From Realist Billiard Balls and Liberal Concentric Circles to Global IR's Venn Diagram? Rethinking International Relations via Turkey's Centennial

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ABSTRACT

The Republic of Turkey continues to grapple with a foundational tension between isolationist impulses steeped in a nationalist, sovereigntist, i.e., realist outlook on the world, and what I call the "embedded liberalism" of the republican project. Yet, neither realism nor liberalism are sufficient, I show, to explain Turkey's trajectory. Invoking three visions of the international system as envisaged in realism (billiard balls), liberalism (concentric circles), and global IR (which I conceptualize as a Venn diagram), I argue that the last best captures (Turkey's) challenges and opportunities. My contention is that global IR incorporates constructivist claims regarding historical and social forces in world politics, but also decenters Eurocentric notions of history and society. A timely way to read multipolarity, the approach supports relational learning regarding our overlapping challenges as humanity. Scholars in and of Turkey arguably have a comparative advantage in this space. This is due to their ability, albeit not always actualized, to read the world in plural terms — the epistemological equivalent of Turkey's proverbial bridging role in world politics.

Keywords: history, collective identity, ontological security, (post)colonialism, multipolarity

Introduction: A 100 Years of Solitude?

Gabriel García Márquez's epic novel, *100 Years of Solitude*, tells a tale of seven generations in an isolated community. Their story is shaped by internal forces like the personalities of each colorful character — their loves, hates, and aspirations — and the societal dynamics to which these concerns give rise. Yet, the story is also structured by the community's embeddedness in wider dynamics, from colonialism and wars of independence, to elections and *coups d'etat*. A linear narrative, as flagged by the book's title, the tale is also circumscribed by cycles. Thus, time and again, the reader is carried through the heady rise and decline — sometimes slow, sometimes precipitous — of its protagonists, institutions, and paradigms. On balance then, the novel shows us that even the most exceptional(ist) communities, who believe themselves to be alone in the world, are shaped by intertwined internal and external forces, which induce patterns of change and continuity discernible to the avid reader.

In the year 2023, the Republic of Turkey is confronted with an opportunity to revisit its own centennial story, with its inter-generational dramas, larger than life characters, tragedies and triumphs, suffering and resilience. And, just as with the novel, to make sense of these dynamics, we must grapple with how internal forces, which are specific to the Turkish context, intersect with international pressures. This reckoning is timely, moreover, for students of IR around the globe, as national projects launched at the apex of Western hegemony are confronted with the challenges and opportunities of a pluralizing international order.

In this piece, I first contend that at 100, the Republic of Turkey continues to grapples with a foundational tension between isolationist impulses, steeped in a nationalist, sovereigntist, i.e., a realist outlook on the world, and what I call the "embedded liberalism" of the republican project. Yet, despite the centrality of realism and liberalism in theories of world politics, neither is sufficient to explain complex patterns in Turkey's trajectory.[1] Rather, realist and liberal reflexes intertwine with context-specific historical and sociological forces. As the Western anchor for identity and action ebbs in and beyond Turkey, this gap between International Relations' (IR) Eurocentric theories and their explanatory power is problematic. *How then to best make sense of (Turkey's) international relations looking back and moving forward*?

Towards answering this question, I invoke three images of the international system as envisioned in realism (a billiard ball image), liberalism (a concentric circle image), and global IR (which I conceptualize as a Venn diagram.) My argument is that the Venn diagram best captures Turkey's challenges and opportunities because it incorporates constructivist claims regarding the historically and socially circumscribed nature of world politics, while also decentering Eurocentric notions of history and society.[2] I then canvass the global turn in IR, suggesting that analysts in and of Turkey have a comparative advantage in this flourishing space. This is due to an ability, albeit not always actualized, to read the world in plural terms — the epistemological equivalent of Turkey's proverbial bridging role in world politics. However, this capacity is not always activated, especially in moments of realist revival.

Realist Nationalism and Embedded Liberalism

Over 100 years of republican history redolent with drama and transformation, a rare constant has been Turkey's proverbial liminality.[3] Persistent ambivalence is due to the country's situation

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1 I agree with the anonymous reviewer's comment that tensions associated with these approaches - especially the fusion of liberalism and *etatism* in economic and political practices which I develop below - is hardly unique to Turkey, and clearly at play in Western countries like France. Indeed, my critique of realism and liberalism in the Turkish context speaks to cases across the world, including Western states. The focus of this special issue, however, is Turkey.

2 Eurocentrism also informs a limited reading of "Europe" itself which is an amalgamation of plural agents and forces, and longstanding co-constitutions with other parts of the globe. Nora Fisher-Onar, "Postcolonial Theory and EU – Middle East Relations: Recognising Co-constitution" Bouris D., Huber D. and Pace, M. (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of EU – Middle East Relations*, London, Routledge, 2022, p. 113-123.

3 Bahar Rumelili, "Liminality and Perpetuation of Conflicts: Turkish-Greek Relations in the Context of Community-Building by the EU", *European Journal of International Relations,* Vol. 9, No 2, 2003, p. 213-248; Lerna Yanık, "Constructing Turkish "Exceptionalism": Discourses of Liminality and Hybridity in post-Cold War Turkish Foreign Policy", *Political Geography*, Vol. 30, No 2, 2011, p. 80-89.

at the interstices of the geo-cultural blocks — "East" and "West", "North" and "South" — via which humans have chosen to describe the world.[4] Turkey's in-between positionality has been its great opportunity, but also its burden. A source of leverage in international affairs, Turkey's liminality causes anguish in a society at odds over the national project.[5]

If liminality has been the constant over linear time, a recurring cycle in its management has been the will to isolate. The reflex to turn Turkey's back on the world has pre-Republican sources in the protracted experience of Ottoman decline due to a combination of centrifugal forces, and European great power interventions. These interlinked processes were exacerbated by the ill-fated decision of the Young Turk triumvirate to join the Axis side in World War I. Culminating in Allied occupation (1919-1923) and the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, the empire faced dismemberment. Yet, Sèvres went unratified even by most of its signatories' parliaments. Instead, proto-nationalist resistance led by Mustafa Kemal Paşa (later Atatürk) enabled a new settlement — the Treaty of Lausanne — and the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923.

The harsh terms of Sèvres and cumulative experience of Ottoman contraction nevertheless furnished a foundational trauma in Republican historiography. This sense of "moral injury"[6] has been perpetuated over generations via official statements, commemorative practices, national curricula, and cultural production.[7] The experience encoded a sense of siege, suspicion of internal minorities, and distrust of external, especially Western actors. In short, an isolationist chord with anti-Western reverberations has long run through the Turkish national project, with significant impact on foreign policy. Especially salient at times of regional or global turmoil, the approach is steeped in survivalist fears, and a strong sense that the solution is "self-help". This emphasis on sovereigntist militarism is in sync with the basic tenets of what IR scholars call a "realist" worldview.

