# DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY DISCOURSE AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN TURKEY

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## ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the prospects for changes in the Turkish national security discourse and the possible role of political parties in this process. Change is differentiated from the establishment of civilian control over the military as a simultaneous process of broadening the security agenda and increasing the number of civilian actors involved in decision-making process. The main argument of the article is that because of the insecurity of doing politics in Turkey, the political parties refrain from participating in the shaping of the national security discourse and only broadening aspect of change, whose outcome is securitization instead of democratization, occurs.

**Key words:** National Security, Democratization, Turkish Politics, Political Parties

## TÜRKİYE'DE ULUSAL GÜVENLİK ANLAYIŞININ DEMOKRATİKLEŞMESİ VE SİYASAL PARTİLER

### ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki ulusal güvenlik anlayışının değişme sürecini ve bu süreçte siyasal partilerin oynaması muhtemel rolü incelemektedir. Çalışmada, değişim, askeri kanat üzerinde sivil kontrolün artması olarak değil; güvenliğin kapsamının genişletilmesi ve karar alma sürecine katılan sivil aktörlerin sayısının artması olmak üzere eş zamanlı iki sürecin birleşimi olarak tanımlanmıştır. Çalışma; siyasal partilerin siyaset yapma konusundaki güvenlik endişeleri sebebiyle ulusal güvenlik konusu ile ilgilenmekten kaçındıklarını ve bunun sonucunda da, değişimin sadece genişleme boyutunun gerçekleştiğini savunmakta ve ortaya çıkan sonucun da demokratikleşme değil, güvenliğin kapsamının genişlemesi olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Ulusal Güvenlik, Demokratikleşme, Türk Siyaseti, Siyasal Partiler

**INTRODUCTION**

The concepts of national security and civilian control of the military have been one of the mostly discussed issues especially within the context of Turkey's European Union (EU) accession. One of the criticisms of the European Commission about Turkey has been the role of the army in Turkish political life and decreasing this role has been one of the expectations from Turkey for democratization. Following this discussion, civilian-military relations and prospects for democratization have been a substantial part of the scholarly debate as well. This study aims to differentiate democratization of the national security discourse from the issue of civil-military relations and to analyze the role of the political parties in the prospects for democratization of the discourse.

The differentiation of democratization of the national security discourse from establishment of civilian control over the military is essentially a consequence of how this type of democratization is defined within the context of this article. Here, democratization of the national security discourse is not understood as the decrease in the involvement of the military in the process. Instead it is understood as the prospects for change in the scope and definition of security towards the idea of human security and more involvement of the civilian actors in this definition process in addition to the military. While doing this, the political parties are taken as the primary actors to be analyzed because they are the primary means of democratic political participation in Turkey.

In order to analyze the prospects for democratization of the national security discourse in Turkey and the role of the political parties, the article first of all analyzes the existing national security discourse and how it has evolved in Turkey. The article then identifies the actors who define the national security discourse in Turkey and analyzes the dominance of the military in the definition process. In addition to the role of the military, the article deals with the existing role of the civilian actors, especially the political parties as well. The final section of the article is devoted to the prospects for change in the national security discourse and possible means of achieving this.

## I. THE NATIONAL SECURITY DISCOURSE IN TURKEY

The actors, which are to be involved in the definition of national security understanding and security policies of the state, are to a great extend determined by how the idea of national security is perceived and conceptualized by the political culture and the legal framework of the country. In the Turkish case, "definition of security has been more in military than non-military terms" (Cizre, 2007: 5) and the main concern has been the preservation of the territorial integrity of the state and prevention of threats that could easily arise from Turkey's unique geographical position and strategic importance. The focus on the military aspect of security reinforced the importance and power of the

military over civilian institutions and facilitated the establishment of military's monopoly over the definition of Turkey's security discourse.

