
IDENTITY PROTECTION

- IDENTITY AND FOREIGN POLICY IN THE DISCOURSES OF EUROPEAN COMMISSIONERS IN THE CONTEXTS OF TURKEY'S MEMBERSHIP AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

Fatih Göksu

- WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT MIGRATION: THE NEED FOR A NEW COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

Sofia Lotto-Persio

- THE FUTURE OF EUROPE LOOKS BRIGHT

Nele Goutier

IDENTITY AND FOREIGN POLICY IN THE DISCOURSES OF EUROPEAN COMMISSIONERS IN THE CONTEXTS OF TURKEY'S MEMBERSHIP AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

Fatih Göksu

Ph.D candidate in Communication, Universitat Pompeu Fabra

goksu.fatih@hotmail.com

Identity, foreign policy and enlargement

History, beliefs, values, norms. Along with many other things, they connect to construct an identity. When 'the other' has different types of god, history, beliefs or values, it is normal to see them as others. It makes sense to talk about differences when we mention our own identity, because as well as similarities, identity is constructed by differences and, in relation to this article, at some point the definition of Europe is also dependent on others.

Manuel Castells (2010), the writer of *Power of Identity* argues that identities can be formed by dominant institutions. He claims that these institutions might become the main identity builders when social actors adopt them and construct their meaning around this adaptation. These institutions also take part in one study done by Turkish author Senem Aydin Düzgit (2013). In her article she mentions how to form identity in foreign policy and in this formation she discusses two types of state identity. One is 'role identity' and the other one is 'type identity'. Here, role identity comes to the fore because it is constructed in relation to other states. She also mentions how policy and identity are ontologically interlinked when foreign policy-makers give the feeling of survival to the people in Europe by using words such as doors, pressure or protection.

Turkey's membership and European security

The accession of Turkey to the European Union has been a very dramatic issue since 1963, when Turkey applied to become a member for the first time. Since then, the full membership option has never been a reality for several reasons. When Turkey finally became a strong, committed candidate, many things changed along with the excuses. In the last couple of years, security issues have become a major obstacle to full membership for Turkey. The many differences between Europe and Turkey have been cultural, mostly, but lately these differences are all about security issues.

Using notions such as security to create 'the other' causes some damage and creates stereotypes and prejudices for the people of Europe and Turkey especially when we note that support for European Union in Turkey has decreased and nationalism is on the rise in Europe.

Security is indeed a very important problem, especially in the current decade, because of the situation in the Middle East, but there is also another reason why security is discussed in all meetings related to Turkey. Turkey was an important ally in the Gulf war or more recently that against the Syrian regime. So the country is a kind of protector but is also a threat to Europe in the field of security. Düzgit (2013) mentions this issue in her article and gives an example of a speech made by one official.

“With the formerly communist East now part of the family, we no longer face the East–West arms race. (...) But relations between Europe and Islam – inside and outside Europe – is (...) a challenge of our time” (Düzgit, 2013).

So here we can easily observe that Turkey reproduces the “clash of civilisations” discourse. Düzgit (ibid.) explains that Huntington’s clash discourse (1996) became almost hegemonic in the Commission’s security-related discussions on Turkey. She also claims that “the key assumptions of the thesis are being discursively reproduced over the topic of Turkish accession. For instance, in the excerpt above, the communist ‘East’, which constituted the major other of ‘Western’ Europe during the Cold War, is no longer constructed as a security threat, now that it is integrated into the ‘family’, a metaphor which naturalises ‘Europe’”. As she gave an example of eastern Europe, we can here insert another speech made by one commissioner in relation to Turkey’s accession and security issue. The border question is a very complex one. You cannot expect that a country bordering regions or countries like Iraq and Iran just applies the same Schengen standards as Poland does with Belarus or Ukraine. The situation is completely different (Düzgit, 2013). According to Düzgit (ibid.) the excerpt mentions Turkey’s accession, and makes ‘migration’ an issue of security by constructing it as an ‘existential threat’. Migration is also predicated as a ‘problem’ for the EU because of the southern region that Turkey borders.

Conclusion

In my opinion, it is not easy to make a conclusion about this article as we still have not decided if Turkey belongs to Europe or not. If we accept that Turkey is a European country which will be a member in the future, I must say that it is understandable that the European Union needs to have a common identity to continue its togetherness, but using notions such as security to create 'the other' causes some damage and creates stereotypes and prejudices for the people of Europe and Turkey especially when we note that support for European Union in Turkey has decreased to 18% and nationalism is on the rise in Europe.

References

Castells, Manuel. *The Power of Identity*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell Publication, 2010.

Düzgit, Aydın Senem. “European security and the accession of Turkey: Identity and foreign policy in the European Commission”. Sage

Publications (August 2013), p. 48 (online) [Date accessed 16.09.2014]
<http://cac.sagepub.com/content/48/4/522>

Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

