EURASIANISM AND CONTEMPORARY FOREIGN POLICY IN TURKEY

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Eurasianism and Contemporary Foreign Policy in Turkey

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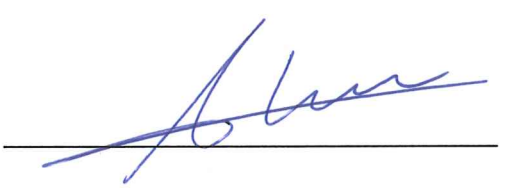
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ABSTRACT

Eurasianism and Contemporary Foreign Policy in Turkey

Describing particular Turkish foreign policy decisions or certain actors within Turkey's political environment as Eurasianist is a trend observable in journals, newspapers and speeches. There are many speculations about the power of Eurasianists within the Turkish state apparatus and especially the Turkish Armed Forces. After officers and politicians who are allegedly linked to Eurasianist thought have been purged during the Ergenekon, Sledgehammer and Izmir spy cases, many of them returned to their posts after the abortive coup of July 15, 2016. Turkish Eurasianists and their ties to Russian Eurasianists and far-right politicians, such as Alexander Dugin and Vladimir Zhirinovsky are criticized in one way or another in Turkish media and academic works. What is astounding here is the fact that the political background of some Turkish Eurasianists is communism or left-wing nationalism with references to the nationalism of the founding father of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Therefore the definition of Eurasianism in Turkey and its theoretical background are highly discussed and contemporary, crucial topics in Turkish politics. The question of what actually lies behind the term of "Turkish Eurasianism" is the aim of this thesis. Conducting interviews with several proponents and insiders will give valuable insight into the aims, approaches and underlying theories of Turkish Eurasianists. For this reason exploratory, qualitative interviews will be conducted with elites to focus on foreign policy approaches between 2008 and 2018 and the historical background of particular actors within the Eurasianist environment. Providing both a contemporary analysis of foreign policy and the historical relations will lead to a better understanding of Turkish foreign policy.

ÖZET

Avrasyacılık ve Çağdaş Türk Dış Politikası

Çeşitli Türk dış politika kararlarını veya Avrasyacılar gibi bazı aktörleri tanımlamak, dergilerde, gazetelerde veya konuşmalarda gözlemlenebilen bir trenddir. Türk devleti ve özellikle Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri bünyesindeki Avrasyacıların sahip oldukları güç hakkında pek çok spekülasyon bulunmaktadır. Ergenekon, Balyoz ve İzmir casusluk davaları sürecinde Avrasyacı düşünce ile bağlantılı olduğu iddia edilen subay ve siyasetçiler tasfiye edildikten sonra, pek çoğu 15 Temmuz 2016'da gerçekleşen başarısız darbe girişimi sonrasında görevlerine dönmüştür. Türk Avrasyacılar ve onların Alexander Dugin, Vladimir Zhirinovsky gibi Rus Avrasyacılar ve aşırı sağ politikacılar ile olan ilişkileri, Türk medyasında ve akademik çalışmalarında çeşitli şekillerde eleştirilmektedirler. Burada şaşırtıcı olan, bazı Türk Avrasyacıların politik geçmişinin, Türkiye'nin kurucusu Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün milliyetçiliğini esas alan komünizm veya solcu milliyetçilik olduğu gerçeğidir. Dolayısıyla, Türkiye'deki Avrasyacılık'ın tanımı ve teorik altyapısı Türk politikasında son derece tartışılmakta olan, çağdaş ve elzem konulardır. Bu tezin amacı, "Türk Avrasyacılığı" teriminin altında neyin esas olduğu sorusudur. Çeşitli yandaşlar ve içeriden kişiler ile görüşmeler yapmak Türk Avrasyacılığının amacına, yaklaşımlarına ve temelindeki teorilere ilişkin değerli anlayışlar kazandıracaktır. Bu amaçla, seçkin kişilerle 2008 ve 2018 arası dış politika yaklaşımları ve Avrasyacı çevredeki belirli aktörlerin geçmişi odaklı, keşfedici niteliksel görüşmeler yapılacaktır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Eurasianism recently became a popular term within Turkey's political discourse. A wide variety of political parties is said to be following a Eurasianist path or use some of the concepts that relate to Eurasianism. Using the term Eurasianism, when we describe contemporary policies, actually means Neo-Eurasianism. This implies that the actual Eurasianism, or classical Eurasianism, is the originator of today's Eurasianist discourse, although the two correspond to quite different perspectives and aims (Tufekci, 2017).

The difference of Classical Eurasianism and Neo-Eurasianism starts with the geographical and ideological definition of Eurasia itself. Eurasia as a term itself is basically the combination of the continents Europe and Asia that define the landmass of Eurasia. As of today, many interpretations of Eurasia exist. To relate to already established political entities, the term Eurasia, within the ideological concept of Neo-Eurasianism, is a reflection of regional cooperation, mostly based on the countries being members of the Eurasian Development Bank and the later Eurasian Economic Union. Here its primary distinction from Europe is not only based on geography but also ideology, emphasizing its difference from the concept and value of Europe (Smith & Richardson, 2017). Alexander Dugin, one of the most important Neo-Eurasianists, has a partition of the world in four large spaces in mind. One space, the Atlantic meridian zone will be controlled by the United States and operating within the framework of the Monroe Doctrine. The second one will be Euro-Africa, controlled by the countries of the European Union and the Arab Great Space connecting continental Europe with North and Trans-Saharan Africa. The third one is

the Russian-Central Asian zone, controlled by Russia and established on the Moscow-Ankara and Moscow-Tehran axes. The fourth region would then be the Pacific zone (Dugin, 2014). Dugin's concept also reflects the thoughts of classical Eurasianists, who also saw a common Russian Eurasian civilization that includes Turanian nations. They argued that the Russian soul is influenced to a great extent by elements of Turanian psychological type that is shared among Finno-Ugric nations, Samoyeds, Turks, Mongols and Manchurians (Paradowski, 1999).

However, these geographical and ethnic components of Eurasianism are an outcome of the historical process. Classical Eurasianism was developed as a reaction to the social transformation caused by the Bolshevik revolution and to the emergence of a pan-Turkic idea at the time of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire that was threatening Russia's interests in Central Asia. Hence Eurasianism experienced its golden age in the early 20th century during and shortly after the Russian revolution. The basis was an understanding of Russia as an own civilization, not simply a nation, with distinct values differing from a European civilization (Pryce, 2013). The masterminds behind the early Eurasian ideology were, among others, Peter Nikolaevich Savitsky, Peter Suvchinsky and Nikolai Trubetskoy. Shlapentokh (1997) describes the classical Eurasianism as a quasi-political and intellectual movement that builds on the uniqueness of Russia, representing a mix of Slavic and non-Slavic cultures and ethnic groups and the corporate nature of the Russian state. This uniqueness is also viewed as a contrast to the European civilization. This alienation from the West or European values can be found to some extent in every contemporary Eurasianist discourse. However, the classical Eurasianists understood the boundaries of Eurasia as the borders of the Russian Empire. This vast geographic entity, that they saw as a continent in itself, ranged from East China to the

Carpathians in Eastern Europe. The inhabitants of this continent, according to the Eurasianists, have found mental kinship, manifested on the "priority of the collective over the individual, the spiritual over the material" (Entin & Entina, 2016, p. 593).

With the peak of Eurasianist intellectual activity in the 1920s, the Eurasian movement of the Russian émigrés stalled in the 1930s. Some followers aligned their views with Stalinism and the original works of classical Eurasianists were banned during the Soviet era. Some Eurasianist ideas would pop up in political discourse of the Soviet Union, especially in Mikhail Gorbachev's ideas for the common European home of the Warsaw Pact (Pryce, 2013). Nevertheless, it took until the end of the Cold War until Eurasianism, now in its new face and termed as Neo-Eurasianism, became popular again. At least since Zbigniew Brzezinski published his famous piece "The Grand Chessboard" in the post-Cold War setting of 1997, the term Eurasia was getting increased attention, also in the Western academic sphere. While Brzezinski was stressing: "For America, the chief geopolitical price is Eurasia" (Brzezinski, 1997), Samuel Huntington separated the West and its political and economic achievements from so-called torn countries like Russia and Turkey and described the Confucian-Islamic connection of Eurasia as threats to Western hegemony. Huntington argued that during the Cold War arms control's primary objective was to balance NATO and Warsaw Pact states. However, after the Cold War, promotion of non-proliferation became a norm directed against any possible state hostile to the West (Huntington, 1993).

Simultaneously to the rebirth of Eurasianist ideas in the states of the former Soviet Union, Turkey started to develop its own version of Eurasianism in the 1990s. This Turkish Eurasianism took its roots in the Post-Cold War environment and had a special focus on creating influence and close relations with the newly independent

Turkic republics in Central Asia. According to Ersen (2013), the development of Turkish Eurasianism, underwent three periods. The first period, between the end of the Cold War and 1995, was defined by Turkey's relationship with the Turkic republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Especially nationalist parties in Turkey used this time to emphasize the Turkishness of the new states and to promote Pan-Turkism as a way to ensure the future importance of Turkey as a central geopolitical power. The second half of the 1990s was then significantly shifting the Eurasianist discourse to geo-economic interests, highlighting the necessity creating a network of energy and transport routes to Central Asia. The third period, after 2000, was specific because of the rapprochement between Ankara and Moscow and the merge of interests of Russian Neo-Eurasianists and Turkish Neo-Ottomanists within the Justice and Development Party.

This thesis should focus on a fourth period that I propose to begin in 2009. The reason for that is the apparent breaking point in Turkish foreign policy in that year. Several authors have described this alteration. Ziya Onis (2009) realized a shift in the JDP's foreign policy from deep Europeanization in the first years of JDP rule to somewhat soft Euro-asianism by the end of 2008. In May 2009, former chief foreign policy advisor Ahmet Davutoglu became foreign minister and presented his pro-active, multidimensional foreign policy approach, that he called 'strategic depth'. This shift in Turkish foreign policy happened because of several reasons. Some of the most important factors were the stalling EU membership process, a rising group of influential, conservative businessmen, called the 'Anatolian Tigers' and Davutoglu's own understanding of Turkey's role in geopolitics. Davutoglu believed that Turkey has a strategic depth in history and geography and failed to take advantage of its position in the years before, because of its passive foreign policy

approach (Dinc & Yetim, 2012). Turkey should therefore establish regional influence with special regards to the Middle East, the Balkans, Caucasian and Central Asian countries (Davutoglu, 2008). Even though Davutoglu's vision of Turkey's foreign policy includes the improvement of ties with regional powers in line with Eurasianist goals, his 'strategic depth' doctrine does not consider Russia as a primary ally for Turkey, a distinctive feature of Turkish Eurasianism (Akturk, 2015).

However, the prelude to the shift from passive to pro-active foreign policy happened in the years before and could be anticipated when listening to the Kemalist elites and the rhetoric of certain individuals within the JDP. In 2002, Turkish General and Secretary of the National Security Council Tuncer Kilinc, a highly decorated military commander urged the audience at Ankara's War Academy to establish close relations with Russia and Iran as a reaction to the unpleasant and hesitating conduct of the European Union (Ministry for European Union Affairs, 2007). At that time JDP policymakers still sought to be in line with the European Union accession process, which formally started in 2005. Aydin and Acikmese (2007) show that Turkey's general compliance with the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) *acquis* and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was fueled by prospective EU membership. However, fulfilling the conditionality of CFSP meant for Turkey to resolve issues with its neighbors like Iran, Syria, Iraq and Armenia. Even though Turkey refused to act according to EU demands to open ports in Northern Cyprus for Greek Cypriots in 2006, which led to a freeze in membership negotiations, Turkey continued to play a vital role in establishing closer ties with Black Sea countries and put a special focus on the Caucasus. Cooperation with Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, with the aim to solve frozen conflicts in the region, even led to the establishment of the Caucasus

Cooperation and Stability Platform (CCSP) in 2008 (Ustun, 2010). This rapprochement in the relations with regional powers was also in line with the Eurasianists foreign policy approach, especially with an eye on Iran and countries that experience a Russian influence. The issue with Cyprus and Turkey's tense relationship with Greece however remain topics that still prevent progress with Turkey's prospected EU membership. Turkey found itself in a quagmire, trying to balance the interests between two major influencing powers, the EU and the US. In the unlikely case that a solution to the Cyprus issue was to be found the EU negotiations could be revived, however it would negatively affect the United States' interests in the region. Those interests could only be served through military cooperation, an exploitation of Turkey's geostrategic role and increased engagement in regional conflicts (Kassimeris, 2010).

The Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), a bastion of Kemalism and a critical factor within Turkish politics, lost parts of its influence, when Turkey harmonized its security forces according to EU demands (Bilgic, 2009). However, although the Turkish population became increasingly skeptical of the benefits of EU membership after 2004 (Stelzenmueller & Raisher, 2013), a survey conducted in 2015 shows that the Turkish military's officer corps remained largely positive (Gurcan, 2018). This survey however shows the political affiliations before the coup attempt in July 2016. In an article written just months after the failed coup d'état, Gurcan and Gisclon (2016, September) identifies a reemergence of the anti-Western Kemalists, or Eurasianists, who were purged during the *Balyoz*, *Ergenekon* and Izmir Spy Cases between 2007 and 2011 (Ozpek &Yasar, 2018). This also meant a shift towards the left within the TAF and that the Eurasianists were replacing the mostly conservative and Atlanticist officers who were members of Fetullah Gulen's coup plotters. The

Eurasianists within the TAF are described as well educated, anti-American and relatively independent with an increasingly reactionary and nationalist stance (Gurcan & Gisclon, 2016, September). This shift in the TAF is visible in current events like the cooperation with Russia in the military operations in Syria and the planned acquisition of the S400 air defense system (Majumdar, 2018, March 9) that has raised concerns and created troubles with Turkey's NATO allies, first and foremost the United States (Insinna, 2017, November 16).

Eurasianism in a Turkish context, Turkish Eurasianism or Avrasyacilik, is a broad concept based on a certain ideology and foreign policy implications. There are many different definitions that should grasp the diversity and fluidity of the Turkish Eurasianists. Akturk (2015) describes Turkish Eurasianists as

> Those individuals and groups that self-identify as Eurasianists constitute a concrete intellectual and political movement with shared goals, both foreign and domestic. Eurasianists aim to change Turkey's foreign policy such that Russia would be Turkey's primary ally. They aim to change Turkey's domestic regime such that a socialist–nationalist, left-Kemalist regime is instituted. (p. 56)

The problem with defining Neo-Eurasianism is apparent in Marlene Laruelle's (2008) book where she mentions the different ideologies, social and political factors that are dividing its proponents. As the smallest common denominator, she mentions the "political and economic rapprochement between the countries of the former Soviet Union as well as between them and the neighboring Asian powers" (Laruelle, 2008, p. 206). This definition is contradicting Akturk's definition as it also counts groups with Islamist and Pan-Turkist views as Neo-Eurasianists. Moreover Laruelle's common denominator is contradicting the inclusion of Islamists and Pan-Turkists in the Neo-Eurasianist concept, as those groups are most certainly putting a focus on economic and political integration with distinctive countries of the Eurasian landmass, Islamic or Turkic states respectively. Also Gurcan (2017, May) mentions

the different Eurasianist variants within the Turkish *Avrasyacilik*, dividing them into pro-Russian Kemalists, Islamists, Pan-Turkists and Erdoganist Eurasianists. Gurcan is emphasizing the common feature of reactive thinking and anti-Westernism. This is again a problematic definition as it includes contradictory groups. As an example, Shlapentokh (2016) argues that the ethnic nationalist Pan-Turkism is directly contradicting Neo-Eurasianism in Turkey not only as a foreign policy strategy, which would lead to competition between Turkey and Russia, but also as an ideology.

These definitions are just examples as there are various other definitions on Turkish Eurasianism including different foreign policy approaches and ideologies. However, Akturk's definition of Turkish Eurasianism on the base Kemalism and a foreign policy approach that considers close cooperation with Russia as its primary goal is the most plausible.

By accepting Akturk's concept of Turkish Eurasianism equating Kemalism and the primary foreign policy objective of Turkish-Russian cooperation, the question arises how this is possible in today's complicated geopolitical reality for Turkey. This thesis should try to answer what contemporary Turkish Eurasianists suggest to overcome the Western influence in Turkish foreign policy-making. Furthermore, also in regard to the contradictory definitions of Turkish Eurasianism, a big question is if and how much the Eurasianist's visions are influenced by ideology or political pragmatism. This thesis will also try to work out the historical influences of Turkish Eurasianism and differences of Kemalist visions within civilian institutions and the Turkish military.

Answering these questions will provide a deeper insight into contemporary Turkish Euriasianism of Kemalist intellectuals, politicians and former military elites. As the research was conducted in late 2017 and 2018, it gives a picture of changing

security perceptions regarding Turkey's position in a geopolitical environment that is dominated by growing anti-Western sentiments and regional and international conflicts within close proximity to Turkey's borders. Topics such as the war in Syria, the ongoing developments in post-war Iraq, and the tense situation about natural gas resources in the Eastern Mediterranean are adding to the factors that lead Turkey's foreign policy of today. The estrangement of Turkey's elites from the United States and European countries is connected to the growing importance of the Eurasianist discourse. In a time where the ruling Justice and Development Party under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Kemalists forge an alliance against an insinuated Western conspiracy, the narratives of the Eurasianists deserve our attention. Despite the importance of understanding the Turkish Eurasianists' influence on foreign policy, there is relatively little academic analysis of the topic. In general, articles on the shift in Turkey's security perceptions after the abortive coup on July 15, 2016 are scarce due to the novelty of the developments.

To gain an in-depth understanding of the Turkish Eurasianists' perspective the method of qualitative unstructured interviews with elites has been chosen. Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) declare that for conducting unstructured interviews, no hypothesis should be made before undertaking the research. They also outline when unstructured interviews are productive:

> Unstructured interviews are most useful when you want to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon within a particular cultural context. In addition, they are most appropriate when you are working within an interpretive research paradigm, in which you would assume that reality is socially constructed by the participants in the setting of interest. (p. 9)

This applies to the intent of this thesis, as the aim is to understand the perspective of a very distinct group within the Turkish political landscape. The choice of unstructured interviews has many advantages for this research. Due to the

novelty of developments in the field of Turkish foreign policy and the influence of Eurasianists the substantiated insights in the field are sparse. The unstructured approach therefore allows reacting to newly gained knowledge from an interview and the usage of it for later interviews, which makes it possible to acquire a more in-depth insight on the topic.

