




DOI: 10.22363/2313-0660-2022-22-1-111-125

Research article / Научная статья

Turkey and the Eurasian Integration: Ideology or Pragmatism?

Emre Erşen  

Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey

 eersen@marmara.edu.tr

Abstract. While Eurasianism as a political ideology has made a remarkable comeback to the Russian political scene following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, it has also attracted considerable interest among Turkish political and intellectual circles since the early 1990s. Yet, Eurasianism in the Turkish context has acquired different ideological meanings in time. In this regard, it is possible to highlight two main strands of Eurasianism in Turkey: one focusing on the prospects for advanced integration between Turkey and the Turkic republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia, and other concentrating on Turkey's strategic cooperation with Russia and China as an alternative to its long-standing ties with the West. While the first approach mainly appeals to nationalist-conservative groups in Turkey, the second is supported by the so-called national-patriotic groups. The article aims to discuss Turkey's role in two Eurasia-based international organizations — the Organization of Turkic States and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization — as they respectively correspond to the two versions of Eurasianism in Turkey. By analyzing the Turkish governments' policies towards these two organizations, it would also be possible to reveal the influence of Eurasianism as an ideology on Ankara's official approach to the idea of Eurasian integration, in which pragmatic political and economic concerns play an equally important role.


Key words: Turkey, Eurasianism, Eurasian integration, Organization of Turkic States, Shanghai Cooperation Organization

For citation: Erşen, E. (2022). Turkey and the Eurasian integration: Ideology or pragmatism? *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations*, 22(1), 111—125. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-0660-2022-22-1-111-125>

Турция и евразийская интеграция: идеология или прагматизм?

Э. Эршен  

Университет Мармара, Стамбул, Турция

 eersen@marmara.edu.tr

Аннотация. Евразийство как политическая идеология вновь проявилось на российской политической сцене в 1991 г. после распада СССР. При этом в это же время идеи евразийства вызывали немалый интерес среди турецких политических и интеллектуальных кругов. Однако со временем в турецком контексте евразийство приобрело различные идеологические значения и измерения, которые в настоящее время оформились в два основных направления: первое ориентировано на задачи углубленной интеграции между Турцией и тюркскими республиками Кавказа и Центральной Азии, второе — на стратегическое сотрудничество Турции с Россией и Китаем в качестве альтернативы ее давним связям с Западом. Хотя первый подход в основном привлекает националистически-консервативные группы в Турции, второй подход

© Erşen E., 2022



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

поддерживается так называемыми национально-патриотическими группами. В сложившемся контексте цель статьи — проанализировать роль Турции в двух международных организациях, базирующихся в Евразии, — Организации тюркских государств и Шанхайской организации сотрудничества, так как они соответствуют двум версиям евразийства в Турции. Посредством анализа политики турецких правительств в отношении данных организаций можно проследить влияние евразийства как идеологии на официальную стратегию Анкары к идее евразийской интеграции, в которой прагматические политические и экономические соображения играют одинаково важную роль.

Ключевые слова: Турция, евразийство, евразийская интеграция, Организация тюркских государств, Шанхайская организация сотрудничества

Для цитирования: Эршен Э. Турция и евразийская интеграция: идеология или прагматизм? // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Международные отношения. 2022. Т. 22, № 1. С. 111—125. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-0660-2022-22-1-111-125>

Introduction

Eurasianism, which is a political ideology introduced by a number of Russian émigré intellectuals in the 1920s, has made a remarkable comeback to the Russian political scene following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Yet, it should be noted that the appeal of this ideology has not only been confined to Russia in the post-Cold War period. Particularly in Turkey, Eurasianism has attracted considerable interest among political and intellectual circles since the early 1990s (Erşen, 2013a; Yanık, 2019). This has been partly due to the unique geographical location of Turkey, which makes it a truly Eurasian country with territories lying both in the European and Asian continents. At the same time, however, the growing interest in Eurasianism in Turkey has also been closely related with the uneasy relationship between Turkey and the West, which has become even more visible in the 2000s. In the last few years in particular, the widening gap between the security interests of Turkey and the US regarding some regional political issues as well as Turkey's problematic relations with the EU have been important factors that boosted the interest of Turkish policymakers in Eurasianism.

Some scholars in Turkey view Eurasianism as some kind of alternative geopolitical vision that reflect the anti-Western and pro-Russian tendencies in the Turkish politics (Akçalı & Perinçek, 2009; Aktürk, 2015). The improvement of the political, economic and

military relations between Turkey and Russia in the post-Cold War period has become an indispensable part of this debate particularly since 2014 when tensions between Moscow and the West have rapidly escalated following the crisis in Ukraine. Even though it is difficult to argue that Turkey and Russia have achieved to resolve all their disagreements regarding geopolitical issues in a vast region extending from the Middle East and the East Mediterranean to the Black Sea and the Caucasus, the governments of the two countries have nevertheless striven to maintain their strategic dialogue about regional conflicts including Syria, Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh.

At the same time, it should be noted that Turkish and Russian leaders have become much more open to perceive each other as partners also in ideational terms — particularly in their criticism of the Western-led liberal international order. For instance, Russian President Vladimir Putin's strong emphasis on the significance of a multipolar world order is also shared by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, even though Erdoğan is critical about the membership structure of the UN Security Council and believes that the international decision-making system should be more inclusive as also indicated by his slogan “the world is bigger than five.” In this sense, not only Russia, but also other rising powers like China and India have become more important in Turkey's foreign political and economic relations in the last few years (Erşen & Köstem, 2019). The strategic

rapprochement between Russia and China in particular has provided the Turkish leaders with the opportunity to draw greater attention to the Eurasian pillar of Turkish foreign policy especially at a time when Ankara finds it more difficult to solve its complicated problems with the West.

