

4 Security dimension

A clash of security cultures? Differences between Turkey and the European Union revisited¹

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Introduction

The relationship between Turkey and the European Union² has had its ups and downs since 1963. Although Turkey and EU member states have always had their differences, a lid was kept on them during most of the Cold War thereby allowing for closer relations under the NATO umbrella. Following the dissipation of the ‘Soviet threat’, the dismantlement of the Warsaw Pact and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, these differences re-surfaced. Indeed, in the aftermath of the Cold War, EU politicians began referring to Turkey having become a ‘burden’ for building security in ‘Europe’. Such words came as a shock to Turkish policy-makers and analysts alike who, since Turkey’s NATO membership in 1952, had come to think of the ‘security relationship’ as the strongest of ties that bound Turkey to Europe (and the United States). Against such background, EU policy-makers’ post-1989 representations of Turkey as a source of ‘insecurity’, when coupled with the EU’s post-1980 coup criticisms of Turkey’s democratisation and human rights record, led some to conclude that EU policy-makers were oblivious to (if not negligent of) Turkey’s ‘legitimate’ security concerns.

These debates have taken a different turn since 1999 owing to changes in both Turkey and the European Union. On the EU side, there has emerged a relatively stronger resolve to have a military dimension to policy-making. In 1999 the European Union decided to develop a capacity for autonomous action backed up by credible military force. Accordingly, some EU policy-makers came to see Turkey in the way NATO does – a strategic asset by virtue of its military strength and geographical location. On Turkey’s side, critical changes followed the European Union’s 1999 decision to grant Turkey candidate country status. In the run-up to and aftermath of this decision, Turkey’s Europeanisation gained pace. The 2001 economic crisis created an opening not only for the financial and economic reforms demanded by the International Monetary Fund but also for the political reforms demanded by the EU. During this period, Turkey amended its constitution several times to improve the human rights situation, strengthen the rule of law, and restructure democratic institutions. Although problems with implementation remain, the prevailing view is that Turkey has come a long way toward meeting EU standards.

In tandem with these changes on both sides of the relationship, the tone of the debates on Turkey and the European Union took a different turn. Both sides have the need for closer relations – some called for full membership, others a special relationship. The scholarly literature has invariably viewed this change of tone in debates as indicative of a closing of the gap between the security concerns of Turkey and the European Union due to either an increasing emphasis on military security on the EU's part, or de-emphasis on military security on Turkey's part, or both.³

Contrary to those who see a closing of the gap between Turkey and the European Union's ways of 'thinking about and doing security', the present chapter argues that differences between Turkey and the European Union remain; EU policy-makers continue to be concerned about Turkey as a source of 'insecurity' whereas Turkey's policy-makers are wary of the potential repercussions of meeting the EU's demands. These differences, I argue, are rooted in the respective security cultures of Turkey and the European Union. The two have grown apart from each other throughout the Cold War due to different ways of organising political community and identifying/addressing threats stemming from inside and outside this community. Not only have the two grown apart but also they have remained rather oblivious to each other's security concerns. So much so that in the wake of the Cold War there surfaced a *clash of security cultures* between the two – a clash that manifested itself as debates on Turkey's role in the evolving European security architecture during the 1990s and present-day battles on human rights, values and democracy.⁴

I use the term 'security culture' rather loosely, in reference to prevailing ways of thinking about and doing security in any given environment. As such, different cultures of security may exist and contend with each other at any given time. What I take to be the prevailing security culture is the one that is deduced from the discourses and other deeds of practitioners and other policy elite. Rather than taking for granted pre-existing entities and analysing the 'threats' faced by them, I follow the critical constructivist literature and focus on 'representations of danger'⁵ by myriad actors.⁶ This approach is in contrast to mainstream approaches to security that assume the subject(s) of security to be pre-given and fixed, and that define security as 'securing those fixed entities against objective and external threats'.⁷ It is also in contrast to culturalist approaches to security that imagine a pre-given culture determining notions and policies of security.⁸ The critical constructivist perspective offered by Weldes et al. points to the mutually constitutive way in which the state (or any other community) is produced in an attempt to secure its identity and interests. They write:

in contrast to the received view, which treats the object of insecurity and insecurities themselves as pre-given or natural, and as ontologically separate things, we treat them as mutually constituted cultural and social constructions: insecurity itself is the product of processes of identity construction in which the self and the other, are constituted.⁹

Weldes et al.'s critical constructivist approach, thus, makes a significant contribution by focusing on the mutually constitutive relationship between identity, interests and insecurity and the (re)production of 'cultures of insecurity'. In what follows, the chapter traces the divergent evolution of the European Union's and Turkey's security cultures and points to the persistence of these differences thus far.

