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Re-Defining and De-Colonizing Idea of Eurasianism in International Relations

Yaşar SARI*

The field of international relations offers various theories aiming to describe, understand, explain, and predict global events. These theories serve as competing frameworks to interpret interactions, conflicts, and economic issues among international actors. While no single theory can comprehensively explain world politics due to its diversity, they collectively provide insights and rational explanations for specific events and regions.

The concept of Eurasianism, with its historical roots in the early 20th century, has recently re-emerged in discussions of international relations, particularly within the context of Russia's foreign policy. However, this revival has sparked debate due to its potential association with past imperial ambitions and compatibility with decolonial perspectives. Therefore, this paper explores the concept of Eurasianism within the realm of international relations, focusing on a new definition of Eurasia and the idea of Eurasianism as a form of postcolonial resistance to the classical definition of Eurasianism.

The paper argues that while classical Eurasianism embodies an imperialist legacy, New Eurasianism serves as a mechanism for deconstructing Russian Eurasianism and restructuring collective

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identities. Through qualitative research based on official documents, policymakers' speeches, content analysis, and expert interviews, the paper investigates and compares the contemporary Turkish/Turkic interpretations of Eurasia as a case study of IR theories.

This paper posits that the Turkish and Kazakh versions of Eurasianism represent a form of an idea to resist the imperialist legacy of Russian Eurasianism. Türkiye and Kazakhstan emphasize their unique cultural and historical heritage to carve out distinct identities and assert nationalist interests globally. While classical Eurasianism, particularly the Russian variant, is viewed as imperialistic, Turkish and Kazakh Eurasianism deconstructs Russian Eurasianism and reshapes collective identities.

Consequently, this paper aims to elucidate a coherent explanation of Eurasianism from the perspectives of the Turkish and Kazakh, distinct from the traditional understanding through Russian lenses. It seeks to substantiate this concept through a case study analysis. The paper will be divided into two parts: the first is conceptualizing New Eurasianism. This section will explore the origins, theoretical development, and contemporary debates surrounding Eurasia as a concept within international relations.

The second part is a comparative analysis of Turkish and Kazakh versions of Eurasia. This part will discuss contemporary Turkish and Kazakh interpretations of Eurasia as a case study for international relations theories. Given Kazakhstan's shared linguistic and historical heritage with Türkiye, alongside common ethnicity and cultural traits, these two countries are pivotal in restructuring and refashioning—the Eurasian concept.

Keywords: De-colonization, Eurasianism, postcolonial resistance, international relations