



Ukraine-Russian Federation Relations within the Concepts of “The Security Dilemma” And “Responsibility to Protect (R2p)”

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ABSTRACT

Since the early ages of history, the need to feel safe in human beings has emerged and the instinct to act collectively for the purpose of self-protection has settled. This collective movement motive has led to the construction of identities and states over time. Many approaches in the discipline of international relations examine that formation processes of the states, which were built with the aim of establishing the need for this environment of trust. However, as can be seen from history, these institutions could not provide the establishment of security sufficiently and as a matter of fact, the wars experienced throughout history became the evidence of the atmosphere of this insecurity causing the concepts of “security dilemma” and “responsibility to protect (R2P)” to take their place in international relations discipline. The article aims to figure out the relations between Ukraine and the Russian Federation within portrayed concepts in light of the events after the annexation of Crimea. With this purpose, it is aimed to reach a resolution whether the conflict can be explained within the concepts of the security dilemma and R2P as Russia claims or Russian Federation’s “special military operation” to Ukraine is rationalized in line with Russia’s revisionist attitude stemming from its Eurasianist ideologies. Apart from the two concepts mentioned above, the Eurasianist and Atlanticist ideologies which have influenced on Russian foreign policy are also analyzed and in this article, the case study approach is used that enables an in-depth analysis of the subject.

Keywords: International Security, Responsibility to Protect (R2P), Russian Federation, Security Dilemma, Ukraine.

Güvenlik İkilemi ve Koruma Sorumluluğu Kavramları Bağlamında Ukrayna-Rusya Federasyonu İlişkileri

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Öz

Tarihin ilk çağlarından itibaren kendini güvende hissetme ihtiyacı hasıl olmuş ve kendini koruma maksadıyla toplu hareket etme güdüsü yerleşmiştir. Bu toplu hareket güdüsü ise zamanla kimliklerin ve devletlerin inşasını sağlamıştır. Uluslararası ilişkiler disiplinindeki pek çok yaklaşım, bu güven ortamına duyulan ihtiyacı tesis etmek amacıyla kurulan devletlerin oluşum süreçlerini incelemektedir. Ancak tarihten de görüleceği üzere bu kurumlar güvenliğin tesisini yeterince sağlayamamış ve nitekim tarih boyunca yaşanan savaşlar bu güvensizlik ortamının delili olmuş ve “güvenlik ikilemi” ile “koruma sorumluluğu (R2P)” kavramlarının uluslararası ilişkiler disiplinindeki yerini almasını sağlamıştır. Bu makalenin amacı, Kırım’ın ilhakından sonra yaşanan olaylar ışığında Ukrayna ile Rusya Federasyonu arasındaki ilişkileri çizilen kavramlar çerçevesinde ortaya koymaktır. Bu bağlamda, çalışmada Ukrayna ve Rusya Federasyonu arasındaki çatışmanın Rusya’nın iddia ettiği gibi güvenlik ikilemi ve R2P kavramlarıyla açıklanıp açıklanamayacağı veya Rusya Federasyonu’nun Ukrayna’ya yönelik “özel askeri hareketi”nin Rusya’nın Avrasyacı ideolojilerinden kaynaklanan revizyonist tutumu doğrultusunda rasyonelleştirilip rasyonelleştirilmediği konusunda bir çözüme varılması amaçlanmaktadır. Bu sebeple çalışma içerisinde yukarıda bahsi geçen iki kavram haricinde Rusya Federasyonu’nun Atlantikçi bakış açısından Avrasyacı bakış açısına yönelme sebepleri de incelenmiş ve böylelikle söz konusu ideolojilerin Rusya Federasyonu dış politikası üzerindeki motivasyonlarının analizi sağlanmıştır. Çalışmada metod olarak, Ukrayna- Rusya Federasyonu arasında yaşanan Kırım’ın ilhaki ile 24 Şubat 2022 başlangıçlı “özel nitelikli askeri operasyon” örneklerinden hareketle konunun derinliğine ve genişliğine irdelenmesini sağlayacak örnek vaka analizi metodu kullanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Jel Kodları: F5, K33, K38.

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Giriş

Since the early ages of history, the need of being safe in human beings has emerged and the instinct to act collectively for the purpose of self-protection has settled which led to the identities and states to be established. This process led to the international relations discipline emerging although the need for security could not be fulfilled adequately. With this in mind, the governments, of which their main purpose was to gain military power in order to maintain the security of society, started to experience conflicts between. Although efforts were made to find a solution to this conflicted environment and to ensure peace through the League of Nations established in 1920, these efforts were inconclusive and, as a matter of fact, World War II. could not be prevented.