Highlighting the differences in security cultures as a source of the difficulties in EU–Turkey relations does not entail taking 'culture' as given, fixed or unchanging. Rather, following critical constructivist theorising in International Relations,¹⁰ the argument here stresses the malleability of security culture and the mutually constitutive relationship between security and culture. As Weldes et al. have argued, 'insecurities, rather than being natural facts, are social and cultural productions'.¹¹ Security cultures are (re)produced through the representation of insecurities, identities and interests of communities. What is of interest for the purposes of this chapter is the differences in the trajectories taken in the (re) production of security cultures in Turkey and the European Union throughout the Cold War and their persistence so far notwithstanding above-mentioned significant changes in the European Union, Turkey and the broader security environment.

The chapter falls into three sections. Section one traces the trajectory of the evolution of security culture in the European Union during the Cold War. The second section looks at the development of security culture in Turkey. Section three illustrates these differences with reference to the concrete case of human rights in present-day world politics.

The evolution of security culture in the European Union

European integration was a 'security policy in response to a non-specific and non-military security problem', writes Bill McSweeney.¹² This may sound paradoxical to some, particularly at a time when EU policy-makers are frustrated over the slow pace of their progress towards adopting common security and defence policies and acquiring an autonomous military force. Yet, the conception of security that is at the root of McSweeney's argument is not one that is 'reduced to its narrowest military dimension'.¹³ Nor does the author take the nation-state as the ultimate referent, or prioritise the military instrument in security provision. Rather, this conception recognises the multiple dimensions of security as well as non-military instruments of security policy.¹⁴ Hence the author's reading of European integration as 'security policy'.¹⁵

Following critical approaches to security, two inter-related arguments are offered in this section. First, it is argued that European integration is best understood as a process of constructing a 'security community' through the adoption of broader conceptions and non-military practices of security with reference to multiple referents within the European Union and 'Europe'. Second, EU security culture was (re)produced during the Cold War through practices aimed at European integration – thus the construction of 'Europe' as a subject of

security. As such, security culture in the European Union has evolved differently from that of non-EU states – including Turkey.

In popular discourse, it is NATO that is referred to as the security institution in Western Europe. The European Union is viewed as having taken care of political and economic integration. What lies beneath such representations is the high/low politics divide that is characteristic of mainstream approaches to security. NATO is viewed as having taken care of ‘high politics’ (security achieved through the threat and use of military force) whereas ‘low politics’ (political and economic integration) was delegated to the European Union.

Although it is true that there evolved, during the Cold War, a division of labour between NATO and the EU with the former taking care of ‘external defence’ and the latter focusing on European integration, representing NATO as *the* security institution would be misleading – unless, that is, one is fully committed to a narrow (military) conception of security. Even then, such an argument will not be entirely accurate given the military security concerns that lie at the heart of the European Union’s predecessor: the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The ECSC was founded in 1951 in an attempt to prevent history repeating itself. This was endeavoured through strengthening economic and political integration with the expectation (in true neo-functional fashion) that cooperation over low politics issues would spill over into high politics issues. In doing so, economic integration made significant progress and spilled over into politics and culture; the military dimension lagged behind.

With the end of the Cold War, hopes were raised among EU policy-makers for the possibility of an independent foreign and security policy. When such expectations did not come true and as the European Union faced difficulties in adopting common foreign and security policies, the EU’s Cold War contributions to security building in Western Europe became obscured in its internal and external representations alike. Increasingly, the European Union was represented as a post-Westphalian project that had very little to do with ‘security’.¹⁶

This was partly EU policy-makers’ own doing. For, as Ole Wæver has maintained, during the 1960s and 1970s, EU policy-makers avoided using the language of ‘security’. Instead, they framed problems as ‘normal’ politics so that debates over various issues would not be brought to a deadlock because of Cold War concerns.¹⁷ Most notable among these issues was that of human rights, which was central to dialogue with Eastern Europe under *Ostpolitik*, and was deliberated outside the security framework. Indeed, as Bill McSweeney has noted:

it was only with the Single European Act in 1987 that we find explicit reference to ‘security’ in the legal instruments binding the member-states in a Community, and then only in respect of what was termed its ‘economic and security aspects’.¹⁸