Yet, since the dawn of the Republic, the isolationist / realist impulse has co-existed with another tendency which, riffing on Ruggie, I call the "embedded liberalism"[8] of the Republican project. This refers to the elements of political liberalism which are baked into Turkey's legal

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4   I fully recognize that geo-cultural referents like East/West/North/South are reductionist, distorting the objects they describe, even as they are also widely internalized by their referents. As such, in this piece, I invoke the terms in quotation marks in the first usage to denote recognition of their plasticity, while reverting to English-language shorthand usage for intelligibility in the remainder of the article.

5   Meliha Benli Altunışık, "The Trajectory of a Modified Middle Power: An Attempt to Make Sense of Turkey's Foreign Policy in its Centennial", *Turkish Studies*, 2022, p. 1-15.

6   Subotić and Steele brought the literature on social psychology into conversation with "ontological insecurity" in IR, defining moral injury as the insecurity caused when a traumatic experience destabilizes core ethical commitments, especially at times of uncertainty. Jelena Subotić and Brent Steele, "Moral Injury in International Relations", *Journal of Global Security Studies,* Vol. 3, No 4, 2018, p. 387-401.

7   Nora Fisher-Onar, "The Capitulations Syndrome: Why Revisionist Powers Leverage Post-Colonial Sensibilities toward Post-Imperial Projects", *Global Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No 4, 2022, p. 1-12.

8   "Embedded liberalism" was coined by John Ruggie to describe post-World War II attempts to combine two, conflicted principles, namely, free trade on one hand, and, on the other, welfare-oriented policies, the lack of which had contributed to the rise of fascism in the wake of the Great Depression. I channel the term in my monograph *Contesting Pluralism(s): Islam, Liberalism, and Nationalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2024) to trace a persistent if oftentimes fragile commitment to political pluralism within the republican national project.

and institutional regime, despite the fact that the early nation-builders were *etatist* in their approach to governance and took a unitary approach to national identity (a contradiction likewise baked into French republicanism). As with realism, the country's embedded liberalism had its origins in prior Ottoman adaptation to the European-dominated international system during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After all, the era of British- and French-led liberal imperialist globalization — which Albert Hourani famously labelled "the liberal age"[9]— entailed benefits for the great ports of the Ottoman eastern Mediterranean.[10] Thus, generations of reformers across the Empire engaged with liberal economic and political ideas from markets to constitutionalism. Yet, paradoxically, engagement was also a form of resistance, aimed at building the capacity to resist Western penetration.[11]

These processes meant that liberal practices were present at the creation of the Turkish Republic which was founded in light of Wilsonian attempts to solve the tragedy of great power politics by enlarging the "family of nations." The fledgling Republic's liberal inheritance included parliamentary, political party, and electoral traditions, and the foundational Treaty of Lausanne which enshrined minority rights. Such measures were enhanced by recognition of women's political rights and the voluntaristic conception of national belonging within the 1924 Constitution (Article 88). Civic elements were embedded in several of the guiding "arrows" of the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* CHP) program,[12] and even during the single party era, liberal democracy was envisaged as an eventual goal. Steeped in the progressive logic of thriving within the Western-dominated, world order, the paradigm reflected the basic tenets of what IR scholars call a "liberal" worldview.

The embedded liberalism of Turkish republicanism — despite ongoing isolationist / realist reflexes — served leaders across the political spectrum. Key figures included İsmet İnönü, who at the end of World War II, positioned Turkey within the club of Western-dominated, capitalist democracies. Subsequent leaders on the center-right, like Adnan Menderes and Turgut Özal, embraced market capitalism and (majoritarian) electoral politics. A common thread across their governments: the touting of Turkey as an imperfect democracy, staunchly allied with the US-dominated "free world."

Similarly, when the Islamist-rooted Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi,* AKP) came to power in 2002, it invoked embedded liberalism to pursue domestic transformation and European Union (EU) membership. Simultaneously, the AKP advanced

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9   Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

10   Çaglar Keyder, "Imperial, National and Global Istanbul: Three Istanbul Moments from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-first Centuries", Nora Fisher-Onar, Susan C. Pearce and E. Fuat Keyman (ed.), *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2018.

11   Nora Fisher-Onar and Ahmet Evin, "Convergence and Resistance: The European Dilemma of Turkish Intellectuals", Lacroix J. and Nicolaïdis K. (ed.), *European Stories: Intellectual Debates on Europe in National Contexts,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 294-312.

12   E.g. "republicanism" (*cumhuriyetçilik*) and "populism" (*halkçılık*).

neo-liberal, economic transformation, an undertaking I have previously called "Turkey Inc." The latter has endured even as political liberalization ground to a halt.[13]

Democratic decline was caused by structural as well as agential factors. In the wake of 9/11, earlier proposals for a cosmopolitan Europe, which Turkish accession would have consolidated, were sidelined by the global securitization of Muslims. In conjunction with struggles within Turkey over key state institutions, EU-oriented democratization dwindled. Meanwhile, the neo-liberal restructuring of Turkey Inc. — of which AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan described himself as "CEO" — thrived under the permissive global economic conditions of the 2000s. This context was transformed by the 2008/9 economic crisis, pushing the AKP to strategically pivot to Gulf investment and religious populism.[14] The elision engendered diverse forms of domestic opposition including a near-successful bid to dislodge the party from its parliamentary primacy in 2015. In response, the AKP allied with ethnonationalist elements, reactivating the country's isolationist / realist impulses.[15]

As suggested by this brief survey, isolationist realism and embedded liberalism offer intertwined threads which help to make sense of continuity and change. Given the prominence of realism and liberalism as IR paradigms, moreover, the approaches help to link any study of Turkey's domestic / foreign policy to broader debates in international relations. Yet, as even this schematic account of the two logics reveals to the close reader of the centennial story, neither approach — nor indeed both taken together — are sufficient to explain many crucial outcomes.

The Need for Situated History(ies) and Sociological Texture(s) from Constructivism to Global IR

For starters, emphasis on the realist reflex ignores its sources not only in rationalist calculations, but in ontological insecurity[16]: the psycho-social traumas associated with Ottoman collapse and persistent "stigmatization" within Western-dominated international society.[17] The "social constructionist/constructivist" turn since the 1980s cues analysts as to how such histories — both real and imagined — shape the social spaces where world politics unfold. Ontological insecurity, in turn, helps to explain political behavior motivated specifically by pyscho-social anxieties.

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13 Nora Fisher-Onar, "Constructing Turkey Inc.: The Discursive Anatomy of a Domestic and Foreign Policy Agenda", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies,* Vol. 19, No 4, 2011, p. 463-473.

14 Nora Fisher-Onar, "The Populism/Realism Gap: Managing Uncertainty in Turkey's Politics and Foreign Policy", *Brookings Institution*, Washington DC: Turkey Project Policy Series, 2016.

15 Nora Fisher-Onar, "Turkish-Islamist Synthesis 2.0: Continuity and Change in Turkey's National Project and Foreign Policy", *Harvard Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy,* 2021b, p. 53-61.