The United Nations, which was established subsequently, also aimed to solve the problems that may arise between countries through peaceful means, but again, these efforts ended in failure, as can be witnessed from the pages of the history. As these conflicts continued to occur, international relations scholars tried to explain the reasons lying beneath. There were various views on this subject such as one party attributed this failure to the human nature, while others referred to the fact that the actors in the decision-making processes did not act rationally for various reasons, and last but not least view discussed the matter within the choices of the states that fall into the security dilemma, which constitutes one of the main subject of this study. The security dilemma concept, which can be summarized as “a situation where the actions taken by a state to increase its own security cause reactions from other states, which leads to a decrease rather than an increase in the state’s security”, is therefore brought to scholars’ attention.

The arms race between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. during the Cold War was the most concrete example of the mentioned security dilemma as both countries felt threatened by the weapons of opposing sides and thus the both sides tried to enhance their military power in an effort to match the other whilst creating a reduction in the welfare level of the both societies (Jervis, 2001: 58, Watts, 2008: 42, Balcı&Deniz, 2019: 134). Moreover the scholars consider the conflicts between India and Pakistan, Türkiye and Greece as examples of states in arms race (Dunne, Nikolaidou, Smith, 2000: 1, Dokos, 2008: 168) while Guinnessy is pointing to the fact that China’s shooting of a satellite with a ground-to-space medium-range ballistic missile is a new example of space arms race which may lead to security dilemma in the near future (Guinnessy, 2007: 29). In addition to these point of views, some scholars also analyze the security dilemma concept in different aspects with a standpoint that after September the 11th, US’ enemy was not rising from a specific country, while being not recognizable and not behaving like states (Soltani, Jawan, Ahmad, 2010: 178). According to this opinion, the situation in which the US is standing led to the newly determined process for the security dilemma concept.

While the reasons lying beneath the concept of security dilemma were thoroughly analyzed by the scholars, another subject caught the attention of the discipline which is defined as the “responsibility to protect”. Distinctly after the Cold War, the decision-makers in Russian Federation has used this concept in various regions like Georgia or Syria and mostly in Ukraine. As our study is mainly focused on clarifying the relations between Ukraine and Russian Federation within the concepts of the above mentioned terms, the historical background is analyzed thoroughly in order to come to an understanding of the relations between both countries and to have an opinion that states are open and closed regimes by comparing the country’s foreign policy practices.

Whilst analyzing the aspects of the relations between Ukraine and Russian Federation throughout this article, the case study method is used as not only case studies capture various range of perspectives but also it helps human beings to come to an understanding and gain a greater opinion of the main subject of the article. As so, its most significant benefit is the method’s holistic review and it lets the researcher use various tools on the subject in hand. With the help of this holistic approach, the researcher can build a detailed understanding and explore the factors of which the article refers to. In this paper, the case study method is preferred because of its capabilities mentioned above. Herewith, it is aimed to understand the relations between Ukraine and Russian Federation through their myths and claims in the light of events that occurred after the annexation of Crimea by analysing the terms “security dilemma” and “responsibility to protect (R2P)” within the international law.

The Concepts of Security Dilemma and Responsibility to Protect in the Discipline of International Relations

Wivel explains the security dilemma as “a situation where the actions were taken by a state to increase its own security cause reactions from other states, which leads to a decrease rather than an increase in the state’s security” (2011). He also categorizes the concepts of “security dilemma” and “responsibility to protect (R2P)” as the most important source of conflict in the international relations discipline (Tang, 2009: 587) while Acharya and Ramsay examine the subject from two different perspectives. The first perspective known as offensive realism claims that the world’s politics is uncertain and this situation causes a lack of trust and cooperation between states (2013: 183, Acharya, 1994: 3). Therefore, those states are aggressive and are certainly not security maximizers. On the other hand, defensive realism claims that as the world itself is anarchic, the states’ main interest is to gain a status of survival and therefore the maximization of their own security causes the neighbour states to feel insecure and in need of more armament eventually leading to a security dilemma.

Morgenthau defines those interests as the essence of politics and does not consider them tied to time and place.

Morgenthau states that since power or states depend on their citizens with the principle of maintaining their existence, they consider all options from physical violence to all kinds of psychological actions (Eralp, 1997: 47). Adding to that, this underlining principle does not comply with an agreed upon universal moral value system. Because, according to Morgenthau, all nations or states claim that their special/unique goals and behaviors are in accordance with the nationally defined purpose of the world. In this context, what is prioritized for states is about which foreign policy practice will affect the ways of power distribution is shaped. In other words, it is not concerned with what the aforementioned practices contribute to other than the existence of political power and it does not matter what kind of gains they provide in the moral, economic or legal field.

This view, which does not see states as equal in various terms, also emphasizes that the weakest do not have the ability to neutralize the strongest. In other words, according to the classic security concept, international relations will remain in a state of war due to the absence of a superior authority, a power struggle will prevail in interstate relations and the only assurance of states will be the balance of power (Eralp, 1997: 47). The fact that power cannot be calculated precisely and completely due to its nature, leads to the uncertainty of the balance of power between one nation and other rival nations. (Morgenthau, 1970: 278).