The policy of avoiding the language of ‘security’ in EU policy discourse became so successful that in the 1990s EU policy-makers began to face difficulties explaining to the public in the new member states (such as Britain and Denmark)

that 'security was central to the rationale of European integration because it played so little a role at the time of their accession (1972)'.¹⁹

To recap, viewed from a mainstream perspective that rests on a high/low politics divide, the European Union comes across as part of a division of labour agreed with NATO on stability in Western Europe. Yet, from a critical perspective that is cognisant of the original rationale for the ECSC, the EU could be presented as a 'non-security response to a specific security problem'.²⁰ As McSweeney has argued, 'the evidence points as plausibly to the need to conceptualise European integration as a security policy in response to a non-specific and non-military security problem'.²¹ The problem was non-specific and non-military because there was no identifiable threat such as that posed by the Soviet Union to defend the members against (as was the case with NATO). Although 'promoting the reconciliation of France and Germany, and of anchoring the one-year-old Federal Republic in the Western alliance'²² were prime (and specific) concerns of the time, there was another broader (non-specific) concern and it remains to date: binding member-states in a network of interdependence so that recourse to military means of resolving disputes would become more difficult.²³ This was, to adopt Karl Deutsch's terminology, an explicit attempt to construct a 'security community' in Western Europe.²⁴

Deutsch defined a (pluralistic) security community, as 'one in which there is real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way'.²⁵ His conviction was that once the conditions and processes that give rise to security communities were identified, it would be possible to replicate them in different parts of the world so that (preparations for and the idea of) war would not enter into calculations of those states.²⁶ To date, European integration remains the best attempt to construct a security community.²⁷

From these arguments one can discern the emergence, during the Cold War, of an alternative model of security building and a security culture in the European Union. This culture is rooted in a broad conception of security that recognises military and non-military threats to states and other referent objects (note the McSweeney quote in the beginning of this section). Yet, at the same time, this culture puts stress on building security without using the language of 'security' for fear of revoking military responses. In Wæver's words, 'the EU has secured the security community not by upgrading joint security activities but on the contrary by doing other things'.²⁸ Thirdly, and in a related manner, security is sought without relying on the military instrument. Indeed, EU security culture has put emphasis on soft governance, common security practices and the need for non-military responses. Hence the 1990s debates on the EU's self-proclaimed identity as a 'normative power' that utilises 'soft power' (in contrast to US reliance, especially during the 2000s, on 'hard power').²⁹

During the 1990s, EU policy-makers sought to export their model to the candidate countries as well. When the walls came down in 1989, the European Union took up the opportunity to move towards further integration whilst seeking to expand towards the East. However, whilst transforming itself the European

Union produced new insecurities. Writing in 1993, Barry Buzan explained the impact of 1989 as follows:

Traditional fears of military revival still lie in the background, and savage subregional conflicts already disturb Europe's complacency. But more important than these leftovers from the old security agenda is the exposure, and in part creation, of a new form of insecurity ... The principal focus of the new insecurity is society rather than the state.³⁰

The demands made by the European Union as part of its rather 'nation-building'³¹ project during the early 1990s, when coupled with migration pressures from the Eastern and Southern peripheries, resulted in some setbacks on the path to further integration (as with the case of the Danish 'no' to the EU vote in 1992). Such developments, in turn, gave rise to a fear of 'fragmentation', that resulted in the securitisation of a range of issues, the foremost of which is migration.³²

For instance, allowing for a freer movement of EU citizens, which was aimed at (re)producing a 'European' identity to back up the process of political integration, eventually constituted 'migration' as a source of insecurity in the European Union, for:

as French Interior Minister Philippe Marchand has noted: 'France's external border is more Germany's border with Poland and Italy's with Yugoslavia than the German-French or Italian-French borders.' If the EC is not seen to provide adequate defence, then the Community itself could become politically vulnerable to nationalist disaffection and charges that it was undermining national identities by both encouraging migration and by promoting the homogenising forces of Europeanisation.³³

Then, by the time the Cold War came to an end, the process of European integration had constituted (and was, in turn, constituted by) a security culture that prioritised issues of 'low' politics and sought to address these issues primarily through non-military instruments. During this period, the EU also constituted its main insecurity: 'fragmentation'. 'Integration', in turn, was made 'an aim in itself' and all those issues that threatened the pace of integration were securitised. Fragmentation thus came to be viewed as an 'existential threat' because the prevailing concern was that 'integration/fragmentation is a question not of how Europe will be, but whether Europe will be'.³⁴ As will be seen below, Turkey's policy-makers remained rather oblivious to their EU counterparts' concerns and failed to realise how these became 'existential threats' from an EU perspective.

