



Review article

Covid-19 Process in the Context of Securitization

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Abstract

As an epidemic that emerged in China in the last month of 2019 and caused political, social and economic changes at the international level in a very short time, the Covid19 pandemic started a period of isolation in social life and created a new process in which countries closed their borders politically. The epidemic, seen as a security threat by political authorities around the world, is considered as a new turning point in the transformation of security after the Cold War and September 11.

In the article, the interventionist attitude on the implementation of curfews, restriction of entry and exit to the country, and tightening of controls during the continuation of the struggle under the conditions that emerged with the increase of the epidemic is analyzed on the basis of securitization. Threat perceptions in the pandemic period in which the role of the armed forces and the security understanding of the state are redefined, are evaluated as a result of extraordinary conditions and uncertainty. In today's world where restrictions are imposed by the state in every aspect of daily life, the gradual tightening of the security circle naturally brings along an isolationist process for individuals and states in social and political terms.

Keywords: Covid-19, Context of Securitization

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, various events have occurred that changed all infrastructures. Epidemics are one of them. There were some epidemic diseases that prepared the collapse of Athens in Ancient Greece and weakened the rule in Western Rome. It is a fact that epidemics such as the plague, namely the black death, preparing the end of feudalism in medieval Europe, and the Spanish virus causing the change of production processes after World War I, deeply affected the system. The last example of infectious diseases that have always been a problem for humanity was the Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. The disease, which started with the reporting of respiratory illness cases of unknown origin to WHO in Wuhan, China's Hubei province on December 31, 2019, was named Covid-19. After the first death cases on January 11, the disease spread to the whole world in two months, and on March 11, WHO declared the situation as a pandemic.

While threatening public health, this virus also causes various social issues in areas such as education, business and tourism, and has created a necessity for countries to rearrange their health policies and protection measures in terms of the death rate and the age group it affects.

Unpredictable threats such as coronavirus affect sectors such as social, health, education, economy, security, food, supply chain, communication and transportation at a critical level and cause extraordinary critical changes on a global and national scale. It is seen that such natural and biological disasters are among the subjects of national security strategies because they are among the elements that threaten national security. This epidemic, which affects almost the whole world, should be considered among the national defense priorities. As a matter of fact, in the age of uncertainty, societies face risks beyond the traditional ones such as climate change, epidemics, irregular migration, drug trade, cyber-attacks and economic crises. Therefore, in defense policies, beyond defending the borders of the country, there is a need for a new security concept shaped around the concept of human security for the defense of citizens against complex threats.

In pandemic conditions that security begins to form a large part of daily life, it is observed that states started to activate armed forces with circulars and regulations. In this study after Cold War, in which conflicts between states began to turn into internal conflicts and September 11, which continued with the declaration of global war against terrorism, it is interpreted as the last link in the security transformation of the point reached with the Covid19 pandemic. In the consideration of the threat perceptions in this process and the examinations carried out on the new stage reached, it is argued that countries have come to control society through militarized tools and that the state has entered a new role definition with its expanding powers on the basis of securitization.

Threat and Security Transformation in the International System

Although the concept of security is seen as a basic need, it can be evaluated at both the human and society level, as well as at the state and system level. The concept of security, which is considered as the state of safety of life, property and relatives in an individual sense, appears as the protection of territorial integrity in the simplest form for states and is evaluated in terms of international relations terminology. In the field of international relations, the term security can be defined as the protection of states, societies and individuals against threats to their existence. The main variable in the definition of security, which is reshaped each time according to the changing and developing dynamics, is the threat. Sustaining security, which is considered as removing the possibilities that create more insecurity, depends on the elimination of internal and external threats.(Dedeoğlu, 2004:16) In addition to the actual existence of threats, it can also be in the form of perceptions and predictions for the existence of the threat.(Bayraktar, 2015:27)

When the use of the concept of security, which expresses the philosophical and psychological state of the mind in history, is investigated, it was used in different ways in Ancient Greece, which means security or being safe. In the Western tradition, security was first mentioned by the name 'securitas' by Cicero and Lucretius, and means being in a state of safety for anxiety and sadness. In fact that the writings of "*Securitas Augusti, Securitas Caesaris*" were printed on the coins of the Roman Emperor Neron in order to indicate the peace environment in his period.(Arends, 2012:200-2001) It can be said that the concept of security, which has become politicized by stripping its philosophical meaning, is seen as directly related to defense and is seen as all defense measures against all kinds of attacks against a state.

