the main goal in technological developments is to achieve an innovation-oriented and positive-sum common competition, harsh techno-nationalist policies can isolate states. For example, EU countries have called for the creation of an economic model that can compete directly with China and thwart China's attempts to influence global standards in 5G and other next-generation technologies. Such developments may result in the blocking of Western countries with high technology against China; and the situation is not limited to the field of technology.

China's new techno-nationalist policies increase the risk of uncertainty and insecurity in international trade and multinational companies. For multinational companies, the incompatibility of local laws with global company policies causes companies to lose trust and accuses of espionage. The most striking result of this situation was what happened with China's Huawei company, and the US Department of Commerce added 38 companies affiliated to Huawei to the list of companies prohibited from working for American companies. There are allegations of economic espionage, trade secret espionage and technological theft directed at numerous Chinese firms. The fact that the majority of Chinese companies are under state control – with a direct influence on companies where it directs them for their own interests - causes these companies to be seen as Beijing's political tools in the international arena. In addition, the WeChat application is accused of not complying with the regulations of digital platforms on cyber security and is receiving international reaction. At this stage, it remains a matter of curiosity what kind of sanctions can be applied to companies such as Huawei or WeChat.

As a result, the new techno-nationalism policies implemented by China to achieve its geopolitical goals and become stronger in all aspects may rather cause serious losses for the country. In today's world, where the lines between economic and security concerns are blurred, countries should calculate their response well and act accordingly when implementing strict techno-nationalist policies. Encountering sanctions and exclusion from international trade will cause more losses than gains. At this point, it is an important question whether the Biden administration will impose harsh and clear sanctions as in the Trump era. On the other hand, the increase of techno-nationalist policies of the Xi Jinping administration, which is seen to be more authoritarian and carry out assertive policies with a high nationalist dose, will provoke more reactions in the international arena. Therefore, it will not be surprising if China becomes the party that suffers from this process.

References

Bitzinger, R. A. (2011). "China's defense technology and industrial base in a regional context: Arms manufacturing in Asia". *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 34(3), 425-450, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2011.574985

Edgerton, D. E. H. (2007). "The contradictions of techno-nationalism and techno-globalism: A historical perspective". *New Global Studies*, 1(1), https://doi.org/10.2202/1940-0004.1013

Evans, P. (2020). "Techno-nationalism in China–US relations: Implications for universities". *East Asian Policy*, 12(02), 80-92. https://doi.org/10.1142/s1793930520000161

Garcia-Herrero, A. (2019). "From globalization to Deglobalization: Zooming into trade". *SSRN Electronic Journal*, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3496563

Gertz, G., & Evers, M. M. (2020). "Geoeconomic competition: Will state capitalism win?". *The Washington Quarterly*, 43(2), 117-136, https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660x.2020.1770962

Luo, Y. (2021). "Illusions of techno-nationalism". *Journal of International Business Studies*, 53(3), 550-567, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-021-00468-5

Luqiu, L. R., & Kang, Y. (2021). "Loyalty to WeChat Beyond National Borders: A perspective of media system dependency theory on techno-nationalism. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 14(4), 451-468, https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2021.1921820

Nakayama, S. (2012). "Techno-nationalism versus techno-globalism". *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An*

International Journal, 6(1), 9-15, https://doi.org/10.1215/18752160-1504708

Reich, R. (1987). "The rise of technonationalism". *The Atlantic*.

Rikap, C., & Lundvall, B.-Å. (2021). "AI policies and politics in China and the US between techno-globalism and techno-nationalism". *The Digital Innovation Race*, 145-163, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-89443-6_7

Shim, Y., & Shin, D. (2019). "Smartness in techno-nationalism? combining actor-network theory and institutionalization to assess Chinese smart TV development". *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 139, 87-98, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2018.09.004

Shim, Y., & Shin, D.-H. (2016). "Neo-techno nationalism: The case of China's handset industry". *Telecommunications Policy*, 40(2-3), 197-209, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2015.09.006

The Diplomat. "US-China Techno-Nationalism and the Decoupling of Innovation". 10.09.2020, https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/us-china-techno-nationalism-and-the-decoupling-of-innovation

 Zhao, Y. (2010). "China's pursuits of Indigenous Innovations in information technology developments: Hopes, follies and uncertainties". *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 3(3), 266-289, https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2010.499628