

Strategic Culture: The Answer of International Relations Study to Overcome Challenges in The Globalized World

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ABSTRACT

Strategic culture is an alternative perspective in International Relations that emerged because of the inability of realism and neorealism in explaining how a state actor acts against the threat from the another. Basically, this perspective believes that domestic factors such as geopolitical order, national historical experience, political culture and ideology, and military culture and its relationship with society in a country can affect the grand strategy of a state actor in defending itself and how the state actor responds to a threat. Although closely related to the military aspect, but the strategic culture perspective is not only limited to the nature of threats derived from state actors. Therefore, in this paper, the authors try to analyze how relevance is this perspective in explaining the state behavior in response to the new nature of threats that have been arisen as a result of globalization, namely non-traditional threats that are not derived from state actors, such as global terrorism. In analyzing it, the authors use the comparison method by comparing the strategic culture of several countries that confronting the same threat then see how these countries have its own uniqueness and effectivity in combating threat based on their strategic cultures.

Keywords: Strategic Culture, Globalization, Non-Traditional Threats, State Behavior

Introduction

Strategic Culture is an alternative perspective in the field of International Relations study. Can be considered as an alternative perspective because Strategic Culture is relatively new, it emerged in 1977 by the first generation of strategic culture thinker, Jack Snyder (1997). In his essay entitled "The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operation", it can be seen that the idea of a strategic culture in the study of International Relations arises when Snyder (1977) saw that there was uniqueness in the behavior of the Soviet Union in responding to US nuclear strategy, which is hardly to be explain by classic perspective in International Relations that was very popular in the Cold War era, neorealism. Snyder (1977) stated that in 1974, US Defense Minister James Schlesinger announced that the United States had begun to increase the flexibility of its strategic targeting plans by forming limited nuclear options as a supplement to the massive attack options that had existed before. The rational reason for the establishment of this strategy is to minimize the escalation if the nuclear war between the two sides really happened.

LNO works by limiting targets and scale of nuclear attacks, i.e. targets that are "allowed" to be attacked are only enemy military facilities with the aim of minimizing damage suffered by both parties and limiting the nuclear capabilities of both parties with one shot each. That is, when one party starts an attack, the enemy facilities will be destroyed and leaves one shot left to retaliate (Richelson, 1979). The United States strategist assumes that they can influence the Soviet Union to respond this LNO strategy with the same response (Snyder, 1977).

Snyder (1977) states that the United States prediction of the Soviet Union's response is based on game theory with a scenario if one country attacks with limited strike, there are only two choices left for the attacked country, responding with the same attack or doing nothing. The authors see that the United States strategist uses neorealism logic to predict the behavior of the Soviet Union. Like the neorealism thesis that the international system is anarchy, which means

there is no sovereignty above the state. in this thesis, the state behaviors are highly illuminated by international system. The game theory used by the United States strategist was the US effort to lure the Soviet Union to balance with US strategy as an effort to defend itself in an anarchy system.

The thesis comes from Stephen Walt (1987), he said that if there are two forces that relatively equal in international system, they will try to balance each other, so that it is called balance of power. In the case of the Soviet Union, the prediction of the United States was wrong. Apparently, the Soviet Union did not play in the same way as the United States. Even the United States strategy was criticized by the Soviet Union which sees this strategy is a harm to SALT (Richelson, 1979). The criticism comes because in this strategy there is an element of pre-emptive strike which can actually change the escalation of war into collateral damage for both countries (Snyder, 1977). The wrong strategic prediction of the United States has proven that the behavior of a country is not always only influenced by the existing international system, but there are other factors that determine it.

Based from these conditions, Snyder (1977) stated that state behavior can come from the unique culture found in the country, so that a strategic culture is formed. Snyder (1977) explained that the United States failed to predict the Soviet Union because it overlooked the cultural aspects possessed by Soviet policy makers. He added that things like thinking culture and emotional prejudices also influenced the Soviet Union's policies regarding nuclear strategy.

