

Foreign Policy Analysis: The Influence of Culture and National Identity in Turkey's Response on Russia Related Crimean Annexation 2014

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Abstract: The annexation of the Crimea by Russia has received various responses from the international community. Referred to as a violation of international law, the annexation continues until the referendum stage and the formation of a new status for the Crimea. Responding to this, Turkey views it as an illegal action. The rejection of the recognition of the outcome of the referendum and the assertiveness of criticism of the action is different from Turkey's cautious step in providing further responses to Russia. Based on this phenomenon, this paper attempts to examine the reasons for such a policy. This ambiguity is traced within the framework of the influence of a national identity that encourages the formation of Turkish foreign policy. The perspective used to examine this is post-structuralism with the layers of identity structure. Each layer contains different content but still has a relationship with each other. This paper is divided into three main sections beginning with the presentation of the problem and focus of the study, then the elaboration of LoA and the third part is the analysis of LoA and case elaboration. Furthermore, in the last section will be drawn conclusions from the exposure and analysis that has been given related cases and LoA that affect it.

1 INTRODUCTION

The annexation of Crimea in 2014 by Russia received a variety of responses from the international world. The action that began in February 2014 was followed by a referendum one month later. This rapid process is further clarified with the Crimean endorsement being part of the Russian Federation in the same month. The annexation is generally regarded as a violation of international law. Western countries respond by imposing sanctions on Russia and rejecting the results of the referendum. The merging of the Crimea to the Russian Federation is believed to be the majority vote by Russia because previously people have been asked to vote through a special electoral process. Although, not a few parties judging the voting is not valid. The historical background of Crimean society is not only closely related to Russia. The division of ethnic groups existing in Crimea is one of them filled by Crimean Tatars that are part of the people of Turkey. For that response is not much different from the Western countries also expressed by Turkey.

Turkey considers that Ukraine has the right to determine its own destiny, including those related to the Crimean issue. Turkey has ethnic and cultural relations with the Crimea and therefore, the status and fate of the Crimean Tatars that are indirectly part of the Turkish people is a separate consideration for the country. Despite criticizing and rejecting the results, Turkey seems to be cautious in responding to Russia. Unlike Western countries that decided to give sanctions, Turkey strives to maintain good relations with Russia. Policies issued by the government don't include the imposition of sanctions or more than that. Related to this, some parties judge the decision due to the relationship between the two countries as a strategic partner. Others doubt the solidarity of the partnership, since there are essentially two scenarios of consideration that arise in government policy toward the Crimean situation. The first scenario stems from cultural ties and historical backgrounds that Turkey denounced the annexation of Russia and refused to recognize the referendum. The second scenario, the consideration of maintaining good relations with Russia as a form of partnership can be seen from the absence of sanctions against Russia from the Turkish government. The official statement by the Turkish

government expressed its desire to be a mediator of the situation and hope for a peaceful solution and a more democratic solution.

There is an ambiguity in Turkish attitude and policy. On the one hand being criticized but not wishing to exacerbate its relationship with Russia. The driving factors of this condition can come from many possibilities. One of the possible things is Turkey's national identity. Is this then encouraged because of its Islamic identity? Or because of the existence of traces of the Ottoman Empire are closely related to the Crimean Tatar people or because of the hollow of Eurasian identity. Therefore, this paper is aimed to find out the reasons of Turkey's foreign policy related to the Crimean issue and more than that is the linkage of national identity with the establishment of the policy. How big and how the elaboration of the concept of national identity can lead to state policy. In the first section will be presented about the elaboration of concepts and theories of national identity that contains basic principles to theoretical consequences. The next section is the conceptual analysis and discussion of the variables in the case. In the last section is the conclusion that will be drawn about the national identity that has shaped Turkey's foreign policy and attitude towards Russia in the case of the Crimean annexation and reaffirms the reasons for the established policy.

1.1 The Elaboration of Level of Analysis

Identity and culture experience a resurgence in International Relations and on the one hand is seen as part of a constructivist change. The present approach to explaining the concept of national identity can be obtained from constructivism to post-structuralism. Arguments in constructivism separate the explanations of the ideational and material factors. Constructivism views the state as the main unit of international analysis and structure as being intersubjective. Then the identity of the state is seen as a result of social construct and not a given thing. The identity in the constructivism approach concentrates on international systemic theory and sees identity in the general sense as a state, sovereign or anarchic form. But to provide insights derived from within the country is not sufficiently elaborated through this approach. The argument provided by Wendt focuses on one side only -from a system perspective- but can't explain how the state can interpret international political structures and their use in interactions with other countries

(Ringmar, 1997: 283; Waevar, 2002: 21). The concept of ideational identity then makes the identity itself more viscous with cultural elements and tends to be rhetorical. So the analysis will not be about how the state can come with an identity and how it can push the country to a foreign policy. Moreover, constructivism is also unable to account for changes in foreign policy taken by a country (Waevar, 2002).

