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Cover Page Footnote

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CONSTRUCTIONS OF GREATNESS IN FOREIGN POLICY: NEO-OTTOMANISM IN TÜRKİYE AND EURASIANISM IN RUSSIA

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ABSTRAK

Perubahan geopolitik di dekade kedua abad ke-21 telah menggeser pusat kekuatan politik internasional. Pusat-pusat kekuatan politik non-barat bermunculan dan meningkat pengaruhnya saat dunia unipolar bertransformasi menjadi multipolar. Berbeda dengan era Perang Dingin di mana ideologi menjadi instrumen utama dalam menghadapi pengaruh barat, beberapa pusat kekuatan geopolitik kontemporer membawa persepsi kejayaan historis sebagai faktor penting dalam kebijakan luar negeri mereka, sebagaimana ditunjukkan oleh Türkiye di bawah kepemimpinan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan dengan neo-Ottomanisme dan Rusia di bawah Vladimir Putin dengan Eurasianisme. Dengan menggunakan metode analisis diskursus pada data yang dikumpulkan melalui tinjauan pustaka, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa persepsi kejayaan historis neo-Ottomanisme dan Eurasianisme penting sebagai instrumen tawar-menawar politik dan menunjukkan pertentangan terhadap unipolaritas Barat; meskipun ada perbedaan dalam tingkat koersivitas dalam praktek yang dilaksanakan kedua negara.

Kata Kunci: Analisis Diskursus, Analisis Kebijakan Luar Negeri, Rusia, Turki, Neo Ottomanisme, Eurasianisme

ABSTRACT

Geopolitical changes in the second decade of the 21st century have shifted the centre of international political power. Non-Western political power centres emerged and increased influence as the unipolar world transformed into a multipolar one. In contrast to the Cold War era, where ideology was the main instrument in dealing with Western influence, some contemporary geopolitical power centres carry the perception of historical glory as an important factor in their foreign policy, as demonstrated by Turkey under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with its neo-Ottomanism and Russia under Vladimir Putin with Eurasianism. By using discourse analysis methods on data collected through a literature review, this research finds that the perception of the historical glory of neo-Ottomanism and Eurasianism is important as a political bargaining instrument and shows opposition to Western unipolarity, even though there are differences in the level of coerciveness in the practices implemented by the two countries.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, Foreign Policy Analysis, Russia, Turkey, Neo-Ottomanism, Eurasianism

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary international relations have entered a phase of ‘de-globalisation’. In the early 2000s, the neoliberal hopes of a ‘borderless world’ flattered, followed by protectionist thinking and renewed international rivalries in the international system, which are now more present (Ajami, 2022). The advent of the so-called ‘Cold War II’ between the United States versus Russia and China on the other has severed many previous connections made after the Cold War in the hope of a more cooperative world (Cohen, 2019). The incompatibility of values between the so-called ‘West and the rest’ has paved the way for non-Western centres of power, with the advent of multipolarity compared to the bipolar system of the Cold War. While ideological beliefs, such as capitalism and communism, were the main talking points in the rivalry during the Cold War, various variables relating to ‘national character’ and ‘national values’ have entered the spotlight in the current international system.

Constructivism in international relations sees the role of ideas, principles, and values in influencing state behaviour (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012). This paradigm sees how a state ‘constructs its surroundings’ and its ‘identity’ compared to other states. One of the most important elements of national identity is a ‘national experience’ where the role of history, perception of allies or enemies, national values, symbols, and identities, including religion, nationhood, and national experience, have enormously influenced the current situation. The country’s leadership promotes these images as a political instrument expected to be accepted by its population. The national experience becomes the key principle in conducting foreign policy and in seeing which countries are perceived as enmity or amity with them. When discussing the history of several modern states that existed as empires, experiences of ‘historical greatness’, and a view that the state should play an important role in international affairs, become the beacon of their values.

This paper will take two examples of cases where emerging powers use imperial history as a foreign policy narrative to influence their identities. The first is Türkiye¹ under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which embraces ‘neo-Ottomanism’ thinking by linking the legacy of its Ottoman Empire and the contemporary Turkish state and acting as an emerging regional and global player with values of political Islam and increased role in the Middle East. The second case is Russia under Vladimir Putin, which has embraced

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Russia's role as a major power in continuing the legacy of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.

Since the Ottoman Caliphate in Türkiye collapsed on March 3, 1924, Türkiye was established with a secular ideology under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who declared its independence on October 29, 1923. Since then, the Islamic constitution has merged with the secular constitution (Marmontova et al., 2008). The concept of the modern Turkish state launched by Atatürk by erasing Islamic values in the foundations of the state, including changing the Arabic alphabet to Latin, prohibiting the life of Turkish citizens who display a lifestyle like the era of the Ottoman Empire Ottoman-era lifestyle, implementing a western-style state education system, eliminating madrasa education, planting a capitalist economic system, and abandoning the sharia economic system (Çalış & Bağcı, 2003). Since then, Türkiye, once a world power, has become sick and slumped in all fields. Furthermore, in 1996, the Islamic-inspired Refah Partisi (Welfare Party) introduced Prof. Neichmetin Erbakan, who became the prime minister of Türkiye. Erbakan has an Islamic nationalist vision to rebuild Türkiye and establish relations with Arab countries to revive the power of the Islamic world (Çinbiş, 2023). However, these ideals were destroyed when the 1997 military coup forced Erbakan to resign. Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP - the Development Justice Party) led by Recep Tayib Erdoğan revived the struggle of the disbanded Refah Partisi. The AKP first won the elections in 2002 and replaced Abdullah Gül as Prime Minister the following year. The political progress of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, a protege of Prof. Necmitin Erbakan, made a breakthrough that made Türkiye a new economic power respected in Europe and internationally. Erdoğan breathes Islamic nuance back into Türkiye, which still has a secular orientation. On the other hand, Erdoğan is a religious and charismatic leader who strongly influences his country and is a respected leader worldwide, including in Islamic countries.

