



Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul

Danish Institute for International Studies, Roskilde University, Malmö University

Adversaries, Neighbors, Kins?

Tensions and Security Potentials in Turkey and the Eurasian Region

MICS Workshop IV, November 19-20 2015, DIIS, Copenhagen

Erik Sjöberg, Umeå University

”The Cold War of genocides”: Greek national populism, memory politics and the Greek-Turkish conflict in the 21st century

With the coming of the so-called earthquake diplomacy of foreign ministers Ismail Cem and Georgios Papandreou in 1999, a new era of conciliation and cooperation seemed to dawn in Greek-Turkish relations. In the early 2000s, Greece appeared ready to abandon its resistance against Turkey’s bid for EU membership, and progress was made towards ending the post-1974 division of Cyprus. However, old enmities die slow. As Turkey’s EU accession talks stalled, and the euro crisis hit Greece, the preconditions for the Greek-Turkish détente appear to have altered for the worse. One aspect of the strained relations is the attention given to previously neglected symbolical issues, such as the commemoration of the so-called Pontian Greek genocide, constructed as a Greek “twin” to the Armenian genocide, which has emerged as a bone of contention, in addition to the unresolved conflict over Cyprus and the Aegean. In this paper, I examine how populist politicians in Greece, from PASOK to the rightwing “Independent Greeks”, have used this issue to challenge the policy of rapprochement with Turkey from 1999 until 2015. I also discuss how the new-found power of the “Independent Greeks” party, which as the junior partner of SYRIZA’s anti-austerity government was entrusted with the Ministry of Defense, might impact the security-political situation in the region.

Hikmet Kırık, The Faculty of Political Sciences, Istanbul University

Don't Buy a House, Buy A Neighbour: Has Europe Enough Heat for Melting the Frozen Conflicts in South Caucasus?

Europe's response to challenges posed by changes in the global geopolitics is to ensure security in the region. Within the framework of "neighbourhood policy", the region encompasses global south as well as eastern neighbourhood. The basic strategy is 'cautious optimism' defined as contributing the regions welfare and stability at the same time not to encounter with Russia. Against it, Russia, developed a policy of aggressive realism based on the doctrine of "near neighbours". This paper reviews both the European Union and Russia's current policies towards the South Caucasus with reference to the current crisis in Ukraine and Syria. The specific attention will be given to Turkish Armenian relations: what would be the prospect of Europe playing a constructive role on normalization or reconciliation of Turkish Armenian relations.

Giray SADIK, Associate Professor of International Relations, Faculty of Political Science, Ankara Yildirim Beyazıt University, Turkey

Analyzing In/security Interdependence among Europe, Turkey, Russia, and MENA

From 2010 onwards the unfolding uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) coined by many as *Arab Spring* have illustrated that the contemporary challenges are unlikely to remain in their original trouble-spots. Until the spiraling war in Syria have grown to be a source of international crises (e.g. anti-IS coalition, mass refugee inflows to Turkey and EU), many in Europe thought that this was another conflict in a crisis-prone region that can be contained locally. Recent refugee tragedies have demonstrated painfully that this is and will no longer be the case! The transnational and interdependent features can be counted as the core, common characteristics of contemporary security challenges, of which this research aims to analyze the interaction among them. To this end, this paper is based on the assumption that security is interdependent across: regions (i.e. NATO, Eurasia and MENA), issues (i.e. refugees, Islamophobia, xenophobia, the rise of right-wing extremism in EU, transnational terrorism), actors (i.e. state and non-state). These assumptions and the resulting preliminary findings bring us to the point where lines between hard and soft security threats are blurred, so much as domestic and international politics. This complexity puts forward the need to look beyond hard-soft power

dichotomy and search for comprehensive and cooperative solutions. As we can all see today, insecurity for one is bound to mean insecurity for all. Therefore, nowadays look like we are at the stage of insecurity interdependence, as troubles find their own ways to touch all of us from MENA to Scandinavia.

Keywords: in/security interdependence, refugees, hard-soft threats/power, proxy/hybrid war, transnational terrorism, EU (European Union), Turkey, Russia, Eurasia, MENA, NATO

Toni Alaranta, PhD, Senior Research Fellow, European Union Research Programme, The Finnish Institute of International Affairs

The Islamic-Conservative state project in Turkey: already exhausted?