The evolution of security culture in Turkey

By the time the Cold War had come to an end, Turkey's understandings and practices of security had come to shape (and was, in turn, shaped by) a different security culture. This had taken place notwithstanding commonalities shared by

Turkey and the European Union as members of NATO and ‘the West’. This was to do with Turkey’s character as a developing country in that it had to take care of specific and non-specific threats of military and non-military kind emanating from both inside and outside its national boundaries. Specific threats from outside the national boundaries stemmed from perceived Soviet expansionism and external aid to PKK separatism. Specific threats from inside the boundaries included PKK separatists and Islamic reactionaries. Non-specific and non-military threats to Turkey’s security took the form of perceived challenges to its sovereign statehood. Membership of NATO in particular and ‘the West’ in general addressed most of these insecurities (specifically *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union and non-specifically in respect of sovereign statehood *vis-à-vis* ‘the West’, see below). Other specific insecurities as with the ‘difficult’ neighbourhood (Iran, Iraq and Syria to the south and Greece to the west) and the ‘low intensity warfare’ in the southeast, Turkey had sought to address on its own.

In meeting all three categories of threats Turkey relied on the strength of its military instrument. Turkey’s use of the military instrument took the form of threat of force *vis-à-vis* its neighbours (including the Soviet Union) and use of force against PKK separatists.³⁵ Turkey’s ‘symbolic’ use of the military instrument took the form of acting together with ‘the West’ within the NATO framework and contributing a significant part of its manpower. Such symbolic use of NATO membership helped to reaffirm Turkey’s ‘Westernness’.³⁶ NATO membership in particular and Turkey’s Western-oriented policies in general helped to address specific and non-specific, military and non-military threats to its sovereign statehood. By the early 1990s, Turkey’s security culture was one that sought to address issues of both high and low politics through resort to the symbolic or actual use of the military instrument through frequent invocation of the language of ‘security’. In what follows, this section clarifies Turkey’s security culture by way of tracing its emergence and persistence.

A significant component of Turkey’s security culture has been the Republican leaders’ answer to the identity question: ‘Who are we?’ ‘Western’ was the answer the founders of the Republic offered. During the inter-war period, they sought to write Turkey’s ‘Westernness’ into ‘race’ and ‘language’ – tapping then prevalent theories of national identity.³⁷ Later, during the Cold War, the ideological stance of anti-communism and NATO membership served as the marker of Turkey’s ‘Western’ identity.

Contra those who reduce Turkey’s Western-oriented policies to the post-WWII Soviet threat or a life-style choice,³⁸ I have elsewhere called for understanding the option made for a ‘Western’ identity as a security policy in and of itself.³⁹ For, from the perspective of early Republican leadership, Western orientation was *not only* a life-style choice or a part of the Republican project of emancipation (as significant as these aspects were) *but also* a crucial aspect of the strategy of seeking security in the face of a ‘Europe’ that had, in the past, refused equal treatment to the Ottoman Empire by virtue of its apparent ‘deficiencies’ in terms of the ‘standards of civilisation’. In the early Republican period, the Western

orientation helped Turkey to meet the ‘standards of civilisation’ thereby allowing Turkey’s founding leaders to claim the right to be treated equally and with respect.

Being part of the West was also a strategy to avoid being on the margins of the world political and economic system. Such concerns were rooted in a particular memory of the final days of the Ottoman Empire that traumatised Turkey’s elite – the memory of Anatolia turned into a backwater of the world economic system and pushed to the brink of dismemberment. These concerns were (and still are) a driving force behind Turkey’s Western orientation throughout the Republican era.