Although no hypothesis should be postulated, a structural realist position should be taken to assess the intentions of the Kemalist Turkish Eurasianists regarding foreign policy. As Unsal (1979) argues, the foreign policy approach of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk is best described as realist. Today his self-imposed restriction of further military conquest would classify him as a defensive realist. As the Kemalists of today are trying to tie on Ataturk's legacy in foreign and domestic policy, a defensive structural realist perspective is used to explain the outcomes of the research. This perspective is based on the assumptions that great powers act in an anarchic system, each state possesses offensive military capability, states' intentions cannot be trusted, states' main goal is survival and states are rational actors (Mearsheimer, 2010). Anti-imperialism and multipolarity as general goals of Neo-Eurasianists also supports the defensive structural realism. One of the most important proponents of defensive realism, Waltz (1979) argues: "With only two great powers, a balance-of-power system is unstable; four powers are required for its proper functioning."

The literature in the next section will give an overview over the topics that will be touched upon in the interviews. It should contextualize the developments of Turkish Eurasianism with its roots in leftist and nationalist parties and influencing factors of Kemalism. It should additionally serve to gain insight into the historical development of related political discussion, the differences and similarities between Classical

Eurasianism, Russian Neo-Eurasianism and Turkish Eurasianism and outline some topics that dominate the arguments of Turkish Eurasianists regarding domestic issues of Turkish nationalism, Kemalism, the role of the military and Kurdish separatism.

The second section of the literature review will deal with the historical changes of Turkey's global role. It will touch upon geopolitical factors that played a role in the development of Turkish Eurasianism and highlight the shift in security perceptions before and after the Cold War.

In the research chapter, the critical statements of the interviewees will be analyzed. This section serves to present the outcome of the research and is divided into two parts, where one is presenting the views of the participants with a civilian background and those who served within the Turkish Armed Forces. Each chapter within the research section will have a short conclusion part to summarize the ideas and perceptions discovered during the interview.

The last part will be a conclusion that is presenting the analysis of the research in triangulating the outcomes of the interviews and the insights from the literature review. It will show the limitations of the conducted research and give ideas for further research in the field.

The interviewees were chosen according to their expected knowledge about the topic of Turkish Eurasianists' idea of foreign policy development. Additionally, the position within state or political institutions was taken into consideration. Another selection criterion was an equal distribution of participants from the civil sector and the Turkish security forces.

The interviews have been conducted from December 1, 2017 until March 29, 2018 with the following six interviewees:

Rafet Aslantas (date of interview: January 15, 2018)

Rafet Aslantas graduated as an artillery officer from the management and organization department of the military academy in 1990. He served in various units of the Land Forces, subsequently in Land Forces Command and Prime Ministry. At the Chief of General Staff's headquarters and institutions affiliated to the bureau, he served a project officer, branch manager, unit manager and chairman of the intelligence staff. During his professional life, he has participated in numerous courses, training, seminars, security, strategy and coordination in domestic and foreign meetings. In 2014 he retired from his duty as senior colonel. He founded the ANKA institute in November 2015 and works as the president of the institute. His expertise and interest is in security and military issues, intelligence, international relations, management, strategy development and consulting.

Gokhun Gocmen (date of interview: March 29, 2018)

Gokhun Gocmen graduated from Pamukkale University in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in political science and public management. Additionally he visited courses at the University of Peloponnese in political science and international relations and worked for the university's Centre for Mediterranean Middle East and Islamic Studies. After receiving a master's degree in Eurasian studies at Istanbul University he started to pursue a PhD. He also works as a journalist and foreign affairs editor for the Turkish daily newspaper Aydinlik, which is affiliated to the Patriotic Party of Turkey.

Ismail Hakki Pekin (date of interview: February 22, 2018)

Ismail Hakki Pekin graduated from the Turkish land forces' military academy in 1972. As an officer at the airborne brigade he was involved in the invasion of Cyprus 1974. He has been awarded the Bronze Medal of Merit of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Serving as commander in various functions and brigades, among others as representative at NATO's military committee and as Chief of Staff at the 1st Mechanized Infantry Brigade. From 1997 to 1998 he served as head of the department of general planning for defense research at the army headquarters. After Pekin was promoted to the rank of lieutenant general in 2006, he became commanding general of the 3rd Army's VIII Corps in Elazig. He then became head of the intelligence section of the General Staff of Turkey in August 2007. In this post he remained until his retirement in 2011. Pekin was in custody between 2011 and 2013 as part of the Ergenekon plot investigations. In 2015, he ran for a mandate in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey for the Patriotic Party.

Dogu Perincek (date of interview: March 7, 2018)

In June 1964 Dogu Perincek graduated from the Faculty of Law of the University of Ankara and entered the Faculty of Public Law as an assistant. With his dissertation on "Internal Order and Prohibition Regime of Political Parties in Turkey" he graduated as Doctor of Law in March 1968. Later he became the chairman of the Turkish revolutionary leftist group *Dev Genc* and founded the *Aydinlik* magazine. After the so-called coup by memorandum in 1970 he was sentenced to 20 years in jail, but was released in 1974. In 1978 he founded the Workers and Peasants Party of Turkey. After the coup in 1980 he was arrested again and released five years later. After being imprisoned for three months again in 1990 he was elected president of

the Socialist Party in 1991. After the Socialist Party was shut down, he became the president of the Workers' Party in 1992. He was again in prison in 1998 for defending the rights and freedoms of the Kurdish populace and later between 2008 and 2014 as part of the *Ergenekon* conspiracy. In 2015 he founded the Patriotic Party and serves as its president until today.

Mehmet Perincek (date of interview: February 12, 2018)

Mehmet Perincek, the son of Dogu Perincek, graduated from Istanbul University Faculty of Law. He also worked as a research assistant at the Ataturk Principles and the History of Turkish Revolution Institute. In 2005 he became a guest research assistant at the State Institute for International Relations of Moscow and in 2010 at the Institute of Asian and African Countries of Moscow State University. He has been conducting research on Turkish-Soviet relations and the Armenian issue in Russian-Soviet state archives for more than 15 years. Many articles and books have been published on these subjects. He is also working on contemporary Turkish foreign policy and delivered papers on this subject at symposiums and international conferences. He appeared on many programs of the public Turkish broadcasting channel as an interview partner and published books and poetry translated from Russian into Turkish.

Nejat Tarakci (date of interview: December 1, 2017)

Nejat Tarakci graduated from the Naval Academy in 1970. He served in the Turkish Navy for 31 years. He joined the 1974 Cyprus Operation and in 1981 he graduated from the Naval War Academy and became a Chief of Staff. Nejat Tarakci, who retired from his military service in 1999, participated in many international

maneuvers within the Turkish NATO missions. Having an associate degree in economics, Nejat Tarakcı became a doctor in history and international relations in 2004. Between the years 2000-2006 he taught at the Aegean, Yaşar and İzmir Economy universities on a part-time basis. Some of his works that appeared in international journals are related to geopolitics and geostrategy, maritime strategy, conflict prevention and crisis management, effects of naval forces on Ottoman history and the European Union.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Turkish nationalism and Kemalism; developments of a Turkish Eurasianism

Turkish nationalism in general and Kemalism in particular are ideologies that need to be understood to explain the establishment of a Turkish Eurasianist discourse. According to a survey conducted in 2018, the four factors that form the nationalist ideal in contemporary Turkey are a skeptic attitude towards the West and outsider groups, anti-elitism, a desire for great economic and military power and Islam (Halpin, Werz, Makovsky, & Hoffman, 2018). Apart from the last, Islam, all of these factors play a significant role in Turkish Eurasianism. Nationalism penetrates all kinds of societies and political parties in Turkey and as will be shown later, it plays a critical part in the concepts and goals of Turkish Eurasianists.

2.1.1 The history of Turkish nationalism and Kemalist ideology

Turkish nationalism in his historical development was basically a non-European, anti-colonial movement, similar to other Third World nationalist movements at its time. A reason for the emergence of Turkish nationalism or Turkism was the secondary position of Turks within the disintegrating Ottoman Empire, as Turks were usually seen as peasants in Eastern Anatolia, while the elites in the metropolitan areas considered themselves as Ottomans. Apart from embracing Turkish identity as a nationalist concept to react against the Pan-Islamist ideas of Sultan Abdul Hamid in the mid-1870's, it was also a reaction against the demoralization of Turks after the losses of vast territories in the First World War and the hostility of Greek nationalism and pan-Hellenistic threat to Anatolia, the Turkish heartland (Turner, 1977).

One of the forefathers of Turkish nationalism, Ziya Gokalp, came from Diyarbakir and would therefore fit in the picture of the peasant from Anatolia, however, with his ideas, combining and struggling with mysticism, theology and natural sciences, he soon became a well-known figure within the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). Gokalp's nationalism can be understood as a reaction against nationalisms of non-Muslim minorities within the empire and at a time of political change his solution was a social and cultural revolution. While the nationalist intelligentsia was arguing about whether the future of the state should be in conservative Islam or liberal Westernization, Gokalp tried to find a middle way. His approach was to embrace only the material aspects of modern, or Western, civilization without adopting its nonmaterial principles (Berkes, 1954).

In the early years of Turkish nationalism it was blended in parts of the empire with Ottomanism and Islamism, even by the CUP, but still, nationalism could be considered the dominant ideology within the Ottoman state especially after the Balkan Wars in 1913 (Balkilic & Dolek, 2013). Therefore Turkish nationalism, even after the foundation of the Turkish Republic by Ataturk in 1923 as a secular state, has close ties with Sunni Islam. As Gokalp's ideas of a Turkish nation shows that Turkism, based on a shared culture of Turks, is partly defined by Islam as a unifying factor of being Turkish. By combining Islam and modernization efforts, the Turkish nation is an idea where non-Muslim, or non-Sunni minorities will be cultural outsiders from a cultural perspective. However, he considered Turkish culture secondary to Turkism, because of the developments of modern nations away from religiously dominated societies. This caused a problem for the ethnic minority of Kurds, who he suggested to be assimilated to Turkish culture as well to achieve Turkish cultural unity (Nefes, 2018). The issues of Islamism and the Kurdish

minorities will be touched upon further in the literature review as well as in the body section, as they are still problematic in Turkish nationalism and Kemalism, subsequently influencing policies of Turkish Eurasianists.

Additionally to the origins of Turkish nationalism, its transformation during Mustafa Kemal Pasa need to be understood to explain concepts of contemporary Turkish Eurasianists. After losing vast territories of the former Ottoman Empire, because of the devastating treaty of Sevres in 1920, the leftovers of what was to become Turkey later was divided between several Western powers that were seen as invaders. To change the status quo, young and ambitious Mustafa Kemal, or Ataturk, started to gather military forces in Anatolia and fought against the occupants. Being able to conquer Anatolia and the small European region of Thrace, the borders of the modern Turkish Republic were defined in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

Ataturk, the "father of the Turks", not only founded the new republic, but also introduced radical reforms, such as a Western-style civil law, the abolishment of the caliphate and the sharia. The new republic founded on the bureaucracy and centralization inherited from the Ottomans and the progressive cultural values that he imposed on its citizens to fight the traditional Islamic influences that he considered as backwardness (Haynes, 2010). In order to mold the different, religious communities in Turkey into a national whole, he introduced the "history thesis", a historical, anthropological concept of Turks tracing back to its pre-Islamic roots. In there Ataturk states that the Turks are actually the ancestors of every important ancient civilization on the Eurasian continent. Going back to the Aryans and Hittites, which were Turks as well in the imagination of Mustafa Kemal and his followers, the theory of an ancient Turkish race was propagated through the Turkish Historical Society and basically all civil and educational organizations of the state. However,

soon after the death of Ataturk in 1938 the history thesis was refuted, though it left some traces in the minds of Turks up until today (Foss, 2014).

As to foreign policy, Ataturk was pursuing a "policy of balance", maintaining good relations with both Western power, especially the British Empire and the "old friend" Soviet Union. He did so in order not to make the same mistakes as the Ottoman Empire and to balance relations with powerful nations to protect the rising power of Anatolia. Although focusing on improving ties with Western countries, Ataturk did not want to let relations with the Soviet Union fall below certain levels (Kurkcuoglu, 1981). In 1935, Ataturk praised the Turco-Soviet friendship as a basis for international peace in the future and stated:

> Our friendship with the Soviets is, as always, strong and sincere. The Turkish nation regards these ties of friendship remaining from our rainy days, as a valuable and unforgettable memory... (as cited in Kurkcuoglu, 1981, p. 166)

However, the effort of signing treaties of alliance with first Britain and later the Soviet Union in 1936, did not materialize because of the British attitude against a pact with the Turks and pressure against a pact between Turkey and the Soviet Union. This was disappointing for the Turks as their efforts of fighting against the Western occupants during the Turkish War of Independence benefitted the Russians to the extent that Western powers could not effectively interfere in the Russian Civil War. The Anatolian movement at that time was also a crucial factor for the establishment of the Soviet regime in Transcaucasia (Kurkcuoglu, 1981).

An important factor to understand the current structure and goals of Turkish Eurasianists traces back to Mustafa Kemal's relation with the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF). By influencing the late Ottoman institution of a clandestine special organization named *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* with the goals of establishing and protecting a secular monolithic nation state, Ataturk laid the cornerstone for the Turkish deep

state (Soyler, 2013). This influential organization's character was carried on by the TAF after Ataturk's death in 1938 and established the Kemalist supra-political embodiment of the state that was the backbone of the tutelary democracy regime of the army that persisted until the constitutional changes of the Justice and Development Party under president Erdogan.

As discussed above, the Kemalist ideology is referring to the Turkish revolution under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. The ideas are based on the concept of Six Arrows: republicanism, secularism, populism, nationalism, étatism and reformism. These arrows are imagined to point forward, representing the progressive ideological approach. Progressive thought took hold in social, political and economic developments, however Ataturk was not the only important figure at that time, as he left the economic development of the country mostly in the hands of Ismet Inonu und Celal Bayar (Mehmet, 1983). Economic development was critical for the Ataturk era and the import substitution regime transformed the country's economy from agrarian to semi-industrial in short time. However, as Candar (2000) states:

> The rise of supranational governments such as the European Union (EU) has reduced the primacy of the nation-state and unleashed new centripetal forces, while the advent of a global free-market economy has rendered Kemalism's statist economic policies increasingly obsolete. (p. 91)

Additional to Ataturk's reforms, secularizing the country, granting free education to everybody and modernizing the economy, the elites and especially the military played a crucial role in the revolution. Ataturk realized however, that true modernization has to be a bottom-up approach and the interference of the military elites in politics could lead the country on a wrong path in the future. Hence it was a principle of Kemalist thought to keep the military out of politics (Kili, 1980). This bottom-up approach was brought to a test in 1930, when the Free Republican Party (FRP) was established. It was in the context of the financial crisis that was stirring

anxieties within the population and voices for a more traditional Kemalism were on the rise. These traditionalist voices should be united within the 'loyal opposition' party, which was led by Ataturk's close comrades. However in the upcoming municipal elections the influence and enthusiasm of the FRP's followers became a threat and the multi-party attempt was abandoned. The RPP argued that the people were not ready for full democracy yet and had to be educated further (Aydin, 2004). This meant a change for the bottom-up approach, as Ataturk himself realized: "No, it is not our party which is winning, it is the administration, police and the gendarmerie. There can be no good for the nation from this kind of politics" (Weiker, 1973, p. 116).

After Ataturk's death and especially during the radicalization of Turkish politics in the 1960 Kemalist thoughts and institutions became more and more divided. Whereas young left-wing Kemalists turned to Marxism, the RPP kept its anti-elitist approach. The army turned to the political right and secured the traditional ties of Turkey with the West. As the leftist officers within the army experienced purges, left-wing Kemalism survived in intellectual circles represented by Attila Ilhan, Ilhan Selcuk and Ugur Mumcu, whose writings frequently appeared in the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper (Riexinger, 2010). The authoritarian traits of Republican policies, especially regarding the control of religion and violation of religious equality in Turkey, were obvious and one reason for the success of the AKP in the 2002 elections. Perceiving religion as a threat to the Kemalist state, Diyanet was created as an institution to control religious activity. However this very institution is now used by AKP to achieve an "even more conservative-Islamic political and social transformation" (Tombus & Aygenc, 2017, p. 81). Hence, Tombus and Aygenc

(2017) understand the AKP with its links to political Islam not as a victim of Kemalism but as a beneficiary.

The particular Kemalism of the Turkish Eurasianists in Turkey are facing these difficulties today. Their pro-Russian stance is met with suspicion from the ruling AKP government and their insistence on Kemalist principles is seen as authoritarian behavior just like the classical Eurasianists. The majority of the Turkish society is cautious towards the Eurasianists, because of their close association with the military elite (Akcali & Perincek, 2009).

Even though the Kemalist ideology was established 90 years ago, it was influencing Turkish politics throughout the following decades of the twentieth century up until today. It is still very present in the Turkish Armed Forces, which had crucial influence on the political processes within the country. Therefore democracy in Turkey could be best described as a form of 'tutelary democracy' until 2010. This categorization fits because of power structure where the military enjoyed certain rights that weaken the state's democratic institutions, as Caliskan (2017) puts it:

> (...) a constitutionally sanctioned independent role of the military in the political system, active- duty officers' control over the armed forces, the military's control over the defense sector, autonomy in the coordination of the defense sector, autonomy in the making of military budgets, autonomy in military promotions, the military intelligence's privileged position in civilian intelligence, and the right of military courts to prosecute civilians (pp. 107-108)

'Tutelary democracy' is a sub form of 'defective democracy', where the democratic civilian state institutions lack oversight and are effectively weakened in its power to govern.

As described above, Turkey's military tutelage can be traced back to late Ottoman times and the autonomy of the military was then further strengthened through the implementation of Kemalism as the state's and the military's ideology.

The TAF became an impersonal, supra-political embodiment of the state after the death of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. The military's power over democratically elected governments came to light through armed coups in 1960 and 1980, the 1971 military memorandum and the so-called post-modern coup in 1997 (Soyler, 2013). The Turkish military did not see their interventions as anti-democratic, as they understand themselves as the guardians of Turkey's modern and secular democracy and therefore their interference was necessary to protect the state and restore a functioning democratic development (Karabelias, 2009). Although Kemalism was and is the core ideology of the TAF, it has developed Kemalism and adopted it to its own needs to counterbalance national developments. The flexibility of the Turkish General Staff allowed the military to adapt to required reforms of the European Union to accept Turkey as a full member (Aydinli, Ozcan, & Akyaz, 2006).

The military's role in the institutional setting of the state was largely considered positive, however the failed coup of July 15, 2016 changed the image of the military. After parts of the military, led by their Islamist leader Fetullah Gulen, tried to topple the presiding AKP government, the public rose up against the heavily armed soldiers and prevented the regime change. This incident was interpreted in two different ways. One is, that the people resisted the military and the loyal, Kemalist forces of the TAF stayed in the shadow. This narrative was used mostly by pro-AKP and Islamist voices in Turkey and served as reason for demanding full-fledged civilian control of the TAF. The other narrative came from the Kemalists and secularists with military background or bureaucrats who have been arrested during the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* trials. Their aim is to turn back to a strengthened position of the military within Turkish politics (Gurcan & Gisclon, 2016).

