
Civilian Powers and Contemporary Global Challenges

Bahadır PEHLİVANTÜRK* & Birgül DEMİRTAŞ**

Introduction

Since the dawn of the discipline of International Relations, concepts of power and security have always held a central role and have drawn different and sometimes conflicting interpretations. These varied interpretations gave rise to diverse theoretical approaches and schools of thought with their own ideas as to how actors can become powerful and how security can be provided. These academic debates are also accompanied by different understandings and implementations of nation-states and the roles of the military with regard to these issue areas of power and security. Over time, various transformations in the nature of the international

system and the nature of conflicts also obliged the discipline to revisit its previous conceptualizations of power and security. As the world became more interdependent, as international economy and economic security became more important issues, and as the number of interstate conflicts decreased while at the same time non-traditional security problems emerged, definitions and previous ontological categorizations also had to be transformed.

This special issue focusing on the foreign and security policies of civilian powers aims to provide analyses of alternative ways of approaching global issues.

* Assoc. Prof. Dr., TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Söğütözü, Ankara, Turkey.
E-mail: pturk@mac.com

** Prof. Dr., TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Söğütözü, Ankara, Turkey.
E-mail: birgul.demirtas@gmail.com

How can a state provide its own security? How can it become a powerful

actor? Would the possession of military power be enough to have security and to protect a state from threats? How can we operationalize the power of states and of other international actors? These are fundamental questions in the field of International Relations. This special issue focusing on the foreign and security policies of civilian powers aims to provide analyses of alternative ways of approaching global issues.

During the Second World War both Germany and Japan experienced the peak of their militarized security policies through aggression toward other countries. However, the end of the war and the humiliating defeat of both countries led to a fundamental change in their approach toward foreign policy and global politics as well as their domestic norms. Both countries reconstructed their state identity and their fundamental approach toward international politics. The United States, as the main victor of the Second World War and as the hegemonic power, became the fundamental actor in pushing both states to reformulate their domestic and foreign policies in the post-Second World War era, reshaping them as robust liberal democracies with strong anti-militarist norms.

Hence, Germany and Japan experienced radical transformation and turned into special types of civilian actors in the international system. After suffering

from the terrible losses and destruction of the Second World War, they became global civilian actors by basing their foreign policy on certain pacifist leanings, using peaceful instruments, mainly through multilateral platforms. In fact, it could be argued that it is their civilian characteristics, their multilateralism and internationalism, and their preference to spend a fundamental part of their budget for education, health, welfare and other areas of civilian needs instead of military exuberance, that has made them global economic powers. In other words, both Japan and Germany owe their economic power to their civilian power characteristics.

In addition to the emergence of these two civilian nation states, the post-Second World War also witnessed the emergence of a civilian regional organization, that is the European Coal and Steel Community. Thanks to its supranational characteristics it has become a *sui generis* organization and based its policies on normative values and principles, with the fundamental aim of making another war in its region impossible. This was also accompanied with a growing web of global governance, supported and expanded by various international organizations and regimes, allowing civilian means more room for influence in shaping the outcomes in global affairs.

Furthermore, other state actors also started putting a special emphasis on soft power instruments and civilian power characteristics. Turkey is just one of them. Ever since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, norms and values have become important in Turkish foreign policy. Basing its foreign policy on the principle of “Peace at Home, Peace in the World,” articulated by the founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey became a multilateral actor.

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This special issue will focus on the foreign policies of Germany, Japan, Turkey and the European Union. Different articles analyze civilian power aspects of their international relations and try to shed light on continuities and changes.

It was the French scholar François Duchêne who first coined the term “civilian power” in the 1970s while studying the European Community (EC) and its place in global politics. He argued that it was an important characteristic of the EC.¹ The fact that

the EC did not have any substantial military power did not constitute any obstacle, on the contrary it could become the pathway for the EC to play a constructive role in international relations through economic, diplomatic and cultural means, and as an agenda setter and creator of norms.

The term was later developed further by Prof. Hanns W. Maull. The drive for Maull’s work came with the reunification of Germany and the rise of Japan to economic superpower status, creating a need to predict how these two powers would behave in the uncertainties of the post-Cold War order. He argued that Germany and Japan constituted new types of powers that were more relevant for the transformed world system, and that even the US should aspire to be one. Basing his studies on the foreign policies of Berlin and Tokyo in the post-Second World War era, he analyzed how the two countries could create new state identities based on civilian features and apply them in their foreign policies.

In Maull’s classical definition, the concept of “civilian power” consisted of three fundamental elements: First, civilian powers base their foreign policy on cooperation with other actors in order to realize their objectives; second, they use non-military means, like economy and culture in their foreign policy; and third, they are keen to

develop supranational institutions, i.e. they are ready to share their sovereignty with other actors.² Characterising Germany and Japan as “prototypes of a promising future”³ he argued that their security alliance with the US provided them with the opportunity to develop their non-military potentials. In his later studies, Maull further emphasized the internationalist and supranationalist characters of civilian powers, mostly resting his analysis on the behavior of Germany.⁴

Within the frameworks for evaluating the foreign policy behavior of the European Union as a singular actor, some sister concepts have also been developed. Ian Manners’ works on the European Union led to the emergence of the new concept of “normative power”. Stating that the EU is an organization based on nine normative principles of sustainable peace, freedom, democracy, human rights, rule of law, equality, social solidarity, sustainable development and good governance, he argues that the important feature of the EU is that through these principles and values the EU is defining what the “normal” is in world politics. Giving the example of the norm of abolition of the death penalty, after the creation of this norm as a part of European identity, it started to spread to other parts of the world without using any kind of coercive power.⁵

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Even though there are large differences between the concepts of civilian powers and normative powers, strong adherence to global liberal norms and a quest for a rules- and law-based world order mark both. However if one country is deemed as one type of power, it does not necessarily mean that it is also the other type.