This then became the criticism that comes from the post-structuralist approach. The arguments brought about in post-structuralism focus on elaboration and a systematic understanding of identity. The analysis that Weaver proposes in post-structuralist not only focuses on recognizing oneself or 'who we are' but also understanding them through the layers that exist within the identity itself. Identity is a relational concept generated through the elaboration of self and others. But in this case, post-structuralist emphasizes more on the explanation of constructions over oneself than involves the role of another identity. This illustrates the depth of the existing structures, the more in self-understanding it is, means the less likely it is for change. Although then this condition can still change when there is pressure in the system and with the recall that the existing structure is actually socially constructed. An understanding of identity in international relations is often interpreted as a sociological question but the real one is that political identity is a discursive and symbolic construct. Further explained that able to explain about politics or foreign policy can be done through a structural model based on national discourse (Waevar, 2002). The national documents and texts of a country are the source of analysis to discover national identity and its interrelationship with foreign policy.

Discourse analysis can basically be used for all forms of policy. The main idea is that discourse can provide coherent or interrelated and well-structured boundaries. This is not found in traditional foreign policy analysis with reference to either causal explanatory factors or decision-making models. The preceding limit then related to the extent to which a thing can be said and not said. Discourses form a system with layered arrangements containing various interrelated statements. One important element in every discourse is language. In the post-structuralist argument, language can be understood as a meaning system. It can't be denied that language can be an issue of its own, but far more important than that is the view that the actor believes is worth more than what is said so that the interest to find out the main thoughts of the actor can be the beginning to examine the existing discourse.

Therefore it is not the choice of the word in question but the meaning of the use of the words (Foucault, 1972: 49; Waever, 2002: 30). This is one of the points that distinguishes post-structuralist with constructivist. Although, there is doubt present in the analysis itself, regarding the truth of the interpretation obtained through the existing discourse. It means whether the actual motives are meant to be in accordance with what is interpreted or contradictory.

The structural model based on the national discourse is described in a post-structuralism layered structure consisting of three layers; first, the depth of understanding of identity; second, relationships with other identities; and third, the actual action. Each of these layers can influence each other and then through this structure can be understood as a changes in policy. The first layer will be more directed to the meaning of the conceptual constellation or the fundamental things about the nation and state. Then in the second layer will further highlight the role and relationships with other identities. See whether or not a possibility exists that influences the first identity in its foreign policy. In the last layer will be found the real policy. The purpose of this model of analysis is not to get the ulterior motive or a plan that is perceived behind a policy. It is the belief or stance brought about in the chosen policy (Weaver, 2002). Using a post-structural layered analysis structure, the authors will attempt to map Turkish national identity through three layers. In each different layer will be found the main idea or content that will be interrelated.

1.2 The Analysis of Level of Analysis and Case Elaboration

Based on post-structuralism logic it can be understood that the identity is the aspect that constitutes foreign policy and the policy will reflect the identity of the state. Based on the three layers of identity structure given then this can be mapped as follows: **the first layer** is the basic conceptual constellation of the state and nation. Mapping the basic idea or concept of the state and nation and how these two can be integrated. It will be more about historical matters and open the discussion about the state ideology. There are five basic principles for building analysis at this level; (a) to question the state and nation as a unit or two independent aspect; (b) look more deeply into construction as a nation; (c) to observe and explore further the role of external and internal dimensions in state construction; (d) to see the possibility of attachment to ideas as a nation;

(e) the possibility to find other concepts that can describe the true relationship between state and nation or nation with its attachment (Waever, 2002).

