



Turkey – A country put aside and perceived to be “the other”, yet still alluring

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Abstract

This article explains the notion of the reconstruction in the man`s mental construct created by various information produced by different information tools. It can be said that the geopolitical perception would also change for this reconstruction. Geopolitical perception that Turkey currently has, has changed due to the relations with EU and social and political developments in the Middle East. Such a change also alters the societies` and countries` perception of political and global identity. Geopolitical thought necessitates the actualization of geography`s role in the intergovernmental relations. There is no uniformity between the state and public in Turkey about the matter of the global relations. But, the state cannot be accepted as a different unity from the society. It is thought that the relationships and developments will reconstruct the geopolitical perception, and in the end, it will bring a new stance. This stance may be an influential element and precursor of a new concept in the international relations that will last for years.

Keywords: Turkey; geopolitical perception; global relations

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Introduction

Due to the developments of technology in communication and transportation, and with penetrating of the innovations into the life of human in the last quarter of the twentieth century, the Globe has been thought as a global village. According to these developments that have continually been emphasized as a course and phenomena, we have been confronted with a spectacle in which the model of nation – state have been weakening, the borders of countries can't be controlled or being insignificant. We have been living in a world in which the men have the opportunity to travel very speedily depending on their wealth, besides the knowledge and money have had the capability to change hands in a short time. The Globalization in this meaning means at the same time, that the human and all the values belonging him have gained a capability of mobility unknown in the history of man. This case makes possible to transportation and reproduction of information very speedily. The information either can move according to the balance of supply and demand or it has a character of agent of influencing and guiding for the global and local actors. The case seen in the media agencies reflects this. “In a country like Turkey in which newspaper circulations were still highly low, TV news is an important agent to which the individuals always apply to understand, learn and interpret either his own society and the events happened in the world.” (Karaduman, 2004, pp.250).

By and large, by the way of conveying of the information continuously rearranged for a goal, the reconstruction of the minds has been aimed at. Though the diversities and differences of messages and information have been creating a disorder in the human mind, it has been unavoidable that they form some believes and convictions. Thus, the human mind is constantly reconstructed by the information and messages constantly reformed at the one hand, and by the belief and convictions at the other. Owing to this increasing information circulation, the international relations are influenced too; in this way, it is seen either that the politic, military, economic and cultural information in this field has entered into daily life. And this interaction created by the information transportation has been effective on the thoughts of individuals and the societies about themselves, and about the others. Thus, perceptions of individuals and societies on their identities, possibilities and problems, may change, and ties found between their cultures and geographies that they belong may change, too. According to these metamorphoses, the space concept of social mind can gain new meanings and this, too, can change the geopolitical perception. These new kinds of perceptions can be effective in creating a new geographical, cultural identity, and a new

political conscious, in local and global scales. Consequently, this politic conscious may be in contradiction with the nation – state policies, it can force it to change or it may affect on international projects.

Geopolitics and Effective Geopolitics

The world geopolitics was used for the first time by a Swedish political geographer Rudolf Kjellen in a journal called *Ymer* in 1899. According to him, geopolitics is a discipline that searches the state in relation with its geography. In this sense, there are many explanations, but it can be said shortly that the geopolitics is a philosophy of geography. Geopolitics doesn't produce politics, but it prepares data for the persons who would make politics. According to A. Dugin, geopolitics tries to understand and to comprehend the meaning of the value structure of a civilization, and it tries to describe its logic. (İlhan, 2005, pp.29-40). Consequently, the geopolitical data will have very important place and influence in the policies that the local and global power centers would carry out. For example, it can be said that they enterprise according to the geopolitical data on the struggles occurring for the dominating of fields where the distribution and transportation of oil and natural gas occurs. “The stemming force of the first and second Gulf Wars and the events caused by them can be thought to be the aim of controlling the distribution of the naturel sources of the Middle East.” (Akengin, 2010, pp.159).

On the other hand, we see individuals and societies can access an intensive information supply in consequence of their possibilities of traveling and communication. At the same time, information supply has become a modus that the individuals largely use to form public opinion. For example, everybody has interpreted the war mood according to himself trying to show himself rightful. Sometimes, the information conveyed is so different that the grasping the fact in that chaos of knowledge has been impossible. Thus, the international social, economic, military and geopolitical themes can be stay in agenda in this intensive communication atmosphere. The information has been reproduced and represented in local and global level for the sake of having power and maintaining it. Consequently, the population that is seen as a changing element of geopolitics will inevitably change in its perception of the place and the world that it belongs. In a difference from the past, this changed perception has a geopolitical sense and influence, and this situation that the policy makers should take into consideration can be described as the geopolitical perception.

The actual, lived situation and international policies performed by global and regional power centers and those that have opposed to them, can be seen as an effective geopolitics. At the

same time, effective geopolitics presents the influences of international policies upon the individuals. Geopolitics is reproduced by being influenced by a higher political structure.

