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Key discourses of Turkish Eurasianism

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Abstract: The goal of this paper is to explore Turkish Eurasianism, ascertaining and analyzing diverse types and concepts of Eurasianism in Türkiye. The objectives of the study are to examine theoretical, conceptual, and ideological origins and foundations of various types of Eurasianism in Türkiye and look into how they influence foreign policy course of Ankara, particularly in diverting the country away from the traditional unidimensional pro-Western Kemalist orientation and drifting it towards Eurasia by cultivating closer rapprochement and forging a strategic alliance with leading powers of the continent. The relevance and novelty of the topic are reflected in the in-depth critical analyses of the pertinent sources as well as in identifying the character and peculiarities of Eurasianist discourses in Türkiye. The results of the study have demonstrated that although Turkish Eurasianists are not a united political force and are not unanimous in foreign policy matters, to a certain degree they tend to exhibit anti-imperialist, anti-Western and counter-hegemonic attitudes. Adhering to anti-Western and more autonomous foreign policy course, Turkish Eurasianists tend to give a top priority for Ankara's strategic independence from the West and its closer rapprochement with Russia, China, Turkic states and other countries in Greater Eurasia. Despite their ardent support and advocacy for a greater autonomy from the West and reorienting the country to Greater Eurasia, as domestic political movements they are rather marginal, holding limited sway over Türkiye's internal and external policy. Therefore, to have a voice and a meaningful influence over Türkiye's foreign policy course, Turkish Eurasianists are periodically forced to ally themselves with powerful political parties such as Erdoğan's AK Party (AKP). Although Turkish Eurasianists consistently advocate for reorienting Türkiye to Eurasia, Ankara's foreign policy is mostly determined by pragmatic approaches. From this perspective, although after the collapse of the bi-polar world order Türkiye has increasingly sought to cultivate a balanced international policy as a 'middle power', the nation's full disengagement from the Western strategic security system has never been a priority for Türkiye. As Ankara is deeply integrated and embedded within the policy and security system of the West since the inception of the Cold War, Turkish policymakers have emphasized the strategic partnership with the Transatlantic alliance system, focusing on EU membership.

Keywords: Türkiye; West; East; Eurasia; Eurasianism; Kemalism; Nationalism; neo-Ottomanism; Islamism; pan-Turkism; pan-Turanism

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Основные дискурсы турецкого евразийства

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Аннотация: Целью статьи является исследование турецкого евразийства, выявление и анализ различных типов и концепций евразийства в Турции. Задачи исследования – анализ теоретических, концептуальных и идеологических истоков и основ различных типов евразийства в Турции и изучение их влияния на внешнеполитический курс Анкары, в частности, на отклонение страны от традиционной одномерной прозападной кемалистской ориентации и ее дрейф в сторону Евразии путем культивирования более тесного сближения и создания стратегического союза с ведущими державами континента. Актуальность и новизна исследования отражены в глубоком критическом анализе источников, а также в выявлении характера и особенностей дискурсов евразийства в Турции. Результаты исследования продемонстрировали, что, хотя турецкие евразийцы не являются единой политической силой и не едины в вопросах внешней политики, в определенной степени они склонны демонстрировать антиимпериалистические, антизападные и контргегемонистские взгляды и позиции. Придерживаясь антизападного и более независимого внешнеполитического курса, турецкие евразийцы склонны отдавать приоритет стратегической независимости Анкары от Запада и ее более тесному сближению с Россией, Китаем, тюркскими государствами и другими странами Евразии. Несмотря на их горячую поддержку и пропаганду стратегической автономии от Запада и переориентации страны на Евразию, как внутренние политические движения они довольно маргинальны, имея ограниченное влияние на внутреннюю и внешнюю политику Турции. Поэтому, чтобы иметь голос и значимое влияние на внешнеполитический курс Турции, турецкие евразийцы периодически вынуждены вступать в союз с ведущими политическими партиями, такими, как Партия справедливости и развития Эрдогана (ПСР). Хотя турецкие евразийцы последовательно выступают за переориентацию Турции на Евразию, внешняя политика Анкары в основном определяется прагматическими подходами. С этой точки зрения, хотя после падения биполярного мирового порядка Турция все больше стремилась развивать сбалансированную международную политику в качестве «средней державы», полное отделение страны от стратегической системы безопасности Запада никогда не было приоритетом для Турции. Поскольку Анкара глубоко интегрирована в политику и систему безопасности Запада с момента начала холодной войны, турецкие политики подчеркивали стратегическое партнерство с системой Трансатлантического альянса, сосредоточившись на членстве в ЕС.

Ключевые слова: Турция; Запад; Восток; Евразия; евразийство; кемализм; национализм; неоосманизм; исламизм; пантюркизм; пантуранизм

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Түрік еуразияшылдығының негізгі дискурстары

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Аңдатпа. Бұл мақала түрік еуразияшылдығын тереңнен зерттеп, Түркиядағы еуразияшылдықтың бағыттары мен тұжырымдамаларын анықтап, талдауды мақсат етеді. Түркиядағы еуразиялық қозғалыстардың түрлі бағыттарының теориялық, концептуалдық және идеологиялық бастаулары мен негіздеріне сыни талдау жасау және олардың Анкараның сыртқы саясатына ықпалын, сонымен қатар елдің дәстүрлі батысшыл кемалистік бағыттан ауытқу әрекеттері мен Еуразиядағы жетекші державаларымен неғұрлым тығыз жақындасуды жеделдету, олармен стратегиялық одақ құру арқылы осы құрлыққа ойысу талпыныстарын қарастыру мақаланың міндеттері болып табылады. Зерттеудің өзектілігі мен жаңашылдығы тақырыпқа қатысты дерек көздерін терең талдау мен Түркиядағы еуразияшылдық дискурстардың сипаты мен ерекшеліктерін анықтаумен тікелей байланысты. Зерттеудің нәтижелері түрік еуразияшылдарының біртұтас саяси күш болып қалыптаспағанына және сыртқы саяси мәселелерде ортақ тұжырымды ұстанбауына қарамастан, белгілі бір дәрежеде олар батысқа қарсы антиимпериалистік және антигегемонистік көзқарастар мен ұстанымдарды көрсетуге бейім екендерін көрсетті. Батысқа қарсы және анағұрлым тәуелсіз сыртқы саясат бағытын ұстана отырып, түрік еуразияшылдары Анкараның Батыстан стратегиялық жағынан тәуелсіз болуын жақтап, елдің Ресей, Қытай, түркі мемлекеттері және Еуразиялық құрлықтың басқа да елдерімен жақындасуына басымдық береді. Батыстан стратегиялық тәуелсіздікті талап етіп, елдің Еуразия құрлығына қарай ойысуын жақтауына қарамастан, түрік еуразияшылдарының елдің ішкі және сыртқы саясатындағы ықпалы айтарлықтай шектеулі екені көрсетілді. Осыған орай Түркияның сыртқы саяси курсына белгілі бір деңгейде ықпал ету үшін түрік еуразияшылдары елдегі жетекші саяси күштермен, соның ішінде биліктегі Ердоғанның жетекшілігіндегі Әділет және даму партиясы (АКР) сияқты үстем саяси партиялармен одақ құруға мәжбүр болып отыр. Түрік еуразияшылдарының елдің Еуразияға қайта бағдарлануын дәйекті түрде қолдағанымен, Түркияның сыртқы саясаты негізінен прагматикалық тұжырымдар тұрғысынан анықталатыны көрсетілді. Осы тұрғыдан келгенде, екі полярлы әлем ыдыраған уақыттан бері «орта держава» ретінде Түркия халықаралық қатынастарда тепе-теңдікке негізделген әлдеқайда дербес саясат жүргізуге басымдық бергенімен, Батыстың стратегиялық қауіпсіздік жүйесінен шығу Анкара үшін ешқашан басым бағыт болған емес екені айқындалды. Қырғи қабақ соғысы уақытынан бері Батыстың қауіпсіздік жүйесіне етене түрде интеграцияланып, сіңіскен Түркия мен оның саяси басшылығы ел үшін әрқашан Трансатлантикалық альянспен әріптестіктің стратегиялық маңызы мен Еуропалық Одаққа мүше болудың саяси маңызын ерекше атап келеді.