The 'securityness' of an issue, in other words, which problems are to be handled within the context of national security, does not depend on any objective criteria (Bilgin, 2007: 558). It is in the power and authority of the state elite and the relevant actors to make an issue a part of the national security agenda. "The widest possible concept of security is not always the most progressive, and can easily result in the militarization of wider societal fields" (Bilgin, 2007: 559). In the 1990s, the national security discourse in Turkey has experienced this sort of change and the scope of national security has been broadened by the inclusion of threats such as Kurdish separatism and the rise of political Islam (Cizre, 2003). This situation expanded the influence of the military over politics and increased its autonomy from the civilian actors in defining the national security discourse. In 1990, in the document called 'The Concept and Scope of the State', the General Secretariat of the National Security Council *(Milli Güvenlik Kurulu)* defined national security as "equal to the existence of a state and a nation and as the protection of the existence and unity of a state against internal and external threats" (İba, 1998: 102-103). Inclusion of both external and internal threats and how these threats are perceived provide a wide range of areas to which military can interfere within the legal boundaries as the Article 35 of the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law states that "the duty of the Turkish Armed Forces is to protect the Turkish country and the Turkish Republic defined by the constitution. Turkish Armed Forces is responsible for the maintenance of the national security and realization of the national objectives" (Chief of General Staff, 2009). The broad national security agenda provides the legitimate ground for the military to intervene to the politics as the major actor of national security.

An analysis of the 'National Security Policy Document' (*Milli Güvenlik Siyaseti Belgesi)* can provide a better picture of how national security discourse has been conceptualized in Turkey. This document states the actual and potential threats and the issues that are considered as related with the national security of the state. The document is revised whenever it is seen necessary or a new perception of threat occurs and by some, it is regarded as "the secret constitution of the state" (İba, 1998). The Turkish National Security Policy Document has been revised three times in 1992, 1997 and 2005. In 1992, the separatist activities were added as a threat to national security and in 1997, religious fundamentalism officially became a threat for the country. After the revision in 1997, "religious fundamentalism, political Islam, extremist nationalism, extremist left, ultra-nationalist mafia and Greece and Syria" (Yeni Düşünce, 2001) were the actual and potential threats for Turkish national security. In 2005, the scope of internal threats remained unchanged and the military continued to hold the power to deal with various aspects of social,

political and economic life in addition to the external defense of the country because of the way in which national security has been defined.

## II. THE ACTORS OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN TURKEY

## A. THE MILITARY

As mentioned in the previous section, the military has been the major actor in defining the national security discourse and implementing the national security policy and the civilian actors have been expected to comply with the military's agenda in this process. Certain historical and political factors have contributed to the shaping of the existing military-civilian balance within the context of national security in Turkey. Some students of Turkish politics define the Turkish armed forces as "a political army" (Güney, 2002: 162). As Ümit Cizre notes, "the most profound contradiction marking Turkish democracy in the 1990s is the demonstrated inability of the civilian politicians to control the military" (1997: 151). In order to understand the strong position of the army in Turkish political life, the best starting point seems to be the historical context.

The Ottoman heritage has been one of the influences over army's present role in politics. The enlargement of the Ottoman Empire and continuation of the state were based on the conquests (Halpern, 1981: 277). As the institution that made the greatest contribution to the development and strength of the state, army had a powerful position within the Ottoman state structure. Moreover, there was no tradition of separating military authority from the civilian one in the Ottoman Empire and the rulers of the empire were commanders at the same time. The lack of distinction between the areas of military and civilian authorities can be perceived as an underlying factor shaping the contemporary military-civilian balance in Turkey. When the Ottoman Empire began to lose power and the need to modernize the state institutions arose, the modernization attempts began with the army in order to increase its strength and made the army more powerful among other state institutions (Kayalı, 1994: 26). Moreover, the army also increased its power in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman state and emerged as the protector of the constitutional order. On 13 April 1909, a fundamentalist uprising, known as 31 March incident (*31 Mart Vakası)*, was spread in İstanbul against the constitutional order. This uprising was suppressed by the Third Army located in Macedonia at the time and the army increased its power in politics as the guardian of the constitution (Ahmad, 2006: 49-50).

The Turkish War of Independence also contributed to the political influence of the military in addition to the Ottoman state tradition in a way that legitimized the involvement of the army in the discussions and decisions about political matters. After the World War I, Anatolian people were disorganized and incapable of responding to the invasion of their land and it was the soldiers who mobilized the masses (Güney, 2002: 163). When the war of independence ended with victory, the army became the hero for the people and this provided a

legitimacy basis for the future actions of the soldiers in founding and modernizing the Republic.