16 Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma", *European Journal of International Relations,* Vol. 12, No 3, 2006, p. 341-370; Bahar Rumelili, "Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory: Hobbes, Existentialism, and Ontological Security", *International Theory,* Vol. 12, No 2, 2020, p. 257-272.

17 Ayşe Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East learned to Live with the West*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

In the case of Turkey, and as attested to by a thriving constructivist-rooted literature on the country's ontological (in)security,[18] history and its inscription onto collective memory via the toolkit of nation-building, have resulted in distinctive frames for action. Notable amongst these is the "Sèvres syndrome", named for the defunct 1921 treaty which would have dismembered the Ottoman Empire, and which to this day activates isolationist/realist fears of encirclement.

An overlapping trauma references historical Capitulations: the prolonged experience of semi-colonization and humiliation by European great powers through legal mechanisms like treaty concessions.[19] Memories of this period — and attempts to respond by revamping the empire —inform what I call the "Capitulations Syndrome." Produced via the same national pedagogical tools as Sèvres, the syndrome entails a hybrid, post-colonial but also post-imperial positionality which leaders instrumentalize to galvanize domestic support and shape foreign policy.[20] This dynamic is significant for IR more broadly given "family resemblances" with other revisionist former empires like China and Iran which likewise display both post-colonial and post-imperial features.[21] Thus, seemingly realist concerns about national security regarding Western or regional threats are shaped as much by identity-based dynamics, as by cost-benefit considerations. Such sentiments further inform a global turn towards what I call "civilizational nationalism": a form of cultural nationalism found in both the "West" and the "Rest" which evokes imagined, imperial/civilizational golden ages of religious and racial purity. [22] In short, realism in Turkey, especially in its defensive variant, is not intelligible without factoring in the roles of history, memory, semi-colonial encounters with the West, and their impact on today's social fabric, political culture, and policy agendas.

Similarly, liberalism is necessary but insufficient to understand dynamics at home and abroad. Domestically, for instance, apparently liberal practices like republican citizenship have long been infused with the assumption of Sunni Muslim primacy. This attitude is a legacy of what is often called the Ottoman "millet system", wherein Muslims of all stripes formed the dominant community (*millet-i hâkime*), and minorities relied on paternalistic toleration. Historically, the pattern was evident in the ideal, secular-Sunni, Turkish-speaking citizen of

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18 Umut Can Adısönmez and Recep Onursal, "Strong, but Anxious State": The Fantasmatic Narratives on Ontological Insecurity and Anxiety in Turkey", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 19, No 73, 2022, p. 61-73; Özlem Kayhan Pusane and Aslı Ilgıt, "Ontological Insecurity, Anxiety, and Hubris", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 19, No 73, 2022, p.95-111.

19 Hakan Yilmaz, "Two Pillars of Nationalist Euroskepticism in Turkey: The Tanzimat and Sevres Syndromes", Karlsson, I. and A.S. Melin (ed.), *Turkey, Sweden and the European Union: Experiences and Expectations*, Stockholm, Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, 2006, p. 29-40. See also Tziarras notion of the "Lausanne Syndrome" in Zēnōnas Tziarras, *Turkish Foreign Policy: The Lausanne Syndrome in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East*, London, Springer, 2022.

20 Nora Fisher-Onar, "The Capitulations Syndrome".

21 Nora Fisher-Onar, "Making Sense of Multipolarity: Eurasia's Former Empires, Family Resemblances, and Comparative Area Studies", *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research*, Vol. 17, No 18, 2020, p.15-19.

22 While civilizational nationalism in Turkey takes an anti-Western form, it mirrors right-wing fantasies of a racially and religiously pure "West" in Europe, North America, and Australia/New Zealand. Nora Fisher-Onar, "Remembering Empires: Between Civilisational Nationalism and Post-National Pluralism", Chovanec, J. and Heilo, O. (ed.) *Narrated Empires: Modernity, Memory and Identity in South-East Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2021a, p. 285-311.

the Kemalist national imaginary. During the AKP period, Sunni Turkish primacy continued to be vaunted, with the prodigal son of Turco-Ottoman tradition (*Osmanlı evladı*) arguably envisaged as the new ideal citizen.[23] These frames differ from Western, liberal approaches in which citizenship is conceptualized, at least in principle, in atomistic terms, while in practice, white, (post-)Christian people are favored citizens.

This dissonance between Turkish and Western frameworks is magnified at the international level, where legacies of European hegemony continue to exert a powerful, structurating force. The liberal order, after all, promises universal empowerment, even though the system entails hierarchies and subtexts which are religious and/or racialized in thrust.[24] Thus, like many peoples around the globe who have encountered Western hegemony, Turks are often deemed late and awkward guests at the liberal internationalist party. This semi-subaltern subject position is also rooted in the racialization of Muslims in European imaginaries since the nineteenth century heyday of European imperialism.[25] These experiences entail affinities with the post-colonial experience, although Turkey was never formally colonized. In other words, as with realism, Turkey's embedded liberalism, in both its domestic and external expressions, jostles with the Eurocentric hierarchies that run through the global liberal order itself.

How then to square the circle? Constructivism alone, with its analytical-descriptive emphasis on discursive constructions of Self/Other tells us little about the core yet liminal substance of Turkey's identity construction and its discontents. How then to capture the complex ways in which historical and sociological forces shape key processes and outcomes *beyond the expectations of Western paradigms*?

Realist Billiard Balls, Liberal Concentric Circles, and Global IR Venn Diagrams

The need to answer this question is pressing, as the West retrenches and the challenges — but also potential rewards — of living together in global diversity loom, not least for a Turkey entering its second republican century. Toward generating an answer, in this section, I compare two images associated with how world order is envisaged in terms of realism (billiard balls) and liberalism (concentric circles), parsing what they tell us about how to position at the dawn of multipolarity. I then contrast these with an image of my own (a Venn diagram). The move is inspired by a burgeoning body of globalizing IR scholarship, which incorporates but de(Euro) centers constructivist insights. This last image, I contend, offers a promising way to make sense of our rapidly changing international system and Turkey's trajectory therein.

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23 Nora Fisher-Onar, "Neo-Ottoman Intersections: The Politics of Gender in a Transforming Turkey — An Afterword", Raudvere, C. and Onur, P. (ed.), *Neo-Ottoman Imaginaries in Contemporary Turkey*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2023.

24 Robert Vitalis, "The Graceful and Generous Liberal Gesture: Making Racism Invisible in American International Relations", *Millennium,* Vol. 29, No 2, 2000, p. 331-356.

25 Cemil Aydın, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History,* Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2017.