Considering that security is the name given to the existence of a threat against individuals or states and to take measures against this threat, it is thought that the concept of security cannot be mentioned where there is no threat.(Waeber, 1995:7) Considering that security can generally be achieved by mobilizing all the means of states urgently and ensuring stability in case of threat, it has been argued that there may be some destructive effects in security.(Buzan, Waeber and Wilde:1998:14)

When we look at the concept of security, studied under the titles of "war studies", "military studies" and "strategy" before the Second World War and became a separate field of study after 1945, it is seen that this situation is related to the demilitarization of security by leaving the military security monopoly by putting the concept of security in the center, not "war" or "defense" in the new period.(Buzan and Hansen, 2009:1)

After the Cold War, the understanding of security is entering a period in which it redefines itself by getting rid of research on military power and nuclear armament. Issues such as global crimes, identity-based crises, and migration were among the issues that started to be included in the security

studies, which started to take shape on the basis of common security, with the establishment of economic development and political integration on the agenda of international relations. Critical security studies, which take a critical look at the studies on the changing and expanding concept of security and start by questioning which basic actor security is based on, evaluates security as an expanding concept in terms of both actors, dimensions and levels. (Krause and Williams, 1996: 230)

By evaluating environmental, culture, identity, ethnicity, economics and health issues within the scope of security, the assumptions that “security is a non-objective situation, threats are not only related to material forces and security is not a fixed but a changing concept and situation.” began to be adopted as a common idea. (Krause and Williams, 1996: 242) With the end of the Cold War, as an understanding that made significant contributions to the understanding of security, the Copenhagen School defines itself in the middle between traditional state-based security studies and post-structuralist security studies. Although the concept of security is not limited to state-based military security problems, the School emphasizes that not every threat against individual situations can be also evaluated within the framework of security in order to save security from a narrow military and political approach, and to protect the concept from being inconsistent. (Walt, 1991: 213)

With the effect of globalization, threats and dangers that arise in the security sectors in terms of military, political and economic issues, as well as social and environmental aspects have started to be addressed, and extraordinary measures to be taken against possible threats have started to be accepted by the societies. In this context, with the September 11 attacks, the concept of security, which has started to take place within the religious factor security under the effect of global terrorism, is a sub-branch of international relations on the one hand, and culture, image and identity issues on the other hand have started to take place within the concept of security. In the theoretical sense, while it is involved in realism, liberalism and constructionist approaches, the concept of security, which is intertwined with various disciplines such as social and humanities, culture, art and civilization studies, is also discussed in terms of critical theories. (Yılmaz, 2017: 88)

Although threats to their independence and integrity for states and societies appear from time to time as the necessities of change, there is a resistance to this necessary change, and as a result, security as a state of protection of the existing has become the first priority for all countries of the world. That the state and sovereignty can avoid the traumatic effects of globalization; With developments such as the increase in international migration and the spread of cultural globalization, the changing nature and power of the state has become open to discussion. It is believed that the traditional theory of sovereignty, which argues that the state has superior control over what is happening within its borders and that they control everything that passes through its borders, has lost its functionality. (Heywood, 2011: 356) This idea of the traditional sovereignty of the state, which is actively defended in the world order where the

borders created by globalization have disappeared, has begun to be questioned again, considering the state measures to control the Covid-19 epidemic, which affects the whole world today.

Security and New Defense Perception in Covid-19 Era

It is seen that the pandemic process as a new stage in the transformation of security after the Cold War and September 11 has reached the end of the world as we know it and that humanity has witnessed many developments for the first time in history. As the whole world, for the first time in history, we are going through a struggle against an invisible threat as the whole of humanity by retreating to our homes, closing economies, stopping all flights, closing all borders, and stopping human mobility globally.