Although the army was the founder and modernizer of the Republic, there were also attempts to separate the realm of politics from the military realm in the early republican period. With the 1924 Constitution, the army commanders and officers, who were parliament members at the same time were forced to choose between their army duties and political identities. In one of his speeches, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, stated that "commanders should avoid the effects of politics while they are fulfilling their duties as soldiers. They should remember that there are people, who will fulfill the political obligations. The separation of army from politics is an important principle of the republic" (Öztürk, 1993: 58; Heper, 1985: 48). However, Kemal Atatürk also defined the military as the "ultimate guardian of the Republic" (Güney, 2002: 163) and the army still sees its guardianship role as its primary duty. "The ultimate justification for the military's political dominance rests on its guardianship of the national interest, of which maintaining national unity is considered to be the most important component" (Cizre, 1997: 154). The military interventions in Turkish political history are the consequences of this self-designed role of the military as the guardians of the unity, integrity and the values of the Republic.

After each military intervention, the army was the institution that prepared the new constitution and legal framework of the state and although the civilian political order was restored after each intervention, the army determined how the system would function and established various exit guarantees, which legalized and constitutionalized its guardianship role. In other words, it was the military that determined the boundaries of legitimate political action for the civilian actors and thus it became possible for the army to monopolize the national security discourse and to limit the involvement of civilian actors.

### B. THE POLITICAL PARTIES

The duality between the state elite and the political elite has been one of the defining features of Turkish politics and affected the involvement of the civilian actors in the national security agenda of the country. "The concepts of the state elite and the political elite essentially refer to the emergence of new political actors in the centre with the transition to the multi-party system after 1950 in Turkey" (Heper, 1985: 46). After the victory of the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*-DP) in the 1950 elections against the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*-RPP), a new elite stratum emerged in the centre in addition to the bureaucrats appointed by RPP. For these bureaucrats, DP and their appointees constituted a threat to the values and fundamental principles of the regime (Heper, 1985: 139). The 1960 military coup was a reaction of the state elite to the increased power of the political elite and the military stepped

into the politics as the guardian of the basic principles of the regime. The confrontation was essentially between the military and the government and the military most of the time blamed the politicians for the problems of the regime and the political instability in the country.

The distrust towards the political parties as the political elite and the military's perceptions about them as a threat to the values of the Republic and the essence of its institutions (Heper, 1985: 140) have been the major reasons of the sidelining of the political parties and the other civilian actors within the context of the definition of national security discourse in Turkey. The fact that "the issues of foreign policy, security and defense are considered as 'national politics' in Turkey and the assumption that each institution and political party adopt the same principles regarding these issues" (Doğan, 2006: 117) also contributed to the undermining of the civilian participation in the national security agenda-setting in the Turkish case.

In a democratic system, the army is expected to be involved only in the security matters of the country and to stay out of politics. In theory, Turkey follows this rule. "In practice, however, by way of taking the lead in the preparation of the national security policy document, and through using its monopoly over 'security-speak', Turkey's military has broadened its own room of maneuver and legitimized its interventions into political processes" (Bilgin, 2007: 563). The major factor that facilitated this situation for the military has been 'lack of security' for the political parties in doing politics. In other words, sanctions such as closure, prosecution and ban from politics over the activities, ideological and political manifestations of the political parties, defined in the constitution and the law of political parties define the boundaries of policy making. Under the threat of these sanctions, the political parties refrain from actively participating in discussion and shaping of the security agenda and leave it to the army.