In recent years, the Turkish policymakers have also demonstrated greater interest in the BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) — the two most prominent symbols of a multipolar world that has been defended vehemently by Russian and Chinese leaders for many years as an antithesis of the Western-led liberal international order. While the BRICS is mainly focused on fostering cooperation on economic, financial and developmental problems, the SCO has become a strong inspiration for the supporters of Eurasianism in Russia and elsewhere mainly due to its security-oriented agenda and distinctively regional scope which includes not only most of the former Soviet states, but also the major actors of Eurasian geopolitics like China, India, Pakistan and Iran. In this sense, it is not surprising that some Turkish analysts tend to make particular reference to Turkey's expanding ties with the SCO whenever they attempt to explore the meaning of Eurasianism in the Turkish political (Erşen, 2013b) context¹. In particular, the Patriotic Party (*Vatan Partisi* in Turkish), which is regarded as the leading supporter of Eurasianism in Turkish politics, pays special attention to the development of a geopolitical axis between Turkey and the Russia-China bloc as an alternative to Turkey's long-standing strategic ties with the West.

Yet, it should be emphasized that Eurasianism as a geopolitical idea has not been introduced to the Turkish political agenda by national-patriotic groups. In fact, the rightist

politicians and intellectuals have played a more significant role with their quest to present economic and cultural integration with the Turkic republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia as a viable foreign policy option for Turkey since the early 1990s. This distinctively Turkish version of Eurasianism has also been influential in the establishment of the Turkic Council — recently renamed as the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) — as a regional organization in 2009. While it is clear that pragmatic economic interests have played a more important role than ideological concerns in the development of the OTS, this multilateral platform nevertheless represents a model of Eurasianism which is quite different from the one proposed by the Russian Eurasianists. This is also why the Turkish Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) has been quite supportive of the OTS, ever since it was launched as a presidential summit mechanism in 1992.

With a goal to shed light on Turkey's position regarding the ongoing debates on Eurasianism as well as the idea of regional integration in the Eurasian space, this article seeks to explore the Turkish role in the OTS and the SCO — two Eurasia-based regional organizations that respectively correspond to the two different geopolitical approaches about Eurasianism in Turkey. Especially by focusing on the Turkish governments' policies toward these two organizations, it would be possible to reveal the influence of Eurasianism as an ideology on Turkey's official approach to the Eurasian integration in which pragmatic political and economic concerns play an equally important role.

The methodology of research in this sense is qualitative as the article aims to conduct a historical-comparative analysis of Turkey's relations with the OTS and SCO, which would also be helpful in revealing the extent to which these two regional organizations reflect Eurasianist considerations of the Turkish policymakers. To this end, following a general discussion on the historical evolution of Eurasianism as a political ideology in Turkey in

¹ Also see: Çolakoğlu S. The Rise of Eurasianism in Turkish Foreign Policy: Can Turkey Change its Pro-Western Orientation? // Middle East Institute. April 16, 2019. URL: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/rise-eurasianism-turkish-foreign-policy-can-turkey-change-its-pro-western-orientation> (accessed: 11.11.2021).

the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, the article seeks to compare the official Turkish approach to the OTS and SCO in light of three research questions: a) What role has Turkey played in the establishment and/or evolution of these two organizations? b) Which version of the Eurasianist ideology has more visibly influenced Turkey's perspective about the OTS and SCO? c) What kind of pragmatic political and economic concerns come into play in evaluating the influence of Eurasianism on Turkey's policies towards these organizations?

Eurasianism in Turkey: Contending Visions

Even though Russian Eurasianism influenced to a certain extent the Turkish political debates in the post-Cold War period, the first geopolitical ideas regarding the definition of Eurasia as a geographical region in Turkey emerged independently from the respective developments in Russia. While the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 presented a significant security relief for the Turkish policymakers, it also caused concerns as to how NATO in particular and the West in general would perceive the strategic importance of Turkey in this new period. The European Community's negative response to Turkey's application for full membership in 1989 also exacerbated such fears in Ankara. In short, the geopolitical anxiety about the sustainability of Turkey's strategic ties with the US and Europe in the post-Cold War world was a major factor that compelled the Turkish leaders to start paying attention to other regions after years of following the priorities of the West in critical foreign policy issues (Özcan, 1998).

Against this background, it was no surprise that the independence of six Turkic republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia in 1991 was warmly welcomed in Ankara. Even though the Turkish governments had neglected this region for more than sixty years in order not to antagonize the Soviet Union, the emergence of a Turkic world was perceived by Ankara as a

golden opportunity to prove the West that Turkey's strategic importance has not diminished with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, since Turkey could now present itself as a model for these newly independent states (Aydın, 1996). Moreover, Turkey's historical, cultural, religious and linguistic links with the region added a strong psychological dimension to the Turkish leaders' enthusiasm to find a new mission for their country in the emerging post-Cold War world (Robins, 1993).

Turkish leaders like Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel were quite vocal about Ankara's interest in establishing new ties with this region, which they have also started to refer to as "Eurasia." Demirel for instance claimed that Central Asia and Azerbaijan have become crucial parts of a "Eurasian community populated by the Turks" (Winrow, 1995, p. 18). It is quite remarkable in this regard that Eurasia, which had rarely been attributed a special geographical meaning by the Turkish policymakers until the end of the Cold War, immediately became a catchword to make reference to the Turkic republics in Turkish foreign policy. For instance, in a parliamentary session held in May 1992, the region of Eurasia was emphasized at least sixteen times by delegates from different Turkish political parties.²

Turkish leaders additionally made reference to the emergence of a "Turkic world stretching from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China," which inevitably caused suspicion particularly among the Russian policymakers regarding the real meaning of this version of Eurasia.³ However, despite Moscow's concerns about Pan-Turkism, Eurasia soon became the focus of Turkey's ambitious policy that aimed to establish extensive

² TBMM Tutanak Dergisi. 1992. Dönem 19. Cilt 10. Birleşim 74. URL: <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d19/c010/tbmm19010074.pdf> (accessed: 11.11.2021).

³ Altın O. Adriyatik'ten Çin'e Türkiye // Cumhuriyet. November 30, 2021. URL: <https://egazete.cumhuriyet.com.tr/oku/192/1992-02-24/0> (accessed: 04.02.2022).

political, economic and cultural links with the Turkic republics. Many delegations from Turkey visited these six countries and many bilateral cooperation agreements were signed particularly in the 1991—1994 period (Aydın, 1996).