Two powerful narratives regarding Turkey, allegedly consolidating each other, converged during 2002–2012. According to the first one, let us call it “inside out,” described the rise of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) as a reformist and democratizing force that would, through the EU-backed reform process, enforce the retreat of the so-called “Kemalist state” and liberate Turkish democratization and modernization project from the forces that allegedly hijacked that project during the 1920s. The result was supposed to be a consolidated liberal democracy in a Muslim-majority society, at the same time a “role model” to the rest of the Middle East. The second narrative, let us call it “outside in,” described how the “Europeanized” and democratized Turkey, ruled by what was often called “Muslim democrats,” was about to make the EU a major actor in the Middle East and thus even globally, by embracing Turkey, a country that could function as a “bridge” between two civilizations, called “western” and “Islamic.” Both narratives have now collapsed. In Turkey, the liberal, pro-EU actors tried to domesticate a party of political Islamists in order to use it against the “omnipotent (Kemalist) state.” But the political Islamists instrumentalized the EU reforms, marginalized the liberals, and inaugurated a transformation project that was indeed radical but not in the sense imagined by the liberals: the AKP’s transformation project was instead an attempt to establish an Islamic-conservative socio-political order that cannot be challenged from the secular/liberal position. At the moment this project is verging on an authoritarian Islamo-fascist regime.

The Islamic-conservative state project has had significant consequences both regarding the domestic and the foreign policies of Turkey. Rather than being the stabilizing factor the EU wanted to see in Turkey, the country has become a revisionist state eager to challenge the “immoral West” whenever

possible, in order to secure what is described as *merkez ülke Türkiye* (centre state Turkey), threatened by *eski ve yeni vesayet unsurlar* (old and new tutelary forces), both internal and external. This paper aims to give an analytical account of what has taken place and where Turkey might be heading, addressing the following themes: How the two narratives became dominant, and to what extent they were based on false assumptions? How we should understand the Islamic-conservative state project? Is it a product of one man's (Recep Tayyip Erdoğan) ambitions, as the popular wisdom claims, or are there deeper components involved? Is the project already exhausted? Do we soon see another, more vigorous attempt to "normalize" Turkey, now that the previous attempt has failed? Does the current cycle of violence and power struggle indicate the inevitable end of the Islamic-conservative state project? Or is this just a beginning?

Umut Uzer

Changing State identity of Turkey and its implications for Turkish foreign policy under the Justice and Development Party government (2002-2015)

The revolutionary changes in Turkey in the past thirteen years require an in-depth analysis of the policies and discourses of the Justice and Development Party cadres and necessitate an answer as to whether the secular Western Turkish identity of the country has been altered with radical policy implications. Starting out as a pro-EU party and undertaking a series of liberal policies to demonstrate its distance from the Islamist past of its founders, the JDP government after its second electoral victory in 2007 increasingly emphasized neo-Ottoman and pro-Islamic policies both at the home front and in its foreign policy. In parallel to this increased confidence of the ruling party, relations with a number of countries including Israel, Syria and Egypt have also hit rock bottom as a result of a number of political crises. This study aims to analyze Turkish foreign policy within the framework of JDP ideology and their redefinition of national interests and purports to answer whether the Western, secular and Turkish state identity has been significantly altered under the current government and replaced by a Muslim and neo-Ottoman state identity.

Mogens Pelt, Associate Professor, Copenhagen University

The Cyprus-issue in Turkey and its impact on Turkey's regional relations in the 1950s

My paper focuses on Turkey's policy on the Cyprus-issue in the early phases of its formulation and on its development from a policy of non-involvement, to the claims that Cyprus is Turkish, to the *Taksim*-policy - i.e. division of that island - to the Turkish government's agreement to the independence of Cyprus in 1960. It will discuss the role of the *Cyprus-is-Turkish-Society* – the first and best-organized group to address the Cyprus-issue in Turkey - in particular how it framed Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots and its impact on public opinion and government. It will discuss the role that the annexation of Hatay (the Alexandretta-province) by Turkey in 1939 played as a model for the 'Cyprus-is-Turkish' campaign and compare the arguments used in the 1930s and in the 1950s not least the motif of the so-called *Dış Türkler*, literally outside Turks. The term refers to Turks or Muslims living outside the Turkish nation state in former Ottoman lands. Turkish nationalists regarded these peoples as their kin, while some *Dış Türkler* viewed Turkey as their kin-state. It will discuss the meaning of the so-called 'Crystal' Night' in Istanbul September 1955 i.e. the pogroms against the Greek-orthodox community and its bearing on the development on Turkey's policy in the Cyprus-issue and on its relations with Greece. Finally it will discuss the interplay between the radical political changes that took place in the countries at Turkey's southern borders in the Middle East – especially in Syria and Iraq - and the substantial and numerous changes of Turkey's stance on the Cyprus-issue.

