

National Security Culture in Turkey: A Qualitative Study on Think Tanks

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Abstract

This article examines the role that think tanks have played in the formulation of national security and a culture of security through field research conducted on fourteen think tanks located in Istanbul and Ankara. In addition to participant observation at the think tanks, twenty-five in-depth interviews were conducted with administrators and specialists. The findings revealed that, in terms of their strategic attitudes about national security in Turkey, there are three groups of think tanks: critical think tanks; b) middle-position think tanks; and c) congruent think tanks. Based on the results of the data collected, we argue that the culture of national security in Turkey has begun to be impacted by a plurality of actors, both civilian and official, and that there is an emerging competition for influence over the definitions and conceptualizations of security as well as the identification of security issues within a securitization process which has led to their securitization. Although the think-tank sector in Turkey is still in its formative years, its roles and influence in the debates on national security have been on the rise.

Keywords

Think-tank, securitization, Turkey, national security, research center, security studies.

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Introduction

In clear contrast to the past, security has become a phenomenon that must be produced. While insecurity has become the rule of the day, attempts to produce security, to construct it, to plan and model it, and even to control it through alternative suppositions and hypothetical propositions, have become the norm (Krause and Williams 1997: viii). This new approach, pointed out to the link between domestic and foreign politics. During the Cold War, domestic politics was extricated from the ideological agenda of the bi-polar world order. The current approach, however, brings domestic politics to the forefront by giving predominance to domestic political agendas. Painful state formation processes, divided or war-ravaged states, state-society tensions, countries' security problems, and vicious cycles of governance crises have enlarged the scope of international security, bridging the gap between domestic and foreign politics (Bigo 2006: 109). Studies of security problems in non-Western geographies have contributed to this new interpretation of security with its problematic domestic domain. It has become a commonly accepted notion that the problem of insecurity, which is produced and exported in regional and international contexts by a group of countries described as the Third World, is directly and inherently linked to the problem of "putting their own homes into order" (Ayooob 1995: 7,8).

In parallel with these developments, a new literature has appeared concerning the changing perception of security in geographies of the global south formerly called the Third World. The structures of the national security state, which were suitable for the Cold War period, have not been able to produce political outcomes which are capable of reacting to and shaping the challenges of the global economy and international system; thus, the ability to tackle these problems in domestic and foreign politics has been lost (Held 1995: 135). In particular, the post-9/11 era has brought about a diversified understanding of politics that assigns the mission of providing security both to state and non-state actors. The growing international security literature largely deals with the new setting of the post-9/11 era, and the production of scientific knowledge has concentrated on these differentiated problems by means of theoretical, analytical and experiment-based studies.

One of the most important discussions in the new literature concerns the role of think tanks and their security experts who specialize in security issues. Although perspectives differ, there is a general consensus on the

political role of security analysts (Behnke 2000: 89). One of the current consensuses is that security is a production of multiple social and political processes, and security experts and think-tanks comprise a sector that contributes to the construction and formation of security in these processes. A similar inference can be made for the Turkish case: the number of think tanks has increased in the post-Cold War period, and they have become diversified as regards which regions they work on and their themes of focus. Additionally, national security production and the formulation of foreign and domestic policy options, constitute a primary sector which determines how security is perceived and performed. Security experts pay particular attention to specific issues that may later on become security issues through a process of securitization. Alternatively, the same security experts may contribute to certain issues' removal from the security agenda through a process of desecuritization. Either way, these experts and specialists of security at think-tanks have become effective in determining the subject, the domain and the scope of security by affecting securitization and desecuritization processes.

Think tanks, through their influence on securitization and desecuritization processes, play the role of catalyst in the culture of security in terms of specifying what constitutes active and potential security threats. Security issues are identified in pluralistic processes in a multi-actor environment. Experts' scientific knowledge, analyses, interpretations and views with regard to security problems all influence the discourses of the security elite. Furthermore, experts' definitions and determinations of security issues and threats are communicated to security bureaucrats and politicians, which is one of the mechanisms by which issues become matters of security in the security-making process. In some ways, the security elite use the knowledge produced by think-tanks to justify their positions and policies. They may, through their interactions, use expert views to determine and exaggerate threats. In other ways, the broad scope of reality, the real threats, the imminent threats, the potential threats may obstruct the formation of a coherent enemy-threat cycle, leaving the state elite in an environment of information pollution and complexity.