Түйінді сөздер. Түркия; Батыс; Шығыс; Еуразия; еуразияшылдық; кемализм; ұлт-шылдық; неоттоманизм; исламизм; пантүркизм; пантуранизм

Introduction

The study explores diverse paradigms and discourses of Eurasianism in Türkiye, focusing on foreign policy stances and attitudes of various Eurasianist traditions, movements and political

forces within the country and their advocacy for a more independent, multidimensional and multidirectional foreign policy course, in which Ankara would play a meaningful role in regional and international affairs as an assertive 'middle power'. Throughout the Cold War period, the Republic of Türkiye had been thoroughly integrated into Euro-Atlantic political and security institutions, which allowed the country to acquire the Western identity, which reflected not only in the adoption of Western ideas and models of the development, but also in the nation's membership into Transatlantic institutions like the NATO (Yilmaz and Bilgin 2006: 39). Within the Transatlantic political and security system, Turkish policymakers systematically cultivated a democratic, unidimensional Western-centric and pro-European Union (EU) identity and discourse premised upon Kemalism, the hegemonic ideology of the country throughout the republican era. Nonetheless, with the collapse of the bi-polar international system and the dawn of a new world order, global and regional power shifts occurred, in which there was a relative decline of American hegemony and the emergence of non-Western power centers and leading nations who were determined to bring deep paradigm shifts and transformations in the international system, vigorously inducing tectonic changes in the Cold War status quo by establishing new rules of regional and global engagement (Kutlay and Öniş 2021: 3051).

All these shifts and transformations in the international arena induced by the end of the Cold War and the birth of a new world order, motivated and encouraged certain countries, including Türkiye, to acquire a new foreign policy orientation and identity. In addition to the hegemonic state-sponsored pro-Western Transatlantic Kemalist discourse, new overlapping and conflicting foreign policy discourses emerged in Türkiye. Turkish policymakers sought alternative regional realignments and orientations predicated on the country's political, diplomatic and military capabilities and outreach. In this regard, Türkiye has positioned itself as an assertive 'middle power' in the context of profound changes in the regional and international balance of power. This in turn was marked by the country's transition from a predominantly pro-Western transatlantic orientation to a more assertive military power in the context of the profound shifts in the US-led liberal global order (Kutlay and Öniş 2021: 3053).

From this standpoint, an assertive 'middle power' status has encouraged Türkiye to search for new realignments and foreign policy reorientations to gain a strategic autonomy, mitigate and lessen its excessive dependence and overreliance on the United States and the Western security system. The need for new realignments has been induced by the country's efforts to carve out a more autonomous policy space and to forge new alliances with other regional powers, particularly with nation states in Greater Eurasia. Such foreign policy shifts and reorientations have been prompted not only by transformations in international politics, but also by profound domestic policy changes that occurred during the 1980s and 1990s with the gradual reduction of the hegemony of Kemalist discourse and the advent of new alternative political parties and movements in Türkiye. A new generation of Turkish political leadership and policymakers such as Turgut Özal, Süleyman Demirel, Necmettin Erbakan, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Ahmet Davutoğlu and others have prompted substantial paradigm shifts in domestic and international policy, mitigating the domination of Kemalist discourse in the country's international orientation. While remaining loyal to the unidimensional pro-Western European orientation and vocation of Kemalism, these ambitious Turkish policy makers have sought a multidimensional and multidirectional autonomous foreign policy course.

Such profound paradigm shifts in domestic and foreign policy of Türkiye have induced reconsideration and reassessment of the nation's conventional unidimensional pro-Western Atlanticist foreign policy and a move towards more autonomous multidimensional international policy, which implies the diversification of Türkiye's engagement with the Middle East, the Islamic world, newly emerged independent Turkic speaking republics in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, as well as influential powers of greater Eurasia such as Russia, China, Iran, India and others. Due to the new assertive 'middle power' policy course, Türkiye has gained an opportunity to extend its outreach beyond its traditional Western-centric orientation, penetrating the areas of Eurasia (Tüysüzoğlu 2014). At the center of new foreign policy discussions in Türkiye lies Eurasianism that has become the paramount intellectual and conceptual framework and paradigm in such debates among Turkish policy makers.

Turkish scholars highlight several prominent traditions and discourses of Eurasianism such as neo-Ottomanism, Islamism, pan-Turkism and pan-Turanism as the four most powerful ideologies that have played prominent roles in shaping domestic and external policy courses of the country (Tüfekçi 2017a: 96; Tüysüzoğlu 2014: 97).

Although Kemalism is known for its rigid pro-Western Atlanticist identity and orientation and the influence of this hegemonic discourse has dwindled, being challenged by alternative discourses, Kemalism is in fact part of Eurasianist debates. Eurasianist foreign policy discourses such as neo-Ottomanism, Islamism, pan-Turkism and pan-Turanism have pushed Turkey towards an extensive engagement with the regions of Eurasia that had played a secondary or marginal role for Ankara during the Cold War. In Tüysüzoğlu's view, new foreign policy shifts towards the Islamic world, post-Soviet space and the Turkic world under Turgut Özal, Süleyman Demirel and their successors were informed and guided by Turkish Eurasianism (Tüysüzoğlu 2014: 97).

Although in the framework of Eurasianism Türkiye would strive for greater engagement with the whole Eurasia, at the onset neo-Ottomanist and Islamist orientations dominated Özal's and Demirel's policy. Yet during the 1990s, the importance of cultural, linguistic and ethnic proximity and affiliations with newly emerged Turkic republics in Central Asia and the South Caucasus gained momentum, which encouraged Türkiye to prioritize closer cooperation with Turkic states. A new Eurasianist pan-Turkic discourse of a "Turkish world stretching from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China" guided Turgut Özal's new policy in inner Eurasia (Balci and Liles 2018: 13; Landau 1995; Tüysüzoğlu 2014: 97).