In such an environment of uncertainty, each state takes various measures in order to make its own interests and survival strategies. And these measures are perceived as a threat on the other nations' side of the equation which lead to the concept of security dilemma finding its place in the international relations discipline, having been used by Herz in 1950. John Herz, who brought up the security dilemma strikingly in the discipline, expresses that states constantly think about their security in case of an attack, and their desire to ensure their security causes them to gain more power (1950: 157-180). According to Herz, this situation causes other states to feel threatened and the vicious circle between security and gaining power continues.

States find themselves faced with a security dilemma in an anarchic structure and in an environment where there is no element of trust due to this. In the discipline of international relations, a security dilemma is the situation when a state X takes actions to increase its security in case it perceives a threat or insecurity towards its own security, causing confusion in the minds of the other state Y (Herz, 1950: 157-180). Here, the dilemma arises when State Y cannot decide whether the actions taken by State X are for defensive or offensive purposes.

In other words, in an environment where everyone is in competition with each other, the behavior of a state to ensure its own security causes others to perceive this behavior as if it was directed by hostile and virulent actions, causing them to feel as if in an insecure environment and take counter-security measures (Necefoğlu, 2017: 8). Yıldırım also states that the security dilemma constantly instills insecurity in the adversary and

therefore causes an escalation in international problems (2016:99). Çelikpala, in addition to those scholars, explains the security dilemma as "the general atmosphere of insecurity and the power struggle that arises as a result of the tension created by the production of counter-policies due to the fact that the policies produced by an actor to ensure his own security are perceived by other actors as a source of insecurity" (2019:1).

In this respect, the states with such motives initiate armament carried out by each to ensure their own security perceived by other states as self-directed, and for this reason, it leads to a similar behavior and to a security dilemma (Arı, 2001: 59). In this situation, which is also defined as the security dilemma model, the behavior of a state to ensure its security threatens the security of its current or potential enemies and puts these actors in danger (Arı, 2002: 198). The arms race in the Cold War years is explained with the concept of security dilemma in this context.

R2P, on the other hand, the abbreviation of "Responsibility to Protect" is another concept which was brought to discipline at the UN World Summit resolutions in 2005 and can be summarized in the UN declaration as follows (Arsava, 2011: 108):

- *"Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.*
- *The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian, and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.*
- *In this context, we are prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."*

As evidently put above, the characteristics of the crimes in this responsibility, which may occur after the existence of four types of crimes individually or together, are explained thoroughly. While the first three crimes (ethnic cleansing, war crimes, genocide) have more specific boundaries, the last crime, crimes against humanity, is within more ambiguous limits. This ambiguity has been taken into account by specifying it in the Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which entered into force on 1 July 2002. (Kurşun, 2011: 7).

As a matter of fact, Article 7 lists crimes against humanity as follows: "Murder; extermination; enslavement; deportation or forcible transfer of population; imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law; torture; rape, sexual slavery, enforced

prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity; persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court; enforced disappearance of persons; the crime of apartheid; other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.”

The Rome Statute, which describes persecution as the intentional and severe deprivation of fundamental rights contrary to international law by reason of the identity of the group or collectivity, also examines crimes against identity in this respect.

Dynamics in Ukraine and the Russian Federation after the Cold War

As the successor state of the USSR, Russian Federation displayed a Western-oriented policy during the Yeltsin period, and the development and maintenance of Western style institutions were prioritized in the entire administrative system of the country (Karabay, 2021: 11). As a matter of fact, membership to NATO, the western institution in which the USA was the dominant power and classified as “the other” during the cold war period, has become a foreign policy dynamic and the possibility of this membership has also been expressed by the decision-making actors. In addition, the liberal economic policies and cultural values of the West were commenced to be internalized in the public sphere and respective socio-cultural domains.

In the period when this Western point of view - defined as Atlanticism – has been pursued, the liberal economic and social order as experienced in the West has been established in the public sector through the privatization of public goods. But soon after a new group classified as “oligarchs” emerged. These practices created a perception in the society that public goods were marketed/plundered in favor of a selected group of politically attached individuals. For this reason, efforts to transform the country’s economic structure were not welcomed by the West. In addition, the fact that the aid that was stated to be provided by the West did not arrive on time and the individuals coming from the West were involved in activities that require legal action against human smuggling under the name of tourism has underpinned the perception of the West as “the other” again.

Soon after the Russian Federation began to long for/yearn for the good old days, due to the fact that pro-Western policies were perceived as practices not for the public interest but for the benefit of oligarchs and attached actors/segments of Russian society. With the experienced increase in oil prices due to the Iraqi crisis, the Russian Federation was more eligible to carry necessary means and politics against that “other”. Depending on that improvement in economics, foreign

policy was diverted to Eurasian Ideology resulting in to end of the Atlanticist Perspective.