Turkey's renewed interest in the region was also warmly welcomed by the leaders of the Turkic republics as they visited Ankara many times and publicly praised the positive role Turkey could play in the post-Soviet space (Winrow, 1995, p. 13). Turkish officials also convinced the leaders of the Turkic republics to meet on a regular basis in the so-called "Turkic Summits" and hold special Turkic general assembly meetings attended by delegates from all around the Turkic world. More importantly, the MHP leader was included in one of the first official Turkish delegations visiting the region, although he held no official post in the government, which gave rise to claims that Turkey sought to promote Pan-Turkism in the region. It could even be argued in this sense that the Turkish leaders' understanding of Eurasia during this period was actually based on the idea of "Turan" — the ancient homeland of the Turkic peoples in the steppes of Central Asia — which has traditionally been one of the most powerful symbols of the Turkish nationalist ideology (Landau, 1995, p. 38).

It is worth mentioning that Turkey's own version of Eurasianism that focused on the integration of the Turkic world was sharply criticized — and at times even attacked — by the proponents of Eurasianism in Russia. Alexander Dugin, who is regarded as the most well-known ideologue of Eurasianism in post-Soviet Russia, for example, viewed Turkey's policies to develop relations with the Turkic world as quite dangerous for Russia's geopolitical interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia and labelled Turkey as a "scapegoat" which should be punished because of its Pan-Turkist approach as well as its military alliance with the West (Dugin, 2000, p. 138, 246). He also advocated the formation of a geopolitical bloc between Russia, Iran and

Armenia to prevent Turkey from extending its influence in the region.

However, it seems that Russian Eurasianists at the time were largely unaware of the emergence of another group in Turkey which perceived the geopolitical meaning of Eurasia in a significantly different light from Pan-Turkism. Advocating an ideology which could be defined as a blend of Turkish nationalism, Kemalism and socialism, the so-called national-patriots (*ulusalcılar* in Turkish) have been quite skeptical about the policies of the West toward Turkey in the post-Cold War period and supported Turkey's inclusion in a geopolitical bloc with states like Russia and China to form an anti-imperialist camp in world politics. Doğu Perinçek, the charismatic leader of the Workers' Party (which later turned itself into the Patriotic Party) and his *Aydınlık* newspaper played a key role in the development of this anti-Western version of Eurasianism in Turkey, which was also in conformity with Dugin's ideas (Perinçek, 2000). It was no surprise in this regard that Dugin and Perinçek have gradually formed a close personal relationship with each other that also led to Perinçek's active participation in the "International Eurasia Movement" founded by Dugin in 2001 to promote Eurasianism in other countries.

Apart from the activities of Perinçek, renowned Turkish poet and intellectual Attila İlhan also played an important role in the development of a geopolitical vision about Eurasia in Turkey that was based on the intensified political and cultural cooperation between the Russian and Turkish peoples. To this end, İlhan paid special attention to the works of Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev, a Tatar Bolshevik revolutionary who introduced the idea of Muslim national communism in the early years of the Soviet Union (İlhan, 2000). İlhan also focused on the political dialogue that emerged between Vladimir Lenin and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the 1920s and argued that such an anti-imperialist dialogue could once again become the main pillar of the Turkish-

Russian rapprochement — this time through the ideology of Eurasianism (Aktürk, 2004).

The visibly anti-Western version of Eurasianism started to attract more interest in Turkey particularly in the post-2003 period in parallel with new problems that emerged in Ankara's relations with the US and EU regarding a number of foreign policy issues including Cyprus and Iraq. Since 2003, Dugin has visited Turkey many times in order to attend high-profile academic conferences and met with influential Turkish politicians as a result of his strengthened links with Perinçek and the Workers'/ Patriotic Party (İmanbeyli, 2015). He became even more popular in the Turkish media after the failed coup attempt that took place in Turkey in July 2016, which has started a new period in Turkey's relations not only with the West, but also with Russia (Erşen, 2019). As Turkey's relations with the US and EU have significantly deteriorated in the 2016—2021 period, the intensified strategic cooperation between Ankara and Moscow in issues like the Syrian civil war and the Turkish purchase of Russian-produced S-400 missiles has been perceived by some as the proof of the emergence of a Eurasianist orientation in Turkish foreign policy (Talbot, 2018).

Yet, one should be careful while evaluating the influence of Eurasianism in the Turkish political context. For instance, the Workers'/ Patriotic Party has never been able to attract significant support from the voters in the general elections held in Turkey since the 1990s. Most recently, for instance, Perinçek ran as one of the candidates in the Turkish presidential elections of 2018, but could only receive less than 100,000 voters in comparison to Erdoğan, who was elected the president of Turkey with the support of more than 26 million people. Even though some analysts claim that Perinçek's influence has become more visible in the last few years on the Turkish government's policies toward Russia, the ongoing disagreements between Ankara and Moscow regarding a number of critical issues in Syria, as well as Russia's concerns about Turkey's

strengthened military ties with Ukraine and Georgia make it difficult to talk about the emergence of a strategic Eurasianist bloc between the two countries.

The MHP in contrast has achieved to keep at least 40 seats in the Turkish parliament since 2007. However, this is mainly due to the party's long history in Turkish politics as well as its leader's ability to form coalitions with different political parties in a pragmatic manner to implement the nationalist agenda rather than the appeal of MHP's traditional pan-Turkist or Turanist discourse. It should be noted in this regard that the main focus of the foreign policy vision of the People's (Cumhur) Alliance, a political coalition formed between the MHP and Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) that also holds the majority in the Turkish parliament, is currently the Middle East rather than the Caucasus and Central Asia.

In short, it could be claimed that neither of the two versions of Eurasianism in Turkey have so far been influential enough to determine the general trajectory of Turkish foreign policy — except for a short period in the 1990s when Turkish leaders seemed to be quite excited about the prospect of establishing new ties with the newly independent Turkic states in the Caucasus and Central Asia (Neziroğlu & Yılmaz, 2015). However, particularly in spheres where their expertise is required by the government, the proponents of both versions have been able to play a greater role in foreign policy even though the governmental actions have still been taken in accordance with pragmatic political and economic concerns rather than ideological motivations. Turkey's evolving role in two Eurasia-based regional organizations — the OTS and the SCO — could be used as a proper example to support this argument.