Methods and Materials

This article aims to investigate Turkish Eurasianism by exploring the various traditions and forms of Eurasianism in Türkiye, evaluating their conceptual, theoretical, and ideological foundations, and examining the ways in which they impact Turkish foreign policy. To conduct this study, we have critically examined the pertinent literature that addressed the research problem; in particular, we have critically analyzed studies that were written in Turkish, English and Russian. We have also carefully examined data from online media, reports from top analytical centers, research papers, and studies by Turkish and other foreign researchers. We have also reviewed a wide range of pertinent sources and materials related to our study. The information gathered for our investigation is extensive, contradictory, and overlapping. We have known that a thorough examination and critical questioning are necessary to determine what

trustworthy and pertinent information and data can offer and whether we have overlooked any crucial theoretical, conceptual, or contextual elements of the research problem. As a result, we have made sure that the data is trustworthy, pertinent to our investigation, and capable of offering enough details to enable us to address the research questions during the interpretation and analysis process.

The study's methodology is qualitative since we use discourse analysis and historical-comparative analysis to look at Turkish Eurasianism's origins, growth, and evolution as well as its different iterations and ideological foundations. Historical-comparative and discourse analysis is an effective method for determining and evaluating the historical foundations of Turkish Eurasianism, as well as its rise and spread in Turkey during the 1980s and 1990s. Furthermore, this analytical tool enables us to comprehend the production, reproduction, and reinforcement of Turkish Eurasianism and its derivatives in Turkish intellectual and political circles. By using this analytical tool, we have been able to determine the underlying reasons behind the formation of such a potent ideology and the motivations behind Turkish Eurasianism. Therefore, we have concluded that the origins of Turkish Eurasianism can be traced back to the way Turkish society responded to the difficulties and changes brought about by the end of the Cold War and its quest for a new foreign policy strategy that would enable Türkiye to play a key role in a new world order. We have demonstrated that Turkish nationalism and anti-Western sentiment are at the heart of Turkish Eurasianism through the use of historical-comparative and discourse analysis. Additionally, Islamism, pan-Turkism, pan-Turanism, and neo-Ottomanism all influence and inform Turkish Eurasianism. In addition, we have thoroughly investigated the current discrepancy between theory and practice regarding the degree to which Turkish Eurasianism influences and molds Türkiye's foreign policy paths. Türkiye firmly adheres to pragmatic and realist approaches in its foreign policy and in addressing global issues, despite Turkish Eurasianism being a potent political discourse. From this angle, our research aims to address the following queries: a) What led to the emergence of Turkish Eurasianism? b) What are the ideological foundations of Eurasianist discourses in Türkiye and how do they influence Ankara's foreign policy?

Results

The historical roots and birth of Eurasianism

Over the past three decades, Eurasianist ideas have taken deep root in Türkiye, having been accepted and embraced by Turkish policy makers, intellectuals and other parts of Turkish society. Yet it should be noted that Eurasianism was born among leading Russian intellectuals in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century. Although today Eurasianism is widely associated and identified with Aleksandr Dugin, a prominent Russian philosopher and far-right activist, as the founder of neo-Eurasianism in Russia, the roots of Eurasianism go back to the 1920s-1930s. After the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 a group of Russian intellectuals in exile in Europe laid the foundations of Russian Eurasianism as a response to tectonic shifts and transformation in Russia and Europe engendered by World War I and the Bolshevik takeover. Among the founders and theoreticians of Eurasianism in émigré were Prince N.S. Trubetskoy, P.N. Savitsky, P.P. Suvchinsky, G.V. Florovsky, G.V. Vernadsky, N.N. Alekseev, V.N. Ilyin, P.M. Bitsilli, Prince D.P. Svyatopolk-Mirsky and many other Russian intellectuals in Europe (Dugin 1997; Dugin 2012: 84).

Anti-Westernism and the rejection of the West lie at the core of classical Eurasianism. Alexander Dugin defines traditional Eurasianism as "a movement that summarized and systematized in its worldview the main philosophical, sociological and historical views of the 'early' and 'late' Slavophiles, and went further than them in rejecting the West and affirming the unique character of Russian civilization" (Dugin 2012: 85). As anti-Westernism is central to classical Russian Eurasianism, the founders of Eurasianism stressed that Russia is not part of European civilization, rather N.S. Trubetskoy, P.N. Savitsky and their fellow contemporaries constructed a unique Russia political body as a distinct self-sustaining independent civilization, which was conceptualized by them as a "world state" (Dugin 2012: 85). While defining Russia as a unique geopolitical entity being the antithesis to Europe and to the broader Western civilization, the founders of classical Eurasianism outlined Russia's Eurasian vocation, seeing virtually no difference between actual Russia and greater Eurasia. In this sense, the early Eurasianists specifically emphasized the cultural and civilizational identity and essence of Russia as the result and outcome of the coalescence of European and Oriental cultures and values, forming a single unique synthesis, representing something completely new, neither Europe nor Asia, but not a simple combination of both, that is Eurasian (Dugin 2012: 85).

As the early Eurasianists highlighted a broader Eurasian and even universal identity and vocation of Russia, they argued that the so-called "Russia-Eurasia" is a completely independent and unique civilization, which must be considered in itself as something different from both the West and the East. At the same time, the Eurasianists emphasized that the West is aggressive, and the East is patient and contemplative, therefore the influence of the West actively distorts the original Russian culture, and the influence of the East is constructive and benevolent. Hence, the Eurasianists were sympathetic to the East and firmly rejected all types of Westernism as well as the ideological by-products of Western culture such as liberalism, individualism, racism, materialism, atheism, techno-centrism and so on (Dugin 1997). The Eurasianists simultaneously highlighted that "Russia-Eurasia" should not be understood simply as a country, rather "Russia-Eurasia" should be seen a universal and worldwide state, and thereby as such Russia must be developed in accordance with distinct patterns, unlike either the Western or the Oriental models. The multitude of ethnic groups and cultures inhabiting its territory form a complex pattern, each element of which – Slavic, Turkic, Caucasian, Mongolian, Paleo-Asian, and other groups ought to find a worthy place in the process called "pan-Eurasian nationalism" (Dugin 2012: 85).

During the Soviet times, although Eurasianism was not officially invoked or sanctioned by the Soviet regime, certain scholars focused on various aspects of Eurasianism from historical perspectives. Perhaps, the leading scholar who systematically focused on Eurasianism was a prominent Soviet intellectual and historian Lev Gumilyov. After the fall of the Soviet Union and emergence of new independent states in the ruins of the Soviet empire, there was the renaissance of Eurasianism not only in Russia, but also in Kazakhstan and other former Soviet republics. There was a top-down promotion of Eurasianism by prominent political leaders, specifically by Kazakhstan's first president Nursultan Nazarbayev who proposed a Eurasian Union in 1994 (Nazarbayev 1994). Such top-down proposals and advocacy for Eurasianism by president Nazarbayev and his counterparts were soon translated into concrete actions when Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus and other former Soviet republics got together to set up supranational institutions that further facilitated integration processes in the region.