Realists often invoke "billiard balls" to describe a view of international relations as played between autonomous, self-interested actors. States are like balls in the classic game, bouncing off each other within the structural parameters of the international system. The lack of an overarching authority makes for a system in which particularism rather than universalism reigns: states pursue self-help such that they ricochet off each other until only one prevails.[26] Implicitly privileging "strong states" and their "strongmen" leaders, this vivid image is particularly congruent with the "offensive" subvariant of realism, since it presumes that ultimately, all relations are zero-sum (and thus that an expansive strategy is the most effective). What does this parsimonious if grim metaphor tell us about multipolarity — a phenomenon which realists refer to as the "return of great power politics"?

In a nutshell, the implication is that if the US is no longer the winning billiard ball, then its transatlantic allies will have to fend for themselves vis-à-vis revisionist actors like Putin's Russia and Xi Jinping's China. In such a world, the cohesion of the EU is also likely to come under strain, as demands by anxious societies for sovereign control over national billiard balls gain salience (a dynamic exemplified by Brexit). The billiard ball model implies that states will be in constant conflict (albeit, at times, joining forces in short-term, tactical maneuvers). In such a vision, even Turkey's traditionally defensive/isolationist reflexes, as invoked in the previous section, could be deemed insufficient (since offensive forays against other billiard balls might appear necessary for self-preservation). In short, the billiard ball image, if apt, evokes a conflict-ridden world ahead.

Yet, as Krasner and others[27] have argued, the metaphor is inherently limited, because it takes the international system — and the identities and interests of its constituent states — as "givens". Reading momentum as driven by surface-level collisions overlooks a key empirical and conceptual driver of international dynamics: historical and emergent forms of connectivity.[28] In other words, the realist metaphor ignores the fact that billiard balls share many common features, and that when they make contact, the impact can be generative as well as destructive. This is a major oversight in the case of Turkey, a "trading state"[29], long embedded within and reliant upon global exchanges of goods and ideas as evidenced by its rich history of participating in international institutions.

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26 The billiard ball metaphor arguably does not do justice to other sub-strands of realism in that it ignores the role of human agency, which is captured by classical realism, as well as the more cautious calculus of defensive realism with its relatively greater openness to alliances.

27 Stephen Krasner, "Regimes and the Limits of Realism: Regimes as Autonomous Variables", *International Organization,* Vol. 36, No 2, 1982, p. 497-510; Michael Marks, *Metaphors in International Relations Theory*, Springer, 2011; Pınar Bilgin, "Beyond the 'Billiard Ball' Model of the International?", *European Political Science,* Vol. 15, No 1, 2016, p. 116-129.

28 Nora Fisher-Onar and Emilian Kavalski, "From Trans-Atlantic Order to Afro-Eur-Asian Worlds? Reimagining International Relations as Interlocking Regional Worlds", *Global Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No 4, 2022.

29 Kemal Kirişci, "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol. 40, 2009, p. 29-56.

Liberalism offers one way to conceptualize such connectivities. Offering an alternative image — concentric circles (see Figure 1) — liberalism sees our international system as a universalistic whole, centered around the liberal, capitalist US and its transatlantic allies in the EU and Great Britain (circle 1). Radiating outwards, circle 2 is composed of transpacific partners of the wider "West", namely, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. Further away, but still arrayed around the Western hub, are other advanced or advancing, industrialized economies of our globalized world, like Korea, Taiwan, India, Brazil, and South Africa (circle 3). Even more distant — and larger still — is circle 4, composed of all participants in global capitalism, including relatively rich, authoritarian states like Russia and China (its nominal communist system notwithstanding). Finally, we find the remaining, economically developing and *de facto* dependent, but *de jure* sovereign states which make up the full membership of the UN (circle 5). As this imagery suggests, the liberal order is both inclusive and hierarchical. It privileges Western markets and democracies, advocating assimilation. The framework is successful, to the extent that many societies which occupy circles 1 and 2 have multicultural social fabrics due to centuries of — oftentimes coerced — incorporation of the outer circles' labor and resources. Yet persistent cultural and racial inequalities clearly persist both within circle 1&2 societies, and in the racialized discrepancies between the inner and outer rings of the liberal, concentric world.

Figure 1. The Liberal Universalist Order's Concentric Circles

1:Transatlantic capitalist democracies: USA, Britain, EU

2: The "global West": capitalist democracies like Japan, Australia, New Zealand

3. Emerging capitalist democracies: e.g. Korea, Taiwan, India, South Africa, Brazil

4. Capitalist authoritarians: e.g. Russia, China, Iran

Everybody else
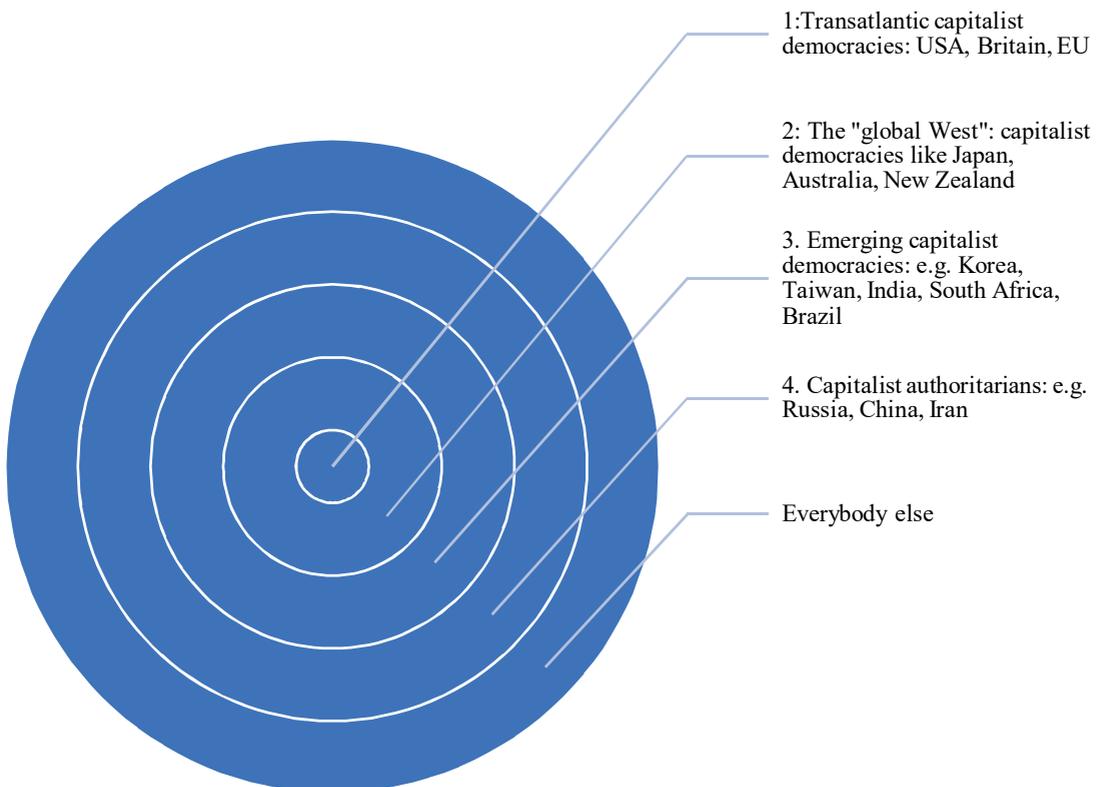
In the twentieth-century, Republican Turkey arguably claimed agency at the interstices of circles 3 and 4. Ankara participated in circle 3 through its promising, if tumultuous, market economy and electoral democracy, NATO, and the cultural westernism of its leadership. The culmination of these efforts was acquisition of EU candidacy in 1999 — and US support thereof — which promised access to the core circles of the liberal order. Informing a short-lived reform process, more recent democratic backsliding, economic turmoil, and the attenuation of liberalism's salience within the core circles of the liberal order itself, arguably have propelled Turkey towards circle 4.