2.1.2 The development of a Turkish Eurasianism

Dev Genc, Dogu Perincek

After the *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* [Republican People's Party] (RPP), established by Ataturk and continued after his death by Ismet Inonu, was the only party in the Turkish political landscape up until the end of the Second World War. The *Demokrat Parti* [Democratic Party] (DP) then became the ruling political party in 1946. Introducing a two-party system to Turkey, the DP ruled the country until the military coup against Adnan Menderes in 1960.

Entering a multi-party system after 1960, Turkey experienced a period of political radicalization. The center-left RPP and center-right *Adalet Partisi* [Justice Party] (JP) did not dare to take more radical stances on the left-right paradigm and hence gave way to radical, militant groups on both ends. Influential left-wing parties at the beginning of the 1960s were the *Turkiye Komunist Partisi* [Turkish Communist Party] with a staunch pro-Soviet stance and the *Turkiye Isci Partisi* [Workers' Party]. A group of left-wing intellectuals started their own periodicals, with *Yon* [Direction] being the most influential, to express leftist views (Zurcher, 2004).

Dev Genc, or the Federation of Revolutionary Youth was also established in the early 1960s and was said to represent a wide group of Marxists, Leninists and Maoists. One of the groups within *Dev Genc* was the *Turkiye Isci Koylu Partisi* [Workers and Peasants Party] (WPP), a revolutionary Maoist group that emerged from the *Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık* [Proletarian Revolutionary Enlightenment] wing. Chairman of the WPP was Dogu Perincek and his program was about "opposing American imperialism and Soviet social imperialism as well as terrorism,

as favoring stronger ties with Greece and Third World countries, and as ultimately aiming at the creation of a classless society" (p. 163). Hence, the party was considered anti-Soviet and denounced by the Soviet Union. In cooperation with the Communist League of Austria the WPP supported the Pol Pot regime and continued to represent a staunchly Maoist program, even recognizing positive aspects of NATO and some center-right parties (Alexander, 2001).

Dev Genc and its left-wing parties destabilized with their various radical views the Turkish state, which was an aspect that led to the coup in 1971, when *Dev Genc* and all student unions, societies and federations were declared illegal and its members were jailed. Aside various other left wing parties, like the reconstructed *Emek Partisi* [Labour Party], the Turkish Workers Party and trade unions like the *Devrimci Isci Sendikalari Federasyonu* [Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions], Dogu Perincek founded the Turkish Workers and Peasants Party (TWPP) in 1978, however, the TWPP, a typical Maoist group, was insignificant for the development of the socialist movement in Turkey at the time (Lipovsky, 1991). In 1980 however, the TWPP was forbidden after the coup d'état of General Kenan Evren. It took until 1988 to establish a new party for Dogu Perincek, the Socialist Party, which again was dissolved in 1992 by a decision of the Constitutional Court. The successor of the Socialist Party was the Worker's Party, which was founded in 1992. The Worker's Party existed until 2015, when the party congress decided to rename it and it was called *Vatan Partisi* [Patriotic Party] (PP) thereafter. As stated explicitly on the party's webpage: "The Patriotic Party (Turkey) considers herself as the heir and continuation of the *Turkiye Isci ve Ciftci Sosyalist Firkasi* [Workers' and Farmers' Socialist Party of Turkey] founded in 1919 (Brief history of the Patriotic Party, n.d.).

Anti-Americanism and the Patriotic Party

Today, Turkey faces many challenges regarding its ties with the United States. The military operation in Syria's Afrin and the announced expansion of its operation to the Manbij region created suspicion of Turkey's Western ally. However, the situation's complexity is also due to Turkish views on the handling of suspected FETO terrorists in the United States and its support for the People's Protection Units (YPG) in Syria, who the Turkish government claims to be the Syrian arm of the PKK terror organization (Ugurlu, 2018). These are just the recent developments that cast a shadow over bilateral ties between Turkey and the United States. Turkey, once a committed ally within the Western security framework, has developed staunch anti-American sentiments over the past decades. In a poll conducted for the British Broadcasting Corporation, the results show that in 2017 the ratio of Turks with negative views on the United States is around 64 percent, compared with just 36 percent in 2014. The Turkish research company A&G even showed a rise of anti-Americanism to 90 percent after the failed coup-attempt of July 2016 (Gurbuz, 2017). A negative trend was observable especially since the presidency of George W. Bush as a poll from 2007 shows. The results show that only 3 percent of the Turkish people have confidence in the Bush administration and that views on NATO and the European Union membership have significantly declined accordingly (Oxford Analytica, 2007). However, the anti-Americanism in Turkey is of a sovereign-nationalist type and can therefore not be understood as a sole response to the policies of the Bush and Obama administration. The democratization process in Turkey is partly responsible for rising anti-American, because the country's pro-Western military and bureaucratic elites became less and less influential over the years. Also the future perspective is not very positive and dominated by the anti-American bias

in Turkey that does not respect the significance of cooperation between the two countries (Grigoriadis, 2010).

The 1950s were the peak of Turkish-American relations, influenced by the Truman Doctrine and the Western aid to Turkish security, helping it to defend against the Soviet Union. The willingness of Turkey's government to participate in the Korean War was a big factor for its positive assessment to become a NATO member. The era of Adnan Menderes thereafter also showed an adoption of American cultural values. However, the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and the lack of reconciliation of the United States with Ankara was the first setback for bilateral ties (Guney, 2008). In 1963, the infamous Johnson letter to Ismet Inonu became a reason for further suspicions against the intentions of the United States. In his letter, president Johnson warned Ankara that in case it would take unilateral military measures to react to the massacre of Turkish Cypriots, Turkey could not count on the support of the United States. Further repercussions occurred on a more frequent basis from that point on. Several examples were the Six-Day War in 1967 and the Lebanon crisis of 1969 where Turkey condemned the use of military bases on Turkish soil for interference of the United States with the internal affairs of other countries. In 1974 the United States even threatened Turkey to bomb poppy fields on its territory that were permitted by then prime minister Bulent Ecevit. Turkey reacted with cooperating with the United Nations and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration to resolve the issue, but for many left-wing groups and ordinary citizens alike the Americans' conduct served as proof of unfair treatment of Turkey. Further deterioration of bilateral ties was caused by the second Cyprus crisis in the same year, which resulted in an arms embargo against the Turkish state that lasted until 1978 (Criss, 2002).

The Kurdish issue, Eurasianism and anti-imperialist conspiracy

The Kurdish issue is troubling the Turkish government since decades, resulting at times in violent clashes between the state's security forces and the PKK. Dogu Perincek and the Patriotic Party see Turkish Eurasianism as a solution for the problem:

> For the independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, welfare and peaceful co-habitation of Turkey and the other countries of the region, Turkey should form an alliance with Syria, Iraq, Iran and Azerbaijan and develop this cooperation. This alliance should include the Kurds too on a basis of equality and freedom. Turkey should cooperate with these countries in all respects including security. Conditions of this cooperation should be advanced step by step, starting with the abolishing of the customs at the borders and continuing until a comprehensive cooperation is reached in the West Asia Union. (Perincek, 2010)

The roots of the Kurdish issue, according to White (1999), trace back to the reforms of the Young Ottomans and the influences of Ottomanism and nationalism, resulting in the Sheikh Ubaydallah rebellions. During the Young Ottoman era many Kurds were left without possessions and confused about their loyalty to the state.

At the end of the First World War hopes were rising among Kurdish leaders to establish themselves within an independent Kurdistan with the help of the British. However, Ataturk, who gained the trust of Kurdish tribes in the battles of the World War, called on the Kurds to unite with their true brothers in the fight against Western imperialists. The Kurds then decided to join forces with Ataturk and all other Muslim people in Turkey and Northern Iraq on the basis of the Erzurum Congress in 1919. The Kurdo-Turkish unity was established on the basis of the religious connection and the problem for Kurdish nationalism to unite a Kurdish force and gather international support (Mango, 1999). However, after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 the Kurdish demands for autonomy were rejected and uprisings in the 1920s and 1930s were crushed as a means of raison d'état. Furthermore, since the

foundation of the republic, Kurds were not recognized as a minority in Turkey and their existence was denied, open expression of Kurdish culture was forbidden (Galletti, 1999).

Just like the founders of the republic, early Turkish Marxist within the Turkiye Komunist Partisi (TKP) (The Communist Party of Turkey) saw their duty in defeating Kurdish rebellions. An example for this was the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925, when they claimed that the uprising was lead by feudalist interests. This reflects the leftwing position on the Kurdish issue at that time. The Kurds and their traditional way of living were seen as backwardness and banditry. The feudal system and the conservative religiosity of the Kurds were a thorn in the side of the TKP. The Comintern also supported the TKP's stance against a Kurdish nationalist movement at that time. The same approach in condemning Kurdish rebellion, as a result of enduring backward social relations, was applied by the TKP on the occasion of the revolts in Dersim 1937-1938 that fueled voices calling for a land reform to destroy the feudal system (Yegen, 2016). During the Second World War and the following decade up until the 1960s the dispute between Turks and Kurds was persistent, however there were no violent large-scale unrests. Through the commodification of Turkey's economy, the introduction of a multi-party system and the modernization process of the country alongside considerable urbanization lead to reactions against the Turkish state based on a struggle between the working class and the industrial bourgeoisie. In those times extreme nationalism rose within political parties as a way to deal with the insecurities that came with the industrialization and rising left-wing sentiments. There were already people within nationalist mainstream blaming the problems with the Kurdish minority to foreign incitement, however, at first the broadly accepted consensus remained that the unrest's root was reactionary forces

and a lack of regional economic prosperity. Following persistent troubles with Kurdish unrest, the nationalists more and more came to believe in foreign powers being behind the separatist Kurdish movements (Yegen, 2007).

However, we see a contradiction in the fact that both the Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK) (Kurdistan Workers' Party) with their separatist ideas and the Turkish state saw the other one as being a tool of Western imperial powers respectively. The PKK pledged itself to the fight against imperialism and using their revolutionary anti-Western rhetoric as an excuse for delegitimizing other Kurdish movements at the same time (Balci, 2017). Waldman and Caliskan (2016) saw several opportunities for the Turkish government and the PKK to find a peaceful solution. The first one was 1991, when president Turgut Ozal welcomed Kurdish autonomy in Northern Iraq and prime minister Suleyman Demirel recognized the importance of solving the Kurdish issue in Turkey. At the same time, the PKK faced pressure from Jalal Talbani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and was perceived as defeated by the Turkish government. However, this was a misconception and the increased military activity against the PKK did not result a dissemination of the group. Another possibility presented itself after the capture and imprisonment of the PKK's founder and leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1999. Although sentenced to death, he was later given a life-time sentence in accordance with the EU's Copenhagen Criteria in order to allow Turkey being accepted as a candidate for becoming a full member of the Union. The most recent possibility of solving the four decades long struggles with the PKK arose in the 2010s. The AKP government and the PKK began talks about a lasting ceasefire, but their interpretation of the unrest of Kurds being triggered solely by cultural issues did not recognize the national extent. However, the process was seen hopeful until the escalation of violence during the

2015 parliamentary elections that was partly influenced by the twin bombings in Ankara in October 2015 and military operations against PKK targets.

2.1.3 Eurasianism; origins and present thought in Turkey

The roots of Eurasianism as an ideological concept dates back to the 1920s and was based on the ideas of the Eurasianist movement, which formulated its theory of the Eurasian continent that stretches from the Pacific Ocean in the East to the Atlantic Ocean on its Western border. Starting from 1921, the main representatives within the Eurasian movement were Nicolai S. Trubetzkoy, Peter N. Savitzky, Georgy V. Florovsky, Peter P. Suvchinsky and Nicolai N. Alekseev. Eurasianism, or classical Eurasianism, was a sophisticated intellectual movement. Intellectualizing Pan-Slavism and Slavophilism, the early Eurasianists dealt with geography-economics, jurisprudence, state theory and spiritual-cultural matters (Botz-Bornstein, 2007). Eurasianism in its early forms can only be defined by widely generalizing their views as a Russian historiosophy that combines anti-Westernism with cultural polycentrism (Mazurek, 2002). However there were plenty of differences and divergences within the movement itself.

Trubetzkoy's Eurasianist movement was comprised of Russian émigrés fleeing the Russian Revolution. Seeking refuge in European cities, such as Vienna, Prague, Paris, and Berlin, their views are considered as a reaction to the dissolution of the Russian Empire. They argued that imperial Russia was getting too involved with European politics and that this was the reason for its extinction. Representing the far right at the time, Eurasianist opposed the liberal ideas of Europe and the communist character of the Bolsheviks alike. However, they appreciated the unification of Russian territory after the Bolshevik revolution. Eurasianists thought

that after communism will be abandoned in time, which they expected to happen soon, Russia would need the Eurasianists thoughts and ideology to develop a new intellectual direction (Palat, 1993).

Eurasianists based their understanding of Russia on the notion of a special symbiosis between Orthodox Slavs and various Muslim ethnicities within the borders of the Russian Empire. Even though the people in this vast geography might be divided by different languages, religion and racial or biological aspects, the Eurasianists stressed the unifying factor of culture that constitutes the civilization of the East. Neglecting ethnic boundaries, the Eurasianists' and even Stalininists' ideology, which represented a form of intrinsic Eurasianism – communist internationalism - were in conflict with the rise of Pan-Turkism in Turkish foreign policy after the end of the Cold War. Later abandoning its Pan-Turkish aspirations, Ankara became a possible partner for the new kind of Eurasianist evolving in Russia's intellectual circles, especially Alexander Dugin (Shlapentokh, 2016). After these developments, the Russian Eurasianists and the Turkish Kemalists improved their cooperation and we can see this in various joint conferences and meetings of government officials and bureaucrats in Turkey and Russia.

Contemporary perspectives on Turkish Eurasianism

Already at the beginning of the millennium we can see Eurasianist views from many Turkish scholars and members of the TAF that have not changed much since then. Nadir Devlet (2001) mentions the issues of Cyprus and the Kurdish terrorist organization PKK as main security concerns for Turkish state officials. However he concludes that in the long run, regional geopolitical and economical developments will be the top priority of the government. Devlet also speaks about the failure to

exert influence over Turkic republics and creating a Common Turkish Market as well as the nonrealistic perspective of EU-membership. Therefore CIS countries and Russia will take a more and more important place in Turkey's future foreign policy considerations. Retired Lieutnat General of the Turkish Army Ihsan Gurkan (2001) also acknowledges the importance of Eurasian geopolitics for Turkey's future considerations. However, he looks at it from a US/Turkish perspective, where he says that Turkey is threatened by Russia's Primakov doctrine that tries to establish and foster a north-south axis with Iran, Iraq and Syria, that would endanger Turkey's and the United States' security interests in the region. However, these insights might seem contradictory, Busra Ersanli (2001), mentions that before 1995 the concept of Eurasia merely covered the Turkic countries. Widening the Eurasia approach to basically the whole of Europe and Asia, she states the differences in meaning of Eurasia for Turkey and other players. For Turkey, Eurasia was neither part of their search for identity as it was for the Slavic émigrés who invented Russian Eurasianism, nor was it considered as the "heartland" as Mackinder described it for developing American geopolitical hegemony.

The contemporary Russian Eurasianists, or Neo-Eurasianists have their own imagination of Eurasianism that shows fundamental differences to both the classical Eurasianism of white émigrés at the beginning of the twentieth century and the Turkish Eurasianism. Neo-Eurasianists like Lev Gumilev, Alexander Panarin and most importantly Alexander Dugin created an ideology that rejects all implications of post-modern thought, the achievements of the Enlightenment, any kind of liberal ideas and human rights in its entirety. Dugin understands Eurasianism as philosophical and geopolitical struggle against the hegemony of the Atlantic system and globalization (Dugin, 2014). In order to fight for the rise of an Eurasian alliance,

spreading from East Asia to Western Europe, Dugin calls for the unified struggle of political extremes, radicals from the far-right and left spectrum of political thought. He does not draw the line between friend and enemy as a line between peasants and bourgeoisie, nor is his concept based on racial or ethnic divisions, but rather a fight between the political forces of the center against the radicals. In 2012 he developed the Fourth Political Theory, a theory that is an answer and countermovement to liberalism, which became the only acceptable ideology after the failure of fascism and communism. To fight against the dominance of liberalism he propagates fundamental conservatism, erasing the roots of liberal ideology and turning back to traditionalist values that existed before the linear progress of history and time was accepted in philosophy (Dugin, 2012).

Despite these different approaches and assessments of the concept of Eurasia, let alone Eurasianism, Bulent Aras (2002) is suggesting for future Turkish foreign policy to recognize Russia and Azerbaijan as partners instead of rivals to realize economic benefits and improvements of domestic security. This domestic security and economic gains are mutually dependent and are heavily influenced by the issue of Karabakh and Caspian pipeline politics. Aras already foresaw the political transformation of Turkey in the twenty-first century that will make it necessary to open up the country and to mend ties with the Balkans, ex-Soviet republics and Middle Eastern countries. This understanding of Eurasianism in Turkish elite circles is in no way connected to Classical Eurasianism, nor does it show the extremely conservative notion of Russian Neo-Eurasianism.

2.2 Geopolitics and geo-economics, foreign policy choices in Turkish history

This section is dedicated to the development of Turkey's foreign policy implications and decisions in a historical context. It will focus on the geopolitical and geo-economical factors that influenced policymakers starting from Turkey's neutrality stance during the Second World War and evolving into the struggle after the breakdown of the bipolar system at the end of the twentieth century. This historical review is provided to reconstruct the Turkish Eurasianists' views on historical development and the misconceptions and mistakes that happened, according to their perspective, in Turkish foreign policy during the last century.

Turkey's role during the Second World War

Still recovering from the repercussions of its continuous wars between 1909 and 1923, Turkey did not have intentions and necessary means to get involved with the Second World War. Although the geopolitical position of Turkey made it an attractive ally for all sides, the government, particularly Ismet Inonu, achieved a feat of diplomacy to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state (Deringil, 1982). Staying neutral throughout the whole war, Turkey's neutrality was doubted at times with regards to its compliance with the Montreux Convention. The convention, which regulates the straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, was of crucial importance to all the parties in the war. As the guardian of the Straits, Turkey was criticized mostly by the Soviet Union, whose security was most dependent on the situation in the Black Sea. On the occasion of the battles between British and French forces in Damascus, Syria both British and Russian observers were unhappy about Turkey's conduct allowing the transport of war material to the Pétainist forces. Alleged breaking of neutral duties and enforcement of the Montreux Convention was

a topic that Turkey faced from all sides also during the second half of the Second World War (Ginsburgs, 1962).