Besides the top-down advocacy for Eurasianism, there has been bottom-up advocacy and initiatives aimed at revitalizing and realizing Eurasianist ideas in practice. In this regard,

Alexander Dugin has been central in revisiting classical Eurasianism and developing new concepts of Eurasianism adapted to the new geopolitical status quo. Although Dugin's Eurasianist ideas may seem just a mere replication of the concepts and theories of classical Eurasianism, his neo-Eurasianism is way too radical and aggressive in its character and essence. Like the architects of Eurasianism, Alexander Dugin highlights the deep historic Western hostility to Russia. In this regard, he goes further by saying that the West is satanic and decadent (Novaya Gazeta Europe 2024). Dugin has called for dismantling and wiping out "the epistemological hegemony of the West" that has poisonous effects on Russian consciousness (Novaya Gazeta Europe 2024). The publication of his seminal book in 1997 titled *"Fundamentals of Geopolitics: Russia's Geopolitical Future"* prompted harsh reactions in Western academic and intellectual circles as well as among policy makers. Reviewing Dugin's contentious book, a leading American scholar and fellow at the Hoover Institution, John B. Dunlop assessed his neo-Eurasianism and anti-Western attitudes as a sign of the rise of far-right fascist ideologies, sentiments and ideas in Russian society (Dunlop 2004: 41). Western scholars and experts had observed the spread of far-right radical Russian nationalism in the form of Eurasianism in the early 1990s (Thom 1994: 76).

Although Alexander Dugin is believed to be the founder of neo-Eurasianism in Russia, the father of neo-Eurasianist discourse was Lev Gumilyov. Besides Alexander Dugin, Russian intellectual and political figures such as Alexander Panarin, Andrei Kozyrev, Yegor Gaidar and others have greatly contributed to neo-Eurasianist discourses. Like Dugin, Alexander Panarin and other Russian intellectual and political figures shared the radical view that the West led by the United States poses a great threat not only to Russia, but also to the rest of humanity. They emphasized that American attempts to establish its domination by forging a unipolar international order must be confronted and prevented. In Panarin's opinion, despite the West pretending to be a defender of human rights, the United States and European nations have weaponized human rights as a political tool in order to dictate and dominate the world. Panarin pointed out that as the exploiter of human rights, the West is the main source of oppression and abuse of the rest of the planet. At the same time, unlike Dugin and other hardliner Eurasianists, Panarin came to embrace democratic and liberal models of development (Tufekci 2017a: 51). This makes Panarin part of the liberal wing of neo-Eurasianism, while Alexander Dugin represents the radical far-right of neo-Eurasianism.

In this case, although the views of Alexander Dugin have had a substantial impact on the development of Eurasianism in Türkiye, Dugin has been pretty much harsh and hostile towards Türkiye. In his 1997 book, Dugin referred to Türkiye as a secular pseudo-Islamic entity who purportedly became a reliable tool in the hands of Western Atlanticist political elites (Dugin 1997: 262). Moreover, in another book published in 2012, Alexander Dugin highlighted that the expansion of the Russian empire in the 18th and 19th centuries occurred at the expense of the Ottoman empire and thereby the current Russian policy makers ought to be cautious of an anticipated hostility by Türkiye (Dugin 2012: 81). Despite harboring such an antagonistic attitude towards Türkiye, Dugin's neo-Eurasianist discourses have come to be accepted and embraced by certain factions and figures of Turkish Eurasianism.

The advent of Eurasianism in Türkiye

Studies on Turkish politics highlight that Türkiye has always been a fertile milieu for debates about overlapping and conflicting ideologies and conceptual frameworks pertaining

to both domestic and foreign policy. Among prominent hegemonic ideologies can be indicated secularism represented by Kemalism, Islam, pan-Turkism, pan-Turanism, Ottomanism and neo-Ottomanism (Ege 2022; Evrensel, Gönenç, and Ünlüsoy 2024; Tüysüzoğlu 2023). On the one hand, these main four ideologies – neo-Ottomanism, Islamism, pan-Turkism and pan-Turanism gave rise to discourses of Turkish Eurasianism, and on the other hand, Alexander Dugin's neo-Eurasianist visions, even if they were anti-Turkish to a certain extent, have greatly contributed to vigorous debates about Eurasianism in Turkish political milieu. In addition to these four mainstream ideologies, Kemalism has likewise been central to the rise of Turkish Eurasianism, despite its pro-Western European orientation and identity.

Under the hegemony of Kemalism, since its birth in 1923 the involvement of the Republic of Türkiye in international politics has been within the Western Transatlantic security system where Ankara has been given curtailed autonomy with regard to issues of security and international politics. Under the security umbrella of NATO led by the United States, Turkish foreign and security policy became an integral part of the Western Transatlantic regional security system. The hegemonic Kemalist discourse has shaped, informed and guided pro-Western internal and external developments and trajectories. Although the Eurasianist essence of Kemalism is increasingly challenged in literature due to its pro-Western attitude, Kemalism as a modernist top-down hegemonic ideology has contributed to Eurasianism in the country. The ideas of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk were intended to transform post-Ottoman Türkiye into a modern secular Europeanized nation, integrated into the Western world (Perinçek and Akçali 2009: 551).

Throughout the republican era, Turkish policy makers prioritized entrenching Türkiye's Western identity, further integrating it into the West by gaining EU membership, and at the same time, portraying the country as a role model for the Middle Eastern Muslim nations as an advanced secular modern nation state (Yilmaz and Bilgin 2006: 40). Yet unlike other alternative Eurasianist discourses, Kemalist Eurasianism did not envision the country's greater rapprochement and strategic cooperation with leading powers of Eurasia such as the Soviet Union, China, Iran and others. Under the guidance of Kemalism, Turkish policy makers had developed a strong Western identity of the nation, associating the country with the West and simultaneously rejecting its Oriental identity, referring to the East as 'other' and 'different' (Yilmaz and Bilgin 2006: 58). Under the strong influence of Kemalism, Turkish policy makers constructed, reinforced and perpetuated the nation's Western identity in contrast to eastern, which contributed to entrench and sustain Türkiye's pro-western orientation. Yilmaz and Bilgin emphasize that Türkiye's embrace of Western identity and affinity with Europe was in fact an outcome of westernization efforts of the founders of the republic in the early period (Yilmaz and Bilgin, 2006: 41). Studies point out that besides strategic security concerns, Turkish policy makers' ardent support for membership in NATO and the EU were also determined by a cultural dimension. Türkiye's aspiration for the NATO and then the EU membership was rooted in Turkish policy makers' profound belief in Western values and the goodness of European political culture and systems (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 209). In this sense, Türkiye's integration into the North Atlantic security system was not only determined by the security concerns, but also by the cultural and civilizational identification with Europe and the West in general. Political narratives of the Cold War period suggested that besides providing collective security, NATO acted as the "military guarantor of Western civilization" (Williams and Neumann 2000: 361).

As can be seen, during the Cold War due to its close cooperation and association with the West, Türkiye's long-standing and well-established Oriental identity significantly eroded and diluted. Despite the concerted efforts of Turkish policy makers to further reinforce the country's western identity and pro-Western orientation, with time passing, Turkish public opinion grew critical of strategic connections with the West, in particular with the United States (Yilmaz and Bilgin 2006: 58). Meanwhile, with the rise of alternative political and security discourses in the country and profound shifts in public opinion in the 1980s and 1990s, newly emerged political forces and figures advocated the diversification of Türkiye's foreign policy identity and orientations. They suggested that while the adherence to the West may remain intact, yet taking into consideration tectonic changes and shifts occurred with the end of the Cold War they hinted, Türkiye ought to seek greater autonomy in its foreign policy by reducing its overreliance on the West and opening up to the Middle East and greater Eurasia. The proponents of this approach suggested that besides the recent embrace of the Western identity, Türkiye ought to reclaim its historic deep-established eastern identity and ties as well.