One of the most visible areas of change in these days, where we experience collective thoughts of life, death and illness, is taking place in the field of security. The emergency conditions that emerged during the fight against the epidemic have emerged for some countries, including Western democracies, to call on military facilities and armies. Considering that many countries from China to Italy, France to South Africa use the armed forces to take precautions before the state in the method of combating the epidemic, it seems possible to talk about the existence of a transformation towards security.

With the end of the Cold War, where the Westphalian understanding based on the state-dominated understanding came to an end to a great extent, there has been a transition to a period in which security is no longer limited to war between states. In the post-Westphalian era, when the understanding of human security gradually replaced the understanding of state security, the definition of security has started to be made for the daily lives and concerns of people. With the September 11 attacks that took place in 2001, the transformation of security has been accelerated by creating a legitimate ground for the necessity of intervening in order to prevent the harm of the peoples. Finally, it seems that discussions have intensified on the fact that Covid19, as an epidemic that emerged in December 2019 and affected the whole world in a short time, has an accelerating effect on the transformation of security.

It is an undeniable fact that the Covid-19 process, which creates an environment of crisis and uncertainty in a global sense, has a driving force to accelerate the change that the current security paradigms are currently going through. Our world, which has already entered a process of change and transformation in the "new normal" order where norms change, is rapidly evolving into an international system where the nation-states tend to regain strength. Therefore, the continuation of the competition between the USA and China, the increasing inquiries about the dysfunction of international institutions and the introduction of protective economic state programs are signs that the winds of change that started before will gain momentum with the epidemic process.

In April 2020, within the scope of the fight against Covid-19, which was evaluated as a real threat to global peace and security by the UN Secretary General, countries prefer to use terms such as 'war against the virus' directly. ("COVID-19: UN chief", 2020) For this reason, it is seen that the army, police

and law enforcement agencies all together play important roles in countries around the world within the scope of this epidemic, which is thought to have started the biggest transformation after September 11 in the 21st century. In this process, it fulfills the responsibilities such as providing the public order, logistics and engineering services and supporting R&D activities as well as health and medicine distribution and humanitarian aid of the personnel of the army and police forces.(Kalkman, 2020:3)

Looking at the future of national politics, democratic and liberal states accuse authoritarian and non-transparent governments such as China and Iran for imprudence raises discussions about which types of regimes are successful in the epidemic. In the later stages of the epidemic process, where comparisons between regimes continue, the increase in cases experienced by countries such as the USA, England, Italy and Spain due to the fact that they underestimate the epidemic makes the epidemic a critical security issue for both regime types. On the other hand, beyond their regimes, the left-right tendencies of the governments in the states, the characteristics of their political leaders and their populist tendencies are compared. For this reason, the unsuccessful policies observed during the epidemic in both authoritarian and democratic administrations may reveal that the regime is not the effective factor in combating the crisis. In addition, state capacity, good governance and trust in the government are thought to be effective factors in how well or badly states manage the process. In other words, strong state capacity and institutions, together with an experienced and effective government, have been able to bring success in this process. Although the effects of the epidemic on people and societies are similar, crisis management skills and decisions of states have differentiated the results. It is seen that states pursue more self-directed and isolationist policies during the crisis period. Countries have made a sudden return to their nation-state reflexes and international solidarity and cooperation have come down to minimum levels. Regarding this, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić said, "There is no such thing as European solidarity! It was only a tale on paper..."(Zachary, 2020)

Security Perceptions in the World After Covid-19

Considering the fact that events are either causes or consequences of each other in the process of globalization, it does not seem possible for any single event to open an era and close the other. Epidemic diseases did not cause the collapse of either Athens or Rome alone, and when we look at the events that took place between 1919 and 1939, Spanish flu was not seen as the most important reason that changed the world. Of course, the Covid-19 process also creates and will bring many changes, and the results will be seen in the medium and long term.

Looking at the views about the world after Covid-19, it is seen that there are predictions gathered around two views: "the values of the nation state will strengthen" and "the nation state will weaken and global values will come to the fore".