The Organization of Turkic States

The OTS was first established as the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States — also known as the Turkic Council —

in 2009 by Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as an intergovernmental organization to promote extensive cooperation among the member states. Uzbekistan joined the organization as a full member in October 2019, while Hungary became the first observing member in September 2018. Since 2011, the heads of state of the members have met annually in various summit meetings to discuss prospects of cooperation on many issues ranging from trade, education and tourism to transportation, sports and customs. At the 8th summit held in Istanbul in November 2021, the organization officially changed its name to the OTS.

The main organs of the OTS are the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Council of Elders, the Senior Officials Committee and the Secretariat, which all conduct their activities in coordination with a number of related and affiliated institutions such as the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TURKPA), the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY), the International Turkic Academy, the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, the Turkic Business Council, the Turkic University Union and the Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry.⁴ It should be noted that TURKSOY and TURKPA are even older than the OTS as they were founded in 1993 and 2008 respectively.

As stated before, Turkey played a crucial role for the establishment of the OTS, which could be regarded as the culmination of the Turkish leaders' decades-long efforts to promote cooperation between the Turkic republics. In fact, the very first summit of the heads of Turkic states was held in Ankara as early as 1992, while the second summit was held in Istanbul. Until the Turkic Council came into existence as a formal organization in 2009, six more summit meetings of this kind were held in various cities of the Turkic

world including Baku, Astana, Tashkent and Bishkek.

As stated before, in the 1990s the element of Pan-Turkism was much more visible in the Turkish leaders' discourse towards the Turkic republics which is probably best symbolized by the statement made by President Özal in his inaugural speech at the first Turkic summit in Ankara that the “twenty-first century would be the century of the Turks.”⁵ Even though the Turkish foreign ministry officials insisted at the time that “Turkey has never sought to shape some form of commonwealth or union with the newly independent Turkic states of the former Soviet Union”, as also emphasized by Winrow (1995, p. 16), “key Turkish politicians may have hoped... to establish a much more institutionalized form of cooperation, perhaps along the lines of the kind of Turkic Commonwealth.” However, Ankara's enthusiasm to promote institutionalized cooperation between the Turkic states apparently irked Russia, which even accused Turkey of brainwashing the leaders of the Turkic states with ideas of Pan-Turkism.⁶ Moscow was also concerned about the newly formed Turkic general assembly meetings — the first of which was held in Antalya in March 1993 with the attendance of Özal and Demirel — joined not only by the representatives of the Turkic republics, but also delegates from Russia's own Turkic-populated regions (Winrow, 2001, p. 213).

Despite Russia's reactions, Ankara was particularly excited about the convening of the first Turkic summit. However, the Turkic presidents' reluctance to antagonize Russia and accept the emergence of Turkey as a new “Big Brother” in the region resulted with a very vague summit declaration that did not even make reference to the possibility of the

⁵ Hepimiz Türküz, Ev Sahibi Sayılırız // *Milliyet*. October 31, 1992. URL: <http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/Arsiv/1992/10/31> (accessed: 04.02.2022).

⁶ The Central Asian Community Can Become an Alternative to the CIS // *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. October 21, 1992. URL: <https://www.ng.ru/archive> (accessed: 04.02.2022).

⁴ For details, see the organizations's official website. URL: <https://www.turkkon.org/en> (accessed: 04.02.2022).

formation of a Turkic common market or a Turkic investment bank as proposed by the Turkish leaders (Winrow, 1995). The declaration also failed to condemn Armenia as the aggressor in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and recognize the political rights of the Turkish community in Cyprus, although Ankara worked hard to include these issues in the final document (Aydın, 2002, pp. 388—390).

The disappointing results of the first Turkic summit did not prevent the Turkic leaders from agreeing to hold a second summit in Baku in January 1994. However, the second Turkic summit had to be postponed to October 1994 and even then it could only be organized in Istanbul — allegedly due to the Russian government's pressure on some of the Turkic presidents.⁷ All these developments have compelled the Turkish policymakers to readjust their bold expectations about the Turkic world and develop a much more pragmatic policy in the post-1995 period that focused on strengthening Turkey's economic and cultural links with the Caucasus and Central Asia without openly challenging Moscow in the former Soviet space (Köstem, 2017). This new Turkish approach inevitably weakened the significance of the Turkic summit meetings, even though they were still organized on a regular basis. The emergence of a number of political problems between the Turkish and Uzbek governments in the second half of 1990s also undermined the slogan of Turkic solidarity as Uzbekistan grew increasingly distant from the Turkish-led platform.⁸

The OTS in contrast has been built on much more modest goals. As Köstem (2019, p. 111) argues, “unlike the 1990s, Turkey no longer seeks an active leadership role in the post-Soviet space,” where it has “gradually but

decisively recognized the limits to its political and economic influence.” This is also due to the fact that the Middle East — rather than the Caucasus and Central Asia — has become the focus of Turkish foreign policy under the rule of the AKP since 2002. Turkey's less ambitious agenda in the region is also reflected by the activities of the OTS, which focuses on promoting economic, scientific, educational, social and cultural cooperation between the member states, rather than directly addressing complicated political-security issues in the Caucasus and Central Asia. This does not mean that the OTS completely ignores the foreign policy sphere. In fact, a special meeting was held in Istanbul in September 2021 to discuss the latest developments in Afghanistan, while other regional issues like Egypt, Cyprus and Nagorno-Karabakh have been mentioned in some of the statements or declarations of the OTS organs in the past (Kocaman, 2021). However, the standing of the OTS in the political-security issues is considerably low-profile particularly when it is compared with other regional organizations in post-Soviet Eurasia such as the SCO or the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). This could also be regarded as a major reason why Moscow has not viewed the activities of the OTS as a threat to its own interests in the former Soviet space. Even though some analysts point out to the concerns of the Russian leaders regarding the OTS, it should be noted that these concerns have not yet been acknowledged at the level of the government.⁹

The disappointments of the early 1990s when Turkey's policy toward the Turkic republics was guided by a degree of Pan-Turkism seem to have played a significant role in how Ankara perceives the role of the OTS in Eurasia today. For instance, the Turkish

⁷ Davos'ta Türk Zirvesi // Milliyet. January 27, 1994. URL: <http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/Arsiv/1994/01/27> (accessed: 04.02.2022).