These alternative discourses were in fact not new in Turkish society, as their roots date back to the Ottoman era when Islam, Orient, Turan and Turkism had been dominant political ideologies. In the 1980s and 1990s, these traditional ideologies, that had been marginalized by Kemalism for many years, reemerged, experiencing their renaissance. During the Cold War era Türkiye had been within the Transatlantic alliance and even had come to be perceived by the West as a model country with democratic system and a free market economy with a majority Muslim population (Evrensel, Gönenç, and Ünlüsoy 2024: 1). Nonetheless, the recent rapprochement with Russia, China, other Turkic states, its attempts to join certain international institutions in Eurasia, and its military engagement in Syria and Libya have been seen by many experts as a sign of Türkiye's pivot to Asia and greater Eurasia (Evrensel, Gönenç, and Ünlüsoy 2024, 1). Such profound shifts in Türkiye's domestic and foreign policy have mitigated and eroded the dominance of the Kemalist discourse (Perinçek and Akçali 2009: 551; Yavuz 2022).

The republican period that began in 1923 with the establishment of the Turkish nation state is divided into four stages: the first period, 1923-1945; the second, 1945-1980s; the third, the 1990s, and the fourth, the 2000s. Until the mid-1980s, Kemalism had been the dominant hegemonic state discourse and remained unchallenged (Tüfekçi 2017b: 1). Nonetheless, with the ascension of Turgut Özal and his "Anavatan Partisi" (the Motherland Party), changed the Kemalist course of the country due to devising a new alternative state ideology. In this regard, besides the dominant European and Western trajectory, Turgut Özal focused on broader Eurasia, placing an emphasis on Eurasianism. According to Tüfekçi, during the mid-1990s Refah Partisi (the Welfare Party) under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan promoted pro-Ottoman and pro-Islamist approaches in politics (Tüfekçi 2017b: 1). However, Necmettin Erbakan's government was toppled by the Turkish military in 1997 and the Refah party was banned on the grounds of harboring an Islamist agenda, which was considered a grave violation of the Turkish constitution.

The rise of alternative political forces and ideologies challenged the hegemonic Kemalist discourse and its unidimensional Western foreign policy. Turkish political leaders such as Turgut Özal and his successors have consistently advocated the diversification of foreign engagement and conducting multidimensional foreign policy. They have put a greater emphasis on the Ottoman past, Islam and ethnic affinities with the newly emerged Turkic speaking nations in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. Although a pro-Islamist party, Refah, was banned, its former leaders

such as Abdullah Gül and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan set up the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2001, which heralded the dawn of a new era in Turkish history, notably the advent of the AKP era. Scholars refer to the AKP under the leadership of Erdoğan as neo-Ottomanist and Islamist (Cagaptay 2014: 117; Yavuz 2009: 105). Keeping the tradition of conducting multidimensional and multidirectional international policy of their predecessors, the AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Ahmet Davutoğlu, a prominent academic, have focused on expanding bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the states in the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia, which had long been disregarded in Turkish foreign policy. In particular, with the rise of Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkish policy makers have increasingly highlighted the strategic importance of cultural and historical dimensions in building cooperation and forging new alliances in greater Eurasia (Tüfekçi 2017a: 126).

In Tüfekçi's view, three key cultural and historical dimensions have played a decisive and pivotal role in forging the Turkish identity, namely Islam, the Ottoman past and Turkishness (Tüfekçi 2017a: 114). Since the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye, the adherents of the hegemonic Kemalist discourse had heavily invested in degrading and eroding the Islamic and Ottoman history and dimensions. Yet with the advent of alternative political discourses, Islamic, Ottoman and pan-Turkist dimensions have experienced their revival. Due to such tectonic shifts in political debates in Türkiye, along with the hegemonic Kemalist discourse, Islamism, neo-Ottomanism and pan-Turkism have become prominent ideologies for determining the trajectories of development of the nation. In addition to these three pivotal ideologies, the discourse of pan-Turanism has become significant in political discussions and formulating foreign policy courses. Thus, Eurasianism took deep root in Turkish political life, being instrumental in redefining the country's role as a 'bridge' between the West and the Orient (Tanrısever 2018: 20).

Erşen points out that although Eurasianism was born amongst Russian intellectuals in the 1920s in Europe, which having further been perfected by contemporary Russian political and academic figures such as Dugin, Panarin and others, it soon penetrated Türkiye (Erşen 2022: 114). Moreover, Erşen also indicates that it is true that Russian Eurasianism had a great impact on political debates among Turkish policy makers and experts, geopolitical ideas about Eurasia were developed independently from Russian Eurasianist discourses (Erşen 2022: 114). According to Perinçek and Akçali, all key discourses of Eurasianism in Türkiye have mostly been influenced not by Russian Eurasianism, but rather by Kemalism (Perinçek and Akçali 2009: 551; Perinçek 2012). In this case, Tüfekçi draws attention to Turkish intellectuals' acquaintance with Russian Eurasianism occurred through Alexander Dugin and Lev Gumilev (Tüfekçi 2017a: 114). In the next section, we discuss various mainstream Eurasianist discourses and ideologies in Türkiye.

The Mainstream Discourses of Turkish Eurasianism

Although it is true that Turkish Eurasianism has been greatly influenced by Russian Eurasianism, Turkish Eurasianists have drawn from Turkish history, culture and geopolitical traditions in developing and perfecting their ideas and theories. Moreover, Tanrısever notes that Turkish policy makers and experts could not manage to develop an all-comprehensive and all-embraced discourse of Turkish Eurasianism in its form, style, essence and content (Tanrısever 2018: 23). As a result, Turkish intellectuals have struggled to properly categorize and conceptualize Turkish Eurasianism. As opposed to theoretically and conceptually well-developed,

well-articulated and well-established Russian Eurasianism, Eurasianism on Turkish soil has not been sophisticated and crystalized enough, lacking the theoretical and ideological depth as well as sophistication (Kınıklıoğlu 2022: 21). Due to the conceptual, theoretical and ideological weakness and deficiencies, there is the lack of common ground among Turkish policy makers and experts with respect to Eurasianism (Erşen 2022; Tanrısever 2018). Unlike the theoretically and conceptually well-articulated Russian Eurasianism, conceptualized and theorized by Alexander Dugin and other Russian Eurasianists, Turkish intellectuals and political figures seem to have failed to develop an all-embracing Eurasianist perspective. As a result, in Turkish political life scholars observe a variety of overlapping and conflicting Eurasianist discourses.