This background is what led Türkiye under the AKP led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to carry out its foreign policy in 3 three different images of the Ottoman Empire, represented by t1) The image of the Ottoman Empire as the cradle or pinnacle of civilisation; 2) The image of the Ottoman Empire as an Islamic Sultanate; and 3) the image of the Ottoman Empire as a liberal and multicultural kingdom. These three images led to the term of neo-Ottomanism (Wastnidge, 2019). This term has existed since 1960 as a cumulative process with regular reference to Türkiye's historical and geographical connections to the glory of the Ottoman Empire domain in the past. Furthermore, during

the Turgut Özal era as the eighth president of Türkiye in the late 1980s, this concept was used as a Türkiye foreign policy which focused on elements of Ottoman identity to challenge the notion of a state-centred Türkiye identity and arguably opened a space for debate on Türkiye identity.

When the AKP came to power in 2003, the foreign policy of Türkiye was increasingly characterised as neo-Ottoman. Türkiye, as heir to the Ottoman Empire, was positioned as the cradle” or peak” of civilisation, which, according to this concept, had the image of being the guardian and possessor of the legacy that must be grown within it. Representative of this discourse are the Türkiye President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s statement (Newsweek, 2017):

“Türkiye is becoming a global and regional player with its soft power. Türkiye is rediscovering its neighbourhood, one that had been overlooked for decades. It follows a proactive foreign policy stretching from the Balkans to the Middle East and the Caucasus. Türkiye’s ‘zero-problem, limitless trade’ policy with the countries of the wider region aims to create a haven of nondogmatic stability for all of us... This is not a romantic neo-Ottomanism: It is realpolitik based on a new vision of the global order.”

In Russia, President Vladimir Putin has dominated the country’s politics since 2000, either in office as president (2000-2008 and since 2012) or as prime minister. As a Russian leader, he tried to reverse Russia’s catastrophic 1990s because of the shock therapy shift from a socialist to a market economy. A separatist war in Chechnya also worsened Russia’s weakness, which challenged Russian national unity after the Soviet collapse. Putin suffered the historical trauma of Soviet collapse during his KGB years in East Germany. Therefore, due to Russia’s perceived weakness and his experience as a KGB officer, in his inauguration address, Putin spoke on the need to ‘prevent the disintegration of Russia’ and make the Russian state strong (Putin, 2000). Putin also reversed a decade of better relations with the United States and Europe, especially as he considered Russia as not being treated as an equal player with its security interests not considered by the West.

Like neo-Ottomanism, Eurasianism in Russia emerged as a philosophical thought before Putin’s rule. During the Soviet era, Russian emigre philosophers such as Lev Gumilev attempted to see Russia as a civilisation destined to have a strong position in Eurasia (Loginov, 2013). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was trying to gain

a new national identity to replace communism. Eurasianism was an interesting choice as Russia struggled to define itself as part of the West or the East. Philosopher Dugin (1997) wrote *Foundations of Geopolitics*, which saw Russia's important role as the preeminent power in the Eurasian landmass, especially with a privileged sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space. At the governmental level, nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy brought Russia's reignited historical ambitions as a political messaging tool. This happened despite Russia trying to have better relations with the West. After Putin's disappointment with the West, Putin tried to bring Eurasianism into his policy priorities, which led to a renewed confrontation with the West (Engstrom, 2014).

Putin attempted to build a strong Russian identity by seeing the role of the historical Russian state and perceived sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space with Russian Orthodoxy as a religious core. In advancing his goals, Putin dared to use military instruments, such as through the military intervention in South Ossetia (Georgia) in 2008, the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, intervention in breakaway regions of Ukraine, Donetsk and Lugansk in 2014-2022, and full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. As Putin consolidated and centralised his power in Russia, he put stronger emphasis towards a 'Russian world' perception by seeing the continuation of the historical Russian state and seeing Ukraine, Belarus, and other states in the post-Soviet space as an integral part of Russian civilisation. This enabled Russia to intervene in their political developments and avoid them joining Western institutions, which were seen as a threat to Russia. On the other hand, Ukraine and several other post-Soviet states have seen continued Russian presence and Putin's narratives as neo-imperialism (Kuzio, 2016), regressing Russian ties with the West and its path towards democracy.

Previous studies on Türkiye foreign policy with a neo-Ottomanism view in the Erdoğan era, among others, are discussed in Dinc & Yetim (2012). The factors behind proactive and multidimensional changes in Turkish foreign policy and a new regional role for Turkey in the Middle East are the most suitable regions for Türkiye to implement foreign policy with new parameters according to neo-Ottomanist views. Furthermore, Hartmann (2013) argues that with the inauguration of the period referred to in scientific literature as the Third Turkish Republic after the 1980 military coup, social and political dynamics developed that had the potential to change some Turkish people who investigated the popular and scientific assessment of the neo-Ottomanism label for implicit and explicit references to Turkish Ottoman history and propose that it should be defined as a transformational narrative rooted in historical rhetoric. Meanwhile, Turan

(2016) analyses that Turkey's current foreign policy is related to the efforts made by the Turkish government in the past to have a big influence on the surrounding region. Ergin and Karakaya (2017) then distinguish between state-led neo-Ottomanism and Ottoman popular culture, focusing on how people in Türkiye are punctuated by two distinct but interrelated discourses depending on their social position.

Furthermore, Edward (2019) reviews and reassesses the articulation of neo-Ottomanism in Turkish foreign policy and explores the importance of its emergence in Turkish domestic politics in Türkiye. He argues that neo-Ottomanism, as used in foreign policy circles, is not without its analytical uses but is debatable because of its broad interpretation. In line with this thought, Yavuz (2020) also analyses the social and political origins of Ottomanism as a new "imagination" or what is called neo-Ottomanism, which emphasises studying aspects of Ottomanism as an ideology, identity, policy and alternative model of modernisation in the context of Turkey's social and political transformation into a modern country. A recent study written by Inanç and Hadji (2022) focuses on the Turkish new political approach, which aims to inspire the multi-ethnic Ottoman formula for making peace with Turkish Islamic and Ottoman heritage at home and abroad, and within the framework of this new political policy concept that restores the balance of Türkiye's regional relations.

Furthermore, previous academic research has focused on Putin's and Russian ideological explanations in understanding Russia's revanchism based on its historical perceptions of greatness. Sakwa (2020) and Laqueur (2015) focused on the figure of Vladimir Putin as the Russian president who tried to use Russian greatness to appeal to its political base and population. Similarly, Nalbandov (2016) focused on Russian state attributes such as concepts of historical greatness (*velikoderzhavnost'*) and anti-Western sentiment in explaining how Russia's foreign policy under Putin has fared. Engstrom (2014) focused solely on Eurasianism, seeing it as 'Russian Messianist thought' trying to spread a global influence based on a Russo-centric world order. Romanova (2012) wrote a neoclassical realist approach by looking at internal attributes and systemic conditions that have influenced Russia's worldview. Anti-Western sentiments are also focused on several writings as Putin's motivation to reignite rivalry or even a new Cold War against the West, as evident in Tsygankov's (2018) and Cohen's (2019), which focused on Russia's worsening relations with the United States.