Assuming that access to the core is desirable, this move toward circle 4 is a blow to Turkey's international prospects. If, however, under increasingly multipolar conditions, the core's interest in or ability to influence its concentric circles is attenuating (or, more dramatically, if the center does not hold), then Turkey must learn to navigate a world unmoored. The question in that case is whether to default to the aforementioned billiard ball vision of world order, with its grim vision of inevitable conflict, or whether an alternative might be possible?

Enter global IR, a relatively recent, interdisciplinary space where, I argue, Turkey and its analysts have a comparative advantage. I advance this claim by offering here a novel image of how a post-liberal, but not necessarily realist, world order might manifest, namely, as a Venn diagram (see Figure 2). This vision places no limits on the shape of the international system, except that it is terrestrial in scope (for now!) [30] Each state can be envisaged as a circle unto itself, redolent with its own historical and cultural specificities. Yet, particularities do not mean that states are hermetically sealed (as in realism's billiard balls), nor intrinsically (inter)dependent vis-à-vis the West (as in liberalism's concentric circles). Rather, state and regional identities and interests evolve in conjunction with human agency, and contingent as well as structural pressures. As a result, interaction with multiple actors is possible, in response to the pragmatic needs of the moment. At the same time, iterative engagements — as in liberalism — result in some reciprocity, if not outright trust. Visualized in Venn diagram terms, these processes of relational learning can help us draw on a plurality of experiences and methods towards addressing our overlapping challenges from migration to climate change.

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30   Technological advances and the recent commercialization of extra-terrestrial travel may inform attempts at governance beyond the global.

Figure 2. Global IR: Relational Learning & Contextualized Solutions in a Plural World[31]

> "Western/Northern" experiences and tools of global governance

> "Eastern/Southern" experiences and tools of global governance

> Turkey/country specific experiences and tools of global governance

> Context-specific & creative approaches to overlapping challenges which draw on a plurality of governance perspectives
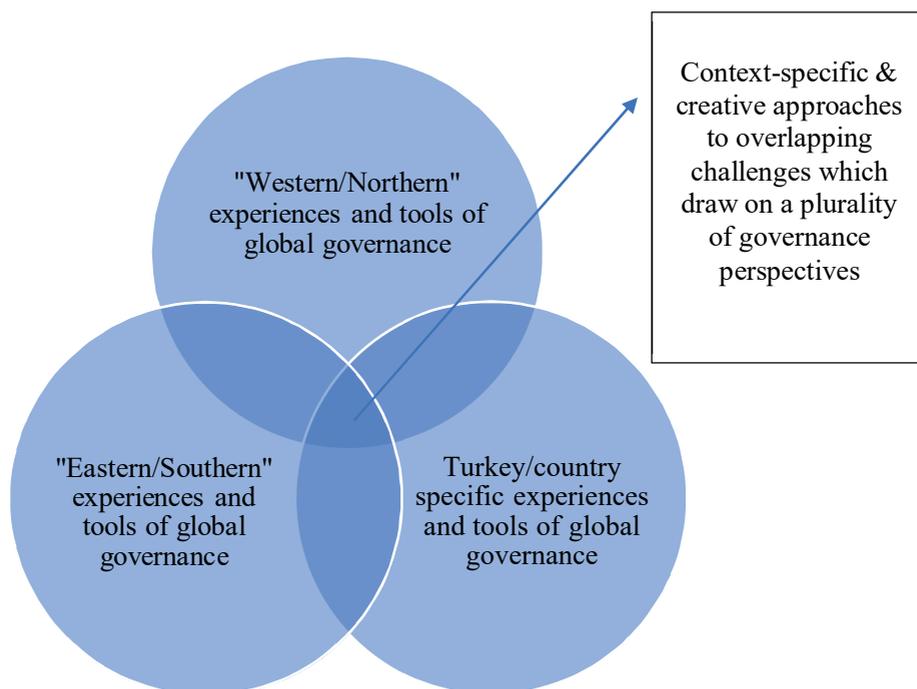
This visual rendering of how a post-Western international system is ordered corresponds to blossoming work in "global" or "post-Western" IR on interlocking regional dynamics on their own terms, rather than from US- or Euro-centric perspectives. Studying such a world requires fine-grained knowledge of the lived experiences of people(s) within a given state or region. In this way, specificities are respected, even as we also must recognize that regional categories are themselves social constructs. There is, after all, as much diversity within geo-cultural blocks as between them. A global approach, as such, spurs us to understand regional identities, imperatives and processes in all their variations. At the same time, we must eschew the temptation to reify non- and post-Western dynamics as encounters between essentialized geo-cultural blocks — a trap which replicates realism's conflictual logic.

Instead, we can recognize the porousness of regional formations, and the multi-directional flow of ideas, peoples, and goods across spaces like greater "Afro-Eur-Asia". This "interlocking regional worlds" framework, as I argue with Emilian Kavalski, emanates from a pluralistic ontology which recognizes, first, that there are multiple sources of world order, and second, that

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31 The geocultural terms "West/North" and "East/South" are used here as shorthand to denote clusters of states/ societies' which have experienced European colonial capitalism and its legacies in distinctive ways. That said, I have long recognized and written about the reified nature of such categories, the vast diversity of experience at play in any region, and how allegedly discrete entities have always been shaped by fraught processes of co-constitution (e.g. Nora Fisher Onar, "Transcending the 'West'/'Islam' Binary: Turkey and the post-Ottoman Mediterranean", Dimitar Bechev and Kalypso Nicolaïdis (ed.) *Mediterranean Frontiers: Borders, Conflict, and Memory*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2009, p. 57-68; Nora Fisher-Onar, "Postcolonial Theory and EU –Middle East Relations".

their mingling co-produces situated realities in contingent and evolving ways.[32] A cognate vision can be found in Onuf's "world-of-worlds"[33], Flockhart's "multi-order order"[34] and Acharya's "multiplexity"[35]—frames that are compatible with my Venn diagram image, and juxtaposed with realism's self-contained circles, and liberalism's hierarchically nested circles.