Turkey is not entirely a part of Europe or Asia, and has not yet stepped closer to getting closer to Western countries, nor in its track record of removing the influence of Islam in society and nation. The important question asked by Waxman (2000) in an article entitled "Islam and Turkish National Identity: A Reappraisal" is whether the Turks are really a nation or just a collection of distinct and heterogeneous groups? The concept of a state and as a complex nation is present in the discussion of Turkish national identity. In the case of Turkey, construction as a nation and state are two separate ideas. The tendency to unite these two things emerged as an attempt to establish a new identity. But on the way there are still many who see that Turkey basically has no fixed idea to be called a national identity. It further disclosed that, in truth, Turkey is experiencing a crisis of identity and this issue is not uncommonly disclosed. For example, an excerpt from a speech by former Turkish President Suleyman Demirel in Washington DC on April 27, 1999 stating:

"We have a multiple cultural heritage and in some ways a multiple identity. As individuals, identity cannot be summed up in one word. It is the same for our nation's identity. We certainly do not have, as outsiders sometimes claim, an identity crisis (Demirel, 1999)."

In the passage of the speech can be seen that Demirel implies the Turkish identity as a nation is not only composed of one aspect. From this point if it is further interpreted then how that identity can affect Turkey's foreign policy will depend on what identity the government has in power. This means that the attitudes and policies shown in an issue may vary and more will depend on the interests it carries. According to Waxman (2000) related to the construction basically the government does not involve the community, so the government positioned itself as an architect who can form the identity that is considered correct for Turkey. The Turkish Republic was born outside the Ottoman Empire. Turkey became a republic that embraced parliamentary democracy, a country that tried to maintain the status quo, and not a multinational, multiracial or multi-religious state, but a homogeneous society. Turks from the beginning were Turks, and in the Ottoman Empire the group called Turk was only part of the ummah. While the Ottoman never considered himself as Turk. The construction of a new Turkish identity is also an

attempt to discover a new virtue based on the Turkish state (Aydin, 2004). But, this construction on many occasions can't get rid of the original face of Islam that has been embedded in the community. So the construction itself becomes an ongoing product of negotiation between the state and society (Waxman, 2002).

1.3 Turkey as a Nation-State: Islam as the Root of the Nation

The construction of Turkey's identity as a nation-state affects much of its foreign policy formation. The discussion that will arise regarding this identity constellation relates to a number of key words such as the Ottoman Empire, Islam and the Euro-Asia identity. How does Turkey define itself especially when it relates to its strategic geographic position? Or interpret the Islam that is still closely rooted in Turkish society? The Ottoman Empire developed the concept of Ottoman nationality to bind various ethnic and religious faiths. In 1453, during the reign of Sultan Mehmet II, a system was established that divided diverse ethnic diversities into political groups based on religious affiliation. Every religious community or nation is called millet (anonymous, 2010). This means that under the power of Sultan Mehmet II, each group retains its own sub-identity. All the Muslim populations regardless of their ethnicity are grouped as millet Muslims and ruled by shari'a. Officially, Ottoman regards Turkish identity from the indigenous Turkish tribe (Turk) to be included as part of the ummah. The same effort can also be seen in 1517 by establishing Sunni Islam as an imperial religion. The reigning Sultan Selim I at that time tried to define the main national identity by referring to two benchmarks; first, the legal-political factor; second, the religious factor. There is a tendency to combine political and ethnic differences into a national identity based on Sunni Islam. But the sub-identity especially in the Turks group still sets the boundaries between religion and politics (anonymous, 2010).

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire became a moment of emergence of a new identity for Turkey. Islam is shifted by the diversity of ethnicity as a key element of the new nationalism. Correspondingly, the idea for a more modern Turkey emerges and widespread. For Turkey at the time, modernization meant westernization or in other words was to be part of European civilization. Western civilization is associated with Western Europe especially France and England (Bozdaglioglu, 2003). In the transitional periods passed by Turkey and to achieve

secularization and autonomy as an individual it is felt not enough simply by improving rationality, bureaucratization and organizational efficiency. More than that, the things that needs to be done is to make a comprehensive transformation in social and cultural aspects. In an effort to establish this new identity one thing that is necessary to be removed is the Islamic framework of culture and society. During the reign of Selim III (1789-1807) a reform program known as the New Order was introduced to increase the organizational power of the central government and one of them against its external enemy, Russia. In this period, Turkey placed Europe as a model to form a more modern Turkey with the advancement of science, technology and society. A clearer concept was obtained during the reign of Mahmut II (1808-1839) through a reorganization program or Tanzimat. The onslaught of secularization on the one hand becomes a move to save and establish Ottoman identity and prevent the disintegration of the state. The course of this program is also followed by the emergence of protests coming from Islamic groups. The main idea expressed is that the programs don't take into account about Islam and traditional Ottoman values. The thing that they should do is imitate the European model but still contains Islamic law in it. The Pan-Islam Movement also appears to bring back the Islamic Shariah in the Ottoman society (Bozdaglioglu, 2003). Trying to balance between the need to be modern but by maintaining cultural identity as Ottomans and Islam in it.