While discussions on both Türkiye and Russia's foreign policy have been common, including on how historical roles and political factors shape their modern foreign policies, a comparative analysis of both countries' foreign policies based on how both countries use geopolitical philosophical thoughts to bring their historical roles into their modern policies have not been researched yet. This research is important due to the importance of both Türkiye and Russia in the current international system, with both countries playing important roles as regional leaders and global players as alternatives towards Western-led world order. Both countries are also members of G20, have good amounts of natural resources to help their power base, and have politically strong leaders who have led their countries for around two decades. At the same time, both countries also face significant issues such as economic stagnation, democratic backsliding and worsening human rights records.

This study would answer how the perceptions of historical greatness in Erdoğan's neo-Ottomanism and Putin's Eurasianism have influenced Türkiye and Russia's foreign policies. This paper uses discourse analysis in international relations as outlined by Milliken (1999), as well as micro and macro levels of analysis in international politics as outlined by Holsti (1983) as analytical frameworks. With an interpretive method, this study will do qualitative research based on a literature review to link the influence between historical thought and modern foreign policies in its discussion. In its conclusion, this paper will give recommendations for Indonesia, an emerging global player, in seeing these factors in its foreign policy.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is a field of research composed of multiple qualitative approaches to studying relationships between language-in-use, in the forms of text, images, messages, or speeches, and the social world. Discourse analysis is based on interpretive thought, seeing the subjective reality of the social world in comparison to objective positivist thought (Bryman, 2015). Discourse analysis has influenced international relations thought, with constructivism seeing discourse analysis as one of its important analytical frameworks. It is part of constructivist thought developed as an alternative towards realist and liberalist thought after the Cold War by challenging notions that certain assumptions of international relations are 'given'. It criticised previous positive thoughts of international relations for being unable to predict the end of the Cold War. This means

believing that the role of interaction and development of ideas between states eventually create how states view international relations, or as Wendt put it, 'what states make of it' (Wendt, 1992). Constructivism sees the important role of meanings attached to interactions and identity in international relations, as evident in leader speeches, policy documents, slogans, and other material. This makes discourse analysis important in analysing international relations from a constructivist lens.

Milliken (1999) attempted to conceptualise discourse analysis as a framework in international relations. Seeing discourse as a way to 'illustrate how textual and social processes are intrinsically connected' (Geroge, 1994 in Milliken, 1999), Milliken saw discourse as structures of signification which construct social realities. This signifies a constructivist understanding of meaning, where people construct the meaning of things using sign systems, mostly, but not necessarily linguistic. Emphasis is given to the relationship between the social structures involved in developing the meaning. Secondly, Milliken discussed 'discourse productivity', where people construct and place meanings on things through various linguistic and non-linguistic sign systems. Discourse is seen as a 'regime of truth' as the only possible method of action and identity. Lastly, Milliken also saw discourse as a play of practice, where competing discourses eventually form dominant or hegemonic discourses. Discourses have the power to manage and limit authority inside a country.

With these three basic assumptions on discourse, Milliken brought discourse analysis as a scientific tool in studying international relations by suggesting the advancement of some areas in discourse analysis, such as improving the analysis of significative systems, highlighting the study of common sense and policy practices, and developing research into the politics of hegemony and historical changes in the discourses (Milliken, 1999). These areas are based on practical case studies of international relations research through discourse analysis, involving the role of state identities in Japan, Russia and the United States in Milligan's writing, including how elites use their political power to spread awareness on a political issue or identity.

Micro and Macro Levels of Foreign Policy

International politics scholar K. J. Holsti brought micro and macro levels of analysis as a way to understand international politics. In his book, Holsti included several variables as influencing factors in foreign policy behaviour (Holsti, 1983). Foreign policy is seen as how a state tries to project its stance and influence through existing power resources

towards other states as an output and as other states respond to the state's policies as an input for the reciprocated state, which reciprocated their policy behaviour as an output. This cycle forms a pattern of international politics. Holsti identified several key aspects of foreign policy outputs and instruments. Factors influencing policy behaviour are orientation, national roles, objectives including core interests and values, power, capability and influence. On the other hand, instruments used to achieve policy goals are diplomatic bargaining, propaganda, economic instruments, clandestine actions, and military intervention (Holsti, 1983).

In explaining foreign policy outputs, Holsti attempted to define the situation which leads to foreign policy behaviour. These are divided into micro and macro levels of analysis. The micro level looks at the internal factors and characteristics influencing a state's foreign policy output based on geographical, economic, political, and diplomatic characteristics. In contrast, the macro level looks at the external environment and the international system, as well as the reactions and behaviour of other states responding to a state's foreign policy, which affects its behaviour. Holsti identified several aspects which affected foreign policy at micro and macro levels of analysis.

At the micro level, four aspects were identified: images, attitudes, beliefs, and social needs (Holsti, 1983). Images are seen as the policymakers' perceptions of reality, delineating objectives, choices among courses of action, and responses to a situation. People act and react according to the images of the environment. Holsti (1983) defines attitudes as general evaluative prepositions about an objective, whether friendly, desirable, dangerous or hostile. Beliefs are defined as prepositions that policymakers hold to be true, regardless of the verification of the beliefs. This includes the foundations of national 'myths and legends', which are applied to be accepted by the population as truth. The fulfilment of social needs is seen as securing needs based on a state's geographical, demographic and resource characteristics that transactions with other states can fulfil. At the macro level, Holsti identified the objectives and actions of others, system trends and structure, and systemic values in influencing a state's foreign policy behaviour. According to Holsti, states respond to various other states' objectives and actions which affect them. Foreign policy trends and interdependence in the international system also affect, especially amid economic globalisation and interdependence for key resources. This plays a role in whatever dynamics the global structure is undergoing, especially when it is changing, as it brings new opportunities and risks for a state in adjusting to the external environment. Systemic values are defined as certain values or doctrines that

could transcend local and regional values, such as prestige or levels of economic and technological advancement.