Of crucial importance for the persistence of Turkish neutrality throughout the war was the Treaty of Mutual Assistance signed between Turkey, Britain and France in 1939. This treaty entailed a pledge to assist each other in case of a war in the Mediterranean Sea, but also involved an opt-out option in case of the Soviet Union being part of military conflict in the war. As the Germans and the Soviet Union were allies at the beginning of the Second World War, Turkey was not obliged to honor the Treaty of Mutual Assistance as siding with the British and French would mean it would have to declare war against the Soviets (VanderLippe, 2001). The reasons for Germany deciding to abandon friendly relations with the Soviet Union and opt for war were partly linked to the Turkish Straits as well. In 1940 the Soviets demanded control of Bulgaria and the Straits, which would mean that Hitler's access to British territories in the Middle East would have been cut off. Not accepting this offer, Germany and Turkey signed the Treaty of Friendship of 18 June 1941, two days prior to the start of the war between Germany and Russia. With this treaty, Germany secured options to transport war material through Anatolia to Iraq and Syria in return for assuring Turkey not to attempt to seize the Straits and a declaration to honor Turkey's independence (MacFie, 1989). Although failing at times to avoid illegal passage of the Straits, according to the Montreux Convention, Turkey interpreted the restrictions strictly at times. This inconsistency was largely due to the weak military power of the country and reflects flaws of the convention on the issue of classifying a vessel of war itself. This weak definition allowed Turkey to act according to its interest of non-involvement and neutrality in the war, by adopting a resilient stance on pressures from both the Axis and the Allies alike. Therefore the Montreux

Convention was of crucial importance of keeping Turkey out of the war, despite its pivotal strategic position (Seydi & Morewood, 2005).

Turkey's security perspectives after World War II; 1945-1947

The period after the Second World War was a time where Turkey faced threats from the Soviet Union regarding its territorial sovereignty. While the West and the Soviets were dealing with postwar problems a new world order was in making. Soviet claims on Turkey's border regions of Kars and Ardahan and control over the Turkish Straits pushed Turkey's foreign policy makers to the West (Satterthwaite, 1972).

However, at the time the United States still sought for cooperating with the Soviet Union after the Second World War, misinterpreting the Soviets' pressure on Turkey. London realized the threat that Turkey, one of the few stable countries in the region, was going to be up against. With the British economy devastated after the war they did not have the necessary resources at the time to provide substantial support for Turkey. The solution was to lobby for American support instead, but their appeal was not heard and the U.S. State Department insisted on keeping friendly diplomatic relations (Seydi, 2006). They were not aware of Stalin's plan to take advantage of the power vacuum that arose during the end of the war and therefore were hesitant to support Turkish positions at first. Stalin made his position clear at the Yalta Conference 1945 when he expressed suspicion about the Turks' power to control the Straits and subsequently threatened Soviet interests. The Soviets then denounced the non-aggression treaty between the two states and demanded military bases the Straits as well as territorial adjustments. Turkey rejected the proposed changes and declared to be ready to go to war over their territorial integrity (Aydin, 2000).

It took until April 1946 until the Americans were ready to show their growing support for Turkey. In spring 1946 they used the USS Missouri to deliver the remains of Turkish Ambassador Munir Ertegun, who rested at Arlington cemetery since his death in 1944. Sending a battleship with the symbolic character of the USS Missouri was welcomed by the Turks and regarded as an act of support. This gunboat diplomacy had the desired effect and people in Istanbul were celebrating the arrival of the Missouri. These events were the prelude to August 1946, when the Americans presented their stance regarding their support for Turkish control over the Straits, including a increased naval activity in the Mediterranean Sea (Inanc & Yilmaz, 2012).

Wheeler (1968) called the Americans' initial miscalculations of Russian imperialist activity at that time as one of the biggest mistakes ever made by Western powers. The Turkish government's rejections of Soviet claims and the support from Western powers to tackle Soviet threats led to the formulation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, which marked the beginning of the Cold War.

The Cold War: An era of bipolarity

Turkey was not initially a recipient of the Marshall Plan, which was used to rebuild the economies of Western Europe and secure American influence. The Turkish government, however, asked to be integrated within the economic development plans and succeeded to present their country's function as an outpost of Western strategy deterring the Soviet Union. After the United States recognized Turkey's position within the Truman doctrine they extended around 300 million dollar between 1948 and 1952 to Turkey. However, there were some negative implications for Turkey. As the Marshall Plan's execution coincided with the establishment of a multi-party

system in Turkey, where the Democratic Party under Adnan Menderes profited mostly from the additional funds for the agricultural sector. This alienated the urban elites in Turkey and was one of the reasons for the coup in 1960 (Yilmaz, 2012).

American support for Turkey and the establishment of Turkey as the outpost of the West's Southern flank resulted in the accession of Turkey as a NATO member in 1952, three years after the foundation of the security organization. Being part of the Western alliance, not only security links between Turkey and its allies were formed, but also Turkey's Western identity was strengthened (Kinancioglu & Gurzel, 2013). NATO under the Truman doctrine was considering strategic reasons, which when controlled by the Soviet Union would threaten the survival of the United States and the Western system. Turkey's position was linked very much to Greece, which was very vulnerable to Soviet threats. Truman thought that if Greece would fall, Turkey would follow and the Middle East would be overrun by the Soviets, threatening world peace and the welfare of Western nations (Prifti, 2017).

In the 1950s Turkey played an important role in terms of NATO's security facing the Soviet Union and regional defense involvement in the Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Classical roles in the Cold War environment presented Turkey the opportunity to get involved in several regional issues voluntarily but strongly encouraged by the United States. However, Turkey's actions were constrained to that of a regional power, mostly focused on cooperation within security initiatives like the Middle East Command, the Balkan Pact and the Baghdad Pact. Those initiatives were not immediately related to Turkey's own regional identity, but rather to its perception of security within the NATO framework and the post war environment. Expecting the Middle East and the Balkans to be places of future conflicts, Turkey got heavily involved in Cold War regionalism

(Sever, 2017). The early phases of the Cold War resulted in the integration of Turkey within the NATO framework and contributed to a mostly positive perception of the West for Turkish elites and general population. The first incident to disturb this connection was the Cyprus crisis in 1963. The decision of U.S. president Johnson not to support Turkey's possible intervention in Cyprus facing retaliation from the Soviets, led to disappointment in Ankara. The Turks now perceived it as an imperative to widen their security ties and to decrease their dependency on the United States. The Cyprus issue should also be the cause for a further deterioration of Turkish-American relations when the U.S. laid an arms embargo on Turkey after the invasion of Cyprus in 1975. Further diversifications for Turkish foreign policy were put into action, but were constrained by the threat of the Soviet Union (Larrabee, 2010).

The Cyprus crisis played a big role for Cold War Turkey and its relations with the West. Not only the position within the security framework of NATO, but also Turkey's ties with Europeans and the accession process to the EU/EC were affected. Turkey applied for an agreement of Association to the European Community in 1959. The application was successful and led to the signature of the Ankara Agreement in 1963. However, it was questioned in several EC meetings if Turkey was really a part of Europe and if the EC would face economic dangers by allowing free access for the relatively cheap agricultural and industrial imports from Turkey. Germany was the main supporter of Turkish accession at the time, stressing the strategic importance of Turkey. Although the Turkish economy was not ready, it pushed for a customs union and the EC signed the protocol in 1970 (Birand, 1978). The military coup of 1980 led to a halt of Turkey-EC relations, but the following multiparty elections in 1983 and the application for full membership in 1987 paved

the road to improving its ties before the end of the Cold War (Republic of Turkey Ministry for EU Affairs, 2017)

Post-Cold War Turkey and Central Asia

A new era for Turkey's foreign policy began with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. A dominant topic for Turkish foreign policy in the 1990s was its relations with newly founded states in Central Asia. As those countries have linguistic and cultural ties with Turks and Central Asia is perceived as the fatherland of ethnic Turks, Turkey sought to establish itself in the region (Caman & Aykurt, 2011). Immediately after the states of Central Asia declared their independence from the former Soviet Union, Turkish politicians began to seek cooperation with them and followed policies that were influenced by the concept of Eurasia and Turkism. President Suleyman Demirel saw a chance for Turkey to form close ties with the Turkish-speaking people of Central Asia and to use this in order to portray Turkey as a bridge between Europe and Asia and gain leverage in negotiations with the European Union. Ersen (2013) emphasizes that these politics were pragmatic and followed Turkism in contrast to pan-Turkism with its racist and revisionist character. Both Russia and the United States welcomed the development of closer Turkish relations with Central Asian countries, as it was preferred to Iranian influence in the region. However, gaining influence in other countries contradicted early Kemalist anti-imperialism. The anti-imperialist rhetoric was abandoned under Ismet Inonu and liberal economic reforms under Turgut Ozal made Turkey an attractive partner for the Turkic Republics (Lipovsky, 1996). Turkey's relations with the Soviet successor states in the Caucasus flourished. Turkey was the first country to accept their independence, visited the regions with hundreds of delegations within

the first year of their independence and hosted the inaugural Turkic Summit in Istanbul in 1992. However, Turkey could not establish itself as a hegemon in the region, as the shift in Russia's foreign policy resulted in a more active role in Central Asia seeking to limit Turkish influence. Also Iran was suspicious of Turkey's role and thus presented a threat for possible military conflict between Ankara and Tehran, limiting the scope of Turkish interests in the region (Aydin, 2002).

Turkey's relations with the United States also experienced a new direction after the Cold War. While being dependent on U.S. support during the bipolar security environment of the Cold War, the end of the Soviet Union resulted in a more loose interdependency between Washington and Ankara. While Turkey for example supported the war in Afghanistan, it opposed the American invasion of Iraq and developed closer ties with Iran. The relations with the United States thus became much more complicated and based the cooperation between Turks and Americans on issue-by-issue approach (Sayari, 2013). However, Turkey with its Muslim majority population and a secular state still serves American interests in the context of Central Asia. This shows the American support for the East-West corridor that benefits Azerbaijan's independence from Russia and increased Turkey's importance in the region. Nevertheless, Washington established its own ties with the states in Central Asia and established trade agreements and bilateral assistance programs with the Turkic republics (Cinar, 2013).

China and the rising powers of Asia

In 1949, Turkey among others recognized the Republic of China (ROC) in Taiwan as the official representation of China at the United Nations. This situation lasted until 1971, when diplomatic ties were officially established with the People's Republic of

China (PRC). In 1971, Turkey started to follow its "One China" policy, recognizing the PRC as the only representative of China. Economic interests have formed the basis of cooperation between Ankara and Beijing since then. China became interesting for the world economy when Deng Jiaoping's reforms started China's economic rise after 1978, making China the world's biggest producer today. China's increasing role in the world economy and its huge market made it an attractive partner for Turkey. Alternatively, Turkey is considered as the door to the markets in the Middle East for Chinese policymakers (Colakoglu, 2015).

China's GDP rose to 11.2 trillion U.S. dollar in 2016 and is the world's second largest economy by nominal GDP. However, as one of the biggest oil importing countries in the world, China has become dependent on oil exporters in the Middle East. This and the need for diversifying China's transport routes to the European markets led President Xi Jinping to start the New Silk Road Project, also known as One Belt One Road project (OBOR) in 2013. OBOR presents Turkey with an opportunity to strengthen economic, political and social relations with China and Middle Asian countries, therefore the project has been considered mostly positive by Turkish politician, despite the risk of increasing Turkey's trade gap (Akcay, 2017).

The Kemalists in Turkey, especially Dogu Perincek and his circle who got arrested during the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* trials pushed for close cooperation between Turkey and China. Perincek said in an interview in 2017, that the example of China's developing economy brings hope to the world and praises the Communist Party of China (CPC) and President Xi Jinping for not seeking hegemony or expansion of the Chinese model. Since 1975, Perincek travelled through China extensively and has been called an "old friend of China", who "pays great respect to Chinese leaders including Chairman Mao Zedong" (Shouen, 2017). In another

interview Perincek mentions the "vital role of China in building a 'new world order' and a 'multipolar world'. Beyond that, he added, China is advancing common development and prosperity through cooperative platforms such as the Belt and Road Initiative" (Xinhua, 2017)

Even President Erdogan was at times flirting with joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), also known as Shanghai Five, the biggest non-Western organization in Asia. In 2012, Turkey joined the SCO as dialogue partner. However, full membership would mean that Turkey had to leave NATO (Wang, 2016). Erdogan used the possibility of joining the SCO to have some more leverage in negotiations for EU membership. In Erdogan's own words: "I hope that if there is a positive development there, I think if Turkey were to join the Shanghai Five, it will enable it to act with much greater ease" (Tattersall, 2016). Turkey's president also declared his support for OBOR, stressing its positive impact on bilateral relations with China and its significance for the world economy. Part of OBOR will be the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project that will connect Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey and is part of the revival of the ancient Silk Road.

CHAPTER 3

TURKISH EURASIANISTS' VIEWS ON TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY (2008-2018)

3.1 The civilian approach

This part of the research is concentrating on research within the civilian actors that are connected with Eurasianism in Turkey. Ozgur Tufekci, in his book "The Foreign Policy of Modern Turkey, Power and the Ideology of Eurasianism" mentions Dogu Perincek and his son Mehmet Perincek as one of the most important representatives of Multiculturalist Eurasianism in Turkey (Tufekci, 2017). Dogu Perincek is the chairman of the left-wing nationalistic Patriotic Party in Turkey. The party and its affiliated institutions are considered as the political representation of Eurasianism in Turkey (Dugin, 2007). One of these affiliated institutions is the journal Aydinlik. Gokhun Gocmen is a journalist at Aydinlik, covering foreign policy issues, and is also a student at the institute for Eurasian studies at Istanbul University and is pursuing a PhD degree.

3.1.1 Defining Eurasianism in Turkey

To define the concept of Turkish Eurasianism it is important to define the term itself first. In an attempt to explain Eurasianism from a Turkish perspective, Dogu Perincek, the Chairman of the Patriotic Party says:

> In my opinion Eurasia means Asia to Germany, France, Great Britain. Europe and Asia. The world is in a condition where countries from England to China should be together. We see this trend also in Western Europe. Germany, France and also Great Britain want to exist outside of the control of the United States. This is also an Eurasian trend. The Eurasian concept is based on reality. Which reality? The interests of England and China and Turkey and Persia and Russia are together against the unipolar world. Eurasianism means multipolar world. Not under the hegemony of the United States, but nation

> states should live without strict borders between the Eurasian states and countries. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

Although the interests of Russia and Turkey are together against a unipolar world, Dogu Perincek analyses the differences between Russian and Turkish Eurasianism in his perspective very clearly. While Russia and specifically the Russian Eurasianists' mastermind Alexander Dugin see Eurasianism as an ideology.

> Alexander Dugin, the leader of the Russian Eurasianists and he is also a friend of mine. He is a very important intellectual of our times, but his Eurasianism is an ideological way, but the Eurasianism of Vatan Partisi is a strategy… (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

Although a friend of Mr. Perincek and in his words "a very important intellectual of our times", Alexander Dugin's use of the term Eurasianism is not equal to the use of the term Eurasianism in Turkey and also not that of the Patriotic Party. As the Chairman of the Patriotic Party and the most important proponent of Eurasianism in Turkey, Dogu Perincek sees Eurasianism as a pure strategy that is an answer limited to today's time and the world politics' context in which Turkey is trying to prevail. Avoiding an ideological approach and pursuing Eurasianism as a strategy, makes it possible to cooperate with the variety of different political regimes in Eurasia. He points out that this approach might be adapted or completely changed in the future as no one is able to foresee the political changes and conditions in 30 or 40 years time.

> (…) the Eurasianism of Vatan Partisi is a strategy of the current time, a contemporary strategy. For example, after 50 years, or 60 years, the conditions of Turkey and the conditions of the world will be different. In that time also we will change our strategy. Dugin's Eurasianism is an ideology, but our Eurasianist concept is based on today's conditions. Now the world turns to Eurasia, but after 30, 40 years we don't know the conditions, maybe we believe something but we don't know for sure what the conditions of the world and Turkey will be like. Turkey should and can only reach it's Kemalist goal with the Eurasian concept. We can only build up on the 6 pillars in Eurasia, now. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

Mehmet Perincek is finding a similar definition for Turkish Eurasianism, describing it as a contemporary foreign policy strategy adopted after the end of the Cold War.

For him, Eurasianism is a strategy to tackle imperialist interests of the United States in the region:

> (...) first of all the Eurasianism is a political, foreign political strategy of a foreign policy, for Turkey, especially after collapse of Soviet Union. After collapse of Soviet Union, national states became target for the US foreign policy, including of course Turkey. After first Iraqi war, USA began to realize Greater Middle East Project and this project predicted (...) from Morocco to China and for Turkey, main problem was at that time to defend their territorial integrity of the country and at that time USA began to support Kurdish separatist movements and for Turkey, main threat began to come from USA, from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. And at that time Turkey needs Eurasianism in this concept I think. Turkey needs it to balance this threat from US and Turkey must build an international alliance system and allies of Turkey would be who has the same problems with USA and who has the same threat from the side of USA. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

If we take the definition of Martini (2012), a foreign policy ideology is "an individual's general theory of how the international environment works, and how governments should act within this framework" (p. 22). Foreign policy strategy is about the formulation of national interest and how to achieve it (Jentleson, 2010).

Dogu Perincek also interprets the concepts of Eurasia differently than the Russian Classical and Neo-Eurasianists. What was either the lands of the Russian Empire or the countries in Asia and Europe that are connected with a special conservative and spiritual culture, is a much more broad concept in Perincek's view. He includes all European and Asian states and therefore uses the concept of Eurasia in its geographical meaning, combining the landmass of Europe and Asia:

> In my opinion Eurasia means Asia to Germany, France, Great Britain. Europe and Asia. The world is in a condition where countries from England to China should be together. We see this trend also in Western Europe. Germany, France and also Great Britain want to exist outside of the control of the United States. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

Mehmet Perincek sees it similar, as he says that Turkish Eurasianism is a strategy of foreign policy. He points out that differentiating between a strategic and

an ideological approach is important for being able to sustain Turkey's foreign policy of the future. Only by avoiding any ideological tenets it is possible to cooperate with regional neighbors and diverse countries in the Middle East and the wider Eurasian sphere and to make it possible to digest the Turkish Eurasianist ideas for the various groups in Turkey's domestic political landscape. Very similar to Dogu Perincek, Mehmet Perincek says:

> … if it is an ideology then Islamist people or left and right people or countries, how can they unite on this strategy? For example Iran, it is an Islamist country, Russia is different, Turkey is different or Syria, Iraq, China, China is a communist country, or India. We think from the different ideologies, people or countries, they can meet on this strategy. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

According to Mehmet Perincek, the same is true for the domestic policy of Turkey as for the ever more polarized society, with political views ranging from far-right to the radical left and from Islamists to Secularists, the Eurasian strategy, without any ideological background, gives them the opportunity to unite behind it. However, Dogu Perincek points out the ideological component of Eurasian nationalism:

> Pan-Turkism is not Eurasianism, it is against Eurasianism. Pan-Turkism is against cooperation with Russia and China. It is not a Eurasian solution. Pan-Islamism is also against Eurasianism, Eurasianism is lay and patriotic. Yes, nationalistic but not nationalistic in a sense of a Turkish race, but nationalism of Turkey. All nationalisms of China, Russia, Iran, Iraq should move together. We are against the nationalism of our neighbor Devlet Bahceli for example. Bahceli is a nationalist, but in our opinion he is an American nationalist. He does not lead Turkish nationalism. His nationalism is always against our neighbors, China and Russia. This is not Turkish nationalism, because Turkish nationalism should work together with neighbors like China and Russia. And also Islamist paths are connected with Saudi Arabia, with Gulf countries – they are also Islamists – and sometimes against Persia, against Iran because they are Shiites. Islamism is a divider, because there is no single Islamism, there are different ones. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

From this statement we see that Dogu Perincek is following the concept of a civic nationalism instead of an ethnic nationalism. Also he mentions the differences of Eurasianism to the concepts of Pan-Turkism and Islamism that are sometimes used

within the concept of Turkish Eurasianism by some authors like Gurcan (2017, May) and Tufekci (2017).

