



Eurasia and eschatology. Dugin's antiliberal resonances in the Muslim world

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Abstract

This article examines the reception of Alexander Dugin's thought in Turkey, in the Arab world, and Iran, highlighting the dynamics through which Russian ideological repertoires are appropriated and reframed outside their original context. Rather than treating Dugin as a doctrinal exporter or a direct source of influence, we foreground the agency of local actors who selectively translate his symbolic vocabulary into their own intellectual and political landscapes. In Turkey, Dugin functions as a strategic validator for Eurasianist realignments; in the Arab world, he is received largely as a symbolic amplifier of anti-Zionism and apocalyptic critique; and in Iran, he resonates as a metaphysical interlocutor aligned with Shi'i messianism and Traditionalist philosophy. Across these cases, his ideological offer operates as a modular system whose elements can be detached from their Orthodox and Russian nationalist origins and reembedded within local discourses. By tracing the modular receptions of Dugin in diverse contexts, the article contributes to broader debates on ideological globalization, illiberal internationalism, and the circulation of postliberal imaginaries.

Keywords Alexander Dugin · Eurasianism · Illiberalism · Traditionalism · Eschatology · Anti-Zionism

Introduction

The past two decades have witnessed a renewed intellectual and political interest in nonliberal alternatives as a response to the perceived failures of the liberal international order. Among the thinkers who have championed this paradigm, the Russian

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ideologue Alexander Dugin has emerged as a global symbol of resistance to liberalism. Once considered a marginal figure in Russian intellectual life, he now occupies a complex space as both a theorist of multipolarity and a spiritual far-right provocateur whose writings, interviews, and media presence circulate far beyond Russia's borders. His geopolitical realism fused with eschatological metaphysics is what renders Dugin legible, if not always embraced, across a wide range of international audiences which find in his thought a vocabulary for articulating opposition to liberal modernity, secular rationalism, and Western hegemony.

This article examines the reception of Alexander Dugin in three distinct yet ideologically resonant contexts: Turkey, the Arab world, and Iran. While differing in their political systems, media ecosystems, and religious traditions, each of these regions has demonstrated engagement, both politically and academically, with his theories. Unlike in most Western academic and intellectual circles, where Dugin is often treated as an extremist or marginal thinker, in Middle Eastern media and academic spaces his ideas are frequently examined within broader postcolonial reflections on global order and civilizational identity. Though he is frequently presented as a prominent anti-imperialist philosopher who serves Russia's strategic interests, his outreach should not be read solely as part of Russia's organized soft power and cultural diplomacy. Rather, it reflects a deeper ideological convergence around shared themes of spiritual sovereignty against the West.

This article situates Dugin not as an exporter of a coherent doctrine but as a cipher through which diverse publics negotiate their own ideological positions vis-à-vis liberalism and the West. What is indeed distinctive about Dugin is his ability to translate complex philosophical and historical discourses into real political capital and integrate them into contemporary analyses of events such as the wars in Syria and Ukraine and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

This paper does not assume a unidirectional influence emanating from Moscow; instead, it analyzes how Dugin's symbolic repertoire is appropriated, reframed, and contested across culturally specific ideological landscapes. In doing so, it highlights the agency of local actors, who actively translate Russian ideological exports into their own discursive registers. By tracing how Dugin is taken up in different political–theological contexts, it offers a study in comparative ideological reception and contributes to broader debates about the transnational diffusion of illiberal ideas, the reconfiguration of civilizational discourse, and the global search for postliberal futures.

From rival to partner in Eurasia: Dugin in Turkey

Alexander Dugin has cultivated a notable intellectual presence in Turkey since the mid-1990s, a country which occupies a complex and shifting role in his geopolitical vision. Initially, the Russian ideologue viewed Turkey as a threat due to its NATO membership, Pan-Turkist ambitions, and potential to undermine Russian influence in Central Asia and the South Caucasus (Kurt 2020). However, Dugin's perspective evolved after Turkey's relations with the West began to deteriorate in the early 2000s (Kınıklıoğlu 2022). This shift led Dugin to theorize Turkey as a potential partner in

the Eurasian project, provided it distanced itself from Atlanticist policies. Yet despite this pragmatic reassessment, Dugin has acknowledged the deep-seated historical and geopolitical rivalries between Russia and Turkey, including competition over Central Asia and the South Caucasus, control of the Black Sea region, and Turkish support for Muslim minorities in Russia.

Although these factors continue to hinder full cooperation between Russia and Turkey within Dugin's Eurasianist framework, his ability to find receptive interlocutors among Turkish political thinkers and social movements has spurred him to moderate the anti-Turkish elements of his original geopolitical vision. Indeed, nationalist and *ulusalcı* (secular left-nationalist) groups have paradoxically embraced Dugin's Eurasianism despite its inherently anti-Turkish stance (Ayas 2012–2013). Once staunchly anti-Russian, some Turkish nationalists, especially those associated with the circle of Doğu Perinçek, began portraying Russia as a geopolitical ally in Turkey's rivalry with the West (Laruelle 2008). The amicable contacts and cooperation with Perinçek, and his circles pushed Dugin to make some adjustments to his views on Turkey, leading him to attempt a positive reconciliation of the Ottoman legacy with Kemalism and its nation-state model within a broader Eurasianist framework.