The presence of religion and its interrelationship with the state can't be underestimated. Religion serves as an attribute of individuals and society, as an organized interest and an institutional relationship with the state. In international politics, religion serves as a set of beliefs or ideologies, cultural attributes and sources of value (Huntington, 1993; Norris & Inglehart, 2004; Philpott, 2007; Warner & Stephen, 2011). The religious heritage of a country can affect the country's overall orientation to foreign policy. Quoting Fox and Sandler (2004; Warner & Stephen, 2011) country leaders can use a common religious understanding of their own population and for other countries with a view to legitimizing foreign policy options as well as gathering support. Countries with the same religion have a significant level of ideological affinity. This thesis departs from Huntington's (1993; Warner & Stephen, 2011) understanding of civilization and that religion enters into a feature in a cultural concept that goes along with it as a construction of civilization (Warner & Stephen, 2011). Citing the argument of

constructivism, the essence of a country is identity, and it comes from culture (Wendt, 1992; Finnemore, 1996; Warner & Stephen, 2011). Religion is embedded in the national identity of the state which further forms the institutions and interests and foreign policy of the country (Warner & Stephen, 2011).

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Ottoman regions in Europe became independent states and Muslim populations in the region converged on Turkey (Pick, 2011). The need to unite society through a new national identity, which can embrace all ethnic and religious in Turkey is growing. A Turk is a citizen of the Turkish Republic, AttaTurk places Muslims, Jews and Christians on the same level and thus confers religion to the private realm. Yet the influence of Islam is not completely removed. Islamic nationalization became the face of Turkish Islam and prevented the politicization of Islam (anonymous, 2010). Turkey underwent a major change in 1923 but the great influence of Islam remained embedded in Turkish society to the extent that it had helped shape foreign policy. Turkey needs Islam because it can't be separated from the root of the nation itself (Schon, 2013). The position of Islam is in fact not shifted. For example, during the war of independence, Kemalist elites used Islamic discourse to strengthen their popular legitimacy and unite leading figures, religious leaders and Anatolian peasants. In the charter of the founders of the Turkish Republic as well as the declaration of conferences in Erzurum and Sivas, the term "Turkish nation" is hardly mentioned but rather mentions Islam and its elements. Even more vivid and even impressed impartiality can be found in the Income Tax Act of 1942 which requires non-Muslims to pay ten times more than Muslims (Waxman 2002). Bernard Lewis (in Waxman 2002) through his work entitled "The Emergence of Modern Turkey" reveals that in Turkish culture, the roots of Islam are still alive and the highest identity of Turkey and Muslims is unchallenged. The last statement that can be asserted to further affirm the Islamic roots of Turkish society and culture is found by looking at the definition of a "Turk" as Islam itself.

The second layer in this identity frame structure will see the relational position of Turkey with Eurasia. How the basic constellations of previous layers relate to Turkey's projection of Eurasian identity. The linkage of Eurasia in this layer is based on the geographical position of Turkey which is in the middle between Europe and Asia. Turkey is seen

as a bridge between Europe and Asia. This geostrategic location puts Turkey in a favorable position to play a bigger role. In mapping this strategic position, one of Turkey's developed strategies is "strategic depth" that emphasizes Turkey's historical and cultural affinity with countries in the region to drive its regional and global influence (Tufekci, 2015). Halford Mackinder (1861-1947) in his article "The Geographical Pivot of History" reveals the concept of "Heartland" which represents the region of the Euro-Asia region. The Turkish position in "Heartland" brings advantages as well as losses. The strategic location of Turkey allows it to serve as a bridge for countries that transact in the oil market, between oil-rich and needy countries. The strategic value of Turkey is also known very well. An example is a statement expressed by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan stating that Turkey is not a peripheral country of Europe, Asia or the Middle East. In contrast, Turkey lies at the crossroads and has the ability to influence the three regions (Tufekci, 2015). Eurasia basically means Europe and Asia. In the classical concept of Eurasianism there are four main principles in it. Two principles that are considered important to be known further are; first, western anti-Eurasians consider themselves closer to Asia than to Europe although in fact its main purpose is to build a different country from Europe and Asia. Second, the uniqueness and culture of Russia. It was developed on the basis of the Turanian idea which later included the Finno-Ugric countries (the Estonians, Karelians, Finns, and Ugandans), Samoyed, Turks (Turks) -including Ottoman Turks, Manchurian people (Tufekci, 2015).