In this issue, we preferred to focus on the concept of civilian power, rather than normative power, because the former encompasses a wider aspect of the actorhood role of nation-states. It also has more coverage for more states, while the concept of normative power could be used in a rather restricted manner.

The challenges of the post-Cold War era and especially the period after the 9/11 terrorist attacks led to some changes in the foreign policy understanding of the civilian powers. Faced with new kinds of global problems, like ethnic conflicts and new terrorist organizations, the pure civilian approach was being questioned not only internally, but also externally. In particular, the US administration has

had new expectations from not only Germany and Japan, but also from the European Union, to involve themselves further in solving the new kind of global problems.

Especially Japan has been under direct US pressure since the Gulf War, to shed its civilian power attitude and abolish constitutional restrictions toward becoming a 'normal' power.⁶ Also lately, all European NATO countries are being castigated by the US administration for their perceived lack of military contributions. The Washington administration also expects them not to shy away from spending more on the military but also pushes them toward using military instruments when necessary as well. The studies in this special issue examine the continuities and changes in the civilian power conception of the EU as an international organization and of three countries, Germany, Turkey and Japan as case studies.

The issue starts with the article by Dr. Mustafa Kutlay on the EU's transformative power. Because of its *sui generis* features the EU has been considered as an international organization that has the potential to transform not only the member and candidate states, but also its neighboring regions as well. However, the study argues that the Euro crisis and migration issue have had a negative

impact on the transformative power of the European Union, leading to the weakening of the solidarity within the EU. In addition, the study also argues that the changing global structure and the rise of new powers are further weakening the position of the EU in the international system.

The second article, by Dr. Birgül Demirtaş and Mahmut Mazlum, deals with Germany's changing security policies by especially focusing on the issue of use of force. It analyses the evolution of Germany's civilian power characteristics based on three case studies of Kosovo, Afghanistan, and the uprisings in the Middle East, using a theoretical framework of realist constructivism. The article tries to answer the following research questions: To what extent has Germany been able to maintain its traditional peaceful foreign policy in the new "global disorder"? Which factors affect its decision to be involved or not in military interventions in various regional and global conflicts? What does the German case tell us about the evolution of civilian powers in the current global circumstances?

Dr. Emel Parlar Dal, Ali Murat Kurşun and Hakan Mehmetcik evaluate the role of trade in the creation of Turkey's civilian power role in Africa. It tries to look at the degree to which its African trade policies contribute to the

construction of a civilian foreign policy. Moreover, the article analyses the connection between “power and trade” and between “civilian power and trade”. Since Turkey is not usually perceived as a traditional civilian power in the academic literature, this study tries to expand the use of the concept of civilian power to Turkey in its relations with Africa.

İbrahim Akbaş focuses on an original topic for the IR literature and a concept closely related with the concept of civilian powers, soft-power, by evaluating the place of cartoons in foreign policy as part of Japanese soft power conception. By taking anime and manga as important instruments of Japanese foreign relations, the study examines the “Cool Japan” concept, a brand adopted by the government of Japan and an expression of Japan’s emergent status as a cultural superpower. Since anime and manga represent Japanese cultures, the Japanese state supports their development and implementation as a novel foreign policy approach.

In this issue, we also have an article analysing great power competition in the Middle East written by Dr. Saman Zulfqar. The article mainly focuses on a comparison of the US, Russian and

Chinese policies toward the Middle East and argues that the involvement of external powers in the region harms the regional stability. The article shows that emphasis on military means alone does not bring peace and stability to the regional and global politics. Although the main theme of the article is different from the focus of the special issue, it puts forward an important case study that proves how foreign policies based on military instruments alone could result in further destabilisation of the Middle East.

Even though the recent turmoil in world politics and the concerns for the demise of the liberal world system are becoming voiced rather frequently nowadays, as the editors of the special issue we believe that civilian power behavior will continue to shape the world system in fundamental ways. At a time when the hegemonic power of the world seems to be behaving in a predatory way that undermines the system itself, the potential paths that civilian powers will choose, their foreign policy choices and transformations, and the way they will construct security thought will gain more importance. We hope that this publication will instill further interest in civilian powers, both conceptually and empirically, and encourage further academic studies.

Endnotes

- 1 François Duchêne, “Europe’s Role in World Peace”, in Richard Mayne (ed.), *Europe Tomorrow: Sixteen Europeans Look Ahead*, London, Fortuna, 1972, pp. 32- 47; François Duchêne, “The European Community and The Uncertainties of Interdependence”, in Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager (eds.), *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign Policy Problems before the European Community*, London, Macmillan, 1973, pp. 1-21.
- 2 Hanns W. Maull, “Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 5 (1990), pp. 92-93.
- 3 Maull, “Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers”, p. 93.
- 4 Hanns W. Maull, “Germany and the Use of Force: Still a ‘Civilian Power?’”, *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (2000), pp. 56-80.
- 5 Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (2002), pp. 232-258; Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe Reconsidered: Beyond The Crossroads”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2006), pp. 182-199; Ian Manners, “Normative Ethics of the European Union”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 1 (2008), pp. 45-60; Ian Manners, “European Union ‘Normative Power’ and the Security Challenge”, *European Security*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (2006), pp. 405-421.
- 6 Yoichi Funabash, “Tokyo’s Depression Diplomacy”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.77, No.6 (1998), p. 26.