⁸ Özbekistan'la İnişli Çıkışlı İlişkiler // Aljazeera Turk. September 9, 2016. URL: <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/ozbekistanla-inisli-cikisli-iliskiler> (accessed: 16.11.2021).

⁹ Sukhankin S. The Great Turan: Russia's Concerns about Turkey's Growing Reputation in Caucasus and Central Asia // Politics Today. May 20, 2021. URL: <https://politicstoday.org/the-great-turan-russia-turkey-caucasus-central-asia/> (accessed: 11.11.2021).

leaders have been quite careful to make sure that the activities of the OTS do not challenge Russia's geopolitical agenda in the region. This is because there has also been a remarkable rapprochement between Ankara and Moscow in the last few years, which is a crucial factor for the protection of Turkey's security interests in a vast region extending from the Middle East and East Mediterranean to the Caucasus and Central Asia (Erşen & Köstem, 2020; Balta & Çelikpala, 2020; Kubicek, 2021).

More importantly, it seems that Turkey has been rather seeking to turn its special relations with the Turkic world into an advantage in order to strengthen its role in the Chinese-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Such a role also corresponds to at least two of the main principles of Turkish foreign policy during the AKP period: proactive and pre-emptive peace diplomacy and a multi-dimensional foreign policy approach.¹⁰ Ankara particularly promotes the Middle Corridor (also known as the Trans-Caspian East-West-Middle Corridor) initiative, which is a transportation route connecting Turkey with China via the Caucasus and Central Asia with the goal of reviving the ancient Silk Road. As also indicated at the website of the Turkish foreign ministry, "The establishment of logistical centers and free trade zones at the ports of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan will facilitate the development and deepening of Trans-Caspian cooperation."¹¹ To this end, a common cooperation protocol has already been signed by the ministers of transport of the OTS member states, and they are currently working on finalizing a combined transport agreement to facilitate the Middle Corridor. These developments once again prove that Turkey's policies toward the OTS

are now guided by pragmatism rather than ideological concerns.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Compared with the OTS, Turkey's role in the SCO has been less significant, which is not surprising when one considers that the SCO has been established in 2001 as an intergovernmental platform between Russia, China and four Central Asian states for cooperation on combating the so-called "three evils" in the security sphere — terrorism, extremism and separatism (Aris, 2009). To this end, the SCO members established a Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in 2004 with headquarters in Tashkent. In addition, they have been holding joint military exercises since 2003. Yet, the greatest achievement of the SCO has been its ability to present itself as some kind of geopolitical counterbalance to the West in global politics, even though it is not a military alliance like NATO or a political-economic integration project like the EU.

While it is true that "institutional weaknesses, a lack of common financial funds for the implementation of joint projects and conflicting national interests have prevented the SCO from achieving a higher level of regional cooperation", the accession of India and Pakistan as full members in 2017 and the latest decision to elevate Iran's status from an observing member to a full member in 2021 have nevertheless turned the SCO into one of the most notable regional organizations in the Eurasian space.¹² Even though security issues still dominate its agenda, advancing cooperation in the economic and cultural spheres has also become a main objective of the SCO in the recent years. This is also why it was highlighted as a key institution in the joint Russian-Chinese

¹⁰ Davutoğlu, A. Turkey's Zero Problems Foreign Policy // Foreign Policy. May 20, 2010. URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/05/20/turkeys-zero-problems-foreign-policy> (accessed: 10.02.2022).

¹¹ Turkey's Multilateral Transportation Policy // Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. URL: https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-multilateral-transportation-policy.en.mfa (accessed: 04.02.2022).

¹² Grieger G. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization // European Parliamentary Research Service. 2015. URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/564368/EPRS_BRI\(2015\)564368_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/564368/EPRS_BRI(2015)564368_EN.pdf) (accessed: 18.11.2021).

declaration in June 2016, in which the two countries underlined their willingness to promote “a comprehensive Eurasian partnership based on the principles of openness, transparency, and mutual interests.”¹³ In this sense, the SCO has become one of the main pillars of the Greater Eurasian Partnership (GEP) initiative that has been promoted by the Russian leaders since 2015, which additionally includes the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The fact that it includes all of the main regional powers of Eurasia has been one of the reasons for the Turkish policymakers’ rising interest in the SCO in the 2010s (Contessi, 2019). In July 2012, Turkey was accepted as a “dialogue partner” as the first — and so far only — NATO member state to enjoy a special institutional relationship with the SCO, which even compelled the analysts to argue at the time that this was “a step with unclear practical consequences but substantial symbolic importance.”¹⁴ More importantly, Erdoğan publicly announced in a televised interview in January 2013 that his government would be willing to join the SCO as a full member as a reaction to Turkey’s stalled EU membership process — a desire he reiterated once again in November 2016.¹⁵ Ankara’s efforts to build a closer relationship with the SCO eventually culminated in the Turkish presidency at the SCO Energy Club in 2017, which was a very remarkable development, since Turkey became

the first non-member state to assume such a key role in one of the SCO organs.

In November 2016, in response to Erdoğan’s remarks about Turkey’s interest in joining the SCO as a full member, the spokesperson for Chinese foreign ministry Geng Shuang stated that a possible Turkish application for full membership in the organization would be favorably assessed by the members.¹⁶ However, General Leonid Ivashov, a leading Russian figure who was in charge of military cooperation between the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the 1996—2001 period and also played an important role for the establishment of the SCO, stated that Turkey first needed to start its departure process from NATO, since he did not believe the accession of a NATO-member state to the SCO could be possible under the current circumstances.¹⁷

In this sense, despite Erdoğan’s conviction that the SCO could become some kind of alternative to the EU in Turkish foreign policy, it is actually Turkey’s long-standing military ties with NATO that complicate the development of its strategic relations with the SCO. Yet, as also indicated by the high-profile representation of Turkey at the latest NATO summits, the Turkish leaders do not consider leaving the alliance anytime soon. For instance, Turkish foreign minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu has also made it clear that Turkey did not need to make a choice between Russia and NATO and wanted to develop its relations with both parties simultaneously.¹⁸

¹³ Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China // President of Russia. 25.06.2016. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/supplement/5100> (accessed: 11.11.2021). (In Russian).