"Policy makers do not necessarily choose security definition, but they are often chosen and framed by discourses of security" (McDonald, 2002: 285). The domestic political climate of the post-1980 coup has identified the legitimate boundaries for the civilian actors for political engagement and the extent to which they constitute a threat to the regime. After the 1980 coup, all of the political parties were suspended. In October 1981, the National Security Council *(Milli Güvenlik Konseyi)* dissolved them with a special decree and confiscated their assets (Landau, 1982: 587). This decision established the threat of party closure as a means of dealing with the civilian political actors and this threat was afterwards institutionalized with the 1982 Constitution and 1983 Law of Political Parties. According to the Article 68 of the 1982 Constitution, "the statutes and programs of the political parties shall not be in conflict with the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nations, human rights, the principle of equality and rule of law, national sovereignty and the principles of

democratic and secular republic, nor shall they aim to protect or establish a class or group dictatorship or dictatorship of any kind, nor shall they incite crime" (1982 Constitution). In case of violation of one of these conditions, the political parties can be dissolved by the decision of the Constitutional Court according to the Article 69 of the 1982 Constitution. Although this article was revised in 2001 and fines other than closure were introduced, the criterion of being the focal point of anti-constitutional activities through frequent and determined actions and the requirement of a decision by 3/5 majority of the Constitutional Court members instead of a simple majority were integrated to the article, party closure is still an instrument for the state elite in its struggle with the political elite and creates a substantial level of doubt on the side of the political elite in terms of making politics in Turkey.

"Decisions to ban a political party on constitutional grounds constitute a defining moment of demarcating and affirming concrete boundaries of legitimate political action" (Koğacıoğlu, 2004: 434). The National Security Council and Constitutional Court have been the two significant institutions in the post-1980 era in terms of defining the boundaries of legitimate political action and while the army has openly raised its concerns and criticisms whenever it felt a political party diverged from the principles of the national and secular order, the Constitutional Court has stepped in to take the necessary action against the given party. Politics around 'ideologically sensitive' issues such as security and any discussion of these issues have been perceived as a threat to the existing order and the civilian actors, especially the political parties have refrained from challenging military's role in determining the national security discourse and from participating more in the discussion of national security matters. Two examples from recent Turkish political history illustrate this situation.

A civilian attempt to challenge the existing national security discourse and to open it to debate took place in the 7th Convention of the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*-MP) on 4 August 2001 with the speech of the then party leader and deputy prime minister, Mr. Mesut Yılmaz. In his speech, Yılmaz underlined the problem, which he called 'the national security syndrome' and argued that the full scale measures to deal with threats such as ethno-political issues and regime disputes have violated human rights (ANAP, 2001). Mesut Yılmaz also criticized the fact that national security is treated as taboo and argued that the content and circumstances of national security should be opened to discussion and the civilian government's oversight needed to be increased in the process of defining national security priorities and strategies of the country.

This speech was important for Turkish politics because it was the first time that a civilian politician openly criticized the national security discourse in Turkey and called for its open debate. Following its importance, it generated a series of reactions from the military and civilian actors. The Chief of General

Staff published a press release on 7 August 2001 stating that "a party convention was an unserious, inappropriate platform tainted by political interests for the discussion of a sensitive issue" (Turkish Daily News, 2001a). The military wing also argued that "Yılmaz's statements could make the social and political environment favorable for the 'Islamists' and the 'separatists' and in turn could require concessions and compromises on national security" (Ibid). The position of the military reflects the traditional distrust towards the civilian political actors and how the national security discourse has traditionally been differentiated from the domain of politics, which is considered to be "corrupt and ineffective" (Cooper, 2002: 119). The reactions of the military also reveal that any attempt to decrease military's monopoly over the definition of national security discourse has been perceived as a threat to the national security itself. While the reaction of the military was expected, it is the reaction of the civilian wing that constitutes a significant point of analysis, since it reflects the insecurity of making politics in Turkey.

The then coalition partners of MP, the Nationalist Action Party *(Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)* and Democratic Left Party *(Demokratik Sol Parti)* criticized Mesut Yılmaz for his speech, arguing that "national security can not be altered" (Turkish Daily News, 2001b) and "it can not and should not be debated" (Turkish Daily News, 2001c). The True Path Party *(Doğru Yol Partisi)*, which was a main opposition party at the time, rejected the idea that there is a problem with the way in which national security discourse is defined in Turkey and insisted that Turkey has never been harmed because of its national security concept (Turkish Daily News, 2001d). The way that the political parties refrained from being a part of this discussion illustrates the fact that the military has the upper hand in the matters of national security as the sole actor that invests on this issue. The civilian actors do not choose to invest on the questions of national security because this investment is perceived as the possibility of making themselves vulnerable in the political life and in order not to risk their existence in the political game; they opt for not challenging the monopoly of the military over the national security discourse.