The Eurasian ideology can be summed up as “defining and putting its own interests before the interests of the USA and the countries of the Western bloc in the foreign policy practices of the Russian Federation with respect to its political and historical hinterland. As a matter of fact, the expansion of NATO in the former Soviet states/countries and geography was defined and declared as the sole threat in the near-environment doctrine proclaimed within this framework (Snetkov, 2013: 96). Even the Russian Federation declared that it would see Ukraine’s membership in NATO as *casus belli* (Yıldırım, 2016: 98). Subsequently, the Russian Federation started to take new security measures for its immediate surroundings within the scope of both the development of new weapon technologies and the updating of security doctrines.

In addition, within the framework of the Eurasian ideology, not only military practices but also cultural and identity-based initiatives were carried out in the following periods. As a matter of fact, Russia, which gained the patronage of the Orthodox with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, strived to sustain this gain for the Orthodox all over the world through the newly opened churches together with the Eurasian ideology. In addition to this religious oriented mentality, Eurasian ideology has developed the concept of the Russian World in order to achieve its goals of having a say in the whole world by going beyond the borders of the former Soviet geography. This ambiguous concept has been framed as not only for the diaspora Russians but all individuals who are interested in Russian culture. According to this mentality, which should be defined as cultural hegemony, all individuals who internalize Russian culture belong to the Russian world and necessary precautions should be taken to protect their rights.

Ukraine, which gained its independence in 1991 after the disintegration of the USSR and was in the process of integrating into the new world order, there was a period in which Western institutions were prioritized in the first years of its independence - like Yeltsin period in the first decade of the Russian Federation. In the beginning, this dual and intertwined foreign policy trend has not created any counter reaction from the Russian Federation for the reasons we have mentioned above. The Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation in the Political, Economic, and Cultural Fields, which was signed in 1994 and entered into force in 1998, has been an indicator of broad cooperation between Ukraine and the EU, thus taking another step towards Ukraine’s ultimate goal - EU membership.

These pro-Western foreign policy practices of Ukraine also found a place in the general elections held in 2004. As a matter of fact, although pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich was declared the winner in the election race between him and pro-Western Viktor Yushchenko, the elections were renewed after the demonstrations in Kiev (Flag, 2019: 45) and pro-Western Viktor Yushchenko won and he commenced his duty as the President of the Republic (Yıldırım, 2020: 438). The demonstrations during this

election process were also an indication that the pro-Western segment has attained an important place in the society as an identity element.

In addition to the development of Western identity in the society and the foreign policy relations with the theme of membership in the Western bloc, which is also built on the military factors, has demonstrated that Ukraine aimed to exhibit a policy within its own internal practices and agenda and declaring to not being under the guidance of the Russian Federation. As a matter of fact, in the context of Ukraine's pro-Western policy tendencies on the military level, a declaration regarding Ukraine's membership to NATO was published at the Bucharest Summit of NATO in 2008 (Dumlupınar, 2017: 12) and thus Ukraine planned to act in cooperation with the West on the economic level. It has been emphasized that Ukraine, which has declared itself to have this perspective, also has this point of view at the military level.

When Viktor Yanukovich, who is pro-Russian and won the presidential election again in 2010, suspended the association process with the EU on November 21, 2013 (Öztekin, 2019: 3). The country again rolled into an east-west dilemma. The people who perceived their identity as immanent to the West also protested the decision "Yevromeydan" protests (Kurt, 2020: 23). In this respect, the protests arose from the alienation of the society - especially the young people - from the Soviet culture and the economic system. Also, young people attained the belief that the country should be governed by Western model of institutions by prioritizing the development and conservation of Western identity."

Yanukovich, who left the country after the "Yevromeydan" protests, took refuge in the Russian Federation (Behbudova, 2017: 30). In this process, armed groups called "green men" in the international relations discipline with their uniforms without rank and epaulets, began to appear in Ukraine on February 27, 2014. In this duration, with the green men in question appearing on the streets of Ukraine, a referendum was held on 16 March 2014 (Dumlupınar, 2017: 15). This annexation, which was signed by the Russian Federation but not accepted by Ukraine, is still today being followed by a period called "special military operation" by the Russian Federation since February 24th of 2022.

Classifying states as open and closed political systems, Farrell emphasizes that the most characteristic feature of an open political system is constitutional democracy (Farrell, 1966: 173). Farrell attributes the existence of closed political systems to 6 conditions, including the existence of an official and central ideology; a single party, representing only a small part of society, runs the main system; arbitrary use of force by the police; the party's control of all mass media; tight control of the military; the control of economic activities (İşyar, 2009: 31).