A former Maoist, Perinçek has had a chaotic career with several arrests and political shifts inside the so-called secular leftist or *ulusalcı* landscape, and led the Workers' Party (*İşçi Partisi*), now rebranded as the Patriotic Party (*Vatan Partisi*). He organized the first Eurasia Conference in Istanbul in 1996, which marked the earliest public forum where themes of Eurasianism—anti-Westernism, multipolarity, and Turkey–Russia alignment—were systematically introduced to a Turkish audience. Perinçek's 1996 book *Avrasya Seçeneği* (The Eurasian Option) predated Dugin's seminal *Foundations of Geopolitics* (1997) but shared its core anti-Atlanticist orientation, creating fertile ground for ideological synergy. By 2000, Istanbul hosted the second Eurasia Conference, and during this period, Perinçek, along with his son and spouse, began engaging with Dugin. In 2003, Perinçek played a role in founding the International Eurasian Movement in Moscow, where he was appointed to its High Council, with Dugin assuming the chairmanship (Kınıklıoğlu 2022). Throughout the 2000s, Dugin's ideas gained traction within Turkey's *ulusalcı* ecosystem, particularly through media outlets like the *Aydınlık* newspaper and Ulusal Kanal, all linked to Perinçek's circle and his Patriotic Party. This period also saw the emergence of several academic studies examining Turkish Eurasianism.

However, Doğu Perinçek was detained on March 21, 2008, as part of the Ergenekon investigation and sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment on August 5, 2013, though he was released on March 10, 2014. The Turkish ultranationalist Ergenekon network was a clandestine organization accused of plotting to overthrow the Turkish government in the early 2000s. Turkish authorities accused the Ergenekon suspects of having direct connections to Russian institutions, especially those advocating a Eurasian geopolitical framework that aligned Turkey with Russia and Iran in opposition to NATO and the West. Among those implicated was retired Turkish General Tuncer Kılınç, who had publicly called for stronger relations with Russia and Iran over ties with the European Union and NATO, a sentiment that echoed Dugin's own strategic doctrines. Dugin sharply criticized the Ergenekon investigation as a US conspiracy to undermine Turkey's relations with Russia (Erşen 2019, pp. 38–39).

Several Ergenekon suspects had attended Eurasianist conferences in Moscow, and the Turkish Eurasianists appeared to function as a “bridge” between far-right Turkish actors and their Russian counterparts. These meetings were not marginal: they were public events that explicitly called for the creation of an “Anti-American Eurasian Axis.” Some Turkish media sources even claimed that Dugin was personally involved in this alleged plot to destabilize the Turkish government, possibly in coordination with Ergenekon actors (Uslu 2008; Rustamova 2013; Erşen 2019). The relationship between Ergenekon figures and Dugin went beyond ideology, involving direct collaboration through joint conferences, political statements, and media amplification, revealing a complex transnational web of conservative or right-wing actors advocating for a Eurasian alternative to Western liberalism.

However, over time, particularly in the 2010s and after the failed 2016 coup attempt, Doğu Perinçek, his movement, and other Turkish ultranationalist actors became increasingly aligned with Erdoğan’s administration. The ruling AKP was able to gradually incorporate many traditionalist, nationalist, and Eurasianist strands within its broader authoritarian–populist framework. As a result, Turkish Duginists have reconciled with the AKP’s neo-Ottomanism and political Islam, especially as anti-Western discourse remained a shared repertoire in Erdoğan’s domestic and foreign policy rhetoric. Perinçek’s party rebranding as the “Patriotic Party” has been part of this readjustment to fit Erdoğan’s growingly illiberal landscape.

Dugin’s profile in Turkey rose significantly following Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the deterioration of Turkey–West relations over Syria. Turkish media, particularly Ulusal Kanal, amplified his rhetoric, framing Moscow and Ankara as natural allies against a common Atlanticist enemy (Ulusal Kanal 2017, 2020a,b). Dugin visited Turkey three times in 2016, culminating in a symbolic appearance before the Turkish parliament’s postcoup commission, where he testified on alleged Western interference and denounced Fethullah Gülen (who lived in exile in the United States)—an unprecedented level of recognition for a foreign ideologue (Öztürk 2016).

Dugin credits Perinçek with serving as a kind of “gateway” or mediator through whom he re-conceived Turkey as a partner rather than a rival: “I used to think of Turkey always as Russia’s enemy. But Perinçek and the military elite close to him, whom I met in the early 2000s, changed my mind. I discovered a completely different Turkey, Kemalist, sovereign, not a tool of NATO.” Perinçek is thus portrayed not merely as a Turkish nationalist politician but as a strategic interlocutor within Dugin’s Eurasian and anti-Atlantic worldview. Dugin further elevates Perinçek’s status by framing him as part of Turkey’s “patriotic deep state,” contrasting him with what the Turkish government calls the “parallel state” (supporters of Fethullah Gülen, or the FETÖ movement). As Dugin puts it: “If you describe Perinçek as a man of Turkey’s deep state, then I, too, represent the patriotic deep state of my country - not the parallel state.” (Aydınlık 2017).