Although the two interviewees show strong similarities in defining the term of Eurasianism, the reason for implementing this strategy reveals striking differences. Mehmet Perincek sees the goal of specifically cooperating with Russia in a Eurasian context in defending the territorial integrity and the possibility for building up a national economy. He then continues by saying that Eurasianism is an answer to a common threat. By this threat he means the influence of the United States and their plan to create a Greater Kurdistan, which poses risks to states like Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria:

> Eurasianism is a political, foreign political strategy of a foreign policy, for Turkey, especially after collapse of Soviet Union. After collapse of Soviet Union, national states became target for the US foreign policy, including of course Turkey. After first Iraqi war, USA began to realize Greater Middle East Project and this project predicted from Morocco to China and for Turkey, main problem was at that time to defend their territorial integrity of the country and at that time USA began to support Kurdish separatist movements and for Turkey, main threat began to come from USA, from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. And at that time Turkey needs Eurasianism in this concept I think. Turkey needs it to balance this threat from US and Turkey must build an international alliance system and allies of Turkey would be who has the same problems with USA and who has the same threat from the side of USA. Of course, potential allies of Turkey are regional countries like Iran, Syria, Iraq and of course China, Russia and the other Eurasian countries. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

So in his view, Eurasianism enables cooperation on a strategic level for those countries, including also China and Russia. He clearly limits the Eurasian approach here to foreign policy, while at the same time accepting different views based on the left-right paradigm or stances on secularism within the country. On the domestic level he only differentiates between national and non-national powers. He explains that with his words:

> In national powers you can see some left groups, left parties or some nationalist groups or nationalist people or some Islamist people or Kemalist,

> Socialist people you can see there. But on the non-national powers you can see the same thing too. There's the so-called left groups, so-called nationalist group, so-called Islamist or something like that and that's why Eurasianism, on the Eurasianism will meet national powers, who thinks who defends the territorial integrity of Turkey, who is against the American plans on this region or who wants to build a national economy in Turkey. I think Eurasian will, can unite all kinds of ideologies. It is a, I think it is a patriotic front or patriotic union. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

While, as mentioned before, Mehmet Perincek really restricts his definition and goals of Eurasianism to a foreign policy perspective mixed with an economical approach, Dogu Perincek does not hide the ideological goal of the Patriotic Party:

> To put it better, the Atlantic system is destroying Kemalist institutions and relations. And in an Atlantic environment, Turkey cannot reach its goal. Our goal is, since 200 centuries, so in the 19th and 20th century, an independent Turkey resting on six pillars; republicanism, nationalism, populism, but better to say for workers or working people as populism has a different meaning nowadays, statism, laicism, secularism but better to say laicism in Turkish, secularism has a different meaning, not like in England, but in France and in Turkey, and revolutionizm. Six pillars is the program of the Turkish revolution. They have been exercised until 1945, but after the Second World War, Turkey has lost this goal. Now Turkey can reach this goal only within the Eurasian climate, that's why our program is a Eurasian program. It's for the strategy, why Turkey has to be in Eurasia. And the reality in Turkey now the biggest trade partner is China, second is Russia and third partner is Germany. That means that the Turkish economy is in the Eurasian world. China, Russia and Germany. Therefore, the Eurasian way is objective for Turkey. For that reason, our program is Eurasian. It is a strategy and only with the Eurasian countries we will reach our goal of independence and be able to build up a production economy. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

This is all the more interesting as he points out the strict detachment of ideology of Turkish Eurasianism. He says that Turkey has to move away from the Atlantic sphere to the Eurasian sphere because of two problems. The first problem is that, according to him, Turkey has lost its linkage with the ideological and institutional legacy of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. What he means with that is the goal of the Patriotic Party to lead the Turkish state back to the six Kemalist pillars of republicanism, nationalism, populism – although he says he does not like this term, because it has a negative connotation at the moment – statism, laicism and

revolutionizm. This implies that although Turkish Eurasianism is considered a foreign policy strategy by both interviewees, at least the ultimate goal of the Patriotic Party is to lay ground to a Kemalist revolution using the setting, which such a strategy would provide. This aims towards a Turkey that is based on laicism and the principles of Ataturk's ideology as well as creating an economic system that comprises both a reinforced role of public companies and private entrepreneurship under the control of a strong and centralized government in Ankara.

Gokhun Gocmen describes the ideological background of the Patriotic Party and more specifically its chairman Dogu Perincek, as Maoist:

> (...) if you read Mao, Mao is a, according to me Dogu Perincek is a, he really likes Mao. When I read Mao, I see Dogu Perincek. Our Eurasianism is a kind of Maosim. When I read Mao, he always says to isolate your enemy. What I understand is, Perincek's plan is, Vatan Party policy is, he defines one enemy, the U.S. And he wants to isolate the U.S. Also in U.S. there are two wings. One of them Trump and the other one the state department and Trump called it deep state. And also Vatan Partisi actually, Dogu Perincek, tried to isolate him. He says, okay they want to smash us, they want to destroy us. I want to isolate him and I want to weaken United States. That's why we have to collaborate with Russia, China, Iran. We have lots of common security concerns with them and they respect our own path. And also for example Germany. Germany is strong, really strong country and our third most important trade partner and he wants to pull them from the U.S. side to our side. I think maybe as a hobby you should read Mao's book. It would be really nice to understand Vatan Party's policy. If you search for our party's history, they call us as a Maoist party. Mao is a very important person for each member of Vatan Party and he has a book, theory and practice. It's a really thin book, but it's a really important one. After you read it, maybe you can understand what Vatan Party is trying to do. (personal interview, March 29, 2018)

Referring back to the socialist ideas of Mao Zedong, he says what he imagines of a Eurasianist policy is a hybrid system like we see in Russia or China:

> We could create a hybrid system. For example in Russia there are private companies, but not private companies. In Iran they are private, but not private. Also Erdogan has created something like that. In China you can see it. They are all of, not state-owned industry but influence, they are influenced. For example in One Belt One Road project, to go to the Western side of the country, Western China is not very good for the industrial companies. The Chinese state told them, go there and if you don't do it, you know. We have

> tools. In Turkey also the system goes like that. (personal interview, March 29, 2018)

As examples he mentions the policies of Vladimir Putin that uses both Stalin and the Tsarist regimes as historical figures for his ideology, which might seem contradictory:

> We say that, each country has its own special way. Russia, okay, there are some nationalist, hybrid ideology. They use some, for example they use respect for Stalin and they also respect the Tsar. In China they say, they called it Chinese character of socialism. That is a different way and they have also a hybrid way. Let's take One Belt One Road project. Actually it's not about socialism or something like that, it's truly capitalism, but it's a win-win solution, they called it. That's why I also support it. (personal interview, March 29, 2018)

Also the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping, uses what is called the "Chinese character of socialism". The Chinese ideology is also a hybrid, mixing religious thoughts of Buddha with Deng Xiaoping's ideology and capitalistic projects like the One Belt One Road projects, all within a communist state. However, he would like to see such a hybrid system implemented in Turkey as well and criticizes the current government of not being willing or able to adopt it properly, as the Turkish government is torpedoing a smart approach by employing family members at public companies and state institutions:

> Xi Jinping also, he is using Buddha, okay, but at the same time he is also talking about Deng Xiaoping, okay. Putin is the same. Nowadays also, after the coup attempt, Erdogan also talking about positive things about Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. But he is not clever, such as Putin and Xi Jinping. He is not a hybrid, he is just seeing a chance and he just try his chances in an extreme way. Putin is very clever. For example he created his own circle in the Russian state but you can't see any family member. Look at our state. (personal interview, March 29, 2018)

This hybrid character of Eurasianisms in the world makes it hard to define definitely. To describe the Turkish Eurasianism all three interviewees try to compare it with other Eurasianisms, mainly Russian and Chinese Eurasianisms. The most striking difference between Russian and Turkish Eurasianism according to Gokhun

Gocmen is the very religious conservative notion of Russian Orthodox Christianity of Russian Eurasianists, especially Alexander Dugin:

> I define Turkish Eurasianism, this is my definition. It's not maybe Vatan Party's or Aydinlik News. The difference between the Russian Eurasianism, I think they are much more conservative. When I say Russian Eurasianist there is only one name, Dugin. He is regularly interviewed by us, also personally we know him, we met him, I met him in Iran at the anniversary of the revolution, two years ago. We talked a little bit. He is regularly visiting Turkey and he is one of the close friends of Dogu Perincek. They are really close and also I know his friends, sometimes we are writing each other, talking. What I see from there, they are much more conservative. They are really (...). Conservative, they are really religious. Then, cause they say that we have to use some means, okay, also we are strong because of our religion. And Europe also, the Atlantic also try to smash our sect in Christianity. I think they are Orthodox, Russian-Orthodox. And they say that Serbs and Russia and Greeks have to preserve their religion, but in Turkey, especially when I say the Turkish Eurasianism is one party, one man, Dogu Perincek, I think he doesn't involve to religion. And he doesn't see religion as a tool, he is a really secular guy and that's why he defends the secular country, secular institutions. (personal interview, March 29, 2018)

Although Dogu and Mehmet Perincek insisted on the pure definition of a foreign strategy, it became obvious that Eurasianism also has some ideological background in Kemalism and socialism. Gokhun Gocmen calls the policies of Vatan Partisi, which is very closely linked to Eurasianism in Turkey as Maoist, referring especially to the Maoist strategy of isolating an enemy, in the Eurasianist case the United States:

> When I read Mao, he always says to isolate your enemy. What I understand is, Perincek's plan is, Vatan Party policy is, he defines one enemy, the U.S. And he wants to isolate the U.S. Also in U.S. there are two wings. One of them Trump and the other one the state department and Trump called it deep state. And also Vatan Partisi actually, Dogu Perincek, tried to isolate him. He says, okay they want to smash us, they want to destroy us. I want to isolate him and I want to weaken United States. That's why we have to collaborate with Russia, China, Iran. We have lots of common security concerns with them and they respect our own path. And also for example Germany. Germany is strong, really strong country and our third most important trade partner and he wants to pull them from the U.S. side to our side. (personal interview, March 29, 2018)

3.1.2 The route to Turkish Eurasianism in pre-coup Turkey

Both Dogu Perincek and Mehmet Perincek mentioned in the interviews that one of the first examples in Turkish history for a true Eurasianist was Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. In the struggle for an independent Turkey that goes on for 200 years already, Ataturk's most important legacy can be interpreted in his testament. To ensure an independent nation resting on the six pillars of his revolution after founding the Republic of Turkey in 1923, he called his closest friends and comrades to leave them a message. In 1937 and the year of his death, 1938, he urged then prime minister Celal Bayar, foreign minister Tevfik Rustu Aras, the officer Kilic Ali, the later President of Turkey Ismet Inonu and the military commander, later minister and Speaker of the Grand National Assembly Ali Fuat Cebesoy to retain good and friendly relations with the Soviet Union. Dogu Perincek stresses the importance of this testament that should ensure the accomplishment of Turkey's strategic goals during and after the Second World War. However, due to the fact that the United States gained tremendous prestige after the war and their entitlement of representing the so-called democratic world, Turkey was forced under the control of Western powers.

> 1938, Kemal Ataturk died and 1937 he gave a testament to his close friends, comrades. Celal Bayar was prime minister and foreign minister was Tevfik Rustu Aras and the third close friend was Kilic Ali. Those three people also say, yes, Ataturk has left us a testament. Ataturk said, I only have one testament to these people; they must not end the friendship with the Soviet Union. It was very important, because if Turkey were to decouple itself from the Soviet Union, it would have to be with the Western imperial powers making the successful implementation of the six pillars impossible. It is a strategic testament. And Ataturk also said in the same year, 1937, also Ismet Inonu and Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Ali Fuat Pasa was a close friend of Ataturk's time at the war school. Ataturk accepted those two pashas, generals to the Dolmabahce Palace and also told them the same testament stressing the importance of friendship with the Soviet Union. He said because a world war is about to come, so only if staying with the Soviet Union during and after the war, Turkey can reach its strategic goal. But after the Second World War, the United States of America gained a lot of prestige, they were the leaders of the so-called democratic world. In this situation, Turkey came to be under the control of Western powers. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

After the Second World War, Turkey could partly safeguard some parts of the Kemalist ideology, such as an economy that was not only dominated by state companies but also heavily influenced and regulated by the government. After 1980 and during the rule of Turgut Ozal, Turkey abandoned this economic strategy and opened its market to integrate it with the world economy. For Dogu Perincek, these policies of Turgut Ozal were the death of Ataturk's vision of economics. The neoliberal Ozal caused the liquidation of the national state by closing down public companies and abolishing protective tariffs.

Mehmet Perincek also refers to Ataturk as an Eurasianist and main Eurasian ideologue who was able to seek a balance between the influence of Western powers and the Soviet Union. In his words:

> That's why I think Ataturk is the main one in the history, because he was for modernization but he was not for Westernization. He was, he defend the independent state, he defend the collaboration with the neighboring countries, especially with Soviet Union and Russia, he was against the, and he fought against the West. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

Apart from Ataturk, Mehmet Perincek also mentions the influence of important military leaders, such as Tuncer Kilinc, former head of the Turkish National Security Council who called for a Eurasian alternative in Turkey's security alliance at the war academy in 2002. Another high-ranking officer in the Eurasianist circles was Admiral Soner Polat who was responsible for blocking the Bosphorus strait for the American Navy to be used during the Russo-Georgian War in 2008. It should be mentioned that both Kilinc and Polat, as well as other leading military officials have been arrested during the Balyoz and Ergenekon trials because of their role and stance against American influence in Turkey. As a critical non-military influence on Turkish Eurasianism Mehmet Perinceks mentions the poet and novelist Attila Ilhan who was a representative of Kemalist and socialist thought in Turkey.

Going back to Ataturk, according to Dogu Perincek, the strategy Kemalist revolution in 1920 implicated cooperation with Middle Eastern countries and the oppressed nations of the Balkan Peninsula. Being under the influence of the Atlantic environment, however, Turkey cannot reach its goals, as the Western powers were destroying Kemalist institutions and relations. Furthermore, the West has always forced Turkey to live:

> ... in a Middle Age system, under the lords, under the sheikhs, under islamistic leaders. Also the politics of King Wilhelm of Germany, after him the politics of England and after the Second World War the United States force Turkey to live in the Middle Age. They have always supported Sheikh A and Middle Age classes. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

This meant also that Turkey was distracted not only from specific Kemalist revolutionary paths but also from laicism. During the times of Western influence both laicism and independence have been lost. For Dogu Perincek, independence and laicism are terms that belong together in Turkish strategy while the control of Western power and anti-lay politics go hand in hand as well. Therefore, through a Eurasian strategy, Turkey can only develop its independence in a system that embraces laicism. Laicism is also the only way to regain good relations with regional powers that are friendly to Turkey. He mentions here the regimes of Iraq and Iran, two strategic allies in the Eurasian concept, that are ruled by Shia religious regimes, the Alevite regime in Syria, the Christian-Orthodox regime in Russia and the atheist regime in the People's Republic of China. To have a place within all these different regimes, Turkey has to be lay. Dogu Perincek also mentions that in this strategic alliance of Eurasia the allies of Turkey are from different religions and sects, however the most reactionary regimes, like Saudi Arabia, are controlled by the United States and are enemies of the Turkish state.

After the Second World War, up until around 2014, Turkey was controlled by Western powers. However, even during this time of American influence Turkey integrated its economy with Russia, China and Germany. Dogu Perincek mentions here that the current President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was lifted to power by the United States in 2002 and was following an American program until 2014. According to Perincek, President Erdogan even publicly stated many times that he is the co-chairman of the American Great Middle East Project. However, during his reign, Turkey moved its national interest to Eurasia. This has apparently also been noticed and reported by the CIA in 2002, which stated that Turkey would move towards Asia in the twenty-first century. The Americans realized that it is necessary for Turkey to make a move away from them and therefore tried to tie Turkey to the European Union.

> During the control of the American regime in Turkey. During this time Turkey has integrated its economy with China, Russia and Germany. That's a necessity for Turkey. Tayyip Erdogan said, 34 times, that he is the co-chairman of the Great Middle East Project of the United States. You know, the Middle East Project. And Erdogan said in 2004, that he is the co-chairman of this project, but in his time, Turkey moves to Eurasia. Therefore Eurasia is a necessity for Turkey. That is a scientific fact, not our will. Eurasia is a necessity for Turkey, which is very important. United States has lost control over Turkey in this time. CIA reported, in 2002, that Turkey would move towards Asia in the 21st century. It's a necessity for Turkey, said CIA. The Americans also saw the future of Turkey, so they were looking for a solution. That was to tie Turkey to the door of Europe. Making them a candidate for membership. It cannot be entering the European Union, but can also not leave the door and move to Asia. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

With the membership application in process, but with no realistic chance of ever getting accepted Turkey was left "like a dog, waiting at the door".