In the context of the historical background explained above, when this modeling of Farrell is applied to Ukraine and the Russian Federation, it is considered that Ukraine is an example of open society and the Russian Federation is an example of closed one. As a matter of fact, although

the principles of constitutional democracy are formally valid in the Russian Federation, the unexplained deaths of journalists with dissenting views and the restrictions on the activities of non-governmental organizations by laws do not allow the Russian Federation to be classified as an open and dynamic society. Baunov, who also agrees with this view, classifies Ukraine as dynamic and open regimes, and the Russian Federation as static and closed regimes (Baunov, 2017: 10).

Rosenau also developed models of open and closed societies and created the classification scale in the context of three structural features that he considered as the most influential on foreign policy outcomes. According to this scale, Rosenau evaluates states in terms of size criteria, economic development criteria and political predictability (Rosenau, 1968). In addition, according to Rosenau, there are five variables in foreign policy that have an impact on the decision-making processes of states (Rosenau, 1971: 98). Those variables are the decision-making personality, the role and extent of decision-making powers, the government bureaucracy, the society and the international system. Foreign policy outcomes in democratic societies according to Rosenau's society variable is influenced by the party system and the conditions of the parties. In this respect, Rosenau also emphasizes that in democratic and therefore open societies, public opinion tries to influence foreign policy. (Hassanpour, 2021: 5).

When Ukraine and the Russian Federation are compared in terms of Rosenau's classification, it is seen that the Russian Federation sets an example for closed regimes, since the effectiveness of the public opinion is very limited by the administration in the foreign policy decision-making process. On the other hand in Ukraine, the losses in the annexation process of Crimea in 2014 led to the rise of considerations against the Russian Federation even in groups that associate itself with the Russian identity, and this trend increased the pressures on Ukraine's pro-Western foreign policy as Ukraine was an open society of which public opinion has influence on.

Moreover, Bergson's descriptions about closed societies also define the reasons for Russia Federation's revisionist foreign policy practises with the following phrases: "The closed society is that whose members hold together, caring nothing for the rest of humanity, on the alert for attack or defence, bound, in fact, to a perpetual readiness to battle" (Bergson, 1932: 266-283). While categorizing this discourse as a "harsh one", Lefebvre and Schott emphasize that although many religions and institutions claim to treat everyone with equal respect the answer for evolution from a closed society to an open one is still not as obvious as it may seem and they try to clarify the underlying causes of these problematic issues between states (Lefebvre and Schott, 2022: 252). On the other hand, Bergson's claims about closed society's behaviors seem to have a point with Russian Federation's foreign policy practices.

Relations Between Ukraine and Russian Federation in the Context of Security Dilemma and Responsibility to Protect

With the annexation of Crimea, the fear of being swallowed up by the Russian Federation in Ukraine renewed and reinitiated the agenda of NATO membership as declared in 2008 before. And both the training of the armed forces and the supply of equipment within the country became the issues that decision makers focused more on. This new initiative, and especially the tendency to join NATO, was perceived as a threat to the Russian Federation and expressed as an unacceptable situation. In other words, the measures taken by Ukraine after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 as an independent state were considered by the Russian Federation as activities against it, and subsequently, the Russian Federation started its invasion, which it onesidedly defined and classified as a "special military operation".

The fact that the relations between Ukraine and the Russian Federation escalated to this crisis level, which includes the use of armed force after the cold war, is due to the differences in the two countries perspectives on history. In other words, the opinions of Ukrainian historians and Russian historians about the Kievan Principality differ widely. To summarize simply, the Principality of Kyiv, which ruled the region from the end of the 9th century to the middle of the 13th century, was disintegrated as a result of the Mongol invasions and was divided into principalities affiliated with the Golden Horde State. And later on, the Principality of Moscow claimed its position as the heir of the Kievan Principality with the weakening of the Golden Horde State.

The historians of the two countries are divided into different perspectives on the origin of the events in this framework (Plokyh, 2006: 6). As a matter of fact, for Ukrainian historians, the Principality of Kyiv means the first founding state, while for Russian historians, the Principality is one of the parts of the Russian society, which was divided into three as a result of mentioned Mongol invasions. From this Russian point of view, the Principality of Kyiv is only a part of Russian culture for their history. Ukrainian historians, on the other hand, do not agree with this opinion and claim that the differences between Russians and Ukrainians were clear and evident even at that time and that Ukrainians had a unique and separable identity of their own.

This difference of view and the fact that the city of Kyiv in Ukraine is the capital of the Russians constitutes one of the underlying reasons for the actions of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The founding capital character of Kiev carries important myths on identity in Russian culture. Therefore, the fact that the city of Kiev remained within the borders of another country after the collapse of the USSR in 1991 constitutes a kind of identity trauma.