As such, Turkey’s Western orientation was a response to non-specific non-military insecurities tied up with late Ottoman and early Republican encounters with European/International Society. Turkey’s present-day relations with the European Union cannot be understood without paying due attention to early Republican leaders’ ambivalence to the ‘West’; for, the ‘West’ for them was a source of inspiration *and* insecurity. The otherwise rich literature on Turkey’s policies has emphasised the former but overlooked the latter. Accordingly, it has failed to account for the present-day ambivalence in Turkey’s policies toward the European Union, which is partly (but not wholly) rooted in Turkey’s past insecurities.

The Western orientation that was adopted from the early days of the Republic onwards remained in the cultural and political realms but did not translate into military cooperation until WWII. Even then, Turkey hesitated to join the War until the very last days, and then in an attempt to become a founding member of the United Nations. Turkey’s security policies came to run in parallel with Western Europe as the Cold War descended. An analysis of textual renderings of Turkey’s intellectuals of statecraft point to specific and non-specific insecurities on Turkey’s agenda.⁴⁰ Whereas Soviet expansionism and its support for communist subversions constituted specific insecurities, being recognised as belonging to ‘Western civilisation’ constituted a non-specific concern. There followed Turkey’s enthusiastic support for the Korean War effort, search for NATO membership and interest in acceding to European integration.

Over the years, the roles Turkey played in various European security institutions have served as occasions on which Turkish policy-makers articulated and defined Turkey’s ‘Western’ identity as well as insecurities and interests. Turkey’s place in and recognition by European security institutions were viewed as strengthening its commitment to liberalism and democracy as well. In the early years of European integration, the Turkish elite sought membership as the next stage in Turkey’s development and Westernisation. At the time the 1963 Ankara Agreement was signed, the European Community was considered the economic wing of NATO. Turkey expected that joining another European institution would bolster its efforts at being/becoming Western. Second, the economic dimension of membership was (and remains) of enormous significance, leading to the signing of a Customs Agreement that went into effect in 1995. Third, supporters of EU membership were keen to replicate in Turkey the process of rapid development that other candidates and EU members went through when preparing for and after joining the Union.

It was not only membership of European security institutions that helped re(inscribe) Turkey's 'Western' identity during this period. Turkey's identity as belonging to 'the West' was also written into space.⁴¹ Through the production of a geopolitical discourse that rested on assumptions of 'geographical givenness', Turkey was located firmly in the West – as a 'fact' of geography.⁴² Yet Turkey's policy-makers' discourse not only served to locate Turkey in the West but was also utilised to justify a specific approach to security policy-making *and* reliance on the military instrument in addressing Turkey's insecurities.⁴³ For instance, a former Minister of Defence said of Turkey was located 'in the virtual epicentre of a "Bermuda Triangle"'.⁴⁴ As such he stressed the presumably 'pre-given' and 'unchanging' character of the security challenges facing Turkey throughout its history. It is by no means the traditionalist elite alone who have based their arguments on such geographical assumptions of 'givenness'. An academic observer introduced Turkey as a 'country surrounded with reality', thereby justifying its policies as a struggle for 'survival'.⁴⁵ Such representations of Turkey have invariably served to explain Turkey's supposedly restricted security policy options – i.e. dependent on the military instrument.⁴⁶ In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, they were used to justify persistence in the very same options notwithstanding changes in the international security environment. The point being, at a time when European policy-makers were seeking to avoid using the language of 'security' for fear of rendering intra-European problems intractable, Turkey's policy-makers increasingly relied on the language of 'national security' to by-pass democratic mechanisms and thwart alternative policy options.

In particular, such representations of Turkey's geographical location have fed into an understanding of Turkey's international relations as a constant struggle for security against 'external' actors (which often use 'internal' actors for their purposes). Such an understanding is epitomised in former Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit's remark that 'considering its geopolitical position, Turkey can never keep out of trouble'. Such representations of Turkey's geography not only serve to depoliticise the process of going to war but also write them as inevitable 'facts' of international relations – facts that can only be prepared for, not prevented. Also referred to as the 'Sèvres syndrome', this understanding of Turkey's international relations advises the citizens to be always vigilant and on the lookout for international ('Western') conspiracies to carve out portions of Turkey's territory.⁴⁷ Such conspiracy-oriented thinking, which is difficult to challenge because of geopolitical assumptions and language, has prevented many people's views about international relations from evolving even in the face of change.⁴⁸ Indeed, even the process of globalisation is conceived in inside/outside terms and presented as a direct threat to Turkey's 'national security' and not as the enmeshment of the local and the global, and the blurring of the inside/outside divide that creates dangers as well as opportunities for global security.