Through evidence collected in a field study, this investigation of think tanks in Turkey analyzes the roles they play in the formulation of national security and the production of a culture of security. The first section discusses methodological issues concerning the field research, and the second section reviews traditional approaches to Turkey's national security policy and discusses emergent dynamics of the culture of national security. The third section pre-

sents a profile of the current think tank sector and examines the major characteristics of think tanks. The fourth section focuses on the increase of actors in the culture of national security with an emphasis on the contributions that think tanks make as actors bearing increasing influence. The article ends with a conclusion on research findings and future prospects.

The Study

The study is a qualitative survey of fourteen think-tanks in Turkey.¹ The sample group was composed of seven thinks from Istanbul and seven from Ankara, as these are the cities where the majority of think tanks are located. Only those which have a wide variety of research interests, engage in an array of activities and are highly active in terms of publications, organizing conferences, meeting with state officials, delivering public speeches, holding press conferences and being highly visible in the media on issues concerning Turkey's security and foreign policy were selected. In Istanbul, we conducted field work on the following think tanks: The Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies (*Türk-Asya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi - TASAM*), The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (*Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı, TESEV*), the Marmara Foundation (*Marmara Grubu Stratejik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Vakfı*), the Economic Development Foundation (*İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı, İKV*), the Arı Movement (*Arı Grubu*), Wise Men Center for Strategic Studies (*Bilge Adamlar Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi, BİLGESAM*) and the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association (*Heinrich Böll Stiftung Derneği*). Those in Ankara included: The Eurasia Strategic Research Center (*Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi, ASAM*),² the Foreign Policy Institute (*Dış Politika Enstitüsü*), the Association for Liberal Thinking (*Liberal Düşünce Derneği*), the International Strategic Research Association (*Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırma Kurumu, USAK*), the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (*Siyasi, Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Araştırmalar Vakfı, SETA*), the Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Research (*Orta Doğu Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi, ORSAM*) and the National Security Strategies Research Center (*Türkiye Ulusal Güvenlik Stratejileri Merkezi, TUSAM*).³ With these fourteen think tanks, twenty-five in-depth interviews were conducted with their representatives. Fourteen of the respondents were administrators of think-tanks, either as president or chairperson of the organization. Eleven of the respondents were specialists working at the think tanks who had expertise on security and foreign politics. Respondents were asked to complete a semi-structured research questionnaire; in addition to prepared questions, ad-hoc questions depending on the needs of the interview were also addressed. The questions included: What are the

central features and dynamics of the culture of national security in Turkey? Who are the major actors in this regard? What changes have occurred in national security? How do you evaluate the nation-state structure in a globalizing international system? What are legitimate *casus belli* for Turkey? What are the junctures and disjunctures of internal and external security and foreign policies? Are there any fundamentals of Turkish foreign policy? Administrators were also given additional questions that covered the administration and organizational structure of think tanks, such as: What is the legal status of your think tank and why did you choose it? What is the organization's hierarchy and how are decisions made? What is the profile of your employees? What is your financial resource and budget management like? Each interview took approximately 70 minutes, with the shortest taking 40 minutes and the longest 120 minutes. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed. A quantitative data analysis technique was used to analyze the interviews. In addition to in-depth interviews, participant observation was conducted at think tanks that focused on print and digital publication productions. The entire field research, including the interviews and participant observation, was carried out between 2008 and 2010, and took less than two years.

Traditional Approaches And New Dynamics Of the Culture of National Security in Turkey

In Turkey, security is understood to mean the avoidance of danger, or staying protected from threats. This approach, which might be termed conservative, is not limited to a military context but encompasses the protection of the population, territorial independence and integrity, and national identity. Although Turkey has one of the largest armies equipped with conventional weapons in the region, it still has a national security syndrome (Aras and Toktaş 2007: 19). The issue of security plays a dominant role in political discourses and holds a privileged position over all other social and political issues. In consequence, securitization and desecuritization processes in Turkey are prominent in the hegemony of security.