Adbullah Simcek, Copenhagen University

Boundaries in transition from Empire to Republic in Turkey

With the sudden and dramatic demise of the Ottoman Empire, some of its former regions now found themselves as separate states in need of boundaries of many sorts. Territories and peoples were carved up. Physical and psychological distinctions and marks of identity were to be created or found. In Turkey this process played itself out a little differently than others, as it inherited the core institutional elements of the Empire, such as its political elite, central bureaucracy, military apparatus, and the imperial capital, Istanbul – giving the imagining and uses of the Ottoman past in identity and nation building a uniquely ambivalent

love-hate character in the Turkish context. In this process the post-Ottoman era took shape in South-Eastern Europe and the Middle East, with Anatolia in between. With the new states new relations, regional issues, and strategic positions were formed, laying the ground for much of the potentials and problems today. In this paper I will discuss the formation and development of Turkey's regional role and relations with its neighbors in the Middle East along the axis of outer geopolitical realities and inner sociopolitical situation during the formative years of the Turkish Republic. In this period, and since then, Turkish regional policy was centered around two overall historically conditioned themes –

Turkey's geopolitical strategic position and relations with the Great Powers on the one hand, and the domestic security issue dealing with the position of the Kurds on the other. One particular case, that of Mosul, in the 1920's will serve as a point of departure for this paper. The Mosul question illustrates all the complexities of the Turkish position in the region, and shows us, in historical perspective, some of the long lasting motives and causes of Turkish decision making and attitudes.

What can it tell us about Turkish motives and policy patterns in relation to its neighbors and the Great Powers? Can we discern particular moving factors behind Turkish regional policy in that regard? Are there identifiable causal connections between then and now, especially in relation to recent Turkish policy towards Syria and Iraq? How much did realpolitik matter, and how much did ideological concerns? A deeper understanding of these complex links and conditions regarding Turkey's regional role.

Hans Åke Persson, Roskilde University

Between path dependency and path breaking critique crises: An alternative approach to understand the relation between Turkey and EU.

In recent years scholars within political science have drawn heavily on institutionalist approaches in the study of European integration and comparative politics. Either it has been rational choice institutionalism, sociological institutionalism or historical institutionalism. It is has been claimed that these approaches have been neglected in the study of Turkey- Europe (EU) relations. Mainly has the role of historical institutionalism been overlooked in determining Turkey's relationship with EU/Europe. With the perspective historical institutionalism - or to use another term path dependency - we can detect and shape and maintain long periods of stasis. On the other hand there is risk that we become too deterministic in our need to speculate about the future. Implicitly a prognostic value is inscribed in the concept of path dependency. This presentation will try to reflect on the possibility to problematize the concept of path dependency with the Turkey-Europe/EU relations over time as focus.

Bo Petersson, Professor, Malmö University, Sweden

Flexing Muscles: Syria, Putin and the Russian Great Power Game

Over the years Vladimir Putin's most fundamental strategy of maintaining his high rates of approval has been to project himself as the most credible guarantor of Russia's great power status. Such status is closely linked to key sentiments of Russian national identity and is highly popular among the public. Relatedly, it also ties in with the reinstatement and maintenance of internal political and social order in Russia after the turmoil of the 1990s, still vivid in popular memory. The annexation of Crimea and the assertive action taken in the conflict in eastern Ukraine from 2014 on meant accordingly a boost for Putin's domestic popularity, which had otherwise been declining since the elections of 2011-2012. It is the argument of this paper that Russia's military intervention in Syria likewise has to be analyzed against the backdrop of predominant Russian interpretations of what the great power role implies. Using Vladimir Putin's political rhetoric as illustration, the paper argues that the Russian strategy in Syria reflects several aspects of these understandings: resourcefulness and capacity to act on a global scale, effective combat of potential disorder at home, and ever present criticism of the role and influence of the United States in the development of the Syrian conflict.



The general point of departure for activities within the MICS program is to form, consolidate and sustain a network for Nordic and Eurasian scholars in humanities and social sciences. More specifically, the rationale is to promote cooperation and scholarly advances in issues pertaining to Migration, Identity, Communication and Security in Eurasia. These four, closely intertwined, processes denote key societal challenges which scholars and practitioners alike will need to confront continuously within the foreseeable future.
www.srii.se/mics