One problem with such representations of Turkey's geographical location is that they take geography as pre-given and fixed; accordingly, they fail to account for different representations of the same geographical location.⁴⁹ After all, the same geographical location has also been represented as follows:

The new risks and challenges that could affect the whole western world have transformed Turkey from a 'flank' to a 'front state'. Turkey is one of the few Western countries whose importance has increased in the post-Cold War period.⁵⁰

The point here is that the relationship between geographical location and security culture is not one of a fixed geography constituting the pre-givens of security policy. Indeed, whereas some in Turkey have tapped so-called 'geopolitical truths' to call for becoming an EU member, others tapped the same 'truths' to caution against EU membership.

Following critical approaches to Political Geography (or Critical Geopolitics)⁵¹ the relationship between geographical location and security could be better understood as one of mutual constitution. Indeed, what is of interest for the purposes of this chapter is what Simon Dalby has called the 'politics of the geographical specification of politics'.⁵² Over the years, representations of Turkey's geographical location have been used by various policy-makers to substantiate a range of security policies adopted to meet state-focused insecurities and interests. What was common to all was a deterministic view of the relationship between Turkey's geography and its security policies. The same discourse has also been utilised to justify reliance on the military instrument in addressing these insecurities.

To summarise, during the Cold War, there evolved a security culture in Turkey that sought to address specific military threats (as with perceived Soviet expansionism and PKK separatism aided and abetted by some of Turkey's neighbours) as well as non-specific non-military threats (as with recognition by the West as its fully sovereign equal). The referent for security has remained the state throughout this period. In addressing these threats, Turkey's policy-makers resorted to actual as well as symbolic use of the military instrument and the language of 'security'. Although the military focus has seemingly begun to dilute with the end of the Cold War with the appearance of so-called low politics issues on the NATO security agenda and post-1999 changes in Turkey that have resulted in de-emphasis on security language in domestic discourse, as will be discussed below, differences between the security cultures of Turkey and its EU counterparts remain.

Turkey and the European Union: Different security cultures

The post-Cold War era turned out to be one of turmoil for Turkish policy-makers, who to their dismay found out that their EU counterparts were oblivious to if not negligent of Turkey's security concerns. As a result, Turkey's relations with the European Union became increasingly strained during the 1990s. Statements of Turkish policy-makers of the time suggest that some were quite resentful of these new policies and criticised their EU counterparts for their lack of understanding of Turkey's 'different' and 'unchanging' security concerns.⁵³ There certainly was an element of truth in their arguments. Since threats to the security of the Turkish

state did not stem only from the Soviet Union and its allies, East–West détente did not mean the same thing for Turkey as it did for, say, Finland or (then West) Germany. However, this inertia in security thinking in Turkey during the era of détente eventually meant that Turkey was unprepared for the drastic changes introduced by Gorbachev’s new thinking that revolutionised security relations across Europe.

As the process of deepening and broadening of the European Union constituted a security culture that was different from that of non-EU states, this has had two major implications for Turkey–EU relations. First, EU policy-makers have come to view security issues from within their own security culture – a culture that evolved during the Cold War in a relatively stable environment provided by the NATO security umbrella. As a result, EU policy-makers grew less understanding of the security needs and interests of those countries, such as Turkey, that are still faced with military threats stemming from both inside and outside the national boundaries. Second, as European integration constituted its own insecurities in the form of ‘new’ threats such as migration, Turkey’s accession to European integration came to be viewed from the lens of ‘cultural difference’ but not in an everyday sense of the term. Rather, this was ‘a difference of security cultures’.

Indeed, highlighting the differences between Turkey and the European Union’s security cultures need not render Turkey any less ‘European’. After all ‘the core fears of each nation are unique; they relate to its vulnerabilities and historical experience. Security thus *means* different things to different nations’⁵⁴ and other communities. What lies beneath these differences is not only geography or ‘culture’ (in the everyday sense of the term) but also diverse paths taken in organising political community and seeing/meeting threats to the security of that community. The end of the Cold War made only more apparent the different trajectories taken by approaches to security in Turkey and the European Union during the Cold War. Hence, the argument of this chapter that the ‘difficult’ relationship the European Union and Turkey have had since the late 1980s is rooted in their security cultures that grew increasingly apart during the Cold War. What is ironic is that Turkish policy-makers have always assumed that it was the ‘security relationship’ that brought them closer to ‘Europe’.