Since the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the dominant paradigm among security discourses in Turkey has always been a construct of the imagination of the bureaucratic elite. The fundamental component of this traditional discourse is the priority given to security accompanied by the fear of the dissolution of the country. One of the most important reasons for the historical importance given to security or insecurity in Turkey is its status as successor to the Ottoman Empire. Continuous wars, subsequent territorial losses, and the collaboration of ethnic-nationalist groups

with foreign powers in the dissolution of the Empire led to a national security syndrome (Aras 2009: 29). The Treaty of Sèvres, which was signed at the conclusion of the First World War, was perceived as an attempt to dismantle Ottoman territories and dissolve Anatolia by allying internal collaborators with external ones, and as a result, Turkey's security syndrome has come to be known as Sèvres syndrome, or Sèvres phobia (Mufti 1998: 37). In spite of the efforts of Ottoman elites to hold the empire together under the banners of Ottomanism or Islamism, permanent territorial losses resulted in the reduction of Ottoman territories to Anatolia, leading to trauma among the political and the state elite. The strong belief that internal elements collaborated with foreign powers in the dismantling of the empire led to an entrenched belief in the threat of internal and external foes. The Sèvres syndrome, or the belief that the country is permanently under the threat of dissolution from internal and external enemies, is the result of this historical experience. Kurdish and Islamic threats were conducive to perpetuating this mindset.

Discourses about the danger of the disintegration or division of the nation have frequently and repeatedly reoccurred in response to such events as the separatist activities of the PKK in the 1990s, the revivalism of ethnic groups, the claims of religious minorities, the conflicts over land with neighboring countries (Greece, Syria, Armenia), and even the EU accession process. A consequence of this discourse is that the bureaucratic elite of Turkey has taken an extremely sober attitude and a skeptical stance (Aras 2001: 59) and has favored cautiousness and adherence to the status quo both in domestic and in foreign relations (Lesser 2000: 183, Mufti 1998: 36).

Turkey's conventional understanding of national security has been primarily based on geography and geostrategy and hence there has been a limited arena for an open and communal discussion of perceptions of threats (Heper and Itzkowitz-Shifrinson 2005: 243). In the geopolitical mind-set of the bureaucratic elite, since Turkey is encircled by the Balkans, the Middle East, Caucasia, the Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea, this positioning entails insecurity, instability, and uncertainty. In line with this view, Anatolia represents a sheltered region since there are seas and high mountain ranges around the country. Yet the vast plains of Thrace are perceived as being vulnerable to attacks that may come from Europe, and Turkey's straits are open to military aggression from the sea and air. Furthermore, Anatolia is a bridge of migration from East to West. In other words, being at the center of three continents in the Mediterranean region

creates difficulties for the defense of the nation. The presence of various non-democratic regimes and animosities in neighboring countries reinforces the Turkish elite's national security syndrome. Additionally, the literature and the knowledge produced thereof concerning Turkey's foreign and security policies have tended to stay focused on geostrategies on the grounds that geostrategy affects the domestic politics of Turkey and its relations with its neighbors (Lesser 2000: 183).

The involvement of the armed forces in Turkish politics is both a cause and an outcome of securitization in the country (Lombardi 1997: 193), and the military has long been actively involved in Turkish foreign policymaking (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 199). Even the political elite responsible for security and foreign policy constantly refer to the impacts and roles of the military in foreign relations, upgrading the military's prestige in the eye of the Turkish public and reinforcing the military's role in foreign policy. The National Security Council, which is a constitutional body, also strengthens the role of the military in security policy formulation. The government takes into consideration the decisions made by the National Security Council.

The military's central position in the issue of national security is closely related to the interference of the military in politics as well as to the lack of interest and awareness on the part of the civilian bureaucratic elite (Toktaş and Kurt 2008: 7). A very limited number of bureaucrats and civilians make a career in security. There appears to be a lack of interest in security matters among civilians, and there are only a few civilians specialized in the military affairs of the country. Added to this is the lack of active societal involvement in policymaking on issues like military expenditures, which leads to a situation in which the military has a strong voice in discourses about security.