Turkish scholars indicate the four main ideologies of Turkish Eurasianism, notably neo-Ottomanism, Islamism, pan-Turanism and pan-Turkism (Kınıklıoğlu 2022: 6; Tanrısever 2018; Tüfekçi 2017a: 96). Tüfekçi stresses that Turkish Eurasianism has been influenced and shaped by neo-Ottomanism, Islam, and Turkish nationalism (Tüfekçi 2017a: 123). Besides Tüfekçi, other Turkish scholars highlight other underlying discourses of Eurasianist discourses in Türkiye, offering their categorization and classification of Eurasianism. For instance, in Tanrısever's categorization, there are a Western-oriented, pan-Turkist, and neo-Ottomanist Eurasianist discourses in Türkiye (Tanrısever 2018: 24-25). Erşen suggests that pan-Turkic and wider Eurasian discourses could be considered types of Eurasianism (Erşen 2022). While Tanrısever points to the Western oriented and pro-European Eurasianists in Türkiye (Tanrısever 2018), in Kınıklıoğlu's view, Turkish neo-Eurasianists tend to portray themselves as Kemalist Eurasianists, exploiting the popular image and name of the founder of the republic (Kınıklıoğlu 2022: 21). Furthermore, in Kınıklıoğlu's observation, Eurasianists in Türkiye tend to be mainly a subgroup of ulusalcıs, which refers to leftist secular nationalists who are united in their opposition to the West and Western orientation, categorizing themselves as anti-Westernists and anti-imperialists (Kınıklıoğlu 2022: 6). These leftist secular nationalists ardently advocate a radical shift in the country's foreign policy towards greater Eurasia, closer cooperation with China, Russia and the Turkic world to confront Western and American imperialism as well as globalism (Gürpinar 2013: 413; Güzel 2021: 33; Kınıklıoğlu 2022: 6).

According to Doğan Gürpinar and Süleyman Çağrı Güzel, left-wing nationalists such as Attila Ilhan, Soner Yalçın, Erol Manisalı, Yalcın Küçük, Mümtaz Soysal, Doğu Perinçek and others emerged as leading figures in the 'Ulusalcılık' movement as a reaction to the advent of the AKP under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 2000s (Gürpinar 2013: 413; Güzel 2021: 33). These left-wing nationalists grew suspicious of the AKP's negotiations with the EU to gain EU membership, of the steps taken by the AKP to further democratize Turkish society in line with the negotiations with the EU and the European standards. They suspected that the AKP's efforts to join the EU and fulfill the EU's demands to carry out democratic reforms would eventually lead to the erosion of the nation state and may threaten the very survival of Türkiye as an independent political entity. Promoting numerous conspiracy theories, these figures pointed out that the United States in conjunction with the EU, Greece, Israel, Armenia, and with the assistance of certain ethnic groups like Armenians, Arabs and Greeks harbored an evil intention to destroy Türkiye (Gürpinar 2013: 413-414). In their view, liberalism, anti-nationalist leftism, and Islamism as other hostile ideologies are complicit in conspiring against Turkey. As the adherents of belligerent hardline Kemalist, ultra-nationalistic and xenophobic views, these left-wing nationalists claimed that there is the plot to destroy Türkiye, in which

the United States, the EU and other foreign actors were allegedly conspiring with the ruling AKP (Gürpinar 2013: 413). In this case, Buğra Sarı draws attention to Türkiye's historic "Sèvres Syndrome", in accordance with which great powers such as the United States, European nations, other foreign and domestic enemies are always conspiring to weaken, fragment and destroy Türkiye (Sarı 2021: 138). Exploiting the traditional "Sèvres syndrome", Doğu Perinçek, Atilla İlhan, Mümtaz Soysal and other left-wing nationalists suspected that the US and the EU would fragment Türkiye into pieces, carving up areas for Kurds, Armenians, and as a consequence, the Turkish nation would lose its independence (Güzel 2021: 33).

Studies focus on neo-Ottomanism, Islamism, pan-Turanism and pan-Turkism as the major ideologies of Turkish Eurasianism. Up to the mid-1980s, these ideologies had been suppressed and marginalized by the hegemonic state-backed Kemalist discourse, yet alternative discourses made a comeback under the leadership of Turgut Özal in the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. In addition to the hegemonic Kemalism, Turgut Özal increasingly referred to the Ottoman past as a pivotal source of a vibrant multicultural plural tolerant society premised upon the tolerant Ottoman Islam. Although Kemalism objects to the Ottoman legacy, opting for a European Western path of development, unlike his predecessors, Turgut Özal came to instrumentalize the Ottoman past to articulate its domestic and external policy course. In this sense, what had been severely suppressed by the Kemalist discourse for a long time, was resurrected by Turgut Özal who sought to reconcile Kemalism with alternative ideologies and ensure a new national consensus in which a variety of discourses and identities in the country could coexist. Highlighting how Turks ruled once a great multinational empire that encompassed the Balkans, some areas of Central Europe, the Middle East and North Africa under Turkish sultans, Turgut Özal and his proponents focused on balancing and expanding the scope of Kemalism and mitigating its excessive obsession with the nation's Western identity and orientation by shifting Türkiye's attention to other regions in the Middle East and greater Eurasia (Taşpınar 2008: 14).

Along with neo-Ottomanism ideology, the discourse of pan-Islamism or Islamism had faded into the background under the powerful pressure from Kemalism and its secularist discourse. Yet like the Ottoman legacy, Islamism experienced its revival during the Turgut Özal's era. Tüfekçi calls attention to Turgut Özal's neo-Ottomanist discourse as an amalgamation of Turkish nationalism, Turkism and Islamism (Tüfekçi 2017a: 102). Turgut Özal and other Turkish leaders emphasized the specific Turkish version of Islam that stands apart from Persian Islam and Wahhabi Islam due to its more tolerant and liberal features. This character of Turkish Islam was leveraged by Özal as the precondition for forging cooperation with Muslims and Muslim states around the world. On the one hand, promoting Islam did not imply confronting secularism and Kemalism as well as did not mean Islamization of Turkish society. On the other hand, embracing Turkish Islam did not suggest eroding the Western identity and orientation of the nation. Quite the contrary, in Özal's view, the resurgence of Islam in Turkish society should be in line with secularism and Türkiye's Western vocation. Moreover, Turgut Özal drew attention to the fact that Islam was an integral part of not only Turkish society, but also the Western civilization as the synthesis and harmony between Islam and the West had become the reality. From this standpoint, between the Christian European and the Muslim Turk no difference exists and thereby both are part of the Western civilization (Tüfekçi 2017a: 103).

Islam was also central to Necmettin Erbakan and his Refah (the Welfare Party) during the second half of the 1990s, when the Islamist discourse dominated the country's domestic and

foreign policy. During Erbakan's rule, while Türkiye's engagement with the Islamic world exponentially grew, its cooperation with Europe and the West lost momentum. Erbakan's tacit distrust towards the West and his rather limited relations with Western countries caused the US suspicion of Türkiye's probable drift towards religious radicalization. As a result, Necmettin Erbakan's Islamic discourse came to an end when the Turkish military intervened in 1997, deposing Erbakan and banning his party. Yet the Islamist discourse took the central stage again in 2002 with the AKP's ascension to power, which is considered to be the Refah's offshoot. In addition to the neo-Ottomanist and Islamist discourses, pan-Turkism and pan-Turanism buttressed and reinforced Turkish Eurasianism (Colakoğlu 2019; Erşen 2022; Gurcan 2017; Kınıklıoğlu 2022; Sevimlisoy 2023).