¹⁴ Kucera J. Turkey Makes It Official with SCO // Eurasianet. April 28, 2013. URL: <https://eurasianet.org/turkey-makes-it-official-with-sco> (accessed: 15.11.2021).

¹⁵ See: Putin’e ‘Şanghay Beşlisi’ Teklifi // Anadolu Agency. January 25, 2013. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/putine-sangay-beslisi-teklifi/281518> (accessed: 18.11.2021); Erdoğan: ‘Şanghay Beşlisi İçerisinde Türkiye Niye Olmasın?’ Diyorum // Sputnik Turkey. November 20, 2016. URL: <https://tr.sputniknews.com/20161120/erdogan-ab-sanghay-beslisi-1025892702.html> (accessed: 12.11.2021).

¹⁶ Çin: Türkiye, Şanghay İşbirliği Örgütü’ne Üyelik Başvurusu Yaparsa Değerlendiririz // BBC Turkish. November 21, 2016. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-38051010> (accessed: 22.10.2021).

¹⁷ Russia, China Give Green Light after Ankara Highlights SCO Option // Daily Sabah. November 21, 2016. URL: <https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2016/11/21/russia-china-give-green-light-after-ankara-highlights-sco-option> (accessed: 15.11.2021).

¹⁸ Çavuşoğlu Moskova İle Yakınlaşma Eleştirilerine Yanıt Verdi: NATO ya da Rusya, Niye Seçmek Zorunda Kalalım // Hürriyet. November 5, 2021. URL: <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/cavusoglu-moskova->

Despite such statements by the government officials, the national-patriotic groups in Turkey still continue to view the SCO as a viable alternative to the West. Perinçek for instance argues that the SCO represents the modern Eurasian civilization that Turkey should embrace instead of the outdated Western civilization.¹⁹ Particularly after the failed coup attempt that took place in Turkey in July 2016, strengthening the Eurasian axis in Turkish foreign policy has also been advocated by other political groups due to the widespread belief in the Turkish government and the public that the US was somehow linked with the coup attempt.²⁰ This is not only due to the fact that Fetullah Gülen, a Turkish Muslim cleric who is accused by Ankara of orchestrating the coup attempt has been living in self-imposed exile in the US since 1999, but also because the immediate reactions of the US — and also EU — officials regarding the coup attempt have been quite muted and hesitant. The Western leaders have also been quite critical about the Turkish government's measures to deal with the repercussions of the coup attempt following the declaration of a state of emergency in the country. The European Parliament, for instance, took a decision in November 2016 advising temporary suspension of the EU's accession talks with Turkey due to Ankara's "disproportionate repressive measures."²¹

In stark contrast to the mixed reactions of the West regarding the July 2016 incident, both

ile-yakinlasma-elistirilerine-yanit-verdi-nato-ya-da-rusya-niye-secmek-zorunda-kalalim-41908729 (accessed: 12.11.2021).

¹⁹ Perinçek D. Niçin Şanghay İşbirliği Örgütü? // Aydınlik. November 24, 2016. URL: <https://vatanpartisi.org.tr/genel-merkez/rota-yazilari/dogu-perincek-nicin-sanghay-Isbirligi-orgutu-21695> (accessed: 16.11.2021).

²⁰ Darbenin Arkasında ABD Var: %79, OHAL Hayatımı Değiştirmede: %75 // Haberturk. November 29, 2016. URL: <https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1329969-darbenin-arkasinda-abd-var--79-ohal-hayatimi-degistirmede--75#> (accessed: 11.11.2021).

²¹ European Parliament Votes to Suspend Turkish Membership Talks // Financial Times. November 24, 2016. URL: <https://www.ft.com/content/afa9ecd8-c324-303a-b203-2073ff1a6da6> (accessed: 15.11.2021).

the Russian and Iranian presidents quickly declared support to the Turkish government against the coup plotters, while the Chinese vice foreign minister paid a visit to Ankara only two weeks after the coup attempt. In this sense, it was no surprise that the coup attempt provided a significant boost to Turkey's relations with these three countries. Some analysts have even drawn attention to the emergence of a loosely-organized, but influential "pro-Russian lobby" in the Turkish state institutions and emphasized the rising influence of Perinçek's Eurasianist group regarding key political issues after July 2016.²²

Even before July 2016, Russia had already become one of the top trade partners of Turkey and played a crucial role in the Turkish energy market as symbolized by grand energy projects like the TurkStream natural gas pipeline launched in 2020 and the Akkuyu nuclear power plant which is still under construction by the Russian state company Rosatom. After the coup attempt Turkish-Russian rapprochement gained even greater momentum and the two countries established a political-military dialogue mechanism in Syria together with Iran, which eventually enabled Ankara to conduct a number of large-scale cross-border military operations to eliminate the security threats posed by ISIS and PYD/YPG (Köstem, 2020). In addition, Turkey made a deal with Russia in September 2017 to purchase the advanced S-400 Triumf missile defense system despite Washington's threats that such an action could trigger US sanctions against Ankara.

Turkish-Chinese relations have also developed particularly in the economic sphere in the post-2016 period. Ankara sought to take

²² See: Akyol M. What the 'Russian Lobby' in Ankara Wants // Al-Monitor. December 15, 2016. URL: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/12/turkey-russia-what-russian-lobby-wants.html> (accessed: 08.10.2021); Yetkin M. PKK Saldırısı, Avrasya Lobisi ve Ürperten Senaryoya Güç Kattı // Hürriyet. December 14, 2016. URL: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/murat-yetkin/pkk-saldirisi-avrasya-lobisi-ve-urperten-senaryoya-guc-katti-40306102> (accessed: 14.11.2021).

active part in the BRI after the initiative was announced by President Xi Jinping in 2013 with a goal to attract greater Chinese investment. To this end, Turkey became one of the founding members of the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB) which is led by China, while Erdoğan attended the Belt and Road International Cooperation Forum held in Beijing in May 2017. These efforts seem to have paid off as the Chinese investments in Turkey were estimated to have surpassed 2.6 billion US dollars as of 2019.²³ In addition, as stated earlier, Turkey has been very much interested in developing the Middle Corridor initiative. The launch of the Baku — Tbilisi — Kars railway in October 2017 has been a milestone in this regard as the first train carrying goods from Turkey to China reached its final destination in December 2020.²⁴

The latest Turkish foreign trade figures also show that China and Russia are among the top three trade partners of Turkey. Even though there is a significant trade deficit working against Turkey in its economic relations with these two countries, it is clear that they both continue to play a very important role for the Turkish economy. For instance, the Turkish central bank made an agreement with China in June 2021 to increase an existing currency swap facility to 6 billion US dollars in order to boost Turkey's foreign reserves.²⁵ This could also be regarded as a major reason why the Turkish leaders have become more interested in international platforms in which Russia and

China play a dominant role like the SCO. In addition, the SCO could potentially build a new bridge between Turkey and India, which became a more important trade partner for Turkey in the last few years.