Mehmet Perincek also states that the strategic foreign policy approach of Eurasianism in Turkey became a reality after the collapse of the Soviet Union when nation states became a target of U.S. foreign policy, but especially after the First Gulf War when the Americans specifically targeted areas in the Eurasian region from

Morocco to China with their Great Middle East Plan. It was during that time, when Americans started to support the Kurdish separatist movement and threatened the Turkish territorial integrity. Suddenly the main threat for Turkey came from the United States. To balance this threat Turkey must build up an international alliance system with countries that face similar threats from the Americans. Potential candidates for this alliance would be regional powers. Countries like Syria, Iraq, Iran and of course China, Russia and others. Very similar to Dogu Perincek, Mehmet Perincek also mentions the economic necessity of shift towards Eurasia:

> After collapse of Soviet Union, national states became target for the US foreign policy, including of course Turkey. After first Iraqi war, USA began to realize Greater Middle East Project and this project predicted (…) from Morocco to China and for Turkey, main problem was at that time to defend their territorial integrity of the country and at that time USA began to support Kurdish separatist movements and for Turkey, main threat began to come from USA, from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. And at that time Turkey needs Eurasianism in this concept I think. Turkey needs it to balance this threat from US and Turkey must build an international alliance system and allies of Turkey would be who has the same problems with USA and who has the same threat from the side of USA. Of course, potential allies of Turkey are regional countries like Iran, Syria, Iraq and of course China, Russia and the other Eurasian countries. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

Additional to security issues, also economically the rising powers of Asia are necessary allies for building up an independent Turkey, subsequently a national economy. This economy, against the destructive economic situation during American influence on the country, would gain from resources, gas and energy, which are abundant on the Asian continent. The most important ally here would be Russia, as it faces the same threats from the United States in the Caucasus, Ukraine with the Orange Revolution, the whole Black Sea region and Syria. According to Mehmet Perincek, the source of all these conflicts is the United States:

> In the other hand, Turkey needs Eurasianism for the national economy, because Westernization destroyed national economy of Turkey and as you know, all the resources, energy, gas, everything are in Asia, in Eurasian countries. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

Mehmet Perincek criticizes the divisive role of American politics that always tried to play Russia and Turkey against each other and provoked Russian-Turkish wars. He says that whenever Russia and Turkey fight against each other, the West is the winner of this confrontation. Examples for this can be found in the Tsarist Russian and Ottoman Turkish past as well as during the Republican era of Turkey. The West has always tried to realize its own plans by weakening the two Eurasian powers. This is considered as the main strategy of the West. He exemplifies this by the war in Caucasia during the First World War. Although Russia fought that incredibly bloody war against Turkey, either force did not rule it after all, but English, French and American soldiers occupied Transcaucasia in the end. After the First World War Mehmet Perincek also observes a positive example of Turkish-Russian relations. When Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and first head of the Soviet Union Lenin collaborated, they managed to stabilize the Transcaucasia region. These are some historic examples why it is necessary for him that Russia and Turkey have to cooperate:

> And about Russia, if we will talk about Russia and I think Russia has the same problem with USA and has the same threat from USA. Caucasia, Orange Revolution, all Black Sea problems, Ukraine or Syrian question, etc. and all the main problems of Russia is of course with USA. And I want to underline here; I see a historical rule: When Turkey and Russia fight with each other it's bad for them, for Russia and for Turkey. When Turkey and Russia fight, or has a war, the winner of the war is always West and West always provoked Turkish-Russian wars. It's not important, Republican time, Tsarist Russia time, Ottoman Empire time, or now before, in the history, it's like, it's always like that and plans of the West, Western realized own plans, always pull the Russian-Turkish wars and they can block or stop union between Russia and Turkey like that. And when Russia and Turkey fight, they become always weak and West can always realize own plans through the Turkish-Russian wars. I think it's a main strategy of West on our region and when we look to the First World War for example, it's a good example I think, because Turkey and Russia fight on the Caucasian front and they fight, they had a war, maybe one of the bloody war of the First World War, but they fought, their soldiers were died there and but after the First World War who occupied the Transcaucasia? Not Russia, not Turkey. England, French and a little bit American troops occupied the Transcaucasia. But when Turkey and Russia collaborate, for example after the First World War, Mustafa Kemal

> Ataturk and Lenin cooperate at that time and after they can make stabilize the Transcaucasia. That's why, for today is the same thing. Competitions between Turkey and Russia gives nothing, but collaboration between these two countries gives to chance them to defend the territorial integrity of the country or to build a national economy etc. That's why for Turkey it's very important now, collaboration with Russia and for Russia the same thing, it's very important to collaborate with Turkey. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

One big problem that America had with the rise of Eurasianist tendencies was that they could not stop this from happening, according to Mehmet Perincek. So the United States tried to manipulate this movement by creating their own pseudo-Eurasianist movements within Turkey. With pseudo-Eurasianism he describes a Eurasianism for the Atlantic powers. The result of that was the development of many groups within Turkey that wear a Eurasianist mask, such as the pan-Turkist movement and Islamist groups. Mehmet Perincek mentions also that Fetullah Gulen and Ahmet Davutoglu also claimed to be Eurasianists, but were serving American interests. Examples for their malicious intentions were the attempted putsch of pan-Turkists in Azerbaijan and the plan of the Fetullahist group to kill the president of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov. The United States used these groups to play a negative role in the region, the Middle East and the Caucasus in particular. The plan was to provoke Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan or Turkmenistan against Russia or China. The outcome of this strategy was the destruction of the formerly close relations between Turkey and the Turkic states. This however shows the reality of geopolitical approaches in the region for Turkey. To establish something like Turan, it will be necessary for Turkey to cooperate with China and Russia as the Turkic states' destiny is tied to those countries and any approach in the region has to come from a Eurasianist perspective:

> Look, I think those are two kinds of concepts of Eurasianism. There's a Eurasianism for Eurasia and a Eurasianism for Atlantic. Eurasianism for Atlantic, we can call them pseudo-Eurasianists, because Eurasianism now is

> very popular and USA wants to use this Eurasianism too for own interest. And they use in Turkey, everywhere not just in Turkey, but especially in Turkey so many groups or parties or people, use Eurasianist mask, I think. For example before the putsch, Fetullahist people or Ahmet Davutoglu, they called them, they called themselves Eurasianist too. They said, they had so many institutions, Eurasianist something, some, I would say *dernek* or, yeah institutions, Eurasianist institutions, but the Eurasianism can serve the American interest and Eurasianism can serve the Turkish interest, because every country or every USA has a Eurasianism, Eurasianist concept, too, for own interest. That's why so-called Eurasianist or pseudo-Eurasianist or Eurasianism for Atlantic, they are enemies of Turkey and Russia too and if, when it's very popular, Eurasianism is very popular and USA want to, if USA can't stop this movement they try to go to inside of this movement and they want to manipulate it. That's why they use so-called pseudo-Eurasianist groups like Fetullahist or Ahmet Davutoglu and like that. And pan-Turkist, for example, movement played the same role after the collapse of Soviet Union and they were, the pan-Turkist movement at that time, after the collapse of Soviet Union, they were Eurasianist for American interest and they tried to make, at that time, a putsch in Azerbaijan, or Fetullahist people had a plan to kill Karimov, the leader of Uzbekistan and they played a really negative role at that time, on this region, in the Middle Asia, Caucasia and they tried, they tried to provoke these countries. Provoke Azerbaijan or Uzbekistan or Kirgizstan, Turkmenistan against China and against Russia and it shows the American interest of this plan, I think. And the pan-Turkist movement at that time destroyed relation between Turkey and Turkic countries. For example, because of it, now Turkey, Turkish people can enter to Azerbaijan just with visa or they have a really, they had a really serious problem with Uzbekistan at that time. But we have to see destiny of these countries like Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, et cetera, destiny of these countries is, belongs to Russia and to China. That's why Turkey can say, establish Turan, Turan yeah, just with Russia and China, not against them. Turan can be unite only just on the Eurasian perspective, with China and with Russia. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

During the time of great American influence on Turkey this was not possible and is evident by looking at the examples of the Justice and Development Party trying to cooperate with the United States against China and Russia:

> (...) especially as you said after the coup-attempt, it's very important, and influence of the Eurasianist, Eurasianism on the Turkish foreign policy we can see the relationships with Russia, relationships with China, relationships with Iran. Before, for example, Turkey has a, had a problems with Russia and they, Turkey collaborate, not Turkey but the AKP, for example, collaborate with USA against Russia, against China, against Iran, but after the coup-attempt, AKP realized that the main threat is coming from USA and they began to collaborate with the Eurasianist countries and I think the Eurasianism played a role to stop, to block the coup-attempt too. That time, Dugin was in Turkey and he warned the Turkish authorities at that time about

> the coup-attempt et cetera. And now, in the other hand, collaboration between Turkey and Russia and Iran in Syria is a success of Eurasianism too. Astana process, Astana process is the success of the Eurasianist policy too, I think. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

However the events around 2014, when the Balyoz and Ergenekon conspiracy cases were reevaluated the Justice and Development Party under President Erdogan began to feel the change. According to Dogu Perincek it was the national interest of Turkey that forced Erdogan to move away from his American allies. As he describes it, President Erdogan was like trapped in the river, where the river represents Turkey and he cannot fight against the forces of the nation that became closer linked to Eurasianism and a Kemalist revolution. Dogu Perincek also quotes a Turkish proverb: "Tac, basi uslandirir". The literal translation for that would be: "The crown tames the head". The meaning is that the leader learns how to act after he got in the position of power. Dogu Perincek therefore considers the shift to Eurasianism as a pragmatic policy that was forced upon President Erdogan by the national interest of the Turkish state.

> Eurasianist necessities pushed Erdogan, like a river, Erdogan is in this river like an animal, he swims in that river. The river is Turkey. With this concept you can understand Erdogan's situation. Erdogan is reacting. Erdogan is not ruling Turkey, but Turkey is ruling Erdogan. Since two, three years Turkey is ruling Erdogan. Turkey is nation, state and all dynamics of Turkey. The Western public could not understand this. They thought Erdogan is ruling Turkey. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

Although Dogu Perincek identifies the Balyoz and Ergenekon related incidents of 2014 as the breaking point in Turkish foreign policy:

> At the beginning, Tayyip Erdogan's policies were tied to the United States but especially after 2014, Silivri prison, it changed. Silivri is the prison. There were two operations against the Turkish Army and also Vatan Partisi. Ergenekon and Balyoz operations. The reason for those operations was the separation of Turkey, to build up a Kurdistan, but Turkey resisted these operations and we were, I was six years in prison and other leaders of Vatan Partisi were in prison and also commanders of the Turkish Army, Air Force and Navy. But after 2014, these operations of the United States were crushed and we were free. And after 2014, Turkey has dispersed the Gladio of

> Fetullah hoca and started operations against PKK. So now there is a military confrontation with the US, a very critical time. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

Mehmet Perincek says the main event was the attempted coup of July 15, 2016 by the Fetullahist terror group, which then became known as the Gulenist Terror Organization or FETO:

> The AKP government, when they came to power first time, they had the American policy. They support the American policy during the Second Iraqi War and Erdogan, for example, Tayyip Erdogan, said that he is a core president of the Greater Middle East Project, he said it maybe 30, 40 times and they played a negative role and they played the negative role against Eurasianist people, but when they realized that America doesn't want Erdogan, get rid of Erdogan and they began to change his policy. USA, Washington used first of all the Fetullahist group against Erdogan and at that time they began to change policy and they began to come to near to Russia. On the international plan they began to near to Russia and in Turkey they began to come to near to Kemalist, or Eurasianist, movement inside of Turkey. But, the main breakpoint was of course the coup-attempt. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

3.1.3 Turkish Eurasianism and its implications after the July 15 coup attempt

Both Mehmet Perincek and Dogu Perincek state the immense effect on the Turkish state's stance towards Eurasianism after the attempted coup on July 15, 2016. Mehmet Perincek even mentions the common effort of Russian Eurasianists and Turks to defeat the Gulenists attempt:

> (...) but after the coup-attempt, AKP realized that the main threat is coming from USA and they began to collaborate with the Eurasianist countries and I think the Eurasianism played a role to stop, to block the coup-attempt too. That time, Dugin was in Turkey and he warned the Turkish authorities at that time about the coup-attempt et cetera. And now, in the other hand, collaboration between Turkey and Russia and Iran in Syria is a success of Eurasianism too. Astana process, Astana process is the success of the Eurasianist policy too, I think. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

With minor differences in positions on whether the shift towards Eurasia happened in 2014 related to the Balyoz and Ergenekon investigations or the failed coup d'états were the actual turning point. Both interviewees agree however that the politics of

the ruling Justice and Development Party under President Erdogan only shifted because of a change in popular perception and national interested that forced the government to follow suit. According to Dogu Perincek:

> The dynamics and the constraints of Turkey. Turkey has a revolutionary testament and an imperial past. It is important to divide, shatter Turkey. You can shatter atoms, but you cannot shatter Turkey. That's why Turkey has refused the American plan. The dynamics of Turkey, farmers, workers, middle class, industrial class, merchants, those classes within Turkey, the nation, cannot live under the yoke of an imperialistic power. And whoever rules Turkey has to accept those dynamics and constraints. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

Gokhun Gocmen identifies similar motives for the Justice and Development Party to move towards Eurasia. The party, according to him, is purely populist in its policies:

> Or populist, let's call it populist. That's why they want to work with National Movement Party. National Movement Party is obsessed with the pan-Turkist idea. They want to get Mosul, they want to get Kirkuk, something like that. But, when the AKP government realized that it is really bad for relationships with Syria, Iran and Russia, they decided to soldier, partner. I think they will find some parties also in Turkey and try to communicate maybe with Vatan Partisi. (personal interview, March 29, 2018)

Like Dogu Perincek, he criticizes the role of President Erdogan as a partner of Barack Obama's Great Middle East Plan. He also mentions the inconsistency of the ruling party both in domestic and foreign policy. This he says is the strength of the Eurasianist Patriotic Party. The Eurasianists have always been straightforward and the fact that the people at the Justice and Development Party, as populists, are following the Eurasianist ideas shows the popularity and growing power of the Patriotic Party's policies and Eurasianism in Turkey:

> (...) we are not a kind of populist party in Turkey, like National Movement kind of parties. But, when they talk with us, okay, step by step we will be popular and then we get a chance to express our views. Because just we have one channel, one newspaper, something like that. We need to touch the mass, okay. So, that will be the opportunity for us. Until this movement, Vatan Partisi uses this opportunity. They will take this opportunity. Most of people criticize us as a pro-government party or something like that. They always say that the condition will change and you will be changing your opinion or

> something like that. But I don't see it will happen like that. (personal interview, March 29, 2018)

Mehmet Perincek also describes the situation in Turkey today as a nation with a society that is following national interest against American interests in the region and supporting cooperation with Eurasian countries, especially Russia, to ensure the territorial integrity of the country. This lead to a rise in anti-Americanism that is higher than in any other country in the world to a staggering extent of 80 percent of the population. Therefore, although unknowingly, everyone in Turkey, regardless of class or political alignment, is an Eurasianist.

> And not just elites, but the simple people are, most of them are Eurasianist too, but they don't know they are Eurasianist. Maybe they never heard the word, something like Eurasianism, they don't know what it means, Eurasianism. But they are Eurasianist, because they see the American role on the region. They are against the American policy, plans on the region. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

This Eurasian shift in popular opinion has three reasons according to the interviewees. The first one is the perception that the United States are planning to divide Turkey and create a Greater Kurdistan by supporting terrorist organizations like the PKK, its Syrian offshoot YPG and Daesh. When asked about if the subsequent necessary steps of Turkey to put Eurasianism into practical policies include ending cooperation with the United States regarding security and economy, Dogu Perincek answered:

> Yes. That is a must. We have to. Turkey is fighting the United States with the pawns, against PKK, against ISID. Those terrorist organizations are under the control of the United States. Therefore Turkey is now fighting against the United States, they fight with weapons, armed war, that is very important. United States are supporting PKK with weapons, Trump said they gave 4.000 trucks full of weapons, they said this openly. American personnel is training PKK fighters, that is the truth and also some American officers are commanding PKK in Northern Syria and Northern Iraq. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

The rationale behind that is that the planned Greater Kurdistan, which would comprise Turkey, Syria and Iraq, would give the United States access to Central Asia and serve as puppet of Washington's policies like Israel. As this is directly against the national interest of Turkey, Turkey and its NATO ally the United States are facing armed conflict against each other. Dogu Perincek also quotes German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel who also raised concerns about these developments earlier. The direct consequence of this is for Turkey to leave the NATO alliance and to deny access to the Incirlik air base as well as other bases for the United States:

> Mr. Gabriel, German Foreign Minister, said; our two allies, Turkey and United States, might maybe fight against each other. In this process, Turkey should leave NATO and should close the access of Incirlik air base and other bases for the US. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

The second one is rooted in economics and is based on the general realistic perspective of trade links with Russia, China and Germany, which are the biggest trade partners of Turkey and the specific incident of Turkish farmers' distress after the downing of a Russian military jet in 2015 that lead to the imposition of trade bans for certain groceries, specifically tomatoes.