Another attempt to change the monopoly of the military over the national security discourse has taken place regarding the Cyprus question after the establishment of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*-JDP) government after 3 November 2002 elections. The Cyprus question has traditionally been a part of Turkey's national security agenda instead of being a part of foreign policy, and consequently, the security concerns and threat perceptions of the military as the national security agenda-setter have shaped the Turkish official discourse. When JDP came to power and challenged the official Turkish policy, this inevitably led to a clash between the civilian and military wings.

As a result of the EU pressures for a solution on the island and various factors, the JDP government began to take a series of initiatives to construct a new Cyprus policy for Turkey, which promoted a solution based on the plan prepared by the UN Secretary General of the period, Mr. Kofi Annan, which was known as the Annan Plan. This position was contrary to the traditional Cyprus policy of Turkey as the previous governments have totally rejected the same plan. As a reaction to this move on JDP' side, the army prepared the reports and plans of its own about Cyprus and the top commanders declared that the Annan Plan, which was supported by the new government, was unacceptable, nonnegotiable and it threatened Turkey's security interests (Turkish Daily News, 2003). The National Security Council (NSC), which brings the civilian and military actors of national security policy, held a meeting on 23 January 2004 to discuss the Annan Plan and Turkey's future moves. After the meeting, the Turkish government went on with its support to the plan; however, this was not as a result of an agreement between the civilians and the military in the National Security Council. In fact, after the meeting, the Chief of General Staff of the period, General Hilmi Özkök stated that "there were two differing viewpoints for the first time ever on a matter of national importance in the National Security Council" (Turkish Daily News, 2004a). Despite government's sidelining of the military in the Cyprus question, the issue has not been resolved as the Annan Plan was rejected by the Greek Cypriots in the referenda (Turkish Daily News, 2004b). The consequence of this situation for the role of the civilians in the national security discourse in Turkey has been the fact that since a civilian attempt to challenge the existing discourse has failed to reach its goals, the civilians moved back to the orthodox stance that was promoted by the military and the monopoly of the military over the national security agenda remained intact.

These two examples illustrate the fact that when a certain policy matter is handled within the context of national security, the civilians refrain from actively participating in the decision-making process and challenging the position set by the military. The security of making politics in Turkey, i.e. the constant threat of party closure, the military's monopoly over the knowledge, sources and policies of security, institutionalized 'sensitivity' of the national security topic in relation to the fundamental principles of the regime and the established power relations between the state elite and the political elite all contribute to this situation and the civilian actors, especially the political parties do not even attempt to participate in the process of agenda setting about the national security matters. In addition to these domestic factors, however, the EU factor also needs to be considered while analyzing the role of the civilian actors in the national security sector and its prospects.

### C. THE EU FACTOR

The most important impact of the EU accession process in terms the redefinition of Turkish security discourse along more democratic and civilian lines has been creating the opportunity for the discussion of its content and determination processes. Because of the pressures coming from the EU-level for the improvement of democratic governance structures and structural reforms, the question of who determined Turkey's security priorities and policies has come onto the agenda and the role of the military in the process, which was previously taken for granted, began to be discussed. According to the Accession Partnership Documents of 2001 and 2003, Turkey was expected, as a part of the political criteria of membership, to make the necessary legal changes in the composition and functioning of the National Security Council in order to increase civilian control over the policy-making processes (European Council, 2001 and 2003).

In order to respond to these demands for structural reform, in 2001 and 2003, important legal changes were made within the context of EU harmonization packages, which could have substantial impacts on the security discourse in Turkey in the long-run. With these changes, the number of the civilian members in the National Security Council was increased, it became possible for a civilian to be appointed as the Secretary General of the Council, the number of Council meetings was decreased and the Council began to meet bimonthly instead of monthly. In addition, the Council decisions were no longer binding over the Council of Ministers and it became an advisory body (Belgenet, 2003).