The clash over the issue of human rights could be viewed as crystallising the differences between the security cultures of Turkey and the European Union. From an EU perspective, Turkey’s human rights problems is a major concern, not only because the EU’s security culture is rooted in a comprehensive approach that recognises the individual and societal as well as national dimensions of security. Not only that, the EU cares about human rights breaches in its neighbourhood also because the EU is apprehensive about its own future. EU politicians, already faced with difficulties in distinguishing between political and economic refugees, are worried about a further increase in the number of Turkish citizens seeking better life chances in the European Union. In other words, this is an ‘existential threat’ in the eyes of EU politicians who worry about the EU public’s view of the ‘Turks’. When one considers the volatility of the project of European integration it becomes somewhat easier to understand how Turkey’s policies could be viewed

as presenting a societal threat to the European Union. If Turkey is kept out of the Union, it could be viewed as constituting an external security threat – a ‘zone of conflict’ bordering the EU’s ‘zone of peace’. If it remains as a candidate it could be viewed as threat to ‘internal’ security by way of failing to meet the EU’s standards – what has made the EU a security community – because Turkey still considers as ‘security’ concerns those issues the EU has successfully desecuritized over the years.

This gap between the EU and Turkey’s respective security cultures remains notwithstanding changes in the external environment (as with the 9/11 attacks) and domestic environment (the EU putting somewhat more emphasis on the military dimension of security and Turkey somewhat less emphasis). On the one hand, since 9/11 the European Union has increasingly come to rely on security technologies for border management and has been making disquieting trade-offs between liberty and security. In doing so EU policies have come to prioritise European integration as a security referent, and not necessarily individual European citizens or non-citizens.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Turkey has made significant changes in its constitution as well as other rules and regulations. The role played by the Military in Turkey’s political processes has been de-centralised. In foreign policy, there has been less emphasis on the threat and use of force (symbolic and actual) and more on Turkey’s ostensibly ‘versatile’ identity ‘between East and West’ and ‘Europe and Asia’. Yet, in doing so, Turkey’s security culture has remained focused on the security of the state and has not considered other referents. This state-centric focus crystallised in Turkey’s reception of Sudan’s President Omar al-Bashir who has visited Turkey twice in recent years. Most significantly, these visits took place in the aftermath of the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) issuing of an arrest warrant for al-Bashir. Turkey not only allowed al-Bashir’s visit but also snubbed EU expressions of displeasure with the visit. On paper, Turkey’s policy-makers have a legal escape in that Turkey does not yet recognise the ICC. However, in terms of human rights and humanitarian values – on which Turkey’s and the EU’s security cultures have come to differ – Turkey’s prioritisation of its economic interests over rights and values, especially at such a moment of human suffering, speaks volumes about Turkey’s present-day stance vis-à-vis security referents other than the state.

Conclusion

Tracing the evolution of respective security cultures of the European Union and Turkey as such allows one to be somewhat more accepting of EU politicians’ representation of Turkey as producing ‘insecurity’.⁵⁶ For, in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup, Turkey began to export some of its domestic problems to the European Union via the Turkish diaspora in Western Europe consisting of migrant workers and political asylum seekers. EU politicians clearly do not wish to see Turkey’s domestic insecurities becoming EU insecurities. Added to this is the problem that successive German governments have faced in integrating over two million Turkish citizens into German society. For, in a European Union that perceives fragmentation as an imminent threat:

the problems of integrating [the Turks] into German society are projected onto the issue of integrating Turkey into the EU: the political, social and cultural cohesion of the EU is seen as being endangered by the inclusion of almost seventy million Muslim Turks.⁵⁷

Such juxtaposition of the evolution of two security cultures also allows one to be more accepting of Turkey's policy-makers' insistence on being/remaining a part of 'Europe' notwithstanding aforementioned failings regarding human rights. In the post-WWII period, a substantive part of Turkey's claim to belong to 'Europe' rested on the role it played in the Western security architecture.⁵⁸ Over the years, every time Turkey's valuing of 'Western security' came under challenge (such as the late 1980s), such criticisms died down following a crisis (as with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990) that enabled Turkey to reinstate its value as a 'strategic asset'.⁵⁹ In other words, during times of crisis, the 'security relationship' served as Turkey's anchor in Europe. For Turkey, acceding to European integration (and being a part of Western institutions in general) is not merely about life-style or economy or ideas and ideals – however important and significant those may be. It is also about security – the security of the Republican project, the project of modernisation and secularisation.