In addition, the efforts of Ukraine, which is seen as a younger brother, to abandon this "little brother" identity after independence and build a new identity, constitute the basis for the Russian Federation to act against international law because the Russian Federation considers the people living in Ukraine as a part of its own identity (Muradov, 2022: 20). In addition, there is a perception in the Russian Federation that Ukraine is a secondary or artificial state due to its "little brother" character (Kurt, 2020: 4). Declaring in 2016 that it withdrew from the Rome Statute, which was signed in 2000 and not yet ratified by the parliament, the Russian Federation, although not a party to the agreement, uses the concept of responsibility to protect in line with its own interests, with the support it receives from the definition of crimes against humanity defined in respective chapters of the agreement.

As a matter of fact, with this foreign policy practice, which is outlined and explained to the press as the protection of the rights of individuals referenced as the members of the Russian world, the Russian Federation "undertakes" the responsibility of protection from its own point of view (Halhalli, 2022: 447). Especially after the Orange Revolution in 2004, the pro-Western government's directive to speak Ukrainian in public institutions and schools (Kurt, 2020: 16) created the perception in the Russian Federation that the rights of diaspora Russians in the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine were violated (Karabay, 2021: 15). Therefore, the concept of responsibility to protect was used in the interventions in 2014 and beyond to rationalize these practices.

In addition to all these facts and practices, the Russian Federation while trying to influence and sustain an impact on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church as the sole patron of the Orthodox sections is trying to rationalize the foreign policy practices of the Eurasian Ideology with an approach that greatly expands the concept of responsibility to protect in international relations. Ukraine's argument on this issue is that even during the Kievan Principality, Ukrainians had their own identity and significant cultural differences between Russians and Ukrainians were evidently observed even in that period. In addition, emphasizing that Ukraine has never been in the status of "little brother", Ukraine states that for this reason, as an independent state with a separate identity, it can make the decisions in foreign policy by its own.

The Eurasian ideology of the Russian Federation has a holistic structure based on preventing the USA and the Western Bloc countries from becoming a hegemonic power primarily in Russia's near hinterland – and if possible in the whole world like the practices performed by Russians in Georgia or Syria. Ukraine's foreign policy preferences, which are structured with a unique and indispensable identity, of course do not conform with the holistic ideology of the Russian Federation. For this reason, the foreign policy clashes and conflicts discussed above are experienced between the two countries.

Evaluation of the Russian Federation's Annexation of Crimea and its "Special Military Operation" in Terms of International Law

Annexation of Crimea in Terms of International Law

Throughout the history, the Russian Federation has pursued the policy of dominating the Black Sea and then reaching to the southern warm seas. Since the primary goal in the policy of landing in the warm seas requires dominating the Black Sea, this process was first initiated by the Russians with the 1774 Küçük Kaynarca Treaty. As a matter of fact, this agreement gave the Russians the right to have a navy in the Black Sea (Yüksel, 2019: 218). In addition, with the independence of Crimea with this agreement, the Black Sea lost its "Turkish Lake" character.

Since gaining dominance in the Black Sea also required acquiring a port in Crimea, The Russians annexed Crimea in April 1783 and established Akhtiar, which would soon after be named as Sevastopol (Zaytsev, 2000: 115). With the beginning of the mapping activities of the Russian navy in the entire Black Sea region (Kurnikova, 2013: 63), the Russians provided the first step of their policy of landing in the warm seas. For this reason, Sevastopol Port in Crimea has a critical importance for the Russians in the geopolitical context (Dumlupınar, 2017: 9). As a matter of fact, when the Crimean region, which was gifted to Ukraine by Khrushchev during the USSR period, remained outside the USSR after the cold war, this geopolitical importance of the port came to the fore again with the return to the Eurasian ideology in Russian foreign policy.

After the "green men's" arrival to Crimea, the referendum held in 2014, in which the Tatars living in Crimea boycotted and did not participate, resulted in annexation. In our opinion, the referendum in question has the status of absolute nullity in terms of international law as The Constitution of Ukraine only makes the validity of such a referendum subject to the permission of the Ukrainian Parliament (Şahin, 2018: 154). This referendum, which was carried out under the "supervision of the green men" without the permission of the Ukrainian Parliament and in which all segments of the society were not represented due to the boycott of the Crimean Tatars, has fallen into a state of absolute nullity due to the absence of that mentioned permission. In summary, the referendum in question was born dead from the beginning, as the requirement to obtain permission from the Ukrainian Parliament was not met.

"Special Military Operation" in Terms of International Law

The fourth paragraph of the second article of the UN Charter is as follows: "*All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.*" In this context, the aforementioned article considers the acquisition of territory by any country against the other country as illegal. Considering that the final goal of the "special military operation" initiated by the Russian Federation on

February 24, 2022 is the acquisition of territory, the operation should be evaluated within the scope of the UN Charter Article 2 (4) (Halhallı, 2022: 448) and be defined as an unlawful act.