Yet, in addition to such pragmatic economic concerns, ideational factors should also be taken into consideration for understanding Turkey's rising interest in the SCO. This is where discussions about Eurasianism become relevant as this ideology is usually associated with an authoritarian type of government, as well as an "Eastern" model of development based on "a strong state, a weak opposition and emaciated checks and balances" in contrast to the liberal democratic Western model.²⁶ It should be noted in this regard that the Turkish political system in the post-2016 period became much more reminiscent of this Eastern model, as the Turkish president's powers have been greatly strengthened vis-à-vis the judiciary and the executive with the referendum held in 2017. Erdoğan's harsh criticisms against the Western liberal order and efforts to promote Turkey's autonomy in foreign policy are also in conformity with the Eurasian ideals that have been associated with the SCO. This could be regarded as another indication that ideas — if not the Eurasianist ideology — continue to play an important role in Turkey's relations with this organization.

Conclusion

As Turkey's ties with the West are becoming increasingly complicated due to the growing rift between Ankara and its NATO allies due to a number of political and economic problems, other regional and global actors are getting more significant in Turkey's external relations particularly since the failed coup attempt of July 2016. Some analysts (Dursun-

²³ Çinliler Türkiye'de Yatırım Peşinde // Ekonomist. February 8, 2020. URL: <https://www.ekonomist.com.tr/arastirmalar/cinliler-turkiyede-yatirim-pesinde.html> (accessed: 18.11.2021).

²⁴ Sahin T. 1st Turkey — China Freight Train Completes Historic Trip // Anadolu Agency. December 19, 2020. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/economy/1st-turkey-china-freight-train-completes-historic-trip/2082512> (accessed: 16.11.2021).

²⁵ Erdogan Says Turkey Has Raised FX Swap Deal with China to \$6 Bln // Reuters. June 13, 2021. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/erdogan-says-turkey-has-raised-fx-swap-deal-with-china-6-bln-2021-06-13/> (accessed: 15.11.2021).

²⁶ Puddington A. Breaking Down Democracy: Goals, Strategies, and Methods of Modern Authoritarians // Freedom House. June 2017. URL: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/June2017_FH_Report_Breaking_Down_Democracy.pdf (accessed: 12.11.2021).

Özkanca, 2019) even point out to a visible shift of axis that has been taking place in Turkish foreign policy²⁷. As the two main powers that represent the emergence of a multipolar world order — Russia and China — naturally play a key role in how Turkish policymakers perceive the contemporary world politics. This also gradually changes the meaning of the concept of Eurasia, which until very recently has been largely associated with the former Soviet space in Turkish foreign policy. In this sense, China has also lately become prominent in the Turkish debates with regard to Eurasia and Eurasianism (Üngör, 2019).

Turkey's rising interest in the Eurasia-based organizations could be evaluated against this geopolitical background. It is clear that the OTS and the SCO in particular have become more important in Turkish foreign policy in the last few years. While pragmatic economic concerns such as taking active part in the BRI, maintaining the special energy dialogue with Russia or attracting greater investment from China seem to have played a more prominent role in the shaping of Turkey's policies toward these two organizations, ideological considerations should not go unnoticed either. For instance, the OTS is still a purely Turkic organization which inevitably underscores some of the popular slogans of Pan-Turkism, even if Ankara is quite careful not to alienate Russia regarding this issue. On the other hand, "the Turkish leaders' frustration with the Western

values as well as their enthusiasm to embrace an alternative model where strong leaders and state-led reforms are essential for political, economic and social development" seem to have been a major factor in Turkey's efforts to develop its relations with the SCO (Erşen & Köstem 2019, p. 8).

In short, it could be argued that both pragmatism and ideology influences Turkey's policies towards regional integration in the Eurasian space. Today, especially in light of the domestic economic difficulties that became much more visible in the last few years, the Turkish leaders seem to rely more on pragmatism than ideology in redefining their regional priorities. This is why Ankara should be expected to continue developing its political and economic ties with the Eurasian states as well as Eurasia-based regional organizations, even though its membership in NATO and customs union with the EU could make it hard for Turkey to reach out to organizations like the EAEU or the CSTO. In this sense, the OTS and the SCO are likely to remain as the two most important platforms shaping Turkey's Eurasian strategy in the foreseeable future. At the same time, however, it should be noted that it is not yet clear whether Turkey can play a meaningful role in the Russia-promoted GEP project which is a grand — though yet ambiguous — regional cooperation initiative attracting greater interest from China and other Eurasian states. Turkey's possible inclusion in the GEP in this regard will be closely related with how Ankara defines its foreign policy interests — not only in Eurasia, but also vis-à-vis the West — in light of pragmatic concerns and ideological motivations.

²⁷ Also see: Nasi S. Turkey's Shift of Axis // *Hürriyet Daily News*. August 1, 2016. URL: <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/selin-nasi/turkeys-shift-of-axis-102315> (accessed: 11.11.2021).

Received / Поступила в редакцию: 20.11.2021
Revised / Доработана после рецензирования: 11.12.2021
Accepted / Принята к публикации: 21.12.2022

References

- Akçalı, E., & Perinçek, M. (2009). Kemalist Eurasianism: an emerging geopolitical discourse in Turkey. *Geopolitics*, 14(3), 550—569. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040802693564>
- Aktürk, Ş. (2004). Counter hegemonic visions and reconciliation through the past: The case of Turkish Eurasianism. *Ab Imperio*, (4), 215—236.