The late 2010s and early 2020s witnessed a surge in Turkish translations of Dugin’s works, further embedding his ideas within nationalist and academic circles in Turkey. All of his major works were translated into Turkish by commercial publishers and those specializing in philosophical and intellectual literature, indicating that his works enjoy a degree of popularity beyond the immediate circle of Turkish Eurasian-

ists.¹ These translations have targeted postliberal intellectuals, expanding Dugin's appeal beyond traditional left-nationalist audiences. The death of his daughter, Darya Dugina, in 2022 as a result of a car bombing in Moscow—an incident that Russian authorities designated as a Ukrainian terrorist attack—generated a wave of articles in the Turkish press (Ulusal Kanal 2022a; Hürriyet 2022; Altınok 2022). Many Turkish news platforms have also hosted Dugin as a guest, presenting him as a geopolitical strategist with close ties to the Kremlin, complemented by engagements with retired Turkish military figures, including the above-mentioned General Tuncer Kılınc, who, for instance, participated in a 2022 Ankara-based symposium advocating a security partnership with Russia (Kınıklıoğlu 2022, p. 13). In this context, Dugin described Perinçek as “charismatic leader” and his party as “an intellectual center of Turkey” (Ulusal Kanal 2023).

Despite these ties, the Syrian conflict exposed enduring tensions. Dugin harshly criticized Ankara's support for anti-Assad forces, calling it a betrayal of Russia and Iran. His Twitter posts in 2024 accused Erdoğan of strategic miscalculation and warned of dire consequences, at times couched in threatening language (Serbestiyet 2024). Though these widely circulated statements drew considerable backlash, they also underscored Dugin's readiness to intervene in Turkish domestic debates. In later interviews with Ulusal Kanal, he moderated his tone, portraying Syria as part of a Western strategy to fragment the region through the “Greater Middle East Project” and Israel's ambitions for a “Greater Israel” (Ulusal Kanal 2024). In these interviews, Dugin argued that Turkey's policy had alienated Russia and Iran while empowering Western-backed Kurdish forces and radical Islamist groups. He warned that Ankara had “lost two potential strategic allies and gained two radical enemies” (Ulusal Kanal 2024). While stressing that Russia was not Turkey's enemy, he insisted that Turkey risked treating Russia as one, with destabilizing consequences. He also pointed to Russia's limited capacity to intervene in the Middle East, given its focus on Ukraine, predicting that reduced Russian presence would create opportunities for Western-backed Kurdish state-building and for jihadist groups to reemerge (Ulusal Kanal 2024).

Dugin has maintained a visible presence in Turkish media, with frequent appearances on Ulusal Kanal, TV100, and different YouTube programs connected with Turkish Eurasianists discussing Eastern Mediterranean tensions and the Ukraine war. For example, on July 18, 2025, Dugin delivered a major speech (online and live) at the conference *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea in Turkey*, organized by the National Strategy Center (Ulusal Strateji Merkezi, USMER), an organization linked to Perinçek and his Patriotic Party. Highlighting Turkey as a significant regional power with its own vision for the Eastern Mediterranean, Dugin envisions a coalition of sovereign states—including Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq, among others—working together to resolve regional issues like the Azerbaijan–Armenia conflict, the Zangezur corridor, and the futures of Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon without Western interference (Ulusal Kanal 2025a,b).

¹ Kaynak Yayınları (Kaynak Publishing House), which belongs to Perinçek's circle, focuses on translation and publication of Dugin's works. However, there are other publishing houses that have published Dugin's books as well, such as Küre Yayınları, Pınar Yayınları, and Yeni Avrasya Yayınları.

No matter how Turkish-Russian relations evolve, Perinçek continues his apologetics for Dugin, revealing how he and his circle seek to shape the Russian thinker's image for Turkish audiences. In one of the Ulusal Kanal's broadcasts, Perinçek was asked to summarize the major criticisms that Turkish media had directed at Dugin following the assassination of his daughter, namely, that he is "a persona with zero influence on Putin," a "radical Orthodox Christian concerned with disseminating his faith," and an "ardent fascist." Perinçek personally responded to all of these critiques. In his rebuttal, he compared Dugin's Orthodox faith to Erdoğan's Muslim identity, arguing that both are personal and non-proselytizing. According to Perinçek, Dugin even opposes Greek Orthodoxy in Greece, NATO's ally, and uses his beliefs to champion anti-imperialist independence for Russia, Turkey, and the welfare of humanity, rather than any form of religious hegemony. Labeling him an "Orthodox Eurasianist," Perinçek insists, misses the point: Dugin's focus is geopolitical liberation, not evangelism. He portrays Dugin as a steadfast fighter against "the most aggressive form of fascism," which he identifies as U.S./NATO imperialism and its proxies. He emphasizes Dugin's opposition to fascist remnants in Ukraine, such as the Azov Battalion's Nazi symbols, thereby aligning him with anti-fascist patriots. Far from being racist or ultranationalist, Dugin, in Perinçek's telling, embodies global anti-imperialism and advocates for "a humane, communal, and sharing world." Finally, Perinçek dismisses claims that Dugin lacks influence on Putin as absurd, arguing that such an assessment ignores the stature of a "world-class intellectual" whose ideas are debated globally. Proximity to power, he maintains, is irrelevant. Dugin's authority derives from his scholarship and his Eurasianist vision. Perinçek nonetheless underscores that Dugin is deeply embedded within the Russian state, but mainly as its "intellectual representative" in Istanbul and beyond (Ulusal Kanal 2022b).