Besides, according to the UN Charter 2 (1), of which both the Russian Federation and Ukraine are members, the UN was established according to the principle of sovereign equality of all its members, and in the context of this principle, each state has the authority to decide on the organizations that its own country will be granted membership. The Russian Federation's attempt to block and obstruct such rights, especially by using force, with reference to Ukraine's perception of Ukraine's membership in NATO as a threat to its immediate environment, also violates the principle of sovereign equality in the relevant article of the UN Charter.

In our point of view, the Russian Federation can not use this "special military operation" from the perspective of concept of security dilemma (Kurt, 2020: 4), citing the active enlargement policies of NATO and the USA towards Ukraine, and on the grounds that the rights of individuals belonging to the Russian world in Ukraine are not protected. Russian Federation tries to rationalize its foreign policy practices with the support it receives from the concept of R2P. In other words, rationalizing the crime, which can be explained as finding a reason for the criminal act of the perpetrator or rationalizing the act of the perpetrator (Vurucu, 2020: 499), by taking the support of the concepts of the security dilemma and R2P the situation that violates the provisions of international law in the "special military operation" of the Russian Federation exhibits a foreign policy practice in line with it.

Conclusion

The safe and sheltered life that mankind has been trying to achieve since the early ages of the history has led to the construction of states over time and the relations between these states have been instrumental in the emergence of the discipline of international relations. The classic realist theory, which emphasizes the traditional understanding of security in international relations, sees the most important problem of the states as survivability and therefore positions military power among the elements of national power in the elementary state building steps. The classic realist theory, which accepts the international environment as anarchic, therefore assumes that every state is in a struggle and effort to ensure its security by increasing its military capacity in line with its national interests.

But on the other hand, continually increasing the military capacity of the states in line with their own interests leads to a security dilemma which is a situation in which two countries enter into a kind of arms race because they see each other as a threat, and this spiral is likely to end in conflict ultimately. The arms race between the East and the West during the Cold War is shown as an example of the security dilemma in the international relations discipline.

If analyzed by Ukraine's side, it is obvious that with the fear of being "swallowed" by the Russians again, Ukraine is

willing to construct its new identity and while gaining its independence it is trying to eliminate Russian's containment policy by joining NATO hence the "special military operation" of the Russian Federation, which started on February 24, 2022, on the other hand does not permit so.

During Yeltsin period, when Atlanticist point of view was followed, these attempts of Ukraine did not receive a reaction. But as the Eurasian structure became the dominant ideology, the proclaimed membership agenda was not admitted acceptable in terms of national interests in the Russian Federation. In other words, the initiative in question was not perceived by the Russian Federation as an independent country's own foreign policy practice and was seen as a goal of gaining power in the region thanks to the bases to be established in the immediate vicinity of the Russian Federation by western countries, especially the USA. In this context, it is observed that the Russian Federation uses the elements of the concept of security dilemma against NATO regarding the Ukrainian foreign policy practices that it carries out with the transition to the Eurasian ideology.

In addition, the Russian Federation perceived the process of building a new identity, which started with Ukraine's membership to the EU, as a threat to the diaspora Russians living in Ukraine and did not affirm this new identity. In the process that started with the annexation of Crimea and continued with a special operation on February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation acted in line with its own arguments under the responsibility of protecting the rights of the diaspora Russians and the individuals that it describes as belonging to the Russian World, and adopted its own dynamics to the principles of international law in the international arena while trying to establish an inconsistent manner.

As a result, although the Russian Federation declared that it started the "special military operation" by taking advantage of the concept of security dilemma, with reference to Ukraine's demand to join NATO and NATO's tendency to expand to the east as a threat in its immediate environment, we come to a conclusion that this is not the case. The operation is an effort to rationalize all the revisionist policies of the Russian Federation in the region, stemming from its Eurasian ideology. In addition, the Russian Federation benefits not only from the concept of security dilemma but also from the concept of responsibility to protect in this reasoning process in the operation where discrimination against diaspora Russians and violation of the rights of individuals belonging to the Russian world are claimed. In our opinion, the efforts of Russia to legitimize and rationalize the crimes it committed are veiled and diversified.

Extended Abstract

Introduction

Since the early ages of history, the need to feel safe in human beings has emerged and the instinct to act collectively for the purpose of self-protection has settled which led to the identities and states to be established. This process led to the international relations discipline

emerging although the need for the security could not be fulfilled adequately. With this in mind, the states, of which their main purpose is to gain military power in order to maintain their security, started to experience conflictions between. The security dilemma concept, which can be summarized as "a situation where the actions taken by a state to increase its own security cause reactions from other states, which leads to a decrease rather than an increase in the state's security", was brought to scholars' attention and the term "responsibility to protect (R2P)" was also considered as a research field then.