However, since the 1980s, changes have been seen in the culture of national security. In parallel with economic liberalization, the business world has begun taking an active role in political processes. Civil society actors have begun speaking up, nurturing this new milieu and forming international partnerships, and globalization has strengthened non-state actors (Öniş 2006: 240). As a result of this strengthening, TÜSİAD (the Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association), TOBB (the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey), trade unions, and many NGOs have raised their voices and held sway in politics. While the military retained the strongest influence (Ergüvenç 1998: 2), security culture in Turkey was no longer the exclusive domain of the military. In this

period, the civilian elite also contributed to the culture of national security, as civil participation began to increase in the formulation of security policies. Society has also begun to perceive other issues as constituting security threats, including global warming, the passage of dangerous tankers through the straits, energy security, global economic fluctuations, and soil erosion. Environmental hazards have been included on the political agenda, reflecting a change in perceptions of security. In the context of the 1980s, political changes were observed in which domestic and foreign policy blended, and the same occurred in the realms of national security and securitization.

One of the causes of these changes in securitization processes and the definition of national security in Turkey is the EU membership process. This process began to influence Turkish political life and foreign policy in the 1990s, and this influence grew even stronger in the 2000s with legal and constitutional reform packages aiming to fulfill the Union's membership criteria, which are known as the Copenhagen criteria. The EU membership process has provoked discussion as regards national security, as actors and opposition groups attempting to influence the definition and understanding of security in Turkey have singled out EU accession as a critical reference point (Heper 2005: 36). Both anti-EU and pro-EU groups frequently raise the issue of national security, asserting that the EU membership process will have a lasting impact on national security (Aydınlı, Özcan and Akyaz 2006: 83). While explaining their own positions and reasoning out their arguments, both sides have made reference to the new world order and the effects of globalization, and have called for a revision in Turkish politics (Bilgin 2005: 194).

Pro-EU groups have mainly been interested in the economic and political dimensions of globalization and have pointed out the benefits of EU membership without placing security issues on the top of their agenda. After Turkey was accepted as an EU candidate country at the 1999 Helsinki Summit, they began questioning the traditional security paradigm (Oğuzlu 2002: 600). For example, the chair of the Motherland Party (ANAP), Mesut Yılmaz, criticized securitization and suggested that national security should be removed from its narrow framework and be opened up for public debate (Aydınlı 2002: 213). Some diplomats and military officials even made pro-EU speeches, emphasizing that Turkey cannot be integrated into the new security paradigm via traditional strategies, and that economic security is as important as military security in the new, liberal world order; it was

also argued that EU membership would make a positive contribution to Turkey's national security (Sarigil 2007: 41).

On the other hand, opponents to accession have argued that joining the EU will prove detrimental to Turkey's national security. Although opinions vary within this group, some writers held that even if Turkey undergoes the reforms required to meet EU criteria, it would not be accepted as an EU member, and the traditional role of the National Security Council and the military would be weakened in the process, to Turkey's detriment (Bilgin 2005: 189-190). Others, in the military and bureaucracy, have asserted that the EU could divide Turkey (Toktaş and Kurt 2010). The presidents of the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İş) and the Ankara Chamber of Commerce (ATO) based their criticism of Turkey's potential EU membership on this traditional understanding of national security, while others have called for a new security agenda that would not make any concessions concerning Turkey's national security requirements (Bilgin 2005: 177). Some have advocated maintaining foreign policy relationships with the EU and its members, and Eurasia or the Middle East have also been proposed as alternative regions for economic unions.

In addition to the political reform process undertaken after the 1999 Helsinki Summit and the return to economic stability, an atmosphere conducive to democratization pervaded domestic politics. The boundaries of normal politics expanded and a number of former security issues, which were securitized before in an enemy-threat chain, emerged as part of the legitimate space of politics. A conservative political party, the Justice and Development Party, which had evolved from a background in political Islam, came to power, and Kurdish politicians, finding inroads as independent candidates, were able to form a group in Parliament.

With the enhancement of democratization, civilians have acquired more room for maneuvering. Democratization has limited the impact of a 'security first' approach, increased the roles of political elites and civil societies, and allowed social demands to have influence in a more democratized policy-making process. The resolution of the security-democracy dilemma in favor of democracy has had repercussions in foreign policy as well. As Turkey has begun to transform its political agenda from one based on security to one based on democracy, it has unfettered its foreign policy from the limits of domestic security considerations. Moreover, democratization and desecuritization have shifted foreign policy from a bureaucrat-

ic-authoritarian stance to a more democratic and pluralist process that takes societal demands into consideration.