Despite these developments, Dugin's influence remains constrained by Turkey's complex geopolitical balancing act. Liberal and leftist critics, including voices in *Cumhuriyet* and *Gazete Duvar*, dismiss him as a neofascist propagandist serving Russian interests (Ataberk 2022; Karataş 2022). Public opinion data further complicates the narrative: a 2023 poll revealed that 65% of Turks favored maintaining NATO membership, with only 20% supporting withdrawal (Voice of America 2024). As the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik noted in a 2022 study, neo-Eurasianism resonates primarily among "frustrated elites" rather than the broader electorate, functioning as a discursive tool rather than a mass ideological movement.

Anti-zionism and eschatology: Dugin in the Arab world

The Arab reception of Dugin should be understood within the region's broader historical and political context. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Arab world has remained a critical theater for Western intervention, which has reinforced local perceptions that Western liberalism serves as a cover for neoimperial domination, prompting Arab intellectuals to explore alternative models of global order. In this sense, Dugin's explicit denunciation of the unipolar system and his advocacy for civilizational pluralism resonate strongly with long-standing concerns in Arab thought regarding autonomy, cultural authenticity, and the ethics of global governance. Among

contemporary Arab thinkers, there is a substantial cohort of critics of Western modernity who are searching for an alternative Arab–Islamic modernity, with themes that typically resonate with some of Dugin's.²

In the 2000s, Dugin was known primarily within a small circle of Arab intellectuals but remained outside broader public discourse. However, this changed with the onset of the war in Ukraine in 2014, continuing through to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the assassination of his daughter later that year, which sparked widespread discussions both in the media and across the Arab blogosphere (Al Jazeera 2022; Al Arabiya 2022a,b). The notion that Dugin exerts intellectual influence on President Vladimir Putin is also widely accepted and often repeated in Arab media narratives, which see him as the “brain” (*‘aql*) of Putin (Al Mayadeen 2016; Al Arabiya 2024). For instance, a prominent political thinker in the Arab world, ‘Abdallah al-Nafisi—himself a frequent guest on Al Jazeera and other networks, and an advocate for an anti-Western integrationist project among Gulf states—referred to Dugin in one of his lectures as “the Mind of Putin” (Al-Nafisi 2022a). Similarly, in its report *Aleksandr Dugin: The Mind That Thinks for Putin?* the Iraqi think tank portrays Dugin as the intellectual architect of Putin's Russia, tracing his opposition to Western liberalism, his call for a multipolar Eurasian order, and his belief that Russia must defend its civilization through ideological and territorial assertiveness. The report treats Dugin's thought as a key lens for understanding Russian politics and an influence on Putin's worldview, while acknowledging that his role is unofficial yet profound (Al-Baidar Center for Studies and Planning 2022).

The most influential Arab channel, the Qatari-funded Al Jazeera, which often promotes alternative voices to Western liberalism, conducted a long interview with Dugin in 2021 (Al Jazeera 2021b,a), in which he emphasized the influence of Geydar Dzhemal, a Russian Muslim philosopher of Azerbaijani origin, on his thought (see below). Al Jazeera's main regional competitor, Al Arabiya—an Emirati–Saudi media giant—has also dedicated significant attention to Dugin, conducting several interviews in which he not only explained the fundamentals of his philosophy but also elaborated on Russia's policies in Ukraine, Syria, and the Middle East at large (Al Arabiya 2023, 2024).

Another influential network, the Lebanese Al Mayadeen (close to Hezbollah-affiliated elites), has similarly featured Dugin in in-depth interviews that have addressed Russia's strategic vision and the war in Ukraine while promoting the Arabic translation of his book *The Geopolitics of Postmodernity: The Era of New Empires* (Al Mayadeen 2019, 2022, 2023). Al Mayadeen has perhaps hosted Dugin more often

