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The Academic Perceptions of Turkish-Israeli Relations

Bülent ARAS

Expert communities play important roles in the formation of negative and positive positions with respect to certain public policy trends or positions groups and they do exercise an important influence over the process of foreign policy development. The focus of this article, is on those analysts who have taken a special interest in Turkish-Israeli relations. Our aim is to explore and elucidate the perspectives of those analysts and their input on the decision making process. These analysts hold common, as well as divergent and even confrontational views with respect to the reasons behind the course of development of Turkish-Israeli relations; therefore, they assess the impact of these relations on regional and global actors in different ways. Political analysts are, of course, well aware that Turkish-Israeli relations are not free of problems and include multiple variables that should be taken into consideration. What is clear is that these relations are an extension of the changing dynamics of the domestic politics of the two countries. Turkish-Israeli relations are an especially clear example of the way in which national identity serves to guide foreign policy decisions. A Western identity for Turkey and a Middle Eastern identity for Israel are a crucial preoccupation of the ruling establishments of these states. The rapid flux of ideological and foreign policy development, however, makes it difficult to clearly identify the roles that identity issues and realpolitik have played in the acceleration of relations between Turkey and Israel in the 1990s. In the discussion of the literature that follows, special attention is paid, among others, to U.S involvement and what have been seen as the negative consequences of the development of closer relations between Turkey and Israel.

A Discussion on Ethnic Identity

Gökhan BACIK

After the end of the cold war a new wave of expectations has come to the forefront. Accordingly, many substantial concepts and institutions are, and will be, changing. Within the margins of the global line of action, some concepts deserve a re-evaluation since they have become the determining facts of our political/international system. We have had these concepts for more than centuries, and we will continue to have them in the future. What makes them important is the changing role/meaning of these 'old,' or known, concepts/values. Of all discussed concepts and institutions, some of them, such as nation

states, are now part of the ongoing discussions. However, considering the various sides of these ongoing discussions, one should note that the main discussion around the concept of identity - identification theory - constitutes a large portion of this disputation. This article discusses why it is the case. It points out that ethnic identity formation brings out its social and political outcomes due to the nature of the process, social and political environment and actors. Hence, in each different case it plays a different role.

The "enduring rivalry" between Greece and Turkey: can 'democratic peace' break it?

Kemal KIRISCI

The purpose of this paper is not to provide and evaluate the long list of inter-state disputes between Greece and Turkey. Instead, the paper will focus on how it might be possible to break out of this pattern of conflicts and break or undo a rivalry that has endured half a century of relentless efforts at conflict resolution. The first part of the paper will address the causes or rather the processes that make the rivalry so unrelenting. Why is it that Greece and Turkey can not cooperate? The second part of the paper, on the other hand, will explore the possibility of whether the notion of 'democratic peace' might be a possible path towards creating an environment conducive to cooperation. The paper will conclude that though techniques such as confidence building measures, inter-governmental dialogues, mediation, etc., are very important they may not succeed in achieving more than conflict reduction or management. What is really required is a sort of paradigmatic shift allowing a conducive environment for the notion of 'democratic peace' to take root.

The Rentier State Model and Central Asian Studies: The Turkmen Case

Ahmet KURU

The collapse of the Soviet Union created a vacuum of theoretical perspective for Central Asian studies. This paper argues that the rentier state model is the best analytical tool to analyze the newly independent republics of Central Asia. Natural gas and oil politics essentially affects both socio-economic and political structures of the region. Furthermore, it has an eminent impact on Central Asian republics' foreign policies and intra-regional relations. The paper analyzes Turkmenistan, as a representative case of the region, through the lens of the rentier state model and reveals the impact of natural gas revenues on Turkmen domestic politics and foreign policy

Transitional Strategies and the Inclusive Democracy Project

Takis FOTOPOULOS

The aim of this paper is twofold. First, to critically assess the various transitional strategies for radical social change which have been proposed in the past, as well as some recently developed strategies, like the civil societarian approach, the Libertarian Municipalism strategy and the 'lifestyle' strategies. Second, to propose a new transitional strategy which aims at the transition to a confederal Inclusive Democracy. In this context, the emancipatory subject in present society is discussed, a new type of politics and political organisation is suggested, and a series of steps for the transition to a political, economic, ecological democracy, as well as a 'democracy in the social realm' is proposed.

Leadership Change: Özal Leadership and Restructuring in Turkish Foreign Policy

Muhittin ATAMAN

This article analyzes the leadership change in Turkey, from the Kemalist leadership to the Özal leadership, and its impact on restructuring of Turkish foreign policy, its alliance pattern in particular. After discussing the leadership change, the article evaluates foreign policy orientation of both leaderships in the following two sections. The article argues that the Özal leadership restructured Turkey's foreign policy from being passive, unidimensional and dependent into being active, multidimensional and interdependent. While the Kemalist leadership focused mainly on internal and transnational threats, the Özal leadership has a more balanced policy between internal and external factors. However, both leaderships followed strategies that would keep them in power first and then would protect national interests.

The Case of Jerusalem from a Civilizational Perspective

Alparslan AÇIKGENÇ

This paper is an attempt to evaluate an international political problem from a philosophical perspective in order to see its actual place within a civilizational phenomenon. How Muslims view Jerusalem and how it is to be viewed from historical perspective are the main issues to be evaluated. The historical approach shall attempt to provide a framework for treating the problem. This framework includes the concept of civilization and the phenomenon of the rise and fall of civilizations. Certain historical facts may lead us to clues for unraveling our perception of the Jerusalem issue today.

Two Perspectives on the Relationship of Ethnicity to Nationalism: Comparing Gellner and Smith

Hüseyin ISIKSAL

The aim of this essay is to examine the relationship of ethnicity to nationalism by the works of two predominant authors who made considerable contributions in developing of theories related with the ethnicity and nationalism: Ernest Gellner and Anthony D. Smith. In this comparison based study, in order to examine the relationship of ethnicity to nationalism more effectively and efficiently, initially focused on different definitions and perceptions of the two authors about ethnicity, ethnic identity, nation and all these relationships with nationalism. In the further stages, essay focus on the comparison and the contrast of the Smith's ethno-centric approach versus Gellner's modernist approach. As a conclusion, this paper argued that although Gellner's theory is quite convincing about the explanation of the; evaluation, social roots, force and power of nationalism in the modern world, Smith's ethno-centric approach had better theoretical explanation on the relationship of ethnicity to nationalism.