Regardless of the state's level of development, the weakness of their crisis management capacity emerged during the Covid-19 outbreak. The failure of the policies implemented in crisis management not only reveals the weakness of the health infrastructure and social security practices of each country, but also caused the health systems to be questioned. Crises disrupt the order in which actors are predictably living in the ecosystem and order they are accustomed to, forcing them to make new decisions. The most important feature of crises is that they produce uncertainties on sensitive issues and force political actors to make choices on these issues. Reactions to crises are an open-ended process, and these responses can direct the actors to a more positive direction by limiting the effects of the crisis, and they can further deepen these effects.(Ikenberry,2020:21)

There are different opinions on whether the pandemic, which is expected to have consequences in many areas such as political, economic, sociological, psychological and cultural, will support a permanent change or be temporary. In addition to the opinions supporting that the Covid-19 process will accelerate the ongoing wave of change in the world, there are also claims that the effects of this crisis will not be as deep as it is thought. (Drezner,2020)

With the epidemic increasing the power of the state and nationalism, there are assumptions that governments who see it as a right to take all kinds of urgent measures to manage the crisis will not want to give up these powers when the crisis is over. It seems that those with this type of opinion agree that with the virus, humanity will awaken to a less open, prosperous and free world. (Allen, Haass et.al.,2020)

This new era, in which the importance of human security understanding increases instead of traditional security concepts, forces all humanity to act together and to cooperate in the fight against this virus. In crisis management, while the states stop their international transportation activities, close their borders and try to isolate themselves from the outside world strengthens the understanding of the nation-state, it cannot be denied that solidarity with other nations is a necessity in terms of vaccination studies and ending the epidemic. So much so that even if you have closed the borders and finished all the cases in your country in the face of such an effective epidemic, it does not seem possible to prevent the ongoing epidemic in your neighbors from coming back to your lands. As Henry Kissinger stated in his article, the effects of the virus on human health are temporary, but there is the fact that the political and economic turmoil it causes can last for generations.(Kissinger:2020) And it can be said that nations will not only be able to get rid of the virus through a national effort, but will need a program of global cooperation and vision.

However, the situation experienced during the process is in the opposite position; In fact, it has been observed that international cooperation and solidarity has been reduced to a minimum due to the difficulties experienced by broad-based international structures in terms of management and coordination in this process. It is seen that the reflexes of the nation-state, which were returned during

the crisis encountered in the epidemic on the basis of the states, did not only appear in the form of protecting the country and protecting the borders, as well as the threat perceptions varied within the framework of multi-faceted security problems. As a matter of fact, it seems possible to observe an increasing interventionism towards the rights of the individual in social life in line with the prolongation of the process in state policies. In these days, when it becomes necessary to redefine the security bureaucracies of countries, it is necessary to deal with the public order in a triangle of security, peace and health.

Considering that weapons of mass destruction are an important security problem today as in the past, the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, a test for the durability of the health system, including the biological security of the country, makes assumptions that this biological disaster may be a biological weapon. In addition to occurring in a natural process, some biological disasters occur in the form of epidemics or insect infestations that occur with the accidental or deliberate release of a lethal microorganism. These disasters have caused physical, economic and psycho-social destructions in the global and regional sense throughout history.(Narayanan, Lacy, Cruz et. al., 2018:220) Thus, besides the fact that Covid-19 is a disaster that affects the whole world in physical, economic and social terms on a global scale, it brings the possibility of using biological weapons to people's minds. The fact that biological weapons are more preferable by terrorist organizations in terms of being manufactured at a relatively low cost and causing large-scale injuries and deaths, the risk of using this method by various states and terrorist organizations raises security concerns on the basis of states.(Jerkins, 2017) Indeed, the fact that the global arms race in the world after Covid-19 will include biological armament and that countries should increase their measures against biological attacks are considered among the important issues to be addressed in the coming days.