²Since the rise of postcolonial Arab nation-states in the early twentieth century, and especially after the Arab–Israeli wars (in 1948 and 1967), leading Arab intellectuals from different ideological stances—leftists, nationalists, and Islamically oriented ones—have raised questions about how to construct alternative socioeconomic and cultural systems outside hegemonic Western models. They have asked how Arab–Islamic heritage (dominant texts, ideas, and discourses) could be mobilized not only to preserve cultural authenticity but to reconfigure it in ways that decolonize intellectual and epistemological dependency on the West. For instance, one of the most influential contemporary Arab–Islamic philosophers, Taha ‘Abd al-Rahman, whose works are read and translated from Morocco to Indonesia, has offered a sustained critique of Western modernity and developed a new philosophical language to resist its epistemic premises. Before him, Muhammad ‘Abid al-Jabiri (d. 2010) and Hasan Hanafi (d. 2021) addressed similar questions of authenticity, heritage, and alternative modernities (Abu-Rabi' 2004; Bilqiz 2014; Hallaq 2019; Kassab 2010).

than any other Arab media outlet, as it conducts a variety of short and long interviews with him every year. He also gave a long interview to the Egyptian pan-Arabic channel Al Ghad (Al Ghad TV 2025). What is striking is that all the Arab transnational media outlets mentioned above are usually engaged in fierce informational and ideological competition, reflecting the rivalries of their state sponsors. Yet, despite these divides, they have all shown a similar interest in Dugin, offering him unusually long interviews that sometimes last one or even two hours. This makes Dugin a rare example of a foreign intellectual who manages to cross Arab media fault lines and secure a prominent platform across competing networks (in addition to the channels discussed above, Dugin was also interviewed by Al Qahera News 2023, 2025; Ten TV 2020; Asharq News 2022, 2025, among others).

Dugin's articles and commentaries, originally published in Russian, are also frequently translated by popular Arab media channels and platforms such as *Al Majalla* (Maher 2025; Dugin 2023a,b) and Al-Arabi al-Jadid (Hasnaywi 2025), among others. His major work, *Foundations of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia*, was translated into Arabic in Beirut as early as 2004 (Al Jazeera 2009), but a wave of new translations appeared after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine (Al-Zain 2023). These include *Theory of a Multipolar World* (Beirut, 2023), *The Geopolitics of Post-modernity: The Era of New Empires* (Doha, 2022)—published by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, one of the region's most influential think tanks—and *Eurasianism: Salvation from the West* (Beirut, 2021), translated into Arabic by the Iraqi–Belgian novelist Ali Badr (Hujayri 2022).

Following the intensification of Russia's policies in the Middle East, Russian Arabic-language media outlets such as Sputnik and Russia Today have actively worked to construct the image of Vladimir Putin as a strong leader engaged in a solitary struggle against Western globalism, NATO imperialism, and “gender ideology.” Putin and the Russian state are portrayed as guardians of traditional values shared by all major religions—values that the West is allegedly seeking to dismantle. Within this context, Dugin serves as an interpreter of the philosophical and ideological foundations of Russian policy for Arab audiences. He frames Russian geopolitical engagement, whether in Ukraine or Syria, not merely as a conflict over strategic interests but as a metaphysical battle for something far greater and more primordial: the defense of religious values, the family, and a traditional social order. For instance, the Russian Arabic-language media project RT Arabic conducted several interviews with Dugin in which he commented on the philosophical and metaphysical aspects of the war in Gaza (RT Arabic 2025).

This discursive framing has also found resonance among Arab intellectual and policy circles that reinterpret Dugin's ideas through their own geopolitical lenses. The report by the Egyptian think tank, Arab Center for Research and Studies, strongly supports Dugin's geopolitical and philosophical vision, interpreting the Russian-Ukrainian war not as a local or economic conflict but as part of a larger Western-driven “civilizational war” aimed at preserving U.S. dominance through globalization and liberal universalism that undermine non-Western sovereignties. Drawing on Dugin's challenge to the Arab-Islamic world to choose between submission to this unipolar order or alignment with multipolar powers such as Russia and China, the author presents this choice as a decisive moment for Arab societies, highlighting

their central position in global power dynamics. Drawing on Dugin's Fourth Political Theory, he portrays Islam as a complete civilizational system opposed to Western modernity and aligns Dugin's ideas with well-known Moroccan futurist Mahdi El-mandjra's (d. 2014) critique of Western cultural domination. The report concludes by urging Arab leaders and intellectuals to achieve intellectual and political sovereignty by mastering Eurasian geopolitics, rejecting Westernization, and asserting the Arab-Islamic world as an active force in shaping a multipolar order (Shawiya 2025). Another report, which was published by the Palestinian think tank Al-Natour Center for Studies and Research, portrays Dugin as the intellectual engine of a global counter-revolution against Western domination. According to it, Dugin's ideas have already materialized in Ukraine, are spreading among rising non-Western powers, and call for engagement from the Arab-Islamic world, which remains largely dormant in the face of its own marginalization (Abu Bakir 2022).