The third reason is laicism that becomes a necessity when decoupling from reactionary regimes that are controlled by the Americans. As the interests of the United States does not allow Turkey to live in a lay country, laicism as a national interest of Turkey forces the country onto the Eurasian path. As Mehmet Perincek puts it:

> I think Eurasianism is a not option for Turkey, it's a obligation or necessaries too and Eurasian Turkey must be secular, it's very important, because Turkey must get rid of Middle Age ways, like religious sects, or you know *Aga* system, or like law system on the East. Turkey must get rid of these things and just secularism can unite Turkish people. It's very important too and Middle Age institutions, religious sects or this *Aga* system become only the tool of imperialistic policy. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

According to Dogu Perincek, Turkey basically has three alternative ways to deal with the latest developments:

> Turkey, now, has three options. First solution is the politics of Tayyip Erdogan, the zigzag course. Decoupling from United States but also not being determined enough to leading the country towards Asia. Zigzag. The second solution is the solution of the United States. CHP, Kemal Kilicdaroglu's party, Fetullah Gulen, PKK, HDP, Abdullah Gul – a group of AKP, and Iyi Party, the new party of Meral Aksener. Forging those parties together and create an Atlantic solution. A power project of the United States. But this project is not realistic and it is impossible that those PKK followers to power, because Turkey is against PKK and fighting against United States. Under these circumstances, no one can lift the PKK to power. This alternative is only possible if the United States conquer Ankara, if the American army is controlling Ankara, with weapons, like they controlled Bagdad, then you can work out this solution. United States cannot take Ankara with weapons. The Turkish Army can resist that. It is impossible. America lost in the Middle East. That's why this second alternative is an impossible alternative. The third alternative is the alternative of Vatan Partisi, a staunch move towards Asia and towards building up a production economy. We are in an extraordinary time and the solution will be extraordinary. Therefore, the future of Turkey is the future of Vatan Partisi. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

This "staunch move towards Asia" comprises the breaking up of ties with Turkey's allies in NATO, especially the United States like mentioned above. This would force Turkey also to look for new partners in Eurasia to defend its security interests and enable it to assert its agenda in the region. Mehmet Perincek talks about similar implications and comes to the conclusion:

> … Greater Kurdistan is not only against them, not only against Turkey or not against only Iran, Syria or Iraq. I think it's against Russia and the whole Eurasia, because the Greater Kurdistan will be not a state of Kurdish people, it's a, it will be a state of a American plan and it will be a military base of USA, because the USA, the main goal of USA is Middle Asia and they want to control and occupy the resources of Middle Asia. They want to control the roads to these resources. The Greater Kurdistan is the first step for them to jump to Middle Asia, that's why the Greater Kurdistan is not only against the regional countries on the Middle East like Syria, Turkey, Iran and Iraq, it's against China and against Russia too. That's why Turkey and the Eurasian countries, regional countries as I said Syria, Iran, Iraq and Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Russia, China, all Eurasian countries has to unite against this American threat. (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

To tackle American interests and the establishment of a Greater Kurdistan, Mehmet Perincek also refers to the current military operation of the Turkish Army in Syria. The operation Zeytin Dali, or Olive Branch according to him is only against the American plan of installing a corridor for its Kurdish forces to the Mediterranean Sea. He emphasizes that this operation is not against Syria, the government of Assad in Damascus, the Iranian regime or Russian interests. Mehmet Perincek also mentions that Russia openly supported this military operation by opening the Syrian air space for Turkish airplanes:

> The Zeytin Dali operation, I think, is a part of the Eurasianist collaboration, because I mean Zeytin Dali operation is against the American plan, because America wants to open a corridor from so-called Iraqi-Kurdistan to Mediterranean Sea, because they needed to survive. They want to build a Greater Kurdistan, they had to open a corridor to Mediterranean Sea through the North Syria and they need, they need a autonomy or independent state on the North of Syria. Zeytin Dali operation is against this plan; Zeytin Dali operation is not against Syria or Damascus, not against Assad or not against Iran. The main target of the, this operation is to cut this American corridor. And that's why Turkey, Russia and Iran is together on this operation, they are not against to each other and Russia maybe, I think not maybe, but they openly supported this operation. They opened the air space for Turkey et cetera. And Russia see that the Kurdish separatist movement is a marionette of American policy… (personal interview, February 12, 2018)

Economically, like mentioned above, Turkey's future in Eurasianist terms will be built on a "mixed economy", comprising both public companies and private entrepreneurs. Additionally to that trade ties and economic integration with the three biggest and most important trade partner Russia, China and Germany should be improved. The ultimate goal of the Eurasianist policies in Turkey is, according to Dogu Perincek the realization of a Eurasian Union:

> The interests of England and China and Turkey and Persia and Russia are together against the unipolar world. Eurasianism means multipolar world. Not under the hegemony of the United States, but nation states should live without strict borders between the Eurasian states and countries. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

Dogu Perincek also mentions that especially the role of the United Kingdom might have changed here over the last years. Considered by Dugin and Russian Eurasianists as a natural part of the Euroatlantic system (Dugin, 2012), the United Kingdom also moved towards Eurasia, realizing the economic potential of China and its former colony India. Dogu Perincek claims that this shift in British minds have been confirmed to him by the First Secretary to the British Embassy in Ankara:

> Now I think his mind has changed. In the past yes, England was always doing what America did, Anglo-Saxon concept. But now, I have been to England yesterday, and also the first secretary of the English ambassador in Ankara said the future of England is with China, Russia and Eurasia. It is a new trend in England, decoupling from the United States and moving closer to Eurasia. (personal interview, March 7, 2018)

However, not only the British have realized the power of economics and politics shifting to Asia. Philosophers, politicians and economists alike see this new development and even Germany is on the way of becoming a Eurasian ally according to Dogu Perincek: "Very important thing. In history Germany and Russia have always been enemies. First and Second World War. Now they are together. A new world."

3.2 The former officers' approach

According to Gurcan & Gisclon (2017) Eurasianist views in the Turkish military forces were not only existing among senior officers, but also increasing after the coup attempt of July 15, 2016. However, although these officers, according to while in active duty, have no ties with the Patriotic Party or Eurasianist institutions mentioned in the section above, they often become members of the party after retiring or are publishing their ideas through affiliated institutions Gokhun Gocmen. The following analysis is focusing on interviews with retired Navy Captain, Dr.

Nejat Tarakci, the former head of the Turkish General Staff's secret service retired Lieutenant-General Ismail Hakki Pekin and retired Colonel of the Turkish Land Forces and former chairman of the intelligence staff Rafet Aslantas. Retired Navy Captain Dr. Tarakci is working now as a geopolitical analyst and strategist in Izmir. Retired Lieutenant General Pekin was a member of the Patriotic Party until recently and ran as a candidate for the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 2015. Retired Colonel Aslantas was founding and is currently leading the Anka institute in Ankara, which is an academic platform and journal, comprised of many writers with professional backgrounds in the Turkish military or secret service.

3.2.1 Eurasia from the view of former military officers

Pekin describes the current security situation, or dilemma like this: Turkey, at the moment is a strong ally of NATO and has been a part of it since decades. However after the fall of the Soviet Union NATO has not stopped to spread out and is now a worldwide hegemon under the control of the United States. The establishment of the European Union and the spread of NATO towards East is causing problems in Eurasia and Turkey is trying to balance those institutions or countries, mainly the United States. Therefore Turkey is trying to build up tighter cooperation with peripheral countries on the Eurasian continent and with its neighbors. As those countries are suffering as well from the NATO hegemon, Russia and China as the most powerful and from an economic and security perspective most promising potential partners of Turkey, Eurasianism is a direct answer to the role of the United States and NATO. To maintain its hegemony in the twenty-first century, the United States face a power struggle with Russia, China and Turkey. According to Pekin, Turkey needed to find a safe harbor to develop its economy and security. This harbor

was meant to be found in the European Union first, but due to the reluctance of the European states towards Turkey, the only alternative that is left for the country is Eurasianism. The big threat that Turkey is feeling from the United States is through terrorists within the country, mainly the PKK, and the wars in its neighborhood, Syria and Iraq, where the U.S. is trying to carve out a new Middle East according to its energy needs. He says that also Europe faces similar threats. The European states are in NATO, but like Turkey they need to work with Russia or other Asian countries as well. Both Western Europe and Turkey therefore feel the need for cooperation and in Pekin's view, a successful concept of Eurasianism has to include Western Europe as well. Europe's concern is to get caught in the middle of a clash between the United States and Eastern powers such as Russia and China, while Turkey fears to lose its territorial integrity and to get separated:

> Turkish security is based on the NATO as the politics and the military. At the same time you would like to enter inside the European Union. So there are two topics, that Turkey is considering. Turkey is trying to find its security and economy through NATO and also from the other side its trying to find economic security through becoming a member of the European Union, by doing so it is trying to bring those two together. Of course, this Cold War period is over, after the Cold War many things have changed. Since there are already blocks with it, both parties, namely Warsaw Pact and NATO, have not been disappearing but NATO has also expanded so much that there are 28 countries. We are in a situation like this. In such an environment we are trying to join both NATO and European Union and have entered the customs union. But on the other hand, America has a very big project in the region, a big European Union project. We know the place where that project is based. In the next century, America is trying to figure out how to maintain its hegemony in the 21st century, or how does it continue to be a superpower again, and in this sense the United States is trying to surround the People's Republic of China, which is developing recently or already developed so much, which is obsessed with becoming a super power by 2050. Meanwhile, USA is trying to prevent the unification of China and Russia, which is going be a problem for USA, and USA is trying to surround Russia too. While doing these surrounding movements, USA is trying to shape the Middle East, because it is the center of energy. There is huge threat against Turkey which we can see on the televisions. It is coming from Syria and Iraq and also inside from Turkey, PKK threat. And when these three come together, in the middle or long run, if there is no solution found, Turkey can be separated. Especially (talking about the threat) by PKK which in Turkey, and by governments

> established in Syria and Iraq. In this situation, the harbor which Turkey will hide in (...) A safety zone, a save harbor. Turkish Eurasiansm is considered as a way to survive the situation. In such kind of an environment Turkey found the European Union as a safe harbor, but unfortunately EU cannot or doesn't take Turkey and they also say for the next 30 or 40 years its not possible for Turkey to be a EU member. So because of this Turkey has only one place as a safe harbor, Eurasianism Eurasianism is not just Russia. There is Eurasianism, there is China, so a new economic power is born, and now we are seeing the fight about who will lead the world economy and about economic power. Both Europe and USA are fighting for it. Maybe our places are different. So Turkey is in NATO, but also feels like it has to side with Russia. So do the Europeans. In Europe, they need to be part of NATO or have an European Army to avoid an outside or inside war and to avoid being crushed in the middle it has to balance both USA and China. What Turkey wants is energy. Also Europe wants energy and they are both dependent. Oil and natural gas are in Russia and Central Asia, the Caspian Sea and the Middle East, including Iran. In such an environment because of Turkey is being pushed out, Turkey is trying to find its place in Eurasia, our Eurasianism is compulsory and we are forced in a way. We have to be Eurasianist. Why, because we are in NATO but they are not protecting us against the threats that we face in this environment. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

Turkey therefore feels the need to act, which resulted in the latest military operations in Syria like Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch as well as in North Iraq. These operations and the collaboration with Iran and Russia in the Astana Process are precautions to avoid a separation of the country in the long term:

> For example Syria and Iraq position then the Turkey really counter the very big threat in this country. Therefore, Turkey is really facing a threat of division on a long-term when we look at the events occurring around the Middle East. Because of it, it has to act. For example, there is an operation in Afrin at the moment and before that the Euphrates Shield operation was carried out. At Idlib, with Russia and Iran with, you know there is Astana process, all of these things are precautions that Turkey uses to protect itself but of course it cannot only be with arms but Turkey needs to enter somewhere somehow. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

Dr. Nejat Tarakci also agrees that the threats are coming from the wars in Turkey's neighborhood, but especially from the PKK terror group within the country. However, he does not consider himself as an Eurasianist, because he says Turkey should neither cooperate with the United States or NATO nor with Russia, as both of

them are aligned with Kurdish nationalist terror groups. What he means with that is the support of NATO and Russia for Kurdish groups in Syria, mainly PYD and YPG, which are considered terrorist organizations by Turkey, although even Turkey at one point tried to cooperate with PYD:

> And our government, the Turkish government, they put all of them in the PKK basket and they evaluated them and declared all of them as terrorist. At the moment, the representative of the PYD, the head of the PYD, is Salih Muslim. Turkey, at the beginning of the conflict wanted to make a connection with the PYD. Salih Muslim, the leader of the PYD, invited Turkey, Ankara, they evaluated the situation of Syria and the Syrian Kurds. But at the moment, American politics is in conflict with the Turkish politics, you know, they support the PYD, YPG and also Russia; PYD has an office in Moscow. They look different, USA and Russia look different, but both of them accept that PKK is a terrorist organization. But it is not valid for PYD and YPG. (personal interview, December 1, 2017)

According to Tarakci, Turkey made grave mistakes in the Syrian conflict and in its security system. The Turkish government is mixing national interest with decisions based on demands from religious groups within the state. He says that the entirety of Turkish political interference in the Syrian conflict is based on religion:

> Turkey at the moment and at the beginning of the Syrian conflict made many choices and they made many faults. They mixed its national interest and some fraction of the religious (...). In the Turkish foreign policy, the religious factor made a big effect, this is very important. Turkish political support in the Syrian conflict is based on religious factor, it was a very very big fault. But now they understand and they gave up. (personal interview, December 1, 2017)

This is a problem for Turkey to develop as an independent and non-aligned nation. However, he mentions that the revolution of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and the subsequent secular nature of the Turkish Republic will prevail. To ensure an ongoing positive development education is very important for Dr. Tarakci:

> (...) the impacts, the very deep impacts of Ataturk's revolution will continue. It is not possible to change, to reverse them. Turkey is, I think, secular should continue, after this government maybe in the future, secular positions at least may be stronger. Especially the education system. I give very big attention, very important attention to education. (personal interview, December 1, 2017)

Tarakci also points to the fact that the training and education of the Turkish Armed Forces and especially the Turkish Navy happened thanks to close cooperation with NATO countries:

> I want to say something about NATO's benefits to Turkey and to Turkish Armed Forces. Turkish Armed Forces after, beginning 1952, they became interdisciplinary and tactical and strategical documents and education and then after 1965, Turkish Armed Forces, especially Sea Forces became a very modern situation. (personal interview, December 1, 2017)

Therefore he is not opposed to NATO but criticizes the current development of several NATO member states that should lead to Turkey leaving the military wing of NATO and to establish itself as an independent country (Tarakci, 2016, May 30). In his opinion, Russia would accept such a move, as resulting out of recent developments in the Syrian conflict the military port of Tartus secures Russian access to the Mediterranean Sea. So, Turkey would still be an important partner for additional logistical and military cooperation, but freed from pressure:

> Because if Turkey becomes a non-aligned country and also prevent from the military power from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea and also from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Russian new position in Syria, Russia became a Mediterranean country. This is a very big advantage for Russia. That means that Russia is not depending on Turkish straits, because they can keep any sea power in Tartus. (personal interview, December 1, 2017)

Rafet Aslantas, the founder and head of Anka institute has a similar idea like Dr. Tarakci in terms of using Eurasianism as an act of balancing Turkey's political approach in order to reach what he calls "high civilization":

> The main aim was chosen to reach the high civilization and the way through to this was determined as the way of wisdom and science while the Turkish Republic was being founded. The principles that were put forward by M. Kemal Ataturk are not only valid for the Turkish Republic but also important for other countries. When we look at it from our perspective, we must be there where we can develop culture, technology, production, consumption, art, living standards that is created by knowledge and science and share fairly. It can be one certain place or in everywhere: by protecting our profits and balances. The common denominator of Westernism and Eurasianism in Turkey is to raise the living standards, our contributions that we will do and the benefit that we will provide to World Civilization. Geopolitical

> expectations should be overlapping with national interests. (personal interview, January 15, 2018)

Due to his argument that technological development is more important for developing a country than the abundance of natural resources, cooperation is possible with any country in the world. The sensitivities in Turkey that are responsible for formulating its national interest are created through suspicion and experiences more than due to political choices. Mr. Aslantas says that natural alliances should therefore not be dependent on circumstances. The views of ANKA Institute and his personal view are therefore more pragmatic and based on Turkey's formulation of national interest:

> There may be differences about Eurasianism or Westernism in the view of each individual, organization, government, state. That is so normal. I think the main issue is about the expected benefit. A individual, B individual, or X political formation, Z movement or Russians, Americans, British, Germans and others will look for their own interests. From my point of view, the main criterion must be our national interests, the promotion of our standards of social life, and the contributions and benefits we will make to world civilization. Westernism and Eurasianism are not obsessions. (personal interview, January 15, 2018)

Differences in the analysis of Turkish Eurasianism of the three interviewees are visible through examining the sources of pressure for current and future Turkish foreign policy decisions.

External and Internal Factors Influencing Foreign Policy

	External	Internal
Aslantas, Rafet	• US foreign policy under Trump • The rise of China • The economic policies of the United Kingdom • Russia's increased self confidence • The capitalist system • Radicalization/Religious divide • Wars for areas of interest in Eurasia	
Pekin, Ismail Hakki	• Migration/refugee crisis	• Kurdish issue • Need for foreign direct investment • Economic development • Access to military equipment • The role of president Erdogan • Turkish media • Religion
Tarakci, Nejat	• The rise of China and its role in the Eastern Mediterranean • Russia' attempt to turn Turkey against the United States	• Turkey's role as a NATO member in the Black Sea region • Naxcivan issue • Kurdish issue

3.2.2 Necessities for security and prosperity under Eurasianism – practical foreign policy objectives

Ismail Hakki Pekin thinks that the recent turn of the Turkish government to a Eurasian strategy is due to homemade problems and security concerns. He counts three reasons for that. The biggest threat to the country is the ongoing terrorism of the PKK. The second problem is energy dependency. The only way to find oil and natural gas supply for a growing energy demand is to buy those resources from Russia, Iran and Qatar. The third problem is also of economic nature and concerns

foreign direct investment. Until recently the bulk of foreign direct investment was coming from European countries like Germany, the Netherlands or Austria. Nowadays the most promising partner for these investments seems to be China, but Turkey also has unsolved issues with the Chinese government about the situation of the Uyghur people. On this matter, China is accusing Turkey to support Uyghur separatists and implemented tighter visa regulations for Turkish businessmen:

> We need 3 things. First of all we need to build up our economy and for this we have to find some money from somewhere and balance the energy that we buy. So we need to raise our exports. We use tourism for that, but that income is not enough to balance the expenses for energy. It had both security needs, and about this topic, Turkey thinks differently than its allies. I mean, allies in NATO, allies like America or Germany and others. Why, because a Kurdish state is trying to be created in Turkey's territory. Turkey's main problem is this. We have PKK terror within, we fight with it. Turkey is looking from that perspective. This is the first one. The second topic, I told you already about the economic issue. We really need oil, and natural gas and other things and we can not provide it. For this we need Russia and Iran, we buy from them, and also some amount from Qatar. Thirdly, we do not have enough savings to recover the economy. So we need to FDI. So the countries need to invest in Turkey. Investment, investment. We need the foreign investment. For this, the countries where this will be provided are certain, namely European countries, we have an investment from Germany. There is the Netherlands. There is Austria. And in recent times China has a very big thing but now we also have some problems with China. They require visa now. Especially because of the activities of these Uyghur Turks due to terrorist activities in that area. They consider that Turkey is supporting it, and they implemented visa for Turkish business men. There are these three issues. Turkey has to reconcile these three issues. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

Again, Mr. Pekin is mentioning the need of a safe harbor for Turkey to find support in order to solve its critical problems. To do so, Turkey does not only want to be with Eurasian powers like China or Russia, but will also need Western Europe, therefore the rhetoric of president Erdogan are only tactical. Therefore Turkey does not want to break with Europe or the United States according to him, which is a very different position to what the civilian interviewees argued:

> So Turkey needs some safe harbor system, so that's how the Turkish Eurasianism is. When we think of Turkey I do not think that Turkey wants to separate from Europe. Our honorable president's words are only tactics, I

> think. Because our alienation from Europe or finding some place outside Europe (...) we, Turkey are trying to evaluate Eurasianism with West Asia, including Middle East, Iran, Syria, Pakistan and Afghanistan together with Central Asia, Russia and it's extension Europe. I mean, there's something like that. What is our goal? What are we not going to be in? Turkey wants to be with Europe, with Russia and with Central Asia for economic, political and security related reasons. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

Mr. Pekin thinks that isolating Turkey completely from the West would be very hard, because they have been integrated with Western countries too much and also Turkey feels drawn to the West because their countries "are 50, 60 years ahead of us". He later explains what he means with this statement:

> I mean, I personally believe in liberal economy and liberal democracy. I cannot say ideology as it would be interpreted in a different way, but Turkey should not be governed by religious values. What I have learned is that there is a system that we have been trying to implement for the past two hundred years, since the political reforms in 1839, and we need to adapt this system to our society. The ideas of people or societies do not change easily. These ideas are passed down on generations, and therefore, they are hard to replace. It also means we need time, say, around 300-400 years. It has been the same for Europe; they have been through so many wars to achieve their current state. Turkey took a shortcut, but claiming that you have liberal economy and liberal democracy does not change the reality. First, the people should adapt to it. No matter what is written in the constitution, what actually matters is what is happening in real life, what the citizens think. I do not want to analyze it from an ideological perspective, as it would not be appropriate in this situation. I do not have a specific ideology anyway. What I believe is that this country should be ruled by democracy, secularism should be the main principle and we should have liberal economy. This is what I think. But what will be done, how these will be achieved, how economic value will be created, how the transition to democracy will be achieved... these are all questions related to the government. During this process, Turkey could continue its relations with the European Union while becoming a part of Eurasia. We just need to take a look at what will be gained or lost as a result. It is easy to abandon an organization. But why should we do it? What if they stop selling us spare parts for aircraft if we leave them for example? We need to think before we speak. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