Holsti tried to see the relations between the micro and macro levels of analysis in explaining foreign policy behaviour and saw a degree of importance in determining which factors were most influential in a state's foreign policy output by taking Anthony Eden's Great Britain during the Suez crisis as its study case, such as threat perception, domestic trends, relative capabilities, bureaucratic influences, structure of the system, and public opinion. In his summary, Holsti saw that making foreign policy decisions and formulations of goals and objectives involves complex processes in which values, attitudes, and images mediate perceptions of reality provided by various sources of information. In the case of foreign policies of Russia and Turkiye, Holsti's micro and macro levels are useful in understanding how the ideas on Eurasianism and neo-Ottomanism take shape, especially due to them being influenced by both internal perceptions and political processes as well as a response towards what is happening at the macro level, the external geopolitical landscape which affects their position internationally.

According to renowned political scientist Joseph Nye, soft power achieves goals through attraction rather than coercion. In soft power, others are influenced to want the outcomes we want (Gomichon, 2013). Nye explained that soft power is based on intangible or indirect influences, such as culture, values, and ideology. As a concept, soft power refers to how a political body can influence what other entities do through direct or indirect influence or encouragement. The influence is often cultural or ideological. The political body is often not necessarily a state (Rakhmawati, 2017).

Ang (2015) stressed that culture per se is not soft power on its own. According to Ang (2015), cultural attractiveness becomes soft power when used to reach clearly defined policy objectives under a thought-out strategy. If a country does that, it uses culture as a soft power resource. Soft power is different from hard power, but it does not mean that soft power exists to replace hard power. Soft power complements hard power (Ang et al., 2015). Culture becomes a soft power when universally seen as appealing and embodied in cultural goods and services. Like culture, political values become soft power when they live at home and abroad. Foreign policies become soft power when other countries see that the policies are legitimate and have moral authority (Ang et al., 2015).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses the interpretive method, rooted in post-positivist social science research, by seeing intersubjective realities of social behaviour playing a role in how humans see the social world (Babbie, 2014). In interpreting data, this study uses a qualitative methodology and inductive logic by drawing up a conclusion based on case studies explained in this study. This will try to understand the nature of the phenomena in both countries by seeing how conceptions of historical greatness influence their foreign policies. Data collection for this study is gathered from various primary and secondary sources, such as statements and speeches produced by leaders and policymakers in both Türkiye and Russia (with some sources in their native language), policy papers, as well as academic writing (academic journals and peer-reviewed books and monographs) relating to the issue. In data analysis, literature review is used to understand the main ideas and reasons by seeing key terms and applying concepts of discourse analysis and micro and macro levels of analysis on foreign policy to explain how Türkiye and Russia are applying their conceptions perceptions of historical greatness towards their contemporary foreign policies.

While discourse analysis developed as part of post-positivist thought in social science, the authors see that it is possible to link in with Holsti's levels of analysis in foreign policy, especially due to how discourses are an important part of shaping foreign policy due to it being evident in the micro and macro levels that impact foreign policy. Discourses are seen in images and attitudes inside countries, which show the existence of a discourse in the form of images. In addition, the objectives and actions of other actors, as well as systemic trends, also contain discourses because there are values brought by external actors that influence another country, such as ideologies, worldviews and moral compasses. As Hansen (2016) wrote, discourse analysis could explain foreign policy through representations by seeing how each image is interpreted, which leads to its foreign policy actions and behaviour. For example, the genealogy of the Bosnian Wars as Balkan is quoted as reproducing narratives produced through centuries (Hansen, 2016). In the cases of Russia positioning itself as a Eurasian power and Türkiye seeing itself as the continuation of its Ottoman history, this can also be seen as the reflection of produced knowledge over time. Discourse analysis is also evident in competing narratives, especially how, in both Türkiye and Russia, nationalist-minded images are usually depicted as contrasting Western-centric thinking.

DISCUSSION

Türkiye and neo-Ottomanism under Erdogan

The Ottoman government could be seen as the golden age of Turkish history. Its territory was around Anatolia, the Asian part of Türkiye, and it made many expansions to expand its government area (Yavuz, 2020). Among its expansions is the European continent, such as Adrianople, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia, Herzik and others. Since the end of its power in 1922, the glorious period of this empire has left an impression until the emergence of an understanding of neo-Ottomanism in 1985, which was originally brought up by David Barchard, a British journalist, as one of several options for a possible future orientation of Türkiye (Yavuz, 2020). neo-Ottomanism means the formation of historical consciousness; it is about how people think and see their past from a different perspective to overcome current problems and challenges. THE interaction of various cultural, literary, and cognitive factors has shaped this awareness. Barchard in Yavuz (2016) stated that the Ottoman Empire was a more powerful force in Türkiye than Islam and that as Türkiye regains its economic power, Türkiye will be increasingly tempted to assert itself. Moreover, this awareness of the past and the externalisation of this understanding shape Türkiye's current social and political configuration.

This line of thinking was based on the dissatisfaction between certain segments of the population who wanted Türkiye to follow in the Empire's footsteps, as well as their disappointment at the failure of the Turkish political elite. During the Ottoman collapse in 1922, these elites wanted to take them further and build a country based on liberal values (Yavuz, 2020). They needed to create a modern, secular nation-state to achieve this objective by changing the existing state and economic and societal structures. This required a break with the Ottomans and, thus, the origins of Islam (Yavuz, 2019). As a result, the Ottoman Empire became the "other" for the Turkish Republic, around which the new state could build its identity. It is argued that this division creates a clash of identities between conservative segments of society and the modern state (Yavuz, 2019).

Furthermore, this concept was increasingly pushed positively during the 1990s, when the main catalyst behind the emergence of the concept of neo-Ottomanism was embedded in major developments (Yavuz, 1998). These developments were interrelated with domestic social transformations that created alternative discursive spaces for critical thinking in the emerging liberal political and economic environment (Marmontova et al., 2023). This was further fueled by major international developments such as the dissolution of the bipolar global system, the Cypriot crisis, the European Union's (EU)

refusal to accept Türkiye as a full member, European indifference to ethnic cleansing in Bulgaria and genocide in Bosnia, and Kurdish ethnonationalism in southeastern Türkiye.