Although relatively rare, critique does exist. For example, in the article "The Arab Duginists" (*al-Dughiniyyun al-'Arab*), Muhammad Hujayri (2022), head of the cultural section of the influential Lebanese newspaper *Almodon*, interrogates why some Arab intellectuals and media platforms have embraced Dugin as an anti-Western icon. He argues that this embrace often stems from a longing for ideological alternatives to Western liberalism rather than a nuanced engagement with Dugin's complex and often contradictory philosophical system. He warns that such fascination risks turning Dugin into a projection of Arab desires for resistance against Western domination rather than subjecting his ideas to rigorous intellectual scrutiny (Hujayri 2022). The article also highlights contrasting reactions among Arab publics. While some celebrated Darya Dugin's assassination with a sense of grim satisfaction, others within the "axis of resistance" framed the attack as evidence of American evil. One of the clearest examples of this came from Ammar al-Mousawi, Hezbollah's official for Arab and international relations, who condemned Darya's assassination and praised Alexander Dugin for his "brave positions" (Al Manar 2022).

In his framework of civilizational multipolarity, Dugin places Russia and the Islamic world within the same camp of traditionalist civilizations—natural allies in the global struggle against liberal hegemony (Al Mashhad 2024; Al Arabiya 2024). He often stresses the shared spiritual values between Orthodox Christianity and Islam—faith in God, the family, and moral order—contrasting them with what he calls the Western cult of individualism and immorality. "Muslims understand me well," Dugin declared in an interview with Al Arabiya, "because I believe the West is the Dajjal (Antichrist) that destroys religion, family, and morality" (Al Arabiya 2023). Yet he has also argued that the Islamic world is not strong enough to emerge as an independent civilizational pole because it remains fragmented and lacks a coherent strategic vision (Al Ghad TV 2025).

The Palestinian cause occupies a central and symbolic position for both Dugin and his Arab audience. For him, the conflict in Gaza represents a frontline in the global war between Western globalism and traditional civilizations, paralleling the confrontation in Ukraine. Israel, in his analysis, is "a Western outpost in the Middle East, a geopolitical tool of Atlanticism," serving Anglo-American hegemony (Al Mashhad 2024; also Dugin 2023a,b; RT Arabic 2025; Al Ghad TV 2025). Dugin draws a sharp distinction between Arab peoples and their political elites, praising

the overwhelming popular support for Palestine but condemning Arab governments for normalizing relations with Israel and submitting to Western influence. “I cannot imagine, after what Israel has done in Gaza, what kind of Abrahamic dialogue one could still speak of,” he mentioned in an interview with Russia Today Arabic (RT Arabic 2025).

Dugin has insisted that October 7 and its aftermath cannot be understood without reference to eschatology, the religious discourse of the End Times. He interprets Hamas’ operation “Tufan al-Aqsa” as a preemptive strike to block Israel’s expansionist and messianic agenda—an agenda that, according to him, includes the destruction of the al-Aqsa Mosque and the construction of the Third Temple. From an Islamic perspective, he argues, Israel represents al-Dajjal, the Antichrist figure occupying the Holy Land, a theme rooted in hadith traditions and prophetic narratives. He recalls that Islamic eschatology foretells the liberation of Jerusalem by the Mahdi (Messiah) who will appear alongside ‘Isa (Jesus) in Damascus to lead the final battle against evil. Thus, both camps, according to Dugin, see themselves as actors in an apocalyptic scenario: “Before our eyes, prophecies are being fulfilled,” Dugin said, “and not by accident but because both sides are consciously acting on them” (RT Arabic 2025; Al Mashhad 2024). This religious language readily finds its audience in the Arab world.

Metaphysical alliances: Dugin in Iran

Iran is arguably a key country in Dugin’s worldview and a fertile ground for the reception of his political philosophy. In his geopolitical framework, Iran occupies a central and strategic position as an independent civilizational ally in the struggle against Western unipolar hegemony. Although Dugin acknowledges that Iran has historically competed with Russia in the South Caucasus and the Caspian region, he identifies numerous points of cultural, ideological, and political convergence. But the synergy between them extends beyond geopolitical alignment.

Dugin is indeed a great admirer of Iranian Neoplatonic philosophy, particularly the Illuminationist (*isharqi*) philosophy of Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi (d. 1191), several of whose works Dugin has translated from Persian (Persian is the only Eastern language he can read fluently). He also considers himself ideologically close to Henry Corbin (d. 1978), the renowned French Orientalist and Islamicist, drawing on Corbin’s scholarship on Iranian philosophy and Shi‘i metaphysics, particularly his interpretation of Islamic esoteric traditions such as Sufism and Shi‘i Neoplatonism as a core or central dimension of Islamic thought. Thus, Corbin functions as an intellectual bridge linking Dugin’s political metaphysics to the mystical and symbolic dimensions of Iranian civilization (Dugin 2014a,b). When visiting Iran, Dugin makes a point of meeting with Iranian philosophers inspired by Corbin. For instance, he conducted an admiring interview with the influential philosopher Gholamreza Avani, during which he explored Iranian traditionalist philosophy and learned about the intellectual academy founded by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Dugin 2018; also Davvar 2022).