These changes, carried out by the civilian politicians, were not contested by the military despite the risk of losing its monopoly over Turkey's national security discourse. The main reason for this attitude has been the military's traditional pro-Western and pro-modernization position, which also entailed supporting Turkey's EU membership. Once it became apparent that certain reforms were necessary for the continuation of the process, the military opted for not openly resisting and advocated a selective and gradual change (Karawan, 2003: 263), in order to protect its key position. Although changes in the composition and powers of the National Security Council constitute an important step towards reconceptualization of national security discourse in Turkey, these reforms are only structural and functional changes, which do not harm the status quo between the military and civilian actors and no change has been made regarding the content and scope of the national security discourse and the involvement of the civilian actors in defining the discourse. The lack of parliamentary control over military spending, the immunity of the decisions of the High Military Council, which is responsible for the appointment, retirement and discipline decisions about the army officers, from judicial review, and the position of the Chief of General Staff as directly responsible to the Prime

Minister instead of the Ministry of Defense, show that the changes are far from increasing the civilian involvement in determining the security discourse of the country.

The EU accession process created an impact in Turkey, which may be called a "first generation security sector reform" (Misrahi, 2004: 27), with the initiation of discussions about the discourse and the role of civilian and military actors in conducting the country's security policy. However, while the EU factor made an important contribution to the prospects for change of the discourse through opening it to debate, it is the internal dynamics, which will determine the possibilities and terms of change. Recent developments regarding Turkey's foreign and security policy illustrate the importance of the internal dynamics in terms of the future roles of civilian and military actors in the country's security agenda. The steps taken by the Government in terms of 'normalizing' the relations with Armenia, bilateral relations with Israel and Northern Iraq authorities and the attempts of the Government to solve the 'Kurdish problem' through a series of democratization measures all indicate a desire on behalf of the JDP government to increase the role of the civilian actors in shaping the security agenda. While taking these steps that may change the balance of power between civilian and military actors, the EU provides a legitimacy basis as it is often stated by the Government that Turkey needs to normalize its relations with its neighbors, to solve the problem of terrorism and to democratize itself in order to join the EU. However, the reluctance and reactions of other major political parties towards these actions of the government indicate that these actions will be a part of the power struggle between the military and JDP instead of contributing to a genuine democratization of Turkish national security discourse in the long-run.

## III. THE PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE

Before analyzing the prospects for changing the national security discourse in Turkey and the involvement of the political parties in this process, it is necessary to specify again what is meant by change of national security discourse within the context of this study. First of all, change of national security discourse does not mean decrease of the role of the military in defining the security agenda nor the increased civilian control over the military. Change of national security discourse means a simultaneous broadening of the national security agenda and the area of legitimate action for the civilian political actors. In other words, within the context of national security discourse, change entails two processes. On one hand, it involves a change in the way in which security is defined and perceived by major actors. On the other hand, it requires an involvement of new actors in addition to the military in defining the national security agenda.

The first aspect of national security discourse change that entails changing the definition of security is highly related with an international discussion about the new threats and new security measures that emerged in the post-Cold War era. The new international order of this period gave way to a new security concept called 'human security'. This concept was created as a result of the new threat perceptions based on growing economic disparities between and within the states, migration and related problems such as xenophobia and violence, global terrorism and the growing importance of national natural resources for global economic activities.

The idea of human security is based on differentiation of the security of the state from the security of the society and human beings (Bilgin, 2003; Thomas, 2001). It "describes a condition of existence in which basic material needs are met, and in which human dignity, including meaningful participation in the life of the community, can be realized" (Thomas, 2001: 161). This means that, in addition to defining security in the traditional manner as the defense of the country against a present threat, human security also entails the "emancipation of people from physical and human constraints such as poverty, poor education and political oppression" (Bilgin, 2003: 209).

An inevitable result of the introduction of the concept of human security is the broadening of the national security agenda through inclusion of political, social and economic problems in addition to the military issues. Thus, in terms of democratization of the national security discourse, the size of the national security agenda is not the real problem. Broadening of the national security agenda requires a re-definition of the legitimate actors, who have a say in determining the threat perceptions and the appropriate responses to these threats. In other words, introduction of the human security concept and broadening of the security agenda along more civilian and humanitarian needs create an agency problem and if the mechanisms and actors of policy making remain untouched while the size of the agenda increases, the result is securitization of issues instead of democratization of the national security discourse.