- Aktürk, Ş. (2015). The fourth style of politics: Eurasianism as a pro-Russian rethinking of Turkey's geopolitical identity. *Turkish Studies*, 16(1), 54—79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2015.1021246>
- Aris, S. (2009). The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: 'Tackling the three evils'. A regional response to non-traditional security challenges or an anti-Western bloc? *Europe — Asia Studies*, 61(3), 457—482. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130902753309>
- Aydın, M. (1996). Turkey and Central Asia: Challenges of change. *Central Asian Survey*, 15(2), 157—177. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634939608400943>
- Aydın, M. (2002). Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler. In B. Oran (Ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası Cilt II* (pp. 366—439). İstanbul: İletişim.
- Balta, E., & Çelikpala, M. (2020). Turkey and Russia: Historical patterns and contemporary trends in bilateral relations. In G. M. Tezcür (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of Turkish politics* (pp. 1—20). Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190064891.013.12>
- Contessi, N. P. (2019). Turkey and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Common values, economics or pure geopolitics? In E. Erşen & S. Köstem (Eds.), *Turkey's pivot to Eurasia: Geopolitics and foreign policy in a changing world order* (pp. 93—110). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429023064-7>
- Dugin, A. G. (2000). *Foundations of geopolitics: The geopolitical future of Russia*. Moscow: Arktogeya-tsentr publ. (In Russian).
- Dursun-Özkanca, O. (2019). *Turkey — West relations: The politics of intra-alliance opposition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Erşen, E. (2013a). The evolution of 'Eurasia' as a geopolitical concept in post-Cold war Turkey. *Geopolitics*, 18(1), 24—44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2012.665106>
- Erşen, E. (2013b). Türk Dış Politikasında Avrasya Yönelimi ve Şanghay İşbirliği Örgütü. *Ortadoğu Analiz*, 5(52), 14—23. Retrieved from https://www.orsam.org.tr/d_hbanaliz/1emreersen.pdf
- Erşen, E. (2019). The return of Eurasianism in Turkey: Relations with Russia and beyond. In E. Erşen & S. Köstem (Eds.), *Turkey's pivot to Eurasia: Geopolitics and foreign policy in a changing world order* (pp. 31—47). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429023064-3>
- Erşen, E., & Köstem, S. (2020). Turkey's interest in closer relations with Russia: Global, regional and domestic dynamics. *Siyasal: Journal of Political Sciences*, 29(2), 231—245. <https://doi.org/10.26650/siyasal.2020.29.2.0026>
- Erşen, E., & Köstem, S. (Eds.). (2019). *Turkey's pivot to Eurasia: Geopolitics and foreign policy in a changing world order*. London: Routledge.
- İlhan, A. (2000). *Sultan Galiyef: Avrasya'da Dolaşan Hayalet*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- İmanbeyli, V. (2015). "Failed Exodus": Dugin's networks in Turkey. In M. Laruelle (Ed.), *Eurasianism and European far right: Reshaping the Europe — Russia relationship* (pp. 145—174). Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Kocaman, Ö. (2021). Adjusting to the "new normal" of post-COVID 19: The role of Organization of Turkic States in multilateral cooperation. *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, 26(2), 189—215.
- Köstem, S. (2017). When can idea entrepreneurs influence foreign policy? Explaining the rise of the "Turkic World" in Turkish foreign policy. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 13(3), 722—740. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orw016>
- Köstem, S. (2019). Geopolitics, identity and beyond: Turkey's renewed interest in the Caucasus and Central Asia. In E. Erşen & S. Köstem (Eds.), *Turkey's pivot to Eurasia: Geopolitics and foreign policy in a changing world order* (pp. 111—128). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429023064-8>
- Köstem, S. (2020). Russian-Turkish cooperation in Syria: Geopolitical alignment with limits. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 1—23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2020.1719040>
- Kubicek, P. (2021). Strictly pragmatism? Prospects for a Russian-Turkish partnership. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 23(2), 233—250. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2020.1867810>
- Landau, J. M. (1995). *Pan-Turkism: From irredentism to cooperation*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Neziroğlu, İ., & Yılmaz, T. (Eds.). (2015). *Koalisyon Protokolleri, Hükümet Programları ve Genel Kurul Görüşmeleri Cilt 3*. Ankara: TBMM.
- Özcan, G. (1998). Doksanlı Yıllarda Türkiye'nin Değişen Güvenlik Ortamı. In G. Özcan & Ş. Kut (Eds.), *En Uzun Onyıl: Türkiye'nin Ulusal Güvenlik ve Dış Politika Gündeminde Doksanlı Yıllar* (pp. 13—44). İstanbul: Boyut.
- Perinçek, D. (2000). *Avrasya Seçeneği: Türkiye İçin Bağımsız Dış Politika*. Ankara: Kaynak.

- Robins, P. (1993). Between sentiment and self-interest: Turkey's policy toward Azerbaijan and the Central Asian states. *Middle East Journal*, 47(4), 593—610.
- Talbot, V. (Ed.). (2018). *Turkey towards a Eurasian shift?* Milano: Ledizioni LediPublishing.
- Üngör, Ç. (2019). Heading towards the East? Sino-Turkish relations after the July 15 coup attempt. In E. Erşen & S. Köstem (Eds.), *Turkey's pivot to Eurasia: Geopolitics and foreign policy in a changing world order* (pp. 64—78). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429023064-5>
- Winrow, G. (1995). *Turkey in post-Soviet Central Asia*. London: Royal Institute for International Affairs.
- Winrow, G. (2001). Turkey and Central Asia. In R. Allison & L. Jonson (Eds.), *Central Asian security: The new international context* (pp. 199—218). London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.
- Yanık, L. K. (2019). Debating Eurasia: Political travels of a geographical concept in Turkey. *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 16(63), 33—50. <https://doi.org/10.33458/uidergisi.621290>

About the author: *Erşen Emre* — PhD, Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Marmara University; ORCID: 0000-0001-6984-9908; e-mail: eersen@marmara.edu.tr