After the Cold War, Russian Federation has used these terms in various regions like Georgia or Syria and mostly in Ukraine. As our study is mainly focused on the relations between Ukraine and Russian Federation, the historical background of it is analyzed thoroughly. When Ukraine officially declared itself as an independent country on 24 August 1991, its main concerns were about setting new institutions with a Western-based policy, resulting with a signed cooperation agreement in 1994 with the EU. As Russian Federation was governed from an Atlanticist perspective, this was not a controversial topic according to decision makers. However, in the long run, when Eurasian ideology became the dominant view, this membership request was not welcomed by Russian Federation.

In addition to this agenda, Ukraine was also considered to be a member of NATO while the topic was declared at the NATO summit in 2008. When these incidents were followed by the protests in Yevromeydan, which were about the suspension of the association process with the EU, "green men" with their unranked uniforms with no epaulets began to appear in Ukraine. During this time, with these green men in sight, a referendum was held for Crimea to join Russian Federation, though it was against Ukraine's constitutional law and such a referendum declaration should have been decided under the consent of the Ukrainian Parliament. Immediately after, Russian Federation annexed Crimea and this era resulted with Russian Federation's "special military operation".

Method

As case studies capture various range of perspectives, it also helps human beings to come to an understanding and gain a greater opinion of the subject which have been analyzed in their works. As so, its most significant benefit is the method's holistic review and it lets the researcher to use various tools on the subject in hand. With the help of this holistic approach, the researcher can build a detailed understanding and explore the factors of which the article refers to. In this paper, the case study method is preferred because of its capabilities mentioned above. Herewith, it is aimed to understand the relations between Ukraine and Russian Federation through their myths and claims in the light of events that occurred after the annexation of Crimea by analysing the terms "security dilemma" and "responsibility to protect (R2P)" within the international law.

Findings

International law that brings order to the relations between states and people, has various sources ranging from treaty law, international customary law, and general principles of law recognised by civilised nations. Those regulations are well thought and constructed in order to maintain harmony and secure environments. As harmony is maintained properly, those regulations remain unchanged while helping the world order.

As one of those regulations, UN Charter took on the task of keeping the peace by setting strict rules like the “non-use of force” principle. This principle in Article 2 (4) Un Charter prohibits a state to use force directly to another state or participating in the use of force. Also the same regulation has the principle of sovereign equality of all its members so each state has the authority to decide on the organizations that its own country will be granted membership. If referred to those articles it can easily be concluded that invasion of Ukraine breaks the rule of above mentioned regulation of Article 2 (4) of the UN charter. In addition to that, Russia is claiming *casus belli* against the will of Ukraine for being a NATO member although both countries are a member of the UN and both countries are equal to the terms of the agreement.

As all countries have their own legal systems, Ukraine has its own order arranging the provisions for holding a referendum and in this order it is a mandatory requirement for Ukraine’s Parliament to have a decision about the demand. In the example of the annexation of Crimea, it has been proven that such a parliamentary decision was not taken, and in this respect, the referendum in question was null and void. Therefore, the Russian Federation’s foreign policy practices were unpractical and irrational on the issue of the annexation of Crimea.

Discussion

Russian Federation, after the Cold War, has followed a West-oriented perspective which was identified as Atlanticist era. This perception aimed to run all public institutions within Western-centered policies to internalize liberal policies in society through privatizations. However, these privatizations gave rise to a group called the oligarchs, which exploits public resources for its own benefit. This economic development created a perception in the society that public goods were plundered and the plundering was due to liberal policies originating from the West. Because of such a social psychology, the Russian Federation turned its face to Eurasian policies that positioned the West as “the other” and exhibited revisionist tendencies in its foreign policy.

With these changes in Russian Federation’s foreign policy, it is accusing Ukraine of causing an insecure environment by considering to be a member of NATO and with this accusation Russia is using the term of security dilemma to its benefits. However, as a sovereign country Ukraine has the right to ensure its security by taking necessary precautions whereas being a member of an organisation. Moreover, the Russian Federation claims

that Ukraine is committing crimes against humanity by making Ukrainian the only language in public institutions and thus Russian Federation’s diaspora will have no access to.

Although Ukraine is a sovereign country and has the right to regulate its own society and although the citizens are obliged to obey the rules on demand, the Rome Status forms a regulation on the crimes against humanity. In this regulation, it is forbidden to perform persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, and gender. Therefore these precautions regarding to the usage of Ukrainian language only, is against the above mentioned status. However, Russian Federation’s measures taken in order to prevent this persecution is beyond its purpose and leads to massive destruction and massacre.

With this in mind, a state with the concern of its diaspora being in a situation facing persecution, shall not engage in an armed conflict causing a massacre of this magnitude. Thus, we came to a conclusion that, not only for our case study but also in other regions, the Russian Federation is exploiting the terms of “security dilemma” and “responsibility to protect (R2P)” to its benefits and the Russian Federation is demanding to be the hegemonic power which is stemming from its Eurasian ideology.

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