According to Tufekci (2015), Eurasian ideology first encountered Turkey in the 1990s that created the collapse of the Soviet Union and gave birth to Turkey as a nation. The concept of neo-Eurasianism is more appropriate to describe Turkey and Eurasia. There are two reasons why Turkey is not related to classical Eurasianism; first, classical Eurasianism is a representation of Western-oriented ideology and recognition of Russia's historical and cultural superiority against the West; second, classical Eurasianism was present to save the Russian Kkota. For that the old status of Turkish relations with Russia is in two rounds, namely as an enemy or a strategic partner. As a strategic partner, the two countries build a principle of mutual trust. In 2001, the parties responsible for improving bilateral ties and became multidimensional partnerships. In 2002 the economic ties between the two countries improved and Russia became a trading partner for Turkey in later years. Turkey's energy imports from

Russia are in significant amounts, 55% natural gas and 12% oil to accommodate Turkey's domestic needs. Beyond the energy problem, Turkey also has a historical relationship with Russia (Cagaptay & James, 2014). As an enemy, Turkey and Russia have been involved in many contexts of imperial times and similar tensions are still exist in contemporary issues.

The third layer will emphasize the government's policy-related issues. In this third layer will be found the actual political actors and integrate the dynamic elements into the structural model. A number of things to note in relation to the two previous levels or layers are; in this last layer the aim is to create a theoretical model in which the layered structure is capable of combining change and confrontation. Changes can be found in these three layers but with different degrees. The smallest can occur at level three and does not change the concept of the second layer. While a fairly radical encountered when there is a change in the second layer and will be very vital when the same thing occurs in the first layer structure (Waever, 2000). In the case of the Turkish national identity it can be seen that the tendency to change the identity of the former imperials and based on religion to become a more secular, modern form and abandon the concepts are considered incompatible. But this change is not entirely successful because the cultural relations in Turkish society towards Islam are difficult to separate. The government also can't abandon the concept of Islam and even be used as a tool to gain legitimacy from the community. For that reason Islam's position and its relationship with Turkey have not really changed. In Turkey's policy and response to Russia it can be seen that the attitudes shown tend to be ambiguous. In the sense that there is a hesitancy to take further action to its strategic partner, Russia. If Turkey contributes to economic sanctions as Western countries do, it will be difficult and detrimental to the Turkish economy. While the opposite attitude is shown in relation to the Tatars in the Crimea. The ideological foundation as well as the historical background that links these three subjects (Turkey, Crimea and Russia) to the consideration and basis of the attitude and policy of Turkey condemning the annexation and referendum.

2 CONCLUSION

Turkish national identity becomes a complex discussion that can't be seen from one aspect only. Multi-Turkish identity is absent in one form of

national identity. This diversity can also be seen in Turkey's foreign policy formation. This statement can be seen further in the case of Turkey's response to Russia that annexed the Crimea. The idea of Islam and the Ottoman Empire in Turkish cultural relations is stronger than the projection of Eurasian identity. This statement is believed for a number of reasons; first, the Islamic roots of Turkish society have existed for a very long period of time, even when defining a Turk then the idea of Islam will share the identity of the individual. So it is with the Turks. This identity then can be projected further in relation to Turkey's response to the Tatar conditions in the Crimea. One Turkish historian Ilber Ortayli revealed that Turkey should maintain good relations with Russia while continuing to ensure that the Tatar cultural heritage in the Crimea is protected. Yet Turkey's level of interest in the Crimean Tatar is not a part of the priorities of the Islamic Conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP).

The Crimean crisis can't be said to be parallel to such an emotional issue as Palestine. This is found in the identity structure of the first layer which essentially contains the ideational concepts of nation and state. This means that the case of the Crimean annexation does not provide a major shock in Muslim society in Turkey while still providing an ideological impact to the extent of cultural linkage and efforts to protect existing heritage and relationships. While Turkey in its projection as Eurasian is believed to be closely related to material drivers that can be seen from the exposure of Turkey's strategic position against Europe and Asia, as well as Turkvis-à-vis Russia. Mentioned earlier that Turkey as a bridge for the two regions as well as a country that needs Russia to meet domestic energy needs and other economic aspects. When it comes to Turkey's response to Russia in the case of annexation it is believed that Turkey is very cautious in taking a position and policy towards Russia. As a strategic partner, it would be a bad scenario if the economic sanctions were granted by Turkey.

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