As key ideologies of Turkish Eurasianism, pan-Turkism and pan-Turanism came into being in the late 19th century among the Turkic peoples under the Russian colonial rule as a response to aggressive Russification and Christianization policies of Russia. Although pan-Turkism and pan-Turanism are often considered to be synonymous, there is a noticeable difference between them in a sense that while the former aims at uniting all Turkic peoples under a single political entity, the latter suggests the unity between Turkic peoples and the Finno-Ugric peoples. In Türkiye, pan-Turkism was represented, advocated and promoted by Alparslan Türkeş, the founder and leader of the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) and the Grey Wolves (Ülkü Ocakları). Erşen claims that pan-Turkism is one of the key discourses of Turkish Eurasianism (Erşen 2022). Although Alparslan Türkeş and his nationalist movement experienced persecution by the government during the 1970s-1980s, with the emergence of independent Turkic speaking nations in Central Asia, pan-Turkism gained momentum. In the early 1990s, Turkish nationalist and pan-Turkist strongly advocated Turkic integration and establishment of a union between Türkiye and other Turkic republics, prioritizing common ethnic, cultural, linguistic and historic origins and affinities with Turks of Central Asia and the Caucasus. In Erşen's view, pan-Turkic Eurasianism was essential in forging close cooperation with Turkic republics and instituting intergovernmental supranational bodies such as the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States (TurkPA), the Turkic Council (the Organization of Turkic States) and others (Erşen 2022). Devlet Bahçeli, the successor of Alparslan Türkeş, increasingly highlights the strategic importance of not only integration between Türkiye and Turkic states, but also the unification of Turkic nations with the Finno-Ugric peoples. However, unlike pan-Turkism, pan-Turanism is seen as less feasible and a prospective union between Turks and the Finno-Ugric peoples is widely disputed and questioned (Tüfekçi 2017b).

Besides the mainstream ideologies of Turkish Eusrasianism, scholars point to other Eurasianist discourses in Türkiye such as nationalist, multicultural and western Eurasianism. Prominent theoreticians and leading figures of these Eurasianist discourses are key scholars, academics, researchers, journalists, former ministers, former military and intelligence officials, poets, writers, leaders of political movements and parties. The adherents of nationalist Eurasianism such as Anıl Çeçen, Şener Üşümezsoy, Özcan Yeniçeri, Ümit Özdağ, Namık Kemal Zeybek, Suat İlhan, Ali Külebi, Arslan Bulut, İhsan Çomak and others advocate a drastic shift in the country's foreign policy towards the East and Eurasia, as well as building alliances with leading powers of greater Eurasia (Tüfekçi 2017b: 24). Drawing upon pan-Turkism, pan-Turanism, Islamism and neo-Ottomanism, nationalist Eurasianism places a greater emphasis upon ethnic affiliations with other Turkic speaking peoples and Turkish identity. Moreover, the proponents

of nationalist Eurasianism call for the establishment of a Eurasian Union to confront and halt American imperialism and imperial expansion. They believe that Eurasianism is the powerful and relevant response to Western imperialism, and Türkiye's excessive integration with the West, which would strip the country of its peculiar national identity and thereby Eurasia is a key to Turkish identity and sovereignty.

Unlike nationalist Eurasianism that puts an emphasis on Turkic identity and ethnic commonalities with other Turkic speaking states and peoples, multiculturalist Eurasianism represented by Attila Ilhan, Doğu Perinçek, Mehmet Perinçek and others tends to be more accommodative, going beyond the scope of ethnic dimension. Therefore, this discourse is defined as multiculturalist whose vision is not confined to ethnicity and primordial ethnic identity. For this reason, multiculturalist Eurasianism advocates forging an alliance with countries of greater Eurasia such as Turkic speaking states, Russia, Iran, and even India and Pakistan as an alternative to the European Union and the US imperialism. One of the prominent leaders of multicultural Eurasianism Attila Ilhan, a well-known author, poet, socialist, Kemalist, anti-Westerner and anti-imperialist, called for building strategic ties with Russia and Iran. In Attila Ilhan's view, to get rid of the Western dominance and to gain independence from American imperialism, Türkiye ought to institute a Eurasian Union in cooperation with Iran, Russia and other nation states of Eurasia (Tüfekçi 2017a: 119). Echoing Attila Ilhan, Doğu Perinçek and his son Mehmet Perinçek further articulated theoretical underpinnings of multiculturalist Eurasianism, focusing on the US efforts to forge a unipolar global order under its domination and on how Türkiye in collaboration with other states in Eurasia ought to build an alliance to confront the US imperialism. According to Doğu Perinçek, although greater Eurasia hosts numerous nation states, only few of them are in fact the key powerhouses of the continent such as Russia, Iran, China, India and Türkiye, who ought to get united to defend their motherland against the US imperialism and colonial expansion.

As opposed to nationalist and multiculturalist Eurasianism, Westernist Eurasianism tends to be within the line of the state-backed hegemonic Kemalist discourse, maintaining loyalty to the nation's pro-Western identity and orientation. Distinguished theoreticians and leaders of Westernist Eurasianism such as Erel Tellal, Sami Güçlü, Nabi Avcu, Akkan Süver, Hakan Fidan and others ardently advocate Türkiye's pro-Western and pro-European course. Yet unlike the traditional unidimensional Kemalist discourse, they highlight the importance of diversification of foreign policy orientation by adding to the Western course an Eastern or Eurasian dimension. This is rooted in their belief that both the West and the East are part of Eurasia, and thereby Ankara ought to prioritize building long-term cooperation with both the West and the East. In this case, stressing the strategic importance of abolishing all discriminations between peoples and nation states, they emphasized that by doing so all countries in Eurasia would be able to live peacefully and would reach a 'brighter future' (Tüfekçi 2017a: 122). The supporters of Western Eurasianism argue that Türkiye's acceptance into the EU as a member state would allow Ankara to play a synthesizing role between the West and the East. Due to its mild, liberal, soft and accommodating character, Westernist Eurasianism came to be accepted and embraced by Turkish policy makers and public opinion as they believe that this discourse of Turkish Eurasianism may pave the way for the development of the nation's independent foreign policy action and course.

Discussion

Türkiye has traditionally been a fertile milieu for political discussions and debates among proponents and theoreticians of various political ideologies despite the conventional hegemonic role of Kemalism in Turkish society and politics (Çolakoğlu 2019; Erşen 2019, 2022; Kınıklıoğlu 2022; Perinçek and Akçali 2009). In this case, studies point out that Eurasianism has always been at the heart of Turkish political life, specifically Turkish Eurasianism has been shaped and guided by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's political ideas throughout the republican era, known as Kemalism. Up to the mid-1980s, Turkish politics had been dominated by Kemalism, yet at the end of the 1980s with the ascension of alternative political parties and leaders with different political visions, there has been a deep paradigm shift in Turkish society. Although Kemalism has remained the hegemonic ideology of the state and alternative political forces have remained loyal to the Kemalist discourse, these newly emerged political discourses have offered different paths of development and foreign policy course (Kınıklıoğlu 2022; Perinçek 2012; Tanrısever 2018; Tüfekçi 2017a, 2017b; Tüysüzoğlu 2014, 2021, 2023; Yavuz 2022). From this standpoint, there is the rich scholarly tradition in Türkiye, which has greatly contributed to understanding the peculiarities of Turkish Eurasianism, its ideological underpinnings, and how a variety of Eurasianist ideas have affected the nation's domestic and foreign policy.