Baciu, in turn, offers a productive method for operationalizing inquiries into the emergent world order, proposing "interpolarity" as "the interaction between multiple interdependent poles of different sizes".[36] The notion of "interpolarity", as such, evokes dynamic connectivities between "poles" in the realist, structural sense of the world, while also conjuring the verb "interpolate"— which means to insert a novel text or value into a familiar conversation or equation, so as to transform and possibly enhance its meaning(s). According to Terzi's interpretation of the concept, by thus envisaging world regions as entailing "multipolar interdependencies", we recognize that rivalry and contestation need not be the only game in town. In short, since multipolar interdependence can also mandate "cooperation" and relational learning "in the face of global challenges".[37]

Figure 3. Realist Billiard Balls, Liberal Concentric Circles, Global IR's Venn Diagrams

Vision of the international system	Realist multipolarity	Post-Western pluralism	Liberal internationalism
PARTICULARITY ⬅➡ UNIVERSALISM			
Definition	3+ major powers with significant military economic, demographic and political capacity	"world-of-worlds" (Onuf 2011); "multi-order world" (Flockhart 2017; "multiplexity" Acharya 2018); "interpolarity" (Baciu 2022)	Multilateral order of state & non-state actors that uphold a politically liberal, individualistic, capitalist code of conduct
Logic of relationship with "Others"	Sovereign nation-states competing in a self-help world (implicitly privileges strongmen)	State & non-state actors at multiple scales trying to solve overlapping problems & learning from each other in the process	Global marketplace of ideas, goods, and governance (implicitly privileges global capitalist elite, esp. within US-led West)

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32 Fisher-Onar and Kavalski, "From Trans-Atlantic Order".

33 Nicholas Onuf, *Making Sense, Making Worlds: Constructivism in Social Theory and International Relations*, New York, Routledge, 2013.

34 Trine Flockhart, "The Coming Multi-order World", *Contemporary Security Policy,* Vol. 37, No 1, 2016, p. 3-30.

35 Amitav Acharya, "After Liberal Hegemony: The Advent of a Multiplex World Order", *Ethics & International Affairs,* Vol. 31, No 3, 2017, p. 271-285.

36 Cornelia Baciu, "Interpolarity. Re-visiting Security and the Global Order", *Defence Studies,* Vol. 22, No 4, 2022 p. 571.

37   Özlem Terzi, "Conclusion: Interpolarity-Bridging International Relations with a Dilemma", *Defence Studies,* Vol. 22, No 4, 2022, p. 736.

As I will now show, a growing group of scholars connected to Turkey are producing decentered theoretical frameworks and empirical insights commensurate with Global IR. The reason is arguably because analysts of Turkey have an intuitive capacity to read the world from a plural positionality. To be sure, this potential is not always actualized given the simultaneous salience of strong realist/sovereigntist, and liberal/westernist reflexes. Nevertheless, Turkey's liminal positionality, I contend, offers the epistemological equivalent of its proverbial geostrategic advantage.

IR's Global Turn and Turkey's Comparative Advantage

A broad tent, the notion of "global IR" indicates a wide range of ontological/epistemological positions, methodologies, disciplinary sub-fields, and substantive research questions. These draw on but are hardly limited to constructivist and post-structuralist, historical and sociological, postcolonial and decolonial, and intersectional gender approaches to the study and conduct of international affairs. But while global IR, like the world it seeks to describe, entails great diversity, a common thread is the commitment to de(-Euro-)centering and substantively pluralizing how we conceptualize and conduct world politics. [38]

For many scholars in this space, the goal is to better capture the experiences of states and societies beyond what is conventionally called the "West" and/or "North". At the same time, the project is normative, seeking to draw out the ways in which putatively "Western" and "non-Western" agencies and ideas have been constitutive of our international system, even if these processes are erased in Eurocentric accounts.[39] Such approaches tend to share: (i) a pluralistic approach to ontology/epistemology, with respect for multiple histories and agencies as constitutive of global patterns; (ii) an openness to methodological pluralism; and (iii) an approach to outstanding substantive questions which foregrounds the perspectives of states and non-state actors that are often ignored in mainstream/Eurocentric analysis.

The debate arguably began to flow with works by scholars with origins in and/or based beyond the Anglo-American and western European hubs of mainstream knowledge production. From Colombia, for example, Tickner [40] argued that concepts ranging from "security" to the "everyday" have different significations in the "third world". The claim was in sync with Japan-based Shani's view that both Islamic and Sikh conceptions of universality offer an

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38 This section's synthetic overview includes works which explicitly self-situate within "global IR", as well as contributions which may reject the label, but which are substantively aligned in their calls for a decentered and more inclusive discipline.

39 Nora Fisher-Onar and Kalypso Nicolaïdis, "The Decentering Agenda: A Post-colonial Approach to EU External Action", Sieglinde Gstohl and Simon Schunz (ed.), *The External Action of the European Union: Concepts, Approaches, Theories*, London, Macmillan Education, 2021, p. 288-304; Gurminder Bhambra and John Narayan (ed.), *European Cosmopolitanism: Colonial Histories and Postcolonial Societies*, London, Taylor & Francis, 2016.

40 Arlene B. Tickner, "Seeing IR differently: Notes from the Third World", *Millennium,* Vol. 32, No 2, 2003, p. 295-324.

alternative to Western approaches.[41] In this same period, Agathangelou and Ling[42], among others, called for "worldling" the field, i.e., for incorporating into our analytical apparatus multiple "lifeworlds" in contrast with the Western-centric, deductive approach of mainstream IR "paradigms".[43]

This trickle of works converged into a stream with the publication of influential edited collections like Achayra and Buzan's provocatively titled volume "Why is there no Non-Western International Relations Theory?"[44] Concurrently, Tickner and Waever comparatively mapped the knowledge economies of IR in multiple national and regional contexts beyond the conventional West.[45] Momentum mounted as scholars striving to debunk Eurocentrism and decolonize the IR academy began to contribute to an ever more effusive conversation. [46]

The field gained traction when emerging powers — a status for which Turkey has been seen as a contender[47] — performed relatively better than their Western counterparts during the 2008/9 global economic crisis. Topicality increased with attempts by regional powers to institutionalize alternative global governance institutions like the BRICS.[48] And while such efforts lost altitude with crises in South Africa and Brazil, China and India continued to gain geo-economic gravitas. Meanwhile, US retrenchment from regions like the Middle East under presidents Obama, Trump, and Biden have informed (multi-)regional revisionism on the part of pivotal powers like Turkey and Iran, and declining great power, Russia. This process appears to have accelerated with the radical disruptions of the Trump administration and the Covid-19 pandemic.

One outcome of these macro-level developments has been that interest in emerging powers' perspectives — and global South viewpoints more generally — is gaining visibility in the subset of leading IR journals open to critical scholarship. Global approaches are featured at major disciplinary conventions like the International Studies Association's annual conventions.[49] These efforts, in tandem with growing if still insufficient support for global

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41 Giorgio Shani, "Toward a Post-Western IR: The Umma, Khalsa Panth, and Critical International Relations Theory", *International Studies Review,* Vol. 10, No 4, 2008, p. 722-734.