Dugin often presents a highly idiosyncratic and racially charged interpretation of Sufism and Iranian Shi‘ism, framing them as manifestations of an eternal struggle

between what he terms the “Aryan-solar” and “Semitic-lunar” religious–cultural traditions. He posits that Iranian civilization, rooted in an Aryan ethos characterized by a metaphysics of light and a struggle against darkness, fundamentally differs from the Semitic civilizations, which include both Arab–Islamic and Judaic traditions. He argues that the Iranians subtly transformed Arab Islam by infusing it with their “solar” Aryan spirit, primarily through the esoteric dimensions of Shi‘ism and Sufism (Dugin 2014a,b, 2016; Knysh 2022, pp. 190–191). This narrative is deeply influenced by traditionalist thinkers like Julius Evola and René Guénon, as well as by Nazi occultism (Laruelle 2022).

Another connection between Dugin and Iran relates to Martin Heidegger. Dugin treats Heidegger’s *Dasein* as an alternative foundation for politics beyond liberalism, communism, and fascism, anchoring a multipolar world in which different peoples articulate their unique relationship to Being rather than conforming to Western universalism. Drawing on Heidegger’s notions of the history of Being (*Geschichte des Seins*) and the “other beginning,” Dugin reworks Heidegger’s historical narrative into a vision of a civilizational plurality grounded in Being itself. He argues for a multipolar world in which each great civilization embodies its own historical and ontological form of existence. Within this framework, Russia represents not merely a political or cultural alternative but a distinct civilizational *Dasein*, a unique mode of Being that stands in contrast to the Western metaphysics of subjectivity and liberal universalism (Dugin 2010, 2011; Backman 2022, p. 4) This Heideggerian framing situates Dugin in a broader New Right genealogy, where Heidegger is mined for metapolitical resources rather than read as a complex philosopher (Laruelle 2022).

In Iran, the group of intellectuals who express interest in Dugin and see him as a Heideggerian philosopher—including Hojjat al-Islam Abdol Hossain Khosrowpanah and Gholamreza Avani—inherits a much older Heideggerian legacy. Iranian twentieth-century intellectuals like Ahmad Fardid (d. 1994) and Jalal Al-e Ahmad (d. 1969) used Heideggerian categories to coin the influential notion of *gharbzadegi* (“Westoxication”). This term drew on Heidegger’s critique of modernity and technology but was recast as a civilizational diagnosis of Iran’s dependence on the West (Mirsepassi 2010, pp. 85–128). Heidegger in Iran has thus functioned both as a tool of nativist resistance to Westernization and as a language of critical philosophy institutionalized within the Islamic Republic’s intellectual field confronting modernity—two elements that speaks to Dugin’s own interpretation of Heidegger. Dugin refers to Fardid and his disciple Reza Davani Ardakani, emphasizing how they successfully integrated Heideggerian philosophy into the framework of Shi‘i Neoplatonism. He highlights their synthesis in which Heidegger’s concepts of *Ereignis* (“event of appropriation”) and *Der letzte Gott* (“the Last God”) were reinterpreted through Shi‘i eschatology. According to Dugin, for these thinkers, *Ereignis* corresponds to the metaphysical event of ultimate revelation, while the Last God symbolizes the appearance of the Hidden Imam (Mahdi), whose return marks the restoration of divine order (Dugin 2014a, pp. 416–417).

Dugin’s active visits to Iran and his close contacts with Iranian intellectuals and religious figures began in the mid-2000s. In 2005, he made an official visit at the invitation of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Tehran Institute for Strategic Studies, where he delivered several lectures. During this visit, he met with Mehdi

Safari, then head of the Russian and CIS Department at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, to outline key directions for future cooperation (Pliyev 2005). The increase in his visibility within Iranian media discourse between 2016 and 2020 can be explained primarily by Russia's entry into the Syrian war in 2015 and the subsequent Russian–Iranian military cooperation in Syria (Grajewski 2021). For instance, his 2016 visit coincided with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) military presence in Syria in support of Bashar al-Assad's regime, a theme Dugin explicitly referred to in his speeches (Davvar 2022; Mehrnews 2016a,b; Shabtabnews 2016a,b).

The main promoter of Duginism in Iran was filmmaker Nader Talebzadeh (d. 2022). Talebzadeh is a particularly interesting figure who, in some ways, can be compared to Doğu Perinçek in Turkey. The two intellectuals share a genuine and profound interest in Dugin and the idea of Eurasianism, and both used financial resources from public and private budgets and foundations to organize events promoting Dugin. Talebzadeh also conducted an extensive interview with Konstantin Malofeev, the monarchist founder of Tsargrad TV and a patron of Dugin on Ofoq TV, a channel closely affiliated with conservative circles (Ofoq TV 2016a,b). However, unlike Perinçek, Talebzadeh was a more prominent and politically connected figure. He was a conservative filmmaker known for several productions, the most famous being *Messiah* (produced in 2007), and favored by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. After Talebzadeh's death, Khamenei described him as a “revolutionary and hardworking researcher and artist” (Khamenei 2022; Davvar 2022).