A Close-Up of the Current Think Tank Sector in Turkey

Although Turkey's first think tanks emerged in the 1960s, there have been waves of proliferation in the numbers of think-tanks over the decades. The enactment of the new constitutions in 1961 and 1982, with their provisions for the legal founding of civil society organizations, triggered the proliferation of think tanks, as well as ideological polarization within the country. The post-Cold war period similarly witnessed another wave in the rise of think tanks. In particular, since the 1990s there has been an increase in discussions concerning the need to revise traditional security paradigms. These discussions have coincided with changes in the security perceptions of the ruling elite. In due course, Turkish foreign policy was in need of shifting from a static Cold-war style approach to an active, multidimensional policy line. The independence of the Central Asian and Turkic republics, the emergence of new states and entities in the Balkans after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and the impact of the first Gulf War on the Middle East added numerous issues to the agenda of Turkey's foreign policy, which led to the foundation of think tanks capable of producing knowledge and engaging in activities relevant to the state of the region. This also compelled a number of official institutions to found or support think tanks to fill the gap of information and expertise. Representative of such organizations are the Strategic Research Center of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SAM) and the National Committee of Strategic Research and Studies, which operates under the auspices of the Turkish Council of Higher Education (SAEMK). Again in this period, some foreign think tanks (such as Friedrich Neumann and Heinrich Böll) launched offices in Turkey.

The steady increase in the number of think tanks continued in the first decade of the 2000s. The causes for this proliferation included the increasing need for information and analysis, civil society's contributions to the improvement of democracy, advances in communication technologies such as the internet, the globalization of funds, and support for civil societies from developed countries. Moreover, Turkey's acceptance as an EU member candidate had a major impact on both foreign and domestic policy. This transformation included reforms in the fields of democratization and human rights, and the further granting of rights and liberties. The broadened political sphere allowed for a variety of choices and methodologies in foreign policy and security issues, which also impacted the results as

well. Liberalized politics articulated through expanded rights and liberties constituted new discourses, which made it possible for the rise of new actors in Turkey. Globalization and the lifting of obstacles to the freedom of association also blurred the line between the foreign and domestic, making it possible for foreign associations, foundations, and think tanks to open offices, form associations, and conduct activities in Turkey. The EU provided direct funding for civil society organizations, as well as for international partnerships, research projects, and joint studies. Financial resources from the EU were used often by think tanks for a range of projects. TÜBİTAK (the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) sponsors think tank activities in a wide range of fields, such as Asian and African studies, and research about issues concerning foreign policy, security and energy. Some of the new think tanks were founded by government institutions such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Turkish Armed Forces and the Turkish Grand National Assembly, while others were founded by non-governmental entities such as corporations and universities.

Think tanks in today's Turkey can be grouped into five categories: a) autonomous and semi-autonomous, b) state-sponsored, c) university-sponsored, d) sponsored by a political party, and e) local branches of foreign think tanks (Aydın 2006: 133-137). These think tanks perform the following: conduct research on domestic and foreign politics and prepare information for decision-makers; make recommendations and explain viewpoints to government authorities on urgent policy issues; contribute to a pluralist and open society by providing a variety of political analyses and opinions; create forums for public debate; disseminate information via print, electronic, and visual media; increase the variety and content of publications in Turkey by publishing books, journals, and research reports; conduct advocacy on Turkish foreign policy through different networks abroad; and, create employment opportunities for graduates of international relations and political science university programs and retired bureaucrats (such as ambassadors, army officers, and chiefs of office).

In the absence of clear legal regulations for civil society organizations like think-tanks, the statutes of think tanks launched by universities are subject to university regulations. Think tanks outside the university structure or official regulations are generally organized as foundations, associations or commercial enterprises. Think tanks that opt for a style akin to an association carry out their press, publication and broadcasting activities via a separate commercial enterprise. A think tank may be established as an

association if it decides to operate on a non-profit basis. This option exempts the think tank from tax obligations and financial regulations. If think tanks choose to have an attached commercial enterprise, they must comply with the appropriate accounting obligations, because such enterprises facilitate publication activities to cover organizational costs. Foreign institutions are primarily organized as associations, and the number of representative branches of foreign think tanks has increased. The advantage of association status is the relative ease of establishment and the freedom of organizational structure. Foundations, however, are under several restrictions imposed by law. For example, foundation activities are supervised by the General Directory of Foundations. Regardless of the limitations of foundation status, think tanks which operate as part of other extensive foundations or have additional aims such as the establishment of universities prefer this kind of status. Additionally, if the government accepts a foundation as a public interest institution, it can receive tax-deductible donations.