For example, the interaction that appeared in consequence of performing of the policies in global and local scale by making use of geopolitical data after cold war era, has changed the geopolitical perceptions of individuals and societies, and created an effective geopolitics different from supposed.

Brzezinski (2007) explains this case such: “The political awakening that is happening worldwide is a major challenge for America, because it means that the world is much more restless. It's stirring. It has aspirations which are not easily satisfied. And if America is to lead, it has to relate itself somehow to these new, lively, intense political aspirations, which make our age so different from even the recent past. But the challenge that we face is rooted much more in the immediate problem, which we have partially created - namely, we are the number one superpower today in the world. We are the only superpower. But our leadership is being tested in the Middle East, and some of the things that we have done in the Middle East are contributing to a potential explosion region-wide. And if that explosion gets out of hand, we may end up being bogged down for many years to come in a conflict that will be profoundly damaging to our capacity to exercise our power, to address the problems implicit in this global awakening, and we may face a world in which much of the world turns away from us, seeks its own equilibrium, but probably slides into a growing chaos.”

USA society has reached to different information due to the information technology though all recycling efforts besides this global influence. For this reason this change in USA society will be able to influence the global and regional geopolitical interpretations of the state.

The Turkish Example:

There is a close connection between the location of any country over the world and its development (Özey, 2007, pp. 274). The Turkey is a Eurasian country that the large part of its lands (Anatolia) is in southern – west Asia and the lesser part (Thrace) is in Europe. The Turkey encircled by seas from the three sides, and having important straits, has an important location in the transportation of Eastern Mediterranean and Black sea. Besides, it can be seen as a central area between Middle East, Balkans, Caucasian and Arabian Peninsula. It has been known that the features of this area have a big importance in international arena. Turkey's today's geographic position with its cultural values is contrasted with the description of peripheral country or other theories made by the power centers of cold war era.

Due to the geographic position and geopolitical features, the course of Turkey's EU membership concerns the global and local power centers. This interest may be effective on the future of relations, too. On the other hand, it has been constantly emphasized that Turkey has a different cultural identity from Europe, and it has faced with different behaviors in Europe in this course. Thus, since this open ended membership course, seen very difficult to realize, it can also be called as “Europe – Turkey Union, and will only be realized between two different cultural structures (İkiel, 2004, pp.149).

In Turkey, it is seen that there are two different trends on relations with EU. “While some sectors in Turkey are in a trend to show the EU as a magical key to recover from all troubles and to solve all problems, some others, unlikely, are inclined to see or to show the EU as a dangerous body with its international character to bring end the national sovereignty of Turkey, leaving the country wholly to the European domination.” (Acar, 2007, pp.124). There are developments to show rightful the two trends, too. As a matter of fact, with the beginning of the negotiations, it has been seen that merely the Copenhagen Criteria were not enough in this course. It is seen, that, by being used various arguments, Turkey has been tried to be excluded from EU. Especially from France and Germany, two big members of EU, comes strong oppositions based culture and identity. Whereas, it is not possible to look down upon the Turkey's place and importance in European history and culture, and to ignore its interaction with Europe. We know that the “other” in European mind is “Eastern”, and the “Eastern” is “Turk” or “Islam” actually. “The concept of the “other” is the product of fear from another cultural entity. It is very interesting that Europe have such a fear today.” (Öztürk , 2005, pp.55-84). The advice of sectors that wish to leave the Turkey out of Europe in some way is the special membership. This will probably be a membership that would not have any influential right in decision making organs and in traveling sphere. It is interesting that the sectors opposed to Turkey's full membership abstain to exclude Turkey.

The Cyprus Greeks have come to the help of the groups who try to block the Turkey's full membership. EU Commission has wanted Turkey open its ports to Greeks. It has decided not to open the eight chapters in negotiations until Turkey would execute the clauses of supplementary protocol signed in December 2005. It has advised to close the other even opened chapters. Thus, the negotiations of membership has stopped and passed to the initiative of Cyprus Greeks (Altınbaş and Kalaycı, 2007. pp.21-22) .

Conclusion

While all these developments make feel the Turkish people an otherness to Europe or West in one hand, they shows that the Turkey has been excluded from the West as long as it tries to approach, on the other hand. But, the strong concern of global capital to Turkey, its economical development, its young population and strategic importance show that Turkey is a center of attraction. The information that reflects these developments run into the public opinion in all its variety and the public’s geopolitical conception has changed. According to this multi cultural interaction, a bilateral situation has appeared; thus, the mental perceptions of the individual and society in Turkey and Europe have been rebuilt. At this juncture, the political conscious or perceptions of individuals can be more rapid than the state’s. This situation would help the actors of social and political power struggles go into a structuring, independent from the state. It can be hoped that a conservative conception that doesn’t want to share the wealth would develop in Europe. Whereas, we think that an open conservative concept to abroad will develop in Turkey. The election concluded recently shows these trends in conservative front.

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