For the democratization of the national security discourse, involvement of the civilian actors is necessary in addition to the military and the political parties are the main agency of this as the legitimate means of claiming political authority. The military's traditional monopoly over the definition and execution of national security discourse has been strengthened by the lack of interest amongst civilian actors in terms of dealing with the security matters (Cizre, 2007). The lack of civilian capacity in terms of knowledge, expertise and policy-making experience in these matters and the anxiety of political insecurity on behalf of the civilian politicians, which was institutionalized through the military interventions, reinforced the military's role in determining the security discourse. If the military remains as the sole actor to invest on security

questions, it will continue to have the upper hand vis-à-vis the civilians (Bilgin, 2007: 568).

The reluctance of the civilian actors and the EU, who are expected to be the pioneers of democratization, to challenge the status quo in terms of national security agenda-setting, constitutes a serious challenge for the prospects of democratization of national security discourse in Turkey. As the draft of the 'civilian' constitution, which did not bring any changes in the composition and duties of the National Security Council (Çelik, 2007), reveals, the civilian actors refrain from openly challenging the security discourse or the military and they opt for minor changes. The main reasons for this choice are their concerns about political stability and their own political security. Although the progress reports criticize Turkey for the role of the military in domestic politics and point out the need for an increase in civilian democratic control of the army, the EU also does not openly challenge the military's monopoly mainly because of its sensitivity about the internal dynamics of Turkish politics and its reluctance to interfere with the balance of power between the military and the civilian political actors (Misrahi, 2004: 35).

As the main channels of political participation and democratic processes, the political parties are the major actors to induce change in the involvement of civilian actors in the determination of national security discourse in Turkey. However, because of the institutional and legal framework they operate in, which makes them susceptible to legal sanctions, they refrain from challenging the boundaries of legitimate political action set by the state elite. The issue of national security, as one of the 'sensitive' issues, is most of the time outside boundaries of legitimate interference of the political parties and such involvement may threaten the existence of a political party. The state elite, especially the military sets the parameters of the national security discourse and any prospects for its change. This power balance leads to the realization of only one aspect of the change of national security discourse. While the agenda broadens and includes more issues as actual or potential threats, the military retains its monopoly over agenda-setting and in the absence of civilian interest or participation; the result is securitization instead of democratization.

**CONCLUSION**

The aim of this article was to analyze the prospects for change in the Turkish national security discourse along more democratic lines and the possible role of the political parties in this process. The change or democratization of national security discourse has been differentiated from the establishment of civilian control over the military and the elimination of the military from the process of agenda-setting in national security matters. Instead, change has been defined as the combination of two simultaneous processes of

broadening the national security agenda and increasing the number and variety of actors involved in the agenda setting process.

In the Turkish case, only one of these processes has taken place. In the post-Cold War era, inclusion of new threats such as terrorism, activities of mafia and religious fundamentalism, which require social, political and economic measures in addition to the military ones, became a part of the national security agenda, thus the scope of national security broadened. However, this process was not accompanied with an increase in the number of actors participating in the decisions and strategies of national security.

The article has illustrated the reluctance of the civilian actors, especially the political parties to participate in, challenge or even debate national security through the cases of Deputy Prime Minister and MP leader Mesut Yılmaz's controversial speech about Turkey's 'national security syndrome' and JDP's Cyprus policy. These two cases reveal the institutionalized monopoly of military over the definition of security, threat perceptions, security agenda, thus the national security discourse. The most important factor that creates the reluctance of the political parties is the threat of party closure. As explained in the article, according to the Turkish constitution, the political parties can be closed by the Constitutional Court if they become the focal point of anti-regime activities. Party closure has been an effective instrument to define the boundaries of legitimate political action and the discussion of national security discourse and more civilian participation have remained outside of these boundaries. Thus, the military has retained its monopoly, despite the changes in the composition and duties of National Security Council within the context of EU accession reforms.

The institutional and legal constraints over the political parties have prevented their participation in national security matters and in the absence of civilian actors, the result has been securitization of economic, social and political matters instead of democratization of the national security discourse in the Turkish case.

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