Think tanks outside universities or government institutions are generally founded by business groups, academicians, politicians, retired bureaucrats or entrepreneurs. The vast majority of think tanks are located in Istanbul and Ankara. Many think tanks that employ researchers have academics or retired bureaucrats (such as ambassadors or army officers) as directors or coordinators. Because of the expense of employing full-time, permanent researchers, think tanks may choose to hire on a per-project, short-term or contract basis. Yet, it is the permanent researchers and their research interests that determine the activities of the think tanks. As the sector is also open to voluntary work, the services of short-term volunteers, mostly university students, are recruited as well. Budget sizes vary; for example, the budget size of a think tank employing eight experts is approximately between 200,000-400,000 USD. The financial structures and resources of Turkish think tanks are not transparent, however. Think tanks may obtain funding from the following sources: income from the sale of production outcomes; endowments; membership fees; sales of books, journals and reports; sales of souvenirs; and funds for research projects that are conducted independently or with domestic and foreign partners. Competition for resources for research is high. Some think tanks carry out projects supported by TÜBİTAK; however, these funds are insufficient for the sustainability of a think tank and TÜBİTAK supports a small number of projects. Some think tanks are supported by the government but this support only constitutes a small part of such institutions' budgets. Other think tanks are directly supported by interest groups or pressure groups, or

pursue activities within the structure of their objectives. Think tanks that are supported by corporations or trade unions are financially more stable because their funding sources are more reliable, and their institutional support is also more reliable (Öztürk and Çevikalp 2008: 27). However, taking into consideration economic fluctuations and crises, think tanks seek to diversify their financial resources. Because local resources are limited, many think tanks turn to foreign sources. The most important funding is provided by the EU for pro-EU institutions through project grants for research projects which are long-term and involve multiple partners in different countries. However, some think tanks that receive funds from foreign sources have been accused of pursuing illegal activities for other countries. For this reason, intensifying nationalist sentiment and popular interest in conspiracy theories may hamper think tanks' ability to fund their activities with foreign funds (Aydın 2006: 142).

Civilian Involvement in National Security Culture: Think Tanks and Alternative Definitions for Security

In interviews, think tank administrators and specialists in our sample group placed importance on their role in security culture and perceived themselves as contributive actors in the formulation of security policy and culture. The concept of national security, according to them, is a result of the communicative interactions between various actors in the security sector. Their contributions are channeled through various means, including websites, press conferences, policy briefs, books, symposiums, newspaper articles, and TV appearances, all of which have as an audience the public, the media and the government. Many of the respondents gave examples of their activities which had influenced official policy, and all of the think tank representatives believed that they were stakeholders in the security sector and the culture of security, in addition to major players like the armed forces, national security council, chief of staff, the ministries of foreign affairs, national defense, Ministry of Internal Affairs, the police force, Parliament and the intelligence agency. Interviewees also mentioned civil societal actors and initiatives in the culture of national security in terms of their increasing power and influence in shaping security and foreign policy. As regards human security, most respondents mentioned the inclusion of new items on the security agenda such as women's rights, identity issues, ecology, social justice, individual security, transnational crime, migration and human rights.

Regarding Turkey's geostrategy and the influence of the geostrategic paradigm on Turkey's foreign and security policy, most respondents placed

importance on Turkey's physical and geographic/geostrategic security; however, it should be pointed out that they occasionally seemed willing to depart from the traditional approach and to criticize the geostrategic norm prevalent among the bureaucratic elite. Almost all of the respondents identified terrorism carried out by the PKK as an internal threat, and the disintegration of territorial integrity was considered to be a legitimate *casus belli*, although some included the replacement of democracy with an Islamic regime as a primary concern. The think tank elite of the sample group seemed to share and reproduce the mindset of the state elite to a certain extent. In terms of identification with the official position of Turkey and an imitative traditional approach inherited from the mindset of the bureaucratic and military elite, there appeared to be three types of think-tanks: a) critical think tanks; b) middle-position think tanks; and c) congruent think tanks.