42 Anna Agathangelou and Lily HH Ling, "The House of IR: From Family Power Politics to the Poisies of Worldism", *International Studies Review,* Vol. 6, No 4, 2004, p. 21-49.

43 Mohammed Ayoob, "Subaltern Realism: International Relations Theory meets the Third World", *International Studies Review,* Vol. 4, No 3, 2002, p. 27-48.

44 Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, "Why is There No Non-Western International Relations Theory? An Introduction", *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific,* Vol. 7, No 3, 2007, p. 287-312.

45 Arlene Tickner and Ole Wæver (ed.), *International Relations Scholarship around the World*, New York, Routledge, 2009.

46 E.g. Deniz Kuru, "Historicising Eurocentrism and anti-Eurocentrism in IR: A Revisionist Account of Disciplinary
Self-reflexivity", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 42, No 2, 2016, p. 351-376; Zeynep Çapan, "Decolonising International Relations?", *Third World Quarterly,* Vol. 38, No 1, 2017, p. 1-15.

47 Emel Parlar Dal, "Conceptualising and Testing the 'Emerging Regional Power' of Turkey in the Shifting International Order", *Third World Quarterly,* Vol. 37, No 8, 2016, p. 1425-1453.

48 Ziya Öniş and Mustafa Kutlay, "Rising Powers in a Changing Global Order: The Political Economy of Turkey in the Age of BRICS", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No 8, 2013, p. 1409-1426.

49 See also Beste İşleyen's superb convening for the University of Amsterdam on decolonizing IR, Europe, and the academy. https://aces.uva.nl/content/news/2020/06/decolonising-europe.html?cb

South contributions to IR theory, have helped to galvanize into a vibrant, epistemic community of far-flung scholars who share frustration with the erasure of non-Western complexities in mainstream paradigms.

Certainly — and as can be expected with any flourishing space of knowledge production, especially one inspired by diversity — there is debate over the state-of-the-art and paths forwards. Topics include, as alluded above, contestation over the label itself, i.e., preference among some scholars for terms like "post-Western" or "non-Western" over "global" (with each frame signaling a differentiated set of commitments regarding, for instance, the degree to which the analyst should be reformist or radical in their critique of Western-dominated, capitalist modernity). A related *problematique*, as I see it, is the question of what constitutes authenticity, i.e., how do we know an emic concept when we see one in a world constituted by complex layers of historical and contemporary interconnectivity?

Scholars of and on Turkey contribute actively to these conversations, producing a significant volume of high-quality analysis that is aligned with the global turn. A source of this propensity, I have suggested, is Turkey's very liminality which enables outside-of-the-box-thinking.[50] By way of contrast, IR in the conventional West, as Blaney and Tickner argue, "has yet to engage systematically [or critically] with 'singular world' logics introduced by colonial modernity and their effacement of alternative worlds".[51] My argument has affinities with W.E.B. DuBois's seminal observation that African-Americans command a powerful analytical and transformative tool in their experience of "double-consciousness": the ability to read both white-dominated society and marginalized, black realities in overlapping perspective.[52] To be sure, the analytical advantages of Turkey's liminal positionality are hardly automatic. Indeed, cumulative experiences of "moral injury"[53] at the hands of the hegemonic West all too often engender defensive exceptionalism.[54] Nevertheless, as Buhari-Gülmez's work highlights, "glocal" insights from Turkey can help us think through the working of "hybridity, hegemony and reflexive engagement" in a post-Western but nevertheless globalized world.[55]

In terms of specific tools, a promising method associated with the global turn in IR draws on Edward Said's work on "contrapuntality". This refers to a listening technique which attends not only to the main melody of a song, but to dissonance and counter-harmonies —

50 Nicolaidis et al. (2014), "From Metropolis to Microcosmos: The EU's New Standards of Civilisation", *Millennium,* Vol. 42, No 3, p. 718-745.

51 David Blaney, and Arlene Tickner, "Worlding, Ontological Politics and the Possibility of a Decolonial IR", *Millennium*, Vol. 45, No 3, 2017, p. 293.

52 Alexander Anievas, Nivi Manchanda and Robbie Shilliam, *Race and Racism in International Relations*, London, Taylor & Francis, 2014.

53 Jelena Subotić and Brent Steele, "Moral Injury in International Relations", *Journal of Global Security Studies,* Vol. 3, No 4, 2018, p. 387-401.

54 Nora Fisher-Onar, "The Capitulations Syndrome".

55 Didem Buhari Gulmez, "Glocal as Hybridity, Hegemony and Reflexive Engagement", *Globalizations,* Vol. 18, No 5, 2021, p. 750-761.

enabling voices to be heard in international relations that are often silenced.[56] The contrapuntal method of decentering and pluralizing the subject(s) of IR resonates with a range of critical and postcolonial/decolonial analytics on plural perspectives. Examples include Afro-Caribbean notions of "creolite", South Asian conceptions of "hybridity" and strategic "mimicry", and the above-mentioned DuBosian insights into marginalized peoples' "double consciousness" due to their simultaneous experience of minority and majority realities.[57] The idea is to listen to a multiplicity of voices (and silences/silencing) in theorizing and practicing international relations.

Scholarship in and on Turkey which speaks to this comparative advantage includes works like Aydınlı & Mathew's pathbreaking exploration of how to "spin IR out of Anatolia"[58] which challenged frequent dismissal of global IR-type critiques as being strong on deconstruction but weak on reconstruction. Other works draw inspiration from the (post-)Ottoman experience and its relevance for appropriations of imperial history/memory in revisionist powers more broadly. Such work supplements aligned if not explicitly "global IR" work like the historical sociological *oeuvre* of Ayşe Zarakol on IR as seen from stigmatized states across greater Eurasia.[59] Further insights bridging historical and legal scholarship within IR theory have been produced by Turan Kayoğlu[60] and Umut Özsu.[61] Also complimentary is work on the constitutive role of Turkish (and Russian) alterity in Eurasian and European processes of identity constructions.[62] Adjacently, Aydın-Düzgit, Rumelili and Topal[63] have fused historical evidence with post-structuralist analytics to assess how frames of "us" and "them" are instrumentalized by politicians in Turkey and Europe alike. This important point on the uses and abuses of

56 Geeta Chowdhry, "Edward Said and Contrapuntal Reading: Implications for Critical Interventions in International Relations", *Millennium*, Vol. 36, No 1, 2007, p. 101-116; Pınar Bilgin, "Contrapuntal Reading" as a Method, an Ethos, and a Metaphor for Global IR", *International Studies Review,* Vol. 18, No 1, 2016, p.134-146; Sarah Wolff, et al. "How to Reflexively Decentre EU Foreign Policy: Dissonance and Contrapuntal Reconstruction in Migration, Religious and Neighbourhood Governance", *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 2022, p. 1-18.