According to previous research, during the presidency of Turgut Özal (1991–1993), the neo-Ottoman concept experienced rapid development because, during his reign, the neo-Ottoman concept became the basis for establishing foreign policy by Türkiye (Kaya, 2013). This can be seen clearly when, at the end of the Cold War, Türkiye's efforts to adopt a multidimensional foreign policy and its increasing attention to the Middle East and the Balkans are at the root of this ambitious claim of the neo-Ottoman concept. Responding to the identity challenges posed by Kurds and Islamists, Özal adopted neo-Ottomanism by emphasising pluralism and recognising the public role of Islam. In addition to his views on Islam representing the moral fabric of Turkish society, Ottomanism is an important part of Özal's political and social vision. This is based on Özal's anxiety that he never felt at home in a secular republic that rejected the legacy of the Ottomans and the role of Islam.

Özal and many Muslim conservative intellectuals and politicians, known as *miliyetçi ve mukaddesatçı*, have a deep nostalgia for the Ottomans. For three reasons, nostalgia (haste) for the Ottoman Empire was an important defining feature of Muslim-Conservative intellectuals and politicians: First, they wanted Turkish Islam, and its implementation was best practised in the classical period of the Ottoman era (1299–1683). Hence, the Ottoman heritage is necessary for understanding Islam in Türkiye. Secondly, they believe that Türkiye's relations with Europe can work harmoniously because of the legacy of the Ottoman Empire (Yavuz, 1998). The Empire first developed and grew strong in southern Europe. Therefore, they want Türkiye to join the European Union (EU).

Moreover, Özal and other intellectuals also wanted to improve Türkiye's relations with the West. In 1987, during his tenure as prime minister, Türkiye applied for EU membership, which set in motion a series of human rights reforms in Turkey, including abolishing the death penalty and granting significant rights to the Kurdish minority. Outside the Eurozone, Özal deepened ties with Balkan countries and fellow newly independent Turkish nations after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The discourse of Neo-Ottomanism requires a configuration of Türkiye's international position and identity to articulate a new moral language and for rewriting Turkish history. Özal's understanding of Neo-Ottomanism consists of strategic recalculations to promote the nation's interests and take advantage of previously unforeseen geopolitical opportunities. Türkiye's

international position during the early development of this concept in the 1990s was marked by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the breakup of Yugoslavia, which changed the entire power dynamic around Türkiye. The dissolution of the Soviet Union freed Turkey from a foreign policy dominated by security interests, allowing the Republic of Türkiye to become more focused on regional and global economic interests. This policy persists today. Türkiye adopted a more pragmatic foreign policy emphasising economic ties with its regional neighbours. Identity politics in the 1990s took centre stage in the neo-Ottoman debate, as conservative elites built on ideas of pluralism, tolerance, and the peaceful coexistence of the Ottoman's diverse ethnic and religious communities. The elite sought to exemplify cultural pluralism and codify colloquial expressions of modern liberal multiculturalism by reimagining the Ottoman past. This aims to construct a neo-Ottoman understanding of Türkiye's domestic and foreign politics.

Then, in 1992, liberal, conservative, and nationalist groups published articles in the *Türkiye Günlüğü* magazine with content on Neo-Ottomanism. The slogan that emerged was “at peace with history and geography.” The discourse that is discussed in the reading of these slogans means that Türkiye wants to restore its glory days and change the orientation of its identity by the outlines of cosmopolitan Ottoman history, recognise its ethnic and cultural diversity, develop an ethic of responsibility towards the ex-Ottoman Muslim community and regard them as assets. Türkiye's foreign policy pursued a more decisive and courageous foreign policy to protect its interests and restore its rightful place, as it was in the Ottoman era. These developments drive cultural orientations that appear more relevant and appropriate within the wider mainstream. This concept of Neo-Ottomanism grew in popularity under the AKP's rule among decision-makers who shifted their focus from the West to the East and became heavily involved in regional issues.

As mentioned in the previous section, during the AKP's leadership, neo-Ottomanism was increasingly popular and growing rapidly. The AKP's leadership period is a strong nostalgia for the Ottoman past as the key to Türkiye's future glory. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, since taking office as Türkiye's 12th president in 2014, has looked back nostalgically to the Ottomans while aiming to create a stronger Türkiye. According to Erdoğan, being Turkish does not come from blood ties or formal legal citizenship in the Western sense (Yavuz, 2020). Rather, it is a commitment to Islam and the Ottoman heritage to protect and preserve the faith to maintain social integration and restore the greatness of the Ottoman Empire. It was Erdoğan's view on this matter that made the direction of the movement of his government applying the neo-Ottomanism concept to

Türkiye's domestic and foreign policies. For Erdoğan, Türkiye is the heir to the Seljuk and Ottoman civilisations to be grateful for. A country with an important role in the international community, Türkiye had deep ties with the Seljuk and Ottoman empires (Yavuz, 2020). As such, it was expected to advance and carry the torch of Islamic civilisation by opening its doors to the oppressed Muslim community. The neo-Ottoman concept constructed by Erdoğan is intended and necessary to explain who the Turks are and how their lives are closely related to their past. Its mission is to protect and advance Islamic civilisation under Turkish leadership and create an economically strong Türkiye capable of achieving this civilisation while deterring Western imperialism and the ongoing invasion of the Middle East.

Furthermore, he blamed the Western-dominated international system as indifferent to the plight of Muslims. However, even though he blamed the international system, which the West dominated, Erdoğan never tried to challenge the international or regional system. Instead, he has created separate messages for Western and Eastern audiences. He defined his mission as empowering Türkiye through raising a "historically aware" generation. Erdoğan's character is important to see how the wave of the neo-Ottomanism concept has developed. He also took advantage of existing social conditions to suit his vision of Türkiye, where he wanted to be an absolute sultan. Erdoğan is widely revered as a sort of Ottoman sultan, a symbol of power, Islamic hegemony, and traditional Islamic values in a world under threat from Western powers and "Westernized" cosmopolitan elites.

Over time, Erdoğan shed his liberal and democratic garb and returned to his earlier authoritarian Islamic identity, much influenced intellectually by Necip Fazıl, a fascist political Islam thinker. Erdoğan used both Islamism and Turkish nationalism to consolidate his power. This was further strengthened when the failed coup occurred on July 20, 2016; Erdoğan used his constitutional powers by imposing a state of emergency, suspending the constitution, and consolidating his power at the expense of institutions and regulations. As a result of taking advantage of the emergency, he became Türkiye's de facto dictator. Erdoğan became more nationalist in his statements and speeches and relied on the support of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) in parliament and elections, thus sacrificing ambition for a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish issue.