The first group of think tanks, although few in number in the sample group, had representatives who were critical of the traditional perceptions and conceptualizations of security and they also critiqued the predominant role the military plays in the culture of national security. Such think tanks seek to distance themselves from traditional discourses, yet they seem to have remained reactionary for the most part. Despite their intentions and efforts, they are primarily responsive and are dependent on agenda items set by other actors in the culture of national security in terms of their knowledge production and policy proposals. In other words, their critiques and activities dwell mainly on countering the 'order of the day' rather than initiating new agenda items and formulating an alternative yet radical discourse which is in stark contrast to the traditional model. This group of think tanks supports full integration in the EU.

The second group adopts a middle position, holding a position between radically challenging the national security episteme and an adapting conventional understandings of national security. There appeared to be a difference in perspectives regarding what the respondents defined as the ideal situation and the real-politik situation. For example, when the respondents were asked questions regarding understandings and conceptualizations of national security in Turkey, they referred to the changing dynamics of world politics, the political milieu of the post-Cold War era and the need for a change in national security in accordance with the change in global politics. They were fully aware of the most recent literature on securitization and desecuritization processes and they addressed new security issues like the environment, migration and human welfare. Yet, when they

were asked specific questions regarding Turkey's security and foreign policy, they expressed ideas and opinions congruent with the official position with justifications like 'Turkey's special position', 'Turkey's uniqueness', and 'Turkey's distinctiveness'. For example, although most of the respondents from this group emphasized the need for the involvement of civil societies in foreign and security policymaking and held an advocate position, when asked about relations with Armenia for instance, they seemed to have adopted the official state position in terms of its denial of an Armenian genocide, and they refused to accept the Armenian lobby's activities as those of a civil society. This group of think tanks is hesitant pro-EU with a reservation on national security.

The third group is comprised of think tanks which not only agree with the conventional understanding of security and the dominant security paradigm in Turkey but also support its hegemony and continuity. The respondents from this group believe that the primary role of think tanks is to support the state and its institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Turkish military, and also engage in public diplomacy for governmental offices. According to these types, the official state line should be widely disseminated in society. In interviews, the respondents frequently used terms like geostrategy, physical security, territorial integrity, and state-society unity. Think tanks in this group oppose accession to the EU.

Concluding Remarks

Since the 1990s, public opinion and the media have played a large role in state conceptualizations of security and foreign policy-making (Kalin 2010: 97). In recent decades, the security elite have begun paying increasing attention to public opinion (Aras, Toktaş and Kurt 2010: 49), which has become increasingly influential in Turkish foreign policy in the 2000s. This is an indicator of the influence wielded by think-tanks vis-à-vis their role in the formation of public opinion. The current article investigated the role of think tanks in the formulation of a culture of national security in Turkey in the post-Cold War era through a field research on fourteen think tanks. The findings obtained through in-depth interviews with administrators and specialists point to an emergence of competition within the culture of national security among different actors. The situation observed marks a deviation from the systemic analysis of Neo-Realism on a single type actor-structure. The rise of think tanks, both in numbers and in impact, reveals a multilevel, multi-actor and multifaceted arena of security in which representatives of the state and military are not the sole de-

terminants, as a result of the trend towards civilianization in culture of national security. The involvement of civilian voices, including those of political parties, the ruling party, civil society organizations, think tanks, and the media, is the primary driving factor behind this trend. In the competition to achieve dominance in the culture of national security, it would appear that civilian participation has begun challenging the 'top-down' approach to security policy, thanks to transformations resulting from the step taken in the EU membership process. Albeit still quite far from the levels of its counterparts in Europe, the new culture of security in Turkey seems to have acquired a civil tone and bears the potential for increased civil participation. One of the determinants of this trend will be the future of the think tank sector.

The think-tank sector in Turkey is at an early stage of development. It is clear that this newly emerging sector has encountered a number of difficulties such as the availability of permanent financial and human support, the weak spirit of philanthropy in Turkey, legal regulations which impede the development of the think-tank sector, and obstacles to accessing data from the security elite and foreign ministry (Öztürk and Çevikalp 2008: 28), in addition to the rigidity of the state concerning confidential information. Nonetheless, in the present situation the think tank sector will continue to develop and increasingly influence debates on national security.