57 For a review of these ideas produced respectively by figures like Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and W.E.B Dubois See Nora Fisher-Onar, Nora Fisher-Onar, "Postcolonial Theory and EU –Middle East Relations".

58 Ersin Aydınlı and J. Mathews, "Periphery Theorising for a Truly Internationalised Discipline: Spinning IR Theory out of Anatolia", *Review of International Studies*, Vol.34, No 4, 2008, p. 693-712.

59 Ayşe Zarakol, *After Defeat.*

60 Turan Kayaoğlu, "Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory," *International Studies Review*, Vol. 12, No 2, 2010b, p. 193-217.

61 Umut Özsu, "The Ottoman Empire, the Origins of Extraterritoriality, and International Legal Theory", *The Oxford Handbook of the Theory of International Law*, 2016, p. 123-37.

62 Seçkin Köstem, "Different Paths to Regional Hegemony: National Identity Contestation and Foreign Economic Strategy in Russia and Turkey", *Review of International Political Economy,* Vol. 25, No 5, 2018, p. 726-752; Viatcheslav Morozov and Bahar Rumelili, "The External Constitution of European Identity: Russia and Turkey as Europe-makers", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 47, No 1, 2012, p. 28-48; Münnever Cebeci, *Deconstructing "Ideal Power Europe": The EU and the Arab Change*, London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

63 Senem Aydın-Düzgit, Bahar Rumelili and Alp Eren Topal, "Challenging Anti-Western Historical Myths in Populist Discourse: Re-visiting Ottoman Empire–Europe Interaction during the 19th Century", *European Journal of International Relations,* Vol. 28, No 3, 2022, p. 513-537.

critical theorizing in diplomatic practice is also developed in Bilgiç's gendered approach,[64] and Çapan and Zarakol's Turkey-inspired critique of "post-colonial colonialism".[65] Meanwhile, Erdoğan and Hisarlıoğlu's[66] insightful edited collection on foreign policy features critical approaches like Güner's mapping of shifting geocultural imaginaries among Turkish agents engaged with Africa.[67] These compliment prolific Marxist/world-systems works by Tansel,[68] Nisancioglu,[69] and Duzgun[70] on the political economy of Turkey's (semi-)peripheral global position — and the economies of knowledge which such structures shape. Thus, scholars of or proximate to the pluralizing agenda of global IR have thrived. And they have done so despite persistent obstacles to securing the uptake of "homegrown theorizing"[71] within a discipline that, as Tolay maps, entails multiple modalities of reproducing Eurocentrism.[72] This claim has been empirically nuanced in recent studies by Aydınlı and Erpul;[73] Bakir and Ersoy[74] and Sula[75] which measure the extent to which declarative attempts at decentering actually translate into classroom, research, and publication practices. Nevertheless, as evidenced by recent edited volumes (e.g. Aydınlı and Biltekin's *Widening the World of International Relations*[76], and special issues of *Uluslararası İlişkiler*[77] and *All Azimuth*, which decenter IR in conversation with (sub)fields from regions/regionalism to global intellectual history[78], a growing number of Turkey scholars are shaping IR's global turn.

64 Ali Bilgiç, *Turkey, Power and the West: Gendered International Relations and Foreign Policy*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016.

65 Zeynep Çapan and Ayşe Zarakol, "Postcolonial Colonialism?: The Case of Turkey", Charlotte Epstein (ed.), *Against International Relations Norms*, London, Routledge, 2017, p. 193-210.

66 Birsen Erdoğan and Fulya Hisarlıoğlu, *Critical Readings of Turkey's Foreign Policy*, Cham, Palgrave, 2022.

67 Ezgi Güner, "Mapping Africa: Cartographies of Imagination and Intervention in Turkey", Birsen Erdoğan and Fulya Hisarlıoğlu (ed.), *Critical Readings of Turkey's Foreign Policy*, Cham, Palgrave, 2022, p. 103-126.

68 Cemil Burak Tansel, "The Shape of 'Rising Powers' to Come? The Antinomies of Growth and Neoliberal Development in Turkey", *New Political Economy*, Vol. 25, No 5, 2020, p. 791-812.

69 Kerem Nisancioglu, "The Ottoman Origins of Capitalism: Uneven and Combined Development and Eurocentrism", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 40, No 2, 2014, p. 325-347.

70 Eren Duzgun, "Capitalism, Jacobinism and International Relations: Re-interpreting the Ottoman Path to Modernity", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 44, No 2, 2018, p. 252-278.

71 Ersel Aydinli and Gonca Biltekin (ed.), *Widening the World of International Relations*, London, Routledge, 2018, p. 9-80.

72 Juliette Tolay, "Inadvertent Reproduction of Eurocentrism in IR: The Politics of Critiquing Eurocentrism", *Review of International Studies,* Vol. 47, No 5, 2021, p. 692-713.

73 Ersel Aydinli and Onur Erpul, "The False Promise of Global IR: Exposing the Paradox of Dependent Development", *International Theory,* Vol. 14, No 3, 2022, p. 419-459.

74 Ali Bakir and Eyüp Ersoy, "The Rise and Fall of Homegrown Concepts in Global IR: The Anatomy of 'Strategic Depth'in Turkish IR", *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace,* Vol. 11, No 2, 2022, p. 257-273.

75 İsmail Erkam Sula, "'Global' IR and Self-Reflections in Turkey: Methodology, Data Collection, and Data Repository", *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace*, Vol.11, No 1, 2022, p. 123-142.

76 Ersel Aydinli and Gonca Biltekin (ed.), *Widening the World of International Relations: Homegrown Theorizing*, New York, Routledge, 2018.

77 Uluslararası İlişkiler, Vol. 8, No 7, 2021.

78 *All Azimuth*'s Vol. 11, No 2, 2022.

Conclusion

I began this piece by applying two powerful paradigms to Turkey's conflicted trajectory over the past century: realist isolationism and what I called "embedded liberalism". I showed that while the tense interplay between these two logics helps to tell Turkey's story, their lack of attention to historical and sociological specificities fails to capture the full picture. This gap between the prominence of Western/mainstream IR paradigms and their explanatory power in — but also beyond — Turkey is problematic. We confront, after all, an increasingly multipolar world as the Western anchor of state behavior arguably ebbs in importance. I accordingly asked: How to best make sense of (Turkey's) international relations looking back and moving forward?

I addressed the question by comparing three images of Turkey's role in the international system as envisaged in realism (billiard balls), liberalism (a concentric circles), and emerging work in global IR (which I conceptualized as a Venn diagram). Suggesting that the last best captures Turkey's challenges and opportunities moving forward, I argued that analysts in and of Turkey command a comparative advantage in the production of a more genuinely globalized knowledge of the international. This can be explained, I argued, by Turkey's location at the interstices of major world regions — the epistemological equivalent of its proverbial geostrategic advantage. If activated, this plural consciousness stands to inform a heightened ability to mediate between world(view)s in a post-Western age, even as centennial habits of isolationist realism and Westernist liberalism also will persist.

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