Ottoman nostalgia, constructed as neo-Ottomanism accompanied by the AKP leadership, shared positive memories of the Ottoman period. Its proponents used this "imagined" past to criticise the building project of a secular state. Through this sense of

nostalgia, the AKP leadership is trying to get in touch with the great masses of Anatolia in the hope of mobilising them for Türkiye's larger rebuilding and recovery projects today. Türkiye, during AKP leadership, drew on many cultural and religious factors to realise its concrete goals to expand its influence in post-Ottoman countries with significant Muslim populations. In addition, views on Islam and the Ottoman past are the most important social ties to maintain ethnic diversity. The Islamcum-Ottoman past, for the AKP, is the most effective common denomination. As the AKP consolidated its legitimacy at home and abroad, it had more freedom to shift between Islamism and neo-Ottomanism. Through transnational Islamic solidarity, the AKP seeks to forge new alliances in countries bordering Türkiye to lead the Muslim world and believe in articulating a separate view of Islamic civilisation.

The wave of development of the concept of neo-Ottomanism under the AKP during Erdoğan's time was constructed through applying policies that were considered more Islamic with a focus on nostalgia for the glory of the Ottomans. For example, during the Erdogan period, especially since 2011, major urban planning, education, and fine arts policies were aimed at “returning the Ottomans”. Grassroots nostalgia for the Ottomans allowed Erdoğan to construct alternative memories and political language to justify his authoritarianism. Furthermore, nostalgia for the Ottomans is not limited to political rhetoric but includes films and television documentaries. For example, the *Diriliş Ertuğrul* series also provides an opportunity to escape the realities associated with Türkiye's marginalised status in the global community. This shows that Türkiye is consolidating their national pride. In addition, some of these films also help explore the unknown or forgotten paths of past societies and contemporary circumstances.

In nearly every populist movement, feelings of nationalism and nostalgia shape domestic and international politics (Ongur, 2015). In Türkiye, Erdoğan has made the Ottoman past a cornerstone in establishing political policies driven by visions of a duel of nostalgia. For Erdoğan, Islam and the Ottoman past are core elements of his identity and important sources of motivation for his foreign policy. The foreign policy manifestation of Türkiye's domestic Islamization process is neo-Ottomanism, namely the strong desire to restore the former glory of the Ottomans by carrying out the Islamization of society and foreign policy.

Earlier in Erdogan's leadership, Europeanization and market-led foreign policy were his priorities from 2002 to 2010. Two main goals dominated this period. First, Türkiye's desire to join the EU and create harmonious relations with neighbouring

countries. However, in the end, Türkiye had to swallow the bitter pill for its refusal to grant the EU. Second, deepen and broaden the legitimacy of the AKP government in creating business opportunities for the Turkish economy. However, the Arab Spring led to the Islamization of foreign policy (2010–2013). Türkiye's foreign policy under Erdoğan succeeded after the Arab Spring in 2011 when Islamic parties with friendly relations with the AKP rose to power and became controversial partners in several Arab countries (Livas, 2015). Erdoğan decided to support the people's legitimate aspirations side with the historical power of the Ottomans and consolidate civil society in Islamic countries.

Furthermore, the other important thing to note in Türkiye's foreign policy during the Arab Spring is the change in Turkey's attitude towards Syria, which is the most important link in building relations with the former Ottoman Arab nations (Dinc & Yetim, 2012). Türkiye's foreign policy of previously supporting Assad's government by opening the system then turned 180 degrees to support the rebellion against him. Türkiye supports the Syrian National Council in logistical and military terms to help weaken the central government. This, in turn, creates opportunities for breakaway Kurdish groups to control large areas on the border with Türkiye. By forcing Assad to rely on Iran and Russia, Türkiye has become more sensitive to the need for both countries to have a limited role in Syria. Moreover, since 2013, his foreign policy has led to extraordinary isolation and the collapse of unrealistic goals. Due to the geopolitical structural changes occurring in the region, Türkiye's foreign policy has gradually shifted from a secular Western orientation to believing more in strengthening relations with the Middle East with the aspiration of reclaiming its former glory, which is neo-Ottomanism (Dinc & Yetim, 2012).

From the description above, the neo-Ottomanism discourse influencing Turkish foreign policy can be analysed based on several points of Holsti's macro-micro policy analysis. First, Türkiye's strategic position since the 13th century is the legacy of the Ottoman government, whose territory was around Anatolia with its expansion covering several European continents, such as Adrianople, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia, Herzik, and others deemed worthy of inheriting its past power (images). Secondly, Türkiye has a deep nostalgia for the Ottomans. This is shown by the country's desire to implement Turkish Islam, the same as in the classical Ottoman era (1299–1683) because it is considered to have a strong influence. In addition, the fact that Türkiye's relations

with Europe can run harmoniously is the result of contributions from the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. It is worthy of improving Türkiye's relations with the West.

Thirdly, Türkiye perceives that forming historical awareness about how people think and see their past from different perspectives is very important to overcome current problems and challenges. This awareness is shaped by the interaction of various cultural, literary, and cognitive factors (Karacasulu, 2015). This created a discourse that wanted a return to cosmopolitan Ottoman history, recognised its ethnic and cultural diversity, and considered it an asset. Türkiye's foreign policy is pursuing a more decisive and courageous foreign policy to protect its interests and restore its rightful place, as it was in the Ottoman era (Perceived national role and beliefs). Fourth, Türkiye sees its position as a powerful force in Erdoğan's time. It reckons with the mature strategic value of promoting the nation's interests and taking advantage of previously unforeseen geopolitical opportunities (Karacasulu, 2015). The Republic of Türkiye is becoming more focused on regional and global economic interests. Fifth, Türkiye adopts a more pragmatic foreign policy emphasising economic relations with its regional neighbours.