Studies call attention to how the spread of Eurasianist ideas and concepts in Türkiye have induced and activated a profound foreign policy shift from traditional pro-Western orientation to a pivot to greater Eurasia. The advent and development of Turkish Eurasianism and its various discourses have been shaped not only by Kemalism, but also by nationalist ideas, the Ottoman history and legacy, Islam, pan-Turkism and pan-Turanism (Tanrısever 2018; Tüfekçi 2017a, 2017b). In this regard, scholars emphasize the conceptual and theoretical richness and diversity of Turkish Eurasianism (Perinçek 2012; Tanrısever 2018; Tüysüzoğlu 2023; Yavuz 2022). Literature on Turkish Eurasianism highlights that Eurasianist ideas in Türkiye are in fact not a rigid, homogeneous and monolithic paradigm, rather they tend to be fluid and diverse, comprising a multitude of overlapping and divergent traditions and discourses (Çolakoğlu 2019; Erşen 2019; Perinçek and Akçali 2009). Since the mid-1980s, with the ascension of a new generation of Turkish leaders and policy makers led by Turgut Özal, Türkiye has redefined and reconsidered its role and place in regional and global affairs, constructing its new role as a 'middle power' or a 'bridge' linking the West with the rest of Eurasia (Colakoğlu 2019; Ege 2022; Evrensel, Gönenç, and Ünlüsoy 2024; Tanrısever 2018; Tüysüzoğlu 2023).

Although certain discourses of Turkish Eurasianism, such as nationalist and multiculturalist Eurasianists, have highlighted the need to abandon the nation's commitment to the West, nurturing a more hostile attitude towards the West and the United States, they have failed to gain the upper hand in policy making in Türkiye (Gürcan 2013, 2021; Tüfekçi 2017a, 2017b). Studies point out that nationalist and multiculturalist Eurasianists ardently demand the disengagement from the Western political and strategic system as the country's Western commitment undermines the Turkish national identity and threatens the nation's independence (Perinçek and Akçali 2009). As nationalist and multiculturalist Eurasianists believe that the Western orientation is detrimental to the nation's core national interests and its strategic autonomy, they argue that Türkiye ought to belong to Eurasia (Perinçek 2012). In this case, Brzezinski believes that Eurasia encompasses the Middle East, Central Asia and Türkiye, which he refers to as the 'the Eurasian

Balkans' (Brzezinski 1997). Ahmet Davutoğlu links his "Strategic Depth" to the Ottoman past and Turkishness (Davutoğlu 2001). With regard to Davutoğlu's "Strategic Depth", Tüysüzoğlu claims that it is in fact a theoretical synthesis of neo-Ottomanist and nationalist Eurasianism as well as an endeavor to revitalize the Ottoman geography, linking it to the Eurasianist thought in Türkiye (Tüysüzoğlu 2014).

Conclusion

Thus, the study has explored Turkish Eurasianism and identified its diverse discourses and traditions. The results of the study have shown that despite the substantial influence of Russian Eurasianism on policy debates and discussions about Eurasianism among Turkish policy makers, experts and intellectuals, especially Alexander Duging's neo-Eurasianist ideas, Eurasianist discourses stand apart from Russian Eurasianist concepts in terms of their reliance on history, culture, religion and political system specific to Türkiye. To be precise, if Russian neo-Eurasianism heavily drew from Russian history, Orthodox Christianity, imperialist traditions and Russian nationalism, Turkish Eurasianism has been shaped by the Ottoman legacy, Islam, Turkishness, pan-Turkism, pan-Turanism as well as the current pro-Western orientation of Türkiye. The need for intellectual, conceptual and theoretical reset and update in Turkish politics in the 1980s and 1990s was induced by the rise of a new generation of Turkish leadership with the new domestic and foreign policy visions drawn upon the Ottoman history, Islam, Turkish nationalism manifested in pan-Turkism and pan-Turanism.

The results of the study have also highlighted that despite these new political leaders of the nation, such as Turgut Özal, Süleyman Demirel, Abdullah Gül, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Ahmet Davutoğlu, have advocated and implemented a new internal and external policy course, pivoting the country towards the Middle East, the Balkans, North Africa, the Turkic World and greater Eurasia, they have remained loyal to Kemalism and its traditional pro-Western approach and orientation. From this perspective, except Necmettin Erbakan who openly challenged the hegemonic Kemalist discourse, marginalizing the country's pro-Western orientation and engaging Türkiye closely with the Islamic world, other prominent Turkish leaders have remained steadfast in their commitment to the West and to the European Union. In this case, the specific feature of the dominant discourses of Turkish Eurasianism lies in their allegiance to the hegemonic Kemalist discourse and to pro-Western course. Yet at the same time, they have focused on altering Türkiye's conventional unidimensional pro-Western and pro-European orientation, by cultivating a multidimensional and multidirectional approach, engaging the country with nation states of greater Eurasia. In this regard, Turkish policy makers and governments since the mid-1980s have adhered to the tenets of Westernist Eurasianism, which is in favor of closer engagement and cooperation with the Western world and countries of greater Eurasia.

In contrast to the hegemonic Eurasianist discourses manifested in Westernist Eurasianism, nationalist and multiculturalist Eurasianists have nurtured anti-Western and anti-imperialist attitudes, prioritizing Türkiye's greater rapprochement, collaboration and strategic alliance with Russia, Turkic states, Iran, China, India, and other Eurasian nation states. The proponents of nationalist and multiculturalist Eurasianism have constructed the image of the West and the United States as historic foes of the East and Eurasia. From this perspective, they have called for the rapprochement and unification of Eurasian state nations in the form of a Eurasian Union

to confront Western imperialism and build a new status quo in Eurasia based on peaceful coexistence and cooperation among states in Eurasia. Whereas nationalist Eurasianists tend to place a greater emphasis on Turkishness, common ethnic, cultural and historical ties with the Turkic world, integration between Turkic states, multiculturalist Eurasianists go beyond ethnic dimension, advocating the departure from the Western camp and Türkiye's full shift to Eurasia, by building a strategic alliance with Eurasian powers (Tanrısever 2018). Nationalist and multiculturalist Eurasianists argue that the full disengagement from the West and pivot to Eurasia will pave the way for strategic autonomy in Türkiye's foreign policy. To achieve that goal, the supporters of nationalist and multiculturalist Eurasianists tend to display their readiness and eagerness to forge a strategic alliance with Russia, Türkiye's historic foe. Despite such ambitious advocacy and objectives pursued by nationalist and multiculturalist Eurasianists, these discourses of Turkish Eurasianism have remained marginal in Turkish politics.

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Yskak, A. – contributed to determining the research topic, outlining its structure, planning and conducting the study, data collection, their classification and analyses, developing the methodology section, reviewing relevant literature and sources, writing the initial draft, writing, formatting and finalizing the manuscript.
Sari, Y. – contributed to outlining the structure of the paper, planning and conducting the study, data analyses, developing the methodology section, reviewing relevant literature and sources, formatting and finalizing the manuscript.

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