Snyder (1977) added that the uniqueness of situation, historical heritage, and military culture as well as the role of the military in the policy-making process are also cultural aspects that must be considered in analyzing a state's behavior through a strategic cultural perspective. Then to find out the strategic culture of a country, it can be done by looking at the written military doctrine, as well as the speech of the president and military commander. Although in the context of the Soviet Union such things have the potential to be used as propaganda, Snyder (1977) assures that this is not the main objective, but that there is always a strategic value that reflects what the country wants to achieve stated in such speeches or written doctrine.

Based on Snyder's (1977) explanation, it can be understood that strategic culture is a perspective to analyze how a state behaves in the face of a threat. In this case the internal factors of a country such as the culture of thinking, past experience, the uniqueness of the situation, and military culture are the determinants of a state's actions. Snyder (1977) describes strategic culture in the context of the Cold War where the nuclear situation is a major issue in this strategic cultural discourse. Snyder's (1977) thinking about strategic culture that is closely related to state policy on the nuclear issue is known as the first of the three generation of strategic culture thinking according to Iain Johnston (1995). According to Johnston (1995), the core of the first generation of strategic culture is related to a set of ideas, emotional responses, and patterns of behavior of the country's strategic thinkers related to nuclear issues.

The second wave of strategic cultural thinking was pioneered by Yitzhak Klein (1991) in his article entitled "A Theory of Strategic Culture". Klein (1991) began his explanation by criticizing that there were no more strategic thinkers who initiated a reliable war strategy in achieving national interests after Clausewitz era. Klein (1991) added that in formulating strategies, strategic planners only pay attention to principles that look sufficient and consistent, by identifying various facts that must be considered in strategic planning and which form a logical framework in which the strategy makes sense. However, that is not enough to make a strategy that is reliable enough. Klein (1991) states that to understand a strategy, it is not

enough to just look at a country's national policies, but also to look at the country's strategic cultural factors.

Strategic culture in Klein's (1991) explanation is defined as "the set of attitudes and beliefs held within a military establishment concerning the political objective of war and the most effective strategy and operational method of achieving it" in other words strategic culture in Klein's conception (1991) focuses on establishing military power, where military power is used to achieve political goals in a war, where war is a continuation of politics. In this case it can also be understood that beliefs and attitudes that develop in a country's military play an important role in the formation of the country's strategic culture. Like Snyder (1977), Klein (1991) also states that each country has its own uniqueness that is different from other countries related to strategic culture, where the strategic culture of each country is certainly formed from their internal uniqueness in terms of history, geography, culture national politics, economics, technology, etc. (Klein, 1991). Based on Klein's (1991) explanation, it can be seen that the main focus of the strategic culture discourse is strongly related to military issues and how the military is used to achieve a political goal in war.

Iain Johnston (1995) states that the third generation tends to be more rigorous and eclectic in conceptualizing independent ideational variables, and more narrowly focuses on certain strategic decisions as dependent variables. While Johnston (1995) himself defines strategic culture as an integrated "system of symbols (e.g., argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors) which acts to establish pervasive and long- term strategic preferences by formulating concepts of role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs ". it means that the strategic culture of a country is influenced by the symbols that develop internally in the country. The series of symbols referred to by Johnston (1995) as mentioned earlier, is closely related to the national culture of thinking, so as stated by some previous scholars such as Snyder (1977) and Klein (1991) that the culture of thinking is a unique aspect of a nation have a major influence on the formulation of a country's strategy.

In his writing entitled *Thinking about Strategic Culture*, Johnston (1995) also explained that there are two methods that can be used to analyze a state's strategic culture, namely cognitive mapping and symbol analysis. Cognitive mapping is designed to capture the structure of a person's causal assertion in relation to a particular policy domain and describe the consequences of the structure. To see this cognitive map, the scholar needs to see official documents released by the authorities related to policy making, or official speeches from the government concerned, then map the causes and effects of the statements contained in the documents and speeches to the policies made.

While symbol analysis becomes important in the study of strategic culture because in this study, cultural aspects of a country are one of the main factors that influence the country's strategy and policy. Johnston (1995) explains that symbols are a representation of culture itself, in other words the culture that develops in a country is communicated through these symbols. So that the culture in question can be studied further.