Mr. Pekin is also mentioning that difference with the view of Dogu Perincek, even his historical analysis of the beginning of the Turkish Republic directly by saying:

> (...) we break ties with the West altogether let's break ties with America and completely turn to Russia. That is impossible to think of such a thing. But the trend in the world points towards Asia, that Asian powers are growing economically, and that investment is in the hands of Asian powers from now on ... well there are only few who think to completely break with the West and turn to Russia, we do not think of a Eurasianism like that, but some are. For example, Mr. Perincek thinks so and his people think that way. But the Turkish government has never thought about it that way until now. That is to say, we also did not think so during the period of Ataturk, even after the war of independence, the war of liberation we had to face so much against the British at Lausanne, but after the War of Liberation we were asked to establish contact with both the English and the Americans in the era of Ataturk. So this structure is nothing new. Also before Ataturk, beginning from the Tanzimat reform, 200-150 years ago we had a connection with the West. For them, Turkey is a transitional country, it is at a point of transition. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

He then continues to describe what he understands of the government's and his own point of view of Eurasianism. The big difference here is that Mr. Pekin's idea of Eurasia is not against the West. It still involves cooperating with Western countries, even staying in NATO. There he says Turkey has many options and also makes its own voice heard and the connection with the West, especially the United States, is based on Turkey's NATO membership. From a security perspective he evaluates a break up with NATO and a turn to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as very unlikely. Turkey already has an observer status in the SCO but is integrated with NATO and Western powers too much:

> Yes also Europe, Germany, England, Turkey also wants to cooperate with china at least as much as I want. Because there is the huge part of money. They have more than 1 billion population. If you will invest, even if you sell cars, if you sell one car to every family, it means one billion cars. The numbers are that high. Because of that I don't think like we draw apart from Europe and then there will be a new block, Eurasia, lets be in Eurasian Union, or I don't think we will get into Shanghai cooperation organization. We can be an observer there anyway we are at the statute of observer there. But 'we will get into Shanghai and this kind of sayings are Daily sayings. Yani, I evaluate like this sayings are not tactical sayings. Because at least Turkey got integrated with Europe this much. I put aside domestic affair but also when we look based on investments, exports, Germany is the biggest partner in foreign trade. We sell a lot of material to Germany to Europe. We don't have chance to sell it to another places. We reached to a certain level of standard about material production with the agreements with European Union and

> Customs Union. About this, our economy got integrated with wests economy after 1980 especially at the era of Ozal. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

Mr. Pekin also disagrees with the interviewees from the first part in a way that he says the influence of the Patriotic Party on the government is very limited. Small operations like Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch in Syria are used to get the support of the public and the Patriotic Party, because it is in line with their policies:

> I do not believe Perincek's group influences the Turkish government or the people. Yes, they might have some effects on daily basis, which the ruling party, AK Party, might benefit from. They might benefit from Perincek and similar people's discourse that the country should leave the western systems (…)While applying the policies or carrying out such operations as Afrin, or doing something against the west, it allows the public to be influenced by this and leads them to support the government's policies. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

However when it comes to actually breaking with the West and leaving its institutions, like the Patriotic Party demands, the government and the opposition parties like the Republican People's Party or the Good Party of Meral Aksener are against this. The only thing that would change would be an altered contract for Turkey's membership in the European Union's Customs Union:

> However, when it comes to leaving the organizations, whether it is the ruling party AKP, or CHP (Republican People's Party) or the Good Party, founded by Meral Akşener, they all agree that Turkey should act in line with the west, should not leave NATO, should cooperate with the European Union and should continue to be a part of the Customs Union maybe in a different way. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

Mr. Pekin sees a problem with accusing the West of supporting PKK and other groups in Turkey, because if you look closely you would also have to accuse Russia doing the exact same thing. This is not a sustainable policy for him and therefore not a reason for leaving Western institutions. Therefore the government's policies similar to the views of the Patriotic Party are just cosmetics. It is important for a country to know in which direction it will develop. So the government is using this

anti-Western discourse because of the losses of Turkish soldiers in Syria. Knowing who to blame and which direction the country goes is critical for all countries at war:

> This is exactly what Mr. Erdoğan is doing as a politician; he is leading people in a particular direction, and thus, people see the west, the US, as a threat. Do people need such direction? Yes. In all the countries across the world and in all war situations, people need such direction. People are led to think in a particular way so that they can support the government's policies. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

However, he sees this also as potentially dangerous because of the important role of strong leaders in the country and their anti-Western discourse mixed with the religious concept of martyrdom in Islam can lead people to think that the conflicts are based on religious hostility between Turkey, Europe and the United States:

> In such countries as ours, the discourse of the leaders plays an important role. Such discourse, along with the concept of martyrdom in Islam and other concepts, lead people to think that there is a religious hostility and a religious war between Turkey and Europe and the US. This is a very dangerous approach as if you take the other side sometime in the future, the same thing will happen. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

Comparing Mr. Pekin's views on the attempt of creating certain enemies within and outside the country directly contradict the statements of the three interviewees close to the Patriotic Party. According to him, mankind's nature is to search for struggle and fight and in order to keep that instincts under control people should not be fed with false enemies:

> War is human nature. But in order to restrain all these, we have some rules, religions, and moral codes. We might have softened it a little with some rules, but the fight is ongoing. It is difficult to tame mankind, and we need to do it without becoming enemies with anyone. Of course it would be wrong to create enemies within Turkey, calling people non-nationalist and telling that they hate their country… It would only polarize people. We should not point at the other countries such as Germany, Austria and others as targets and cause our people to hate them. In the minds of Turkish people, the US and the West are our enemies

The current situation in Turkey, anti-American sentiment on the rise and Eurasianist tendencies, is due to the extraordinary situation after the coup attempt of July 15,

2016. Turkey feels misunderstood by its Western partners, the European Union countries and the United States, because of the narrative that it was not an actual coup by the Fetullahist terror group. In Mr. Pekin's eyes, this issue could be solved very quickly in an attempt of mutual understanding and meetings. In the end Europe needs Turkey as much as Turkey needs Europe. The interests of the Europeans should lie in de-escalation and peace in Turkey's neighborhood to enhance the flow of energy, resources and general trade:

> Turkey needs Europe, it is as simple as that. It needs Europe as much as it needs Russia. Turkey should get along with its neighbors. I have always argued that it would benefit to Europe if Europe could put an end to all the conflicts in the region. The conflicts in that region prevent the flow of energy resources, making money out of it and selling western products there. So it is not possible to do trade or establish a market where there is chaos. Cooperation or tourism is not possible in such case either. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

Where Mr. Pekin is also disagreeing with the view of the Patriotic Party and Dogu Perincek, is that Turkey needs to aim for becoming or staying a liberal democracy. For him this is one of the reasons to stay within the Western system, because otherwise Turkey would be on the way to an Islamic state with a theocratic government. By liberal democracy he only means the political system, excluding the economy. He therefore argues, similar to the approaches that were mentioned by the civilian supporters of Eurasianism, that Turkey would have to be in control over certain economic sectors to create investments in otherwise neglected areas. As an example he mentions the government institutions that Turkey used in the past to control the selling of fish and meat, guaranteeing an outcome for Turkish livestock producers and fishermen. These institutions have been abolished and therefore Turkey needs something like meat sector cooperatives, which exist in Western countries as well:

> In the past, we had a system where there were meat and fish institutions. Such institutions would buy the livestock raised by the villagers, which would provide the villagers a place to sell their animals. We need such incentives again. In the west, there are cooperatives in this sector, which is also what we need here. But of course, along with the liberal democracy, the flow of capital should also be liberated. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

However, although Mr. Pekin calls for more government influence on production economy he argues that the flow of capital in the country must be liberated to lower the interest rate. The problem with interest rates in Turkey led to the increasing inflow of hot money and thus creating a volatile situation for the Turkish Lira:

> People bring hot money which then turns into Turkish lira, reviving the economy; later on, they take their money back. It plays an active role and Turkey can control these activities. Today, it is impossible to even imagine preventing the free movement of money and capital. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

The conflict line between Mr. Pekin and the Patriotic Party comes out at this statement:

> I believe after this chaos is over, Turkey will find the balance between Eurasianism, Turkish Eurasianism and Europe. Eurasia does not mean Russia, it means Europe. I don't think Europe has a system that excludes Russia as even in NATO, they organize meetings with Russian Federation. Without negotiation and understanding, no one can understand what is going on, it would only escalate things. So we need to look forward. If we don't, if we cannot foresee and plan for 15-20 years ahead, we cannot resolve anything. Of course, there is competition. The west desires to expand its culture; the US is seeking the continuation of its hegemony. And then, there is China and Russia. All countries are looking out for their own interests. But we need to look from a broader perspective. People are being misled, if they weren't, they would not be provoked. When people are misled to think that these countries prevent our development and exploit us instead, it has a huge influence on the public. This is a political approach. From a broader picture, we can analyze it in two ways: one is looking at the measures taken with regards to world peace and regional peace; and the other is how the leaders are directing their people in a certain direction, which is a part of daily politics. That also means, unfortunately, daily politics is highly effective in such countries as ours. Can we think long term? No. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

3.3 Historical representatives of Eurasianist thought in Turkey

In order to understand the current interpretation of Turkish Eurasianism, I asked the interviewees to reflect on historic figures in Turkish politics that represent their view of Eurasianism. Most of them mentioned Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic. However, Ataturk was interpreted differently. While he is a reason for Dogu Perincek, Mehmet Perincek and Nejat Tarakci to argue for utterly breaking ties with NATO, Mustafa Kemal is an example for staying close to Western allies while also cooperating with Russia for Ismail Hakki Pekin. Pekin mentions here the Sadabad Pact and the Balkan Entente leading to a belt of peace around Turkey:

> During his time, the country was in cooperation with the west, we were a part of NATO; and on the other side, we had investments from Russia in iron and steel plants and aluminum plant in Konya. So what we can say is that one of the most important things Ataturk achieved was the good relations he had established with Russia, the west and the neighbors at the same time. Balkan Entente, the Sadabad Pact (...) What he did was to create a belt of peace around the country to ensure security of Turkey along with its neighbors and Europe. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

Also he mentions the Ataturk's admiration for Europe's level of civilization, however the attempt to reach this level in Turkey could not be achieved during Ataturk's time, because the people were not ready for it and such a change needed more time:

> Another thing Ataturk did was to praise Europe in terms of its level of civilization, which was what he called modern civilization. When we take a look at the country he founded, we can see that he included it in all the laws from civil code to Turkish criminal code and the others. However, despite all these changes, only a small group of people were educated in this direction and it was not effective across the whole country. The reason behind it is that such changes require time. It is difficult to transform a person from a slave into a free individual. Yes, you can make laws and tell that women have rights as was done in 1936, but for women to be able to exercise such rights, first they should believe in them. It is essential to make laws, but people should understand and believe them, which can only happen over time. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

However, for Dr. Tarakci, Ataturk was the reason for Turkey's successful partnership with Russia as well, but this relationship got later undermined through Western powers, mainly the United States, leading to a more problematic relationship with its Eastern partners:

> During the independence war of Turkey they helped very very valuable to win the war at Ataturk times. And then at the end of the Cold War, Turkey-Russia relations has become a conflict position, because of the Americans and NATO. (personal interview, December 1, 2017)

Going back in history, another figure that Pekin considers similar to Ataturk's Europeanization attempts was Sultan Mahmud II. A balanced Eurasianist was also Suleyman Demirel, who cooperated closely with NATO but also established better ties with Russia at the same time, which resulted in investments in the iron and steel sector in Konya. This refers also to the focus of Demirel's approach more on economy than on politics. Pekin also draws similarities between Demirel and Turgut Ozal who tried to establish a Western Asian union with Central Asian states, Russia and others while still remaining a part of NATO:

> The late Turgut Ozal was also in a similar quest. He wanted to gather the Central Asia, Russia and other surrounding countries and establish a Western Asian union, but continue to be a part of NATO and the European Union at the same time. (personal interview, February 22, 2018)

Attila Ilhan, the Turkish poet and popular figure, was mentioned by Dogu Perincek, Mehmet Perincek and Gokhun Gocmen as an example of one of the leading Eurasianists in Turkish history. Furthermore, Mehmet Perincek counts two former military generals as important Turkish Eurasianists, Tuncer Kilinc and Soner Polat. Tuncer Kilinc, the former head of the National Security Committee [Milli Guvenlik Kurulu], was arguing for an alliance with Russia and Iran against the plan of the West at the Turkish military academy in Ankara, 2002. Soner Polat, a member of the

Patriotic Party and retired Navy Admiral, was responsible for blocking the Bosphorus strait for American warships during the Russian-Georgian War.

The most recent example mentioned by Pekin is the current president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. However, Pekin says that Erdogan is in a transitional phase, moving away from the West since the attempted coup in 2016. According to him it remains to be seen if president Erdogan can achieve a balance with Turkey's Western and Eastern partners and also within the countries divided populace:

For Gokhun Gocmen and Mehmet Perincek also Dogu Perincek is an example of an outright Turkish Eurasianist.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to understand the positions and contradictions within Turkish Eurasianism regarding contemporary foreign policy. After introducing the topic and outlining the critical questions of the topic, a literature review has been presented to enable the reader to use background information on the topics touched upon in the interviews conducted. By interviewing elites both within the Turkish political and the military realm, it has been possible to gather crucial information on the rationale behind current Eurasianist thought in Turkey.

The results have shown that although close cooperation between Russian Neo-Eurasianists and Turkish Eurasianists has influenced both sides, there have been striking differences in both the definition of the meaning of Eurasianism itself as well as the political and philosophical implications. The Russian Neo-Eurasianists, first and foremost Alexander Dugin, have based their concept of Eurasia on a civilization paradigm, separating Slavic and Eastern non-Slavic peoples from the Western civilization. Different from current Turkish Eurasianists, the Russians have put emphasis on religious conservativism and based their Eurasianism on an ideology with its origins in the Russian émigrés' ideas that emerged during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Turkish Eurasianists however see their approach as a mere foreign policy strategy, tackling problems that arise of the contemporary political environment, differentiating it from an ideological perspective. Defining the term Eurasia geographically, the interviewees present a geopolitical vision comprising the combined landmass of the European and Asian continents.

Turkish Eurasianists argue that Eurasianism is an answer to the unipolar world that emerged after the end of the Cold War and showed it first negative outcomes in the Gulf War. Therefore, Eurasianism is trying to merge the national interests of European and Asian countries to fight against the hegemony and threat coming from the United States. This hegemony has been considered as an imperialist strategy, including the Greater Middle East project that is jeopardizing collaboration of Eurasian powers. As this has shown, an anti-Western notion has been inherent in the arguments. Following the ancient Roman principle of divide et impera, Western institutions like NATO, have developed an attitude that is hostile to Turkish national interest in peacefully cooperating with its neighbors. This divisive approach has been mentioned also with specific reference to Turkey's territorial integrity as well. The Turkish Eurasianists have mentioned the support of Western powers for separatist groups, such as the Kurdish Workers' Party, as well as conservative agitators that propagate Islamism and feudalism.

Therefore the Turkish Eurasianists have had the intention to create a multipolar world system to fight against the imperial plans of the United States. In order to be able to reach this aim, Eurasianism presupposes a revival of Kemalist principles that enables close cooperation between Turkey, Russia, Iran and China. According to the interviewees, laicism has been the principle within the Kemalists' Six Arrows that is crucial to facilitate close ties with regional actors, which are divided between different religious sects and ideological bases. In general, Turkish Eurasianists have seen their positions as a continuation of the revolutionary ideas of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who has been considered as an early Eurasianist fighting against Western political influence. According to some interviewees, the legacy of Ataturk has been a call for friendly relations with the Soviet Union. However this

path has been abandoned after the death of Ataturk, when a time of Westernization has approached in Turkey. An emphasis has been put on the devastating outcomes of conflicts between Turkey and Russia that only serve American interest. Therefore, in order to fulfill the Kemalist legacy, Turkey would have to find ways to cooperate with Russia.

The interviews have also been insightful on the topic of differences between the Eurasianists that have a background in the Turkish Armed Forces and those who represent political or private interests. Whereas the former military officer prefer a security system that continues to operate within the NATO framework, however limited, the civilian approach is more radical and propagates a complete split from the organization. Reasons for continued cooperation are based on pragmatic considerations. One of the interviewees with a military background however would like Turkey to withdraw from the military wing of NATO, following the path of Charles de Gaulle's decision in 1966. The other officers have been more in favor of NATO, however they all have agreed to the benefits that are entailed in NATO membership and the integrated structure of the TAF within the NATO framework. This also reflects the interpretation of national interest, which the ex-military's views as being directed towards technological development. They explicitly object the civilians' idea of a foreign policy based on current developments in world politics. If one would have to come up with an overarching definition of Turkish Eurasianism, I would propose: Turkish Eurasianism describes an effort of Turks against unipolarity as a setting of power in general and against American hegemony within that setting in particular, whilst not referring to religious or ethnic factors.

What the participants do agree on is a deeper cooperation with Asian powers and Turkey's neighbors to reach a positive result of future prospects regarding

security and economy. Also the interviewees have generally agreed upon the immediate problems of Turkey, such as the threat through terrorism, the dependency on foreign energy supply and the economic problems that arise out of Turkey's lack of stable foreign direct investment and export capacity.

It should be noted that this research, like any other, has its limitations. Those limitations are based on the factor of time, the consent of elites to partake in interviews and the research process itself. Turkish Eurasianism is not per se new, however it reacts strongly to current development hence defining its characteristics will also differentiate over time. Although it was possible to find six interviewees that are highly qualified for taking part in the research, it might be interesting to extend the scope of participants for further research. The choice of unstructured exploratory interviews is also a limited approach that does not aim to completely proof any hypothesis, but should rather be seen as a first attempt to clear the boundaries for a topic and enhance further research,

Despite its limitations, this thesis has shown that interpretations of Eurasianism in Turkey show a variety of facets. Some of them even contradicting each other on topics that have seemed dominating the Eurasianist discourse, such as the membership in Western security organizations and the definition of Turkey's national interest. Therefore it would be of great relevance to conduct further research on this topic. Quantitative methods and circular approaches based on the outcome of this research may be useful to develop the theoretical definition of Turkish Eurasianism further. However, maybe it is the strength of Turkish Eurasianism that it has no concrete boundaries. Fluidity of such a concept may be useful in times where we observe a fast changing political environment. The persistence of Eurasianism in

Turkey will ultimately depend on the pragmatism of foreign policy-makers and the development of democratic processes in the future.

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