Comments

- ¹ The field research was part of a larger research funded by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK). The sample group of the research covered only autonomous and semi-autonomous, think tanks. University research centers were excluded from the sample group.
- ² This Center decided to close itself after the research was conducted.
- ³ This Center decided to close itself after the research was conducted.

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Türkiye'de Ulusal Güvenlik Kültürü: Araştırma Merkezleri Üzerine Niteliksel Bir Araştırma

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Özet

Araştırmamız, ulusal güvenliğin çoğulcu bir ortamda belirlendiği Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde, Türkiye'deki araştırma merkezlerini merceğe almaktadır. Araştırma merkezlerinin ulusal güvenlik anlayışı ve güvenlik kültürünün belirlenmesindeki rolü üzerine niteliksel araştırma yöntemleri ve veri toplama tekniklerine dayanan bir saha çalışması yapılmıştır. Sektörün önde gelen 14 araştırma merkezinde katılımcı gözlemde bulunulmuş; 25 yönetici ve uzman ile derinlemesine görüşme yapılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda ortaya çıkan bulgu, Türkiye'de ulusal güvenliğin tanımlanmasında, bürokrasi odaklı, sivil kontrol mekanizmalarından bağımsız, demokratik katılım ve denetime kapalı ve güvenliği sadece devletin ve sınırların korunması olarak algılayan egemen anlayışın artık eski gücünde olmadığı ve somut değişimlere uğradığıdır. Resmi tanımlamaları ön plana çıkartan ve devlet kurum ve kuruluşlarının başat aktör olageldiği geleneksel güvenlik kültürü yapılanması yerini giderek sivilleşen, sivil katılıma hem olanak hem dayanak sağlayan bir değişim sürecine bırakmaktadır. Araştırma merkezleri bu değişimi hem tespit etmekte hem de şekillenmesine katkıda bulunmaktadır. Her ne kadar yakın bir geçmişte kurulmaya başlamış olsa da ve Batı Avrupa ve Kuzey Amerika'daki benzerleri ile karşılaştırıldığında henüz doymunlaşmamış ve dar bir sektöre tekabül etse de, gelinen nokta, ulusal güvenlik kültüründe çoğulcu bir ortama işaret etmektedir. Araştırma merkezleri, var olan ulusal güvenlik anlayışına alternatif tanımlamalarda bulunma çabası içerisinde ve kendi güvenlik anlayışlarını çeşitli bilgi üretimi ve iletişimi araçlarıyla ifade etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Düşünce kuruluşları, güvenikleştirme, Türkiye, ulusal güvenlik kültürü, araştırma merkezleri, güvenlik çalışmaları.

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Культура национальной безопасности Турции: специальное исследование научно-исследовательских центров

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Аннотация

Предметом нашего исследования являются научно-исследовательские центры Турции, возникшие в период после окончания холодной войны в плюралистической среде национальной безопасности. Были проведены полевые исследования, основанные на сборе материалов и качественных методах исследования концепции национальной безопасности научно-исследовательских центров и роли в определении культуры безопасности. Проведено наблюдение 14-ти ведущих научно-исследовательских центров этой отрасли, взяты содержательные интервью 25-и руководителей и специалистов. Результаты исследования показывают, что в данный период коренным образом изменилось формулирование концепции национальной безопасности Турции и традиционное мышление независимого от механизмов бюрократических и гражданского контроля, а также закрытого для демократического участия и контроля, предназначения безопасности только для охраны государства и границ, уже утратило свою силу. Официальная версия структур традиционной культуры безопасности, в которой государственные учреждения и организации играли главную роль, эволюционируется в сторону демократизации и гражданского участия.

Научно-исследовательские центры исследуя эти изменения, вносят определенный вклад в формирование этого процесса. Несмотря на то, что они были созданы в ближайшем прошлом и по сравнению с аналогией стран Западной Европы и Северной Америки еще недостаточно развиты и отвечает интересам узкого круга, сегодняшнее их положение свидетельствует об эволюции в сторону плюрализма в культуре национальной безопасности. Научно-исследовательские центры стремятся предоставить альтернативные варианты традиционной концепции национальной безопасности; собственные понимания безопасности выражают через различные научные исследования и средства массовой информации.

Ключевые Слова

мозговые центры, безопасность, Турция, культура национальной безопасности, научно-исследовательские центры, исследования безопасности.

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