Based on the previous explanation, it can be seen that there is a different understanding of strategic culture by the three generations. In the first generation it can be seen that the strategic culture is fixated on the nuclear situation where the strategic decisions of a country (in this case the Soviet Union) are based on a culture of thinking and emotional prejudice (Snyder, 1977). In the second generation, based on what was described by Klein (1991) it can be seen that the situation faced by this generation is a military situation or can be said to be conventional war,

where strategic decisions are based on the attitudes and beliefs that develops in military institutions. Whereas the third generation, referring to Johnston (1995) tends to base strategic decisions on the system of symbols that develop in a state. Then the author sees that Johnston (1995) tends to see strategic culture not only applicable in the military realm, but includes the issue of national security, foreign policy, threats, and the use of force.

Strategic Culture and Non-traditional Threat: Case Study of Germany and Russia

Based on the explanation of some scholars such as Snyder (1977), Klein (1991), and Johnston (1995) it can be concluded that strategic culture is a very state-centric perspective. This happened because the scholars explained that strategic culture was only owned by the state and related to how a state response to a threat. Therefore, the relevance of strategic culture began to be questioned in this era of globalization where international relations were no longer dominated only by the state actors.

However, the author sees that this perspective is still very relevant. This happens because the increasingly complex actors in international relations actually present new “problems” for state actors. The “problems” refers to non-traditional threat. The concept of non-traditional threats is understood as a threat that does not come from military power of a state (Caballero, 2006). In other words, traditional threats can mean any threat that is outside the military realm of a country. These threats include terrorism, trans-national crime, insurgency, piracy, humanitarian issues, and even disease outbreaks.

In this paper, the authors take Germany and Russia as case studies to see how strategic culture influences the actions of Germany and Russia in responding to non-traditional threats. In this case, the two countries face the same two problems, but respond differently. The problems are the issue of refugees and terrorism. In responding to the issue of refugees, both Germany and Russia response in completely different way.

Germany implemented an open-door policy in dealing with refugee problems. The policy allows Germany to accept large numbers of refugees. Dempsey (2016) explained that the German policy was based on the German view that the Syrian crisis was a crisis that had a catastrophic impact on a global scale. Russia, on the other hand, has since refused to help refugees from Syria (telegraph, 2015). Even based on the data posted on the UNHCR website (2017), Russia did receive many refugees, which were 126,000. It's just that more than 123,000 of them are Ukrainian refugees, while Syrian refugees have only a few places in Russia.

In dealing with the issue of terrorism, Germany in its White Paper (2016) stated that terrorism is a global threat and tried to contribute to eradicating the threat by deploying 1200 military personnel to Syria in 2015 (The Guardian, 2015). Meanwhile, Russia also took similar steps to deploy its troops in Syria, but Russia has a different view from Germany regarding terrorism. Russia sees terrorism as a real threat, but Russia in its Foreign Policy Concept (FPC) in 2016 views terrorism that emerges in the Middle East and North Africa as a "result" of foreign intervention.

German and Russian policies related to these two issues are certainly related to aspects of the strategic culture of the two countries. The current strategic culture cannot be separated from the historical experience of Germany in World War II. The shadow of what was done by the Hitler regime in World War II helped shape Germany's strategic culture to this day. The fact that Germany started two World Wars made the previous German strategic culture that relied heavily on military and unilateralism originating from the culture of the Prussian Empire then

shifted to a militarism or refused to use the military again (Becker, 2013). Therefore, the norm which later developed into Germany's strategic culture is *Nie wieder Sonderweg* (Never again alone), in the sense that Germany will no longer act unilaterally and views its identity more superior than other nations, but will be more open to acting multilaterally with other European countries (Becker, 2013). Then the next norm is *Nie Wieder Krieg* (Never again war), meaning that the war will never again start from German soil, and Germany itself will never use its military instruments to fight (Becker, 2013).