Sixth, Türkiye's rejection of EU membership has had a devastating impact on the country's secular state identity. It is gradually moving closer to the Middle East and the Balkans, espoused by a spirit of neo-Ottomanism (Yavuz, 2020). The dynamics of interaction between Türkiye and the EU have done much to shape the AKP's identity and leadership position, and the EU is increasingly seen as an untrustworthy partner (Objectives and actions by other states). Seventh, Türkiye's role in maintaining regional stability was marked in the Arab Spring, namely towards systemic changes in relations between Türkiye and Syria, the most important relationship in building relations with the former Ottoman and Arab countries. When youth took to the streets in Syria, Erdoğan worked very hard to get Assad to open up the system despite Türkiye's role in maintaining regional stability, one of which was marked in the Arab Spring, namely towards systemic changes in relations between Türkiye and Syria, the most important relationship in building relations with the former Ottoman.

Eighth, Türkiye's foreign policy of previously supporting Assad's government by opening the system then turned 180 degrees to support the rebellion against him. Türkiye supports the Syrian National Council in logistical and military terms to help weaken the central government. This, in turn, creates opportunities for breakaway Kurdish groups to control large areas on the border with Türkiye. By forcing Assad to rely on Iran and Russia, Turkey has become more sensitive to the need for both countries to have a limited

role in Syria. Moreover, lastly, the significant role of the AKP, which led Türkiye during Erdoğan's time, saw Islam and the Ottoman past as the most important social ties to maintain ethnic diversity. The Islamcum-Ottoman past, for the AKP, was the most effective general denomination. At the same time, criticism of the secular state development project was deemed no longer suitable to be implemented in order to restore Türkiye's glory as in the past.

Eurasianism and Russian Foreign Policy under Putin

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the new Russian Federation, as the successor state, tried to take a different ideological path amid the triumph of liberal democracy and the collapse of Marxism-Leninism (Hudson, 1994). Russian elites were sure of the promise of democracy and the inevitability of Russia transitioning towards democracy and a market economy. In order to push towards democracy, Russia tried to maintain good relations with the West, especially the United States. Boris Yeltsin saw Russia needed to get assistance from the West to help with its transition, and its foreign minister, the pro-Western Andrei Kozyrev (1992), wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that Russia should remain a great power but a 'normal' one which strives to get good relations with the West (Kozyrev, 1992). Similarly, the 1993 Russian Foreign Policy Concept provided importance for ties with the West and G7.

However, ties with the West did not go on as smoothly. The shock transition to a market economy proved to be disastrous as Russia suffered an economic crisis in the 1990s as its gross domestic product dropped sharply, corruption and crime became rampant, the fall of Russia's currency or ruble, and Russia suffered severe social problems such as lowered life expectancy, high drug and alcohol abuse, and HIV/AIDS epidemic. At the same time, Russia performed poorly in a separatist war in Chechnya, where Chechen Muslim rebels tried to form an independent state away from the Russian Federation. This caused fears of a possible disintegration of the Russian Federation, just like the Soviet Union, if the Chechen separatist movement would spread to North Caucasus, Ingushetia and deep into the Volga River. Meanwhile, in 1999, three Central European states, formerly part of the Eastern Bloc, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, joined NATO. The worsening conditions caused Russians to doubt Western support for the country, as they felt the improving ties with the West were causing problems for Russia (Primakov, 2004).

Facing increasing unpopularity, President Yeltsin resigned on New Year's Eve in 1999 and handed power to the then-relatively unknown prime minister, Vladimir Putin. Putin was a former KGB officer who served in East Germany during the waning years of the Cold War. In his first article published at the same time of his ascent, titled 'Russia at the Dawn of the New Millenium' Putin still noted a hope for democracy and noted that 'only democratic systems are lasting, not authoritarian ones' but importantly emphasised the need for Russia to become modern, prosperous, and stable. He noted the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the collapse of the Soviet Union as disruptive events that should be avoided. He also feared the possibility of Russia disintegrating and 'falling into the second or third echelon of world states' (Kremlin, 2000; Putin, 2000). This aimed to bring back Russian public confidence after a decade of transition and crisis. Putin's popularity soared after a victorious, though bloody, campaign to regain control of Chechnya in the early 2000s. Russia's economic fortunes also improved due to increasing oil prices and the centralisation of economic resources under state control. After attempting to gain better relations with the West, Putin's view of the West worsened as he saw NATO expansion and promotion of liberal democracy in Russia's perceived 'sphere of influence' in the post-Soviet space, which was seen as a threat to Russia (Sakwa, 2020; Short, 2022). Putin criticised the unipolar world order and saw American leadership as dangerous, especially after its actions in the Middle East (Putin, 2015). Putin consolidated his political power and used violence to silence dissidents, bringing Western criticism (Ostrovsky, 2016).

As Putin's ties with the West worsened, a revised foreign policy paradigm was needed for Russia. Despite worsening ties with the West, Russia strengthened relations with the 'rest' from China, India, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. Russia also tried to defend its preeminent position in the post-Soviet space so it would not pursue a Western tilt. Seeing this situation, Russia's foreign policy thinkers turned their interests on Eurasianism, basing Russia as a Eurasian power and a 'civilisation' destined to link Europe and Asia and also opposed to Western hegemony (Karaganov, 2018).

Eurasianism as a thought is shaped by Russia's notion of a Eurasian power due to Russia's massive landmass encompassing the Eurasian continent, from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean and from the Arctic Ocean to the Caucasus. This also includes Russia's privilege in areas formerly belonging to the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union, such as Belarus and Ukraine, South Caucasus, and Central Asia due to them being a part of the Russian cultural sphere: *Russkiy mir*/Russian world. Eurasianism was developed in the

1930s by Russian emigre philosophers, such as Lev Gumilev, Pyotr Suvchinsky and Nikolai Trubetskoy. In short, they saw the Russian Revolution of 1917 as necessary for Russia's modernisation to make it capable of being a Eurasian power. However, at the same time, they were opposed to Soviet communism and atheism. They believed it would one day evolve into an Orthodox empire due to Orthodoxy's core position in Russian identity and culture (Loginov, 2013).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, interest in Eurasianism reawakened as a response towards the failing promise of a future with the West. Russian philosopher Alexander Dugin wrote in his 1997 book, *Foundations of Geopolitics*, arguing that Russia was destined to become an empire in continental Eurasia, which was in constant confrontation with Western civilisation, due to the difference in values between the individualist and materialistic West and the collective Orthodox Russia. Dugin argued that states formed after the Soviet breakup, like Ukraine and Georgia, were 'artificial states' and should belong in Russia's sphere. Dugin also believed in using propaganda, influence spread, and breaking up Western unity to give Russia an upper hand (Dugin, 1997). Dugin's book was reportedly a reading by Russia's General Staff, though other commentators doubted his influence in modern Russia (Barbashin & Thorun, 2014; Sandford, 2022).