Online meetings, distance education software and homeschooling applications have supported the continuation of the operation in this period of uncertainty. Although some of the changes in our life will return to the past after the vaccine is found, many changes are thought to be permanent.(Friedman,2020) In the Covid-19 pandemic process, where citizens continue to communicate and socialize from homes via the internet and social media, it is seen as a great convenience for people to reach state institutions and organizations by using their knowledge, as well as running their business remotely. It is among the expected results for the future that social media and internet services will come to the fore as an internal public diplomacy tool as never before. It is highly likely that this situation will not only make things easier, but also reveal a cyber security problem. In this process, in which the reference subject of security turns back to human, the issue of protecting the unity of the individual as well as the protection of the digital personality seems to be a topic to be discussed in the coming days for states in the dimension of human security. Considering that both social and commercial life are carried out in a virtual environment

during the period when we are kept closed at homes, the state will have important responsibilities in ensuring cyber security against the uncertainty of the crisis.

The terminology used in combating the epidemic is based on war and security, and when we look at the point we are at, we do not know how it will affect us and there is a metaphor of fighting against an invisible enemy. However, in this case, at a point that we cannot overcome individually, the measures and activities taken by the supreme authority are an effective method to overcome this problem. The pandemic process, which reveals the idea of a strong state, will continue to be perceived as a reality of life and a threat that is included in the national security doctrines in the future. As this threat perception continues, the fight against pandemics will continue to be needed more and more as a central and unique structure. As the provider of healthcare, safety and welfare, the state is alone and at the forefront of all global and national outbreaks, and this is expected to continue. Due to the deficiencies in crisis management and dysfunctional management mechanisms of the states that adopted neoliberal policies during Covid-19, it is anticipated that a state portfolio that has an active role in economic and security will bring the social state practices to the fore in planning the next processes.

In the process, we see different practices in different countries, but in the dilemma of the welfare state and the security state, it is thought that the state mechanisms will follow the security-oriented approaches. In the process of the distribution of power between the state and individuals, the existence of a mechanism that is dominant in the direction of the state is experienced in the process, and it is possible that there may be requests for this balance not to change after the process.

Conclusion

We are witnesses to a global issue where liberal theories that emphasize the necessity of international decision-making systems in order to create a global peace come face to face with realist theories that predict each country to survive with its own means. When we think of the world as a ship traveling in space, we will all concentrate on finding common solutions as passengers of this ship, or will we worry about saving ourselves, we will witness this together over time. However, it would not be wrong to say that state structures will be deeply affected at the end of the process. There will be a conviction in societies that they are not managing their own government mechanisms and this will create an epidemic domino effect on the redesign of the social order.

There is a pandemic process that supports the authoritarian and introverted understanding in the geographical areas in the liberal world where the "securitization process" has been rising rapidly. The pandemic process, like the rise of the threat of DAESH with the Arab Spring that came right after the terrorist groups after September 11, and the economic crisis, also brought about the necessity of determining the security areas of the states in the form of a terror attack in the field of health.

Covid-19 epidemic, which has significantly affected areas such as economy and security, especially health, causes changes in other areas related to security as well as problems such as economic and public order problems experienced by states. It is expected that digital, economic and biological security will come to the fore regarding what problems the states will bring to the agenda in the perception of security. The concept of security, which has been considered at the political and military level until today, is expected to be discussed in a much broader framework within the scope of the consequences of ecosystem destruction and global climate crises as well as biosecurity. With the global threat to be considered from a multi-dimensional perspective, it is of vital importance to seek radical solutions in the international system for the fight against the epidemic and the new normal period after.

In the "new normal" practice, which is shaped over the phenomenon of security that changes with the human and his basic needs, he brought out the human-oriented social state framework, as well as bringing the expectations about security to the highest level. It has been observed that states faced with an invisible threat that is not easily defined, targeting both the individual and the society, has to go through a paradigm shift in the face of this unusual security problem. In this process, in which the borders of national security have expanded, the necessity of including health, nature and food-related issues in the field of intervention of the state has emerged.

In any case, considering that we will evolve out of the world politics and world order we are accustomed to, the main parameter that will determine the direction of the transformation in the global system in this environment of rapid change and uncertainty will be the attitudes and attitudes based on the current actors when the crisis is still not under control.

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