Despite the slight shift in the Kosovo incident in 1999, Germany finally deployed its military in the war. The policy was a response to the genocide carried out by the Milosevic regime. The military breakdown was carried out on the basis of Germany's sense of responsibility so that an event similar to Auschwitz did not recur, so that a new norm emerged that was Never Again Auschwitz (Schax, 2012). This sense of responsibility arises from the guilt that emerged collectively in German society due to the actions of the Hitler regime during World War II (Becker, 2013). The guilt later turned into a sense of responsibility for Germany to maintain world peace and humanity. Therefore, German foreign policy has always been related to these narratives.

This explains German policy regarding refugees where Germany decided to accept large numbers of refugees when various other countries saw refugees as a threat to national security. This policy relates to the German strategic culture of never again Auschwitz, where Germany does not want a humanitarian crisis on a large scale to occur again. While the sense of responsibility of Germany to maintain peace and protect humanity is a driving force for counter-terrorism. Military instruments have to be deployed because this case concerns the security of the wider community which is part of Germany's responsibility for world peace.

Turning to Russia, Russia's strategic culture largely based on Russian historical experience on both Tsardom and the Soviet's Era. In the Tsardom era, Russia was geopolitically located in the heartland region, and geographically bordering many countries often faced invasions from surrounding countries. Russia's experience makes Russia not easy to trust with other countries, so it relies more on self-reliance. The same event was repeated in the era of World War II in which the Soviet Union which signed the agreement to not attack each other with Germany, instead became the target of Nazi forces' operations, the impact of this event, the Soviet Union suffering such a huge damage. Therefore, in the Cold War, as Snyder explained (1977) earlier, the Soviet Union did not respond to the strategy of the US LNO, because the Soviet Union considered that it was not necessarily the United States actually limiting its nuclear power in accordance with the stated in the LNO. So, if the Soviet Union agrees and has already reduced its nuclear power based on what is desired by the United States, then it is very dangerous for the Soviet Union if it turns out that the United States does not really restrict its nuclear power. It was this experience that made Russia distrust other countries especially in security matters.

In addition, the fact that Russia succeeded in thwarting all invasions faced, also formed the Russian identity as a "European savior". This was also stated by Lavrov (2016), where he said that Russia was the one who saved the International System by thwarting Napoleon's invasion which was seen as destroying the system because he tried to dominate all European land. Therefore, a narrative emerges that Russia views itself as "the great savior". On that basis, according to Lavrov (2016) Russia also identified itself as part of Europe, and deserved to be recognized as part of Europe, but apparently the Europe actually rejected Russia as part of them because Europe itself was afraid of the growth of Russia as a great power from the east (Lavrov , 2016).

This made Russia build its own identity as "The Great Russia" because it was not recognized by Europeans but felt its identity was too high for Asian nations and other Slavic races, even Ukraine which has very close cultural relation in some extends. As stated by Onuch (2015) that Russian and Ukrainian people look at each other negatively towards each other's countries. Russian identity which is not recognized by Europe or the United States forms Russia's negative view of the West as an enemy. Basically, Lavrov (2016) states that Russia regards the West as a Partner, but the overthrow of the Ukrainian president makes Russia see that the West itself is considered to violate the principle of equal security between Russia and NATO. Therefore, Russia's view of the West has also strengthened.

This strategic culture also explains Russia's policies regarding refugees and terrorism at once. First, in the FPC (2016) Russia states that terrorism and civil war in Syria are the work of foreign intervention, if you look at the dynamics that exist, then the foreign party is the West or the United States specifically. This was evidenced by the actions of the United States who wanted to overthrow the regime of Bashar Al Ashad. Russia is suspicious of this action, therefore Russia deployed troops in the purpose of counter- terrorism, while protecting the Ashad regime from the United States at the same time. This statement is based in the Russian FPC (2016) that Russia considers that only the current government regime is capable of stopping the civil war in Syria. In the case of refugees, Russia's suspicion of other parties was also a driving force, Russia suspected that Syrian refugees could be members of terrorist networks.

Conclusion

Strategic culture is an alternative perspective of international relations arising from the failure of neorealism in explaining state behavior in the Cold War era. In its development, there are three generations of strategic culture that have different views regarding what is a strategic culture. The point is that strategic culture is an internal factor that explains a country's behavior regarding security policy, foreign policy, and threats.

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