Nevertheless, Dugin's thought aligns with modern Russian foreign policy under Putin. There are many similarities, such as how Russia views its preeminent role in post-Soviet space and trying to divide Western unity against Russia. Recently, Putin has more frequently quoted Dugin's thinking in his formal speeches, such as arguing that Ukrainian statehood was artificial, the existence of a 'collective West' in constant conflict against the 'Russian world', the degeneracy of 'godless and materialistic' Western values against Russian Orthodox spirituality, and how he believes Western unity against Russia will not succeed (Putin, 2022a; Putin, 2022c; Putin, 2021; Putin, 2023). In this way, Eurasianism has given a meaning as a 'regime of truth' produced through 'textual and social processes' that is adhered to by the Russian leadership in its foreign policy conduct, based on Milliken's discourse analysis.

The discourse of Eurasianism has affected Russia's foreign policy in various means. In more peaceful means, Russia used Eurasian integration as an impetus for its ties with former Soviet states, such as through the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and on a wider scale, the Greater Eurasian Partnership concept linked with China, India, Iran, and ASEAN (Lukin, 2021). This is

seen as ‘pragmatic Eurasianism’ (Vinokurov, 2013). In coercive means, Eurasianism and the Russian world are used as a justification for Russia to intervene in former Soviet states, either to preserve friendly regimes, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, use military tools to ‘safeguard ethnic Russians and pro-Russian minorities’ such as in Transnistria, Crimea, Abkhazia and South Ossetia by ordering military interventions towards other states such as Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine and most notably, ordering a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 2022 as a response towards ‘requests from the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics,’ pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Putin has indicated his embrace of Eurasianism in several statements and policy practices, especially since the third term of his presidency. In his 2023 Valdai Club speech, he noted Eurasia as the key towards building a new world order and hitting back at Western arrogance and its tendency to contain Russia (Putin, 2023). During the Eurasian Economic Forum in 2022, Putin also stated the need to transform Eurasia into a zone of cooperation at a time when Western partners are actively containing Russia (Putin, 2022b). Russian think tanks and their researchers, like Valdai Club and the Russian International Affairs Council, have routinely held events relating to Eurasian integration, such as Russian foreign policy scholar Dmitri Trenin, who was previously seen as a pro-Western liberal, speaking about the need to focus on the Eurasian vector of Russian foreign policy to build a global balance of power, as evident in his guidebook on Russian foreign policy (Trenin, 2023). The latest Russian Foreign Policy Concept published in 2023 mentioned linking Eurasian cultures and how Russia tries to be a Eurasian power (Mid RF, 2023).

Putin’s embrace of Eurasianism has profoundly shaped the post-Cold War international order. Relations between Russia and the West, the United States and European Union, have fallen into lows comparable to the Cold War, and in some sense worse than the Cold War due to personal sanctions adopted and vice versa. As images of atrocities committed by the Russian military were spread to the world, many people in the West saw that Russia could not be treated as a partner and should be treated as a pariah unless it was defeated or fundamentally changed itself (Wynnicky & Pekar, 2022). Polish president Andrzej Duda said, ‘There can be no business as usual with Russia’. On the other hand, Russia has taken steps to avoid international isolation by strengthening its ‘no limits’ partnership with China and maintaining good relations with the developing world. Many people in the developing world refuse to take the Western narrative of vilifying Russia due to the argument that what Russia is doing is not different or worse from other

population, and Orthodox heritage have made it an exceptional civilisation destined to play a significant role in Eurasia; Putin has spoken about this in his speeches (Putin, 2022b). Second, Russia sees the importance of relations with the post-Soviet sphere as being part of a wider Russian world and would do any means to protect its interests there (Trenin, 2023).

Third, Russia believes it has a preeminent role to play in Eurasia as a Eurasian power at the crossroads between Europe and Asia (Trenin, 2023). Fourth, Russia sees its position as a great power with a strong regime under Putin as important for its internal stability and protection from external threats (Sakwa, 2020). Fifth, Russia sees the ‘collective West’ as hostile forces trying to weaken and even destroy Russia, while the rest is engaged in constructive relations (Putin, 2022b).

Sixth, Russia is currently undergoing a shift with a return to confrontation with the West and Cold War-era hostility, while at the same time, multipolarity is taking shape (Engstrom, 2014). And last, Russia saw those Western values, which were against Russian culture, were not equally accepted globally, so Russia saw a chance to foster relations with non-Western countries (Christoffersen, 2021). This shows evidence of Russia’s path of embracing Eurasianism in its foreign policy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, perceptions of historical greatness in both Türkiye and Russia are taken as foreign policy instruments by their current leaders as the mixture of political discourse at home and their perceptions of national roles and opposition to Western unipolarity. Both countries have several similarities and differences as they implement their foreign policy based on their historical image and roles. The first similarity is how discourses of political greatness have developed as important political discourses. Both Erdoğan and Putin see their perceptions of history as an appeal towards their populations for support and belief that their countries would be strong and stable under their leadership. This has turned out positively as both leaders maintain high levels of popularity in their countries. These discourses also became alternatives after disappointment with Western engagement, as both Türkiye and Russia initially hoped for integration with the West before turning their backs due to their concerns and disappointment with Western influence.

Secondly, Türkiye and Russia saw their national roles as important in forming the multipolar world order. Both see continuities between their history and current foreign

policies regarding the Russian position in Eurasia and the Turkish position around the Middle East, Mediterranean and the Caucasus. Perceptions of "Russian" and "Turkic" worlds and historical links have been used as instruments to gain influence with various countries. Both countries saw their vision of multipolarity as vital and noted that an ideal world order could not be constructed without their participation.

However, there is a difference in methods of how Türkiye and Russia try to expand their influence. Türkiye's policies to reignite links with the Turkic world have led to closer economic, political and cultural ties without coercion, as evident in the Turkic Council and raising Turkish soft power and favourability among the population. On the other hand, Russia has used coercion and military instruments to make countries stay in their sphere of influence, which has led to military conflicts and humanitarian catastrophes, especially in Ukraine. While some post-Soviet states remain committed to close relations with Russia, many, including Baltics, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, see Russia as a threat and hostile power, causing a decline in favourability for Russia in the post-Soviet space.

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