Notes

- 1 This chapter is a shortened, revised and updated version of P. Bilgin, 'Clash of Cultures? Differences between Turkey and the European Union on Security', in Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu and S. Taşhan (eds) *The Europeanization of Turkey's Security Policy: Prospects and Pitfalls*, Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute, 2004, pp. 25–52.
- 2 'European Union' and EU will be used throughout the chapter to refer to the organisation of European states (EEC and EC) before the adoption of its current title.
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- 12 McSweeney, *Security Identity and Interests*, p. 8.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 7. On security studies cognisant of individual and social groups as referents, see K. Booth, 'Security and emancipation', *Review of International Studies*, 1991, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 313–326; P. Bilgin, K. Booth, and R. W. Jones, 'Security Studies: The Next Stage?', *Nacao e Defesa*, 1998, vol. 84, no. 2, pp. 131–157; R. W. Jones, *Security, Strategy, and Critical Theory*, Critical Security Studies, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999; K. Booth, 'Special Issue on Critical Security Studies', *International Relations*, 2004, vol. 18, no. 1; K. Booth (ed.), *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, Critical Security Studies, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005; R. W. Jones, 'On emancipation: Necessity, capacity and concrete utopias', in K. Booth (ed.) *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005; K. Booth, *Theory of World Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
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- 34 Wæver, ‘Insecurity, security and asecurity in the West European non-war Community’, p. 91.
- 35 There was also the Cyprus ‘Peace Operation’ in 1974.
- 36 E. Yılmaz and P. Bilgin, ‘Constructing Turkey’s “Western” identity during the Cold War: Discourses of intellectuals of statecraft’, *International Journal*, Winter 2005, vol. 6, pp. 39–59.
- 37 İ. Aytürk, ‘Turkish linguists against the West: The origins of linguistic nationalism in Atatürk’s Turkey’, *Middle Eastern Studies* 2004, vol. 40, no. 6, pp. 1–25.
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- 39 P. Bilgin, ‘Securing Turkey through Western-Oriented foreign policy’, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 2009, vol. 40, pp. 105–125.
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- 41 For instance, in response to Valéry Giscard d’Estaing who declared that ‘Turkey’s capital [is] not in Europe, 95 per cent of its population [lives] outside Europe, and it [is] not a European country’, various actors have pointed to Turkey’s Cold War contributions to security in Europe and what it has to offer toward advancing European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Needless to say, both qualities are considered to be a function of Turkey’s geographical location and its implications for politics. Their assumption being that, if not culture, religion, ideology or civilisation, geopolitics secures for Turkey a place in the ‘West’ and/or ‘Europe’.
- 42 Bilgin, ‘A return to “civilisational geopolitics” in the Mediterranean? Changing geopolitical images of the European Union and Turkey in the Post-Cold War Era’, pp. 269–291.
- 43 P. Bilgin, ‘“Only strong states can survive in Turkey’s geography”: The “uses” of “geopolitical truths” in Turkey’ *Political Geography*, 2007, vol. 26, pp. 740–756.
- 44 H. S. Türk, ‘Turkish defense policy’, Speech Delivered at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 3 March 1999. Online. Available <http://www.washintgoninstitute.org/media/samiturk.htm> (accessed 19 November 2001).
- 45 M. F. Tayfur, ‘Turkish foreign policy towards Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation: A comparative analysis’, *Dış Politika/Foreign Policy*, 1999, vol. 1, no. 4, 75.
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- 52 Dalby, 'Critical geopolitics', p. 274.
- 53 See T. Baytok, *Bir Asker Bir Diplomat: Güven Erkaya-Taner Baytok, Söyleşi* [One Officer One Diplomat], İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 2001, pp. 43–81, for an expose of some Turkish policy-makers' yearnings for the 'good old days' of the Cold War era.
- 54 O. Wæver, 'Conflicts of vision: Visions of conflict' in P. Lemaitre, E. Tromer and O. Wæver (eds) *European Polyphony: Perspectives Beyond East–West Confrontation*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1989, p. 301. Original emphasis.
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