In 2016, Dugin participated in the Fourth Humanities Gathering, an event organized by *Asr-e Andisheh* magazine in collaboration with the Sadra Research Center. The gathering was framed as a philosophical and civilizational dialogue between Iran and Russia and featured prominent Iranian intellectuals such as sociologist Manouchehr Ashtiani and international relations scholar Jahangir Karami. In his speech, Dugin emphasized what he called a shared “culture of expectation” (*farhang-e entezar*) between the two nations, meaning that Iranian Shi‘ism and Russian Orthodoxy both embody eschatological worldviews centered around the return of a divine figure—Imam Mahdi (the Messiah) in Shi‘i Islam and Jesus Christ in Orthodox Christianity. In his speech, Dugin also invoked Suhrawardi's philosophical allegory of *al-ghurba al-gharbiyya* (The Occidental Exile) as a symbol of the spiritual dislocation caused by modernity. According to Dugin, Iran's Islamic Revolution represented a model for such a spiritual return, just as the reassertion of Russian Orthodox identity could serve as the foundation for a Russian revival. Both revolts, he suggested, signal the failure of modernist ideologies as viable political projects (Mehrnews 2016a,b).

The event's organizers and participants responded to Dugin's ideas with a mix of admiration and critical reflection. Sajjad Norouzi, director of the Andisheh Cultural Center, which promotes Iranian culture, praised Dugin's political philosophy as grounded in reality and described his Fourth Political Theory as a bold attempt to develop a non-Western framework for politics. Similarly, Nader Talebzadeh compared Dugin's intellectual role to that of Ayatollah Khomeini's famous letter to Mikhail Gorbachev, suggesting that Dugin was laying the groundwork for a new ideological axis in the post-Western world (Mehrnews 2016a,b). However, not all Iranian commentators embraced Dugin with open arms. Jahangir Karami, a professor of Russian

studies at the University of Tehran, acknowledged the relevance of Dugin's thought to Iranian geopolitical interests but raised conceptual concerns about the risk of falling into the ideological traps of fascism or ethnonationalism. He also cautioned against overtheologizing a strategic partnership between both countries (Mehrnnews 2016a,b).

In 2016, Dugin was also a special guest in Iran for a few days at the "New Horizon Conference," hosted by Talebzadeh (Mashreghnews 2018). He went on to attend this annual conference multiple times, including as a distinguished speaker in 2019 in Beirut (Mashreghnews 2019). During his 2016 trip to Qom, he met with Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad Mehdi Mirbagheri, the head of the Qom Islamic Sciences Academy and a prominent theorist on the relationship between science and religion (Davvar 2022; Radio Farda 2016). In this meeting, Dugin extensively explained the religious dimensions of his theories, particularly the necessity of "religionizing natural sciences," that is, liberating them from the Western positivistic epistemologies—an idea central to the Iranian Traditionalist school. Dugin has also given speeches at the Allameh Tabataba'i University. In his conversation with Ayatollah Mirbagheri, which was published in full by Iranian media, Dugin said that he is delighted to be in the epicenter of the fight against modernity, calling it a flawed ideology, culture, civilization, lifestyle, philosophy, and politics, synonymous with Satan (Tasnimnews 2016; Mashreghnews 2016).

In 2017, Dugin, accompanied by Talebzadeh, participated in the Arba'in procession in Iraq, the fortieth day after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn b. 'Ali (d. 680) and his companions. The procession was broadcast on state television channels, and in one of his interviews, Dugin emphasized that Christians, too, should take part in this spiritual march because it is a symbol of the struggle against capitalism and liberalism (Ofoq TV 2017). Dugin was also interviewed by Mehdi Naseri, a conservative intellectual and former editor-in-chief of one of the most popular conservative Iranian newspapers, *Keyhan*.

Dugin's next visit to Iran in 2017 coincided with the regime's celebrations of the Islamic Revolution anniversary, during which he met with officials, scholars, and students in Tehran (Davvar 2022). He established close relationships with prominent conservative religious figures and philosophers, such as Mostafa Mohaghegh Damad, Gholamreza Avani, and Gholamhossein Ebrahimi Dinani, who, while trusted by the Iranian regime, also hold significant academic credibility. Dugin later met with Avani again, as well as with Hojjat al-Islam Abdol Hossain Khosrowpanah, head of Iran's Institute for Research in Philosophy and Wisdom, in Moscow. The meeting occurred as part of the conference "Revolution and Transformation in Islamic Thought and History," organized by the Russian Foundation for Islamic Studies and Iran's Institute for Research in Philosophy and Wisdom (Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia 2017).

In 2020, Dugin delivered a lengthy speech at Hassan Abbasi's think tank, the Center for Borderless Security Doctrinal Analysis, commonly known as Yaqin. Abbasi, a prominent conservative political theorist and officer in the IRGC, hosted the event. In his address, Dugin praised Qasem Soleimani, who had been killed by a US airstrike earlier that year, describing him as a true martyr and heroic figure (Yaghin TV 2020).

Dugin's name continues to appear regularly in Iranian media. They extensively covered the assassination of his daughter Darya in August 2022, generally echoing

the Russian narrative that Kyiv was responsible, but also situating the attack within the wider confrontation between Russia and the West. They portrayed Dugin as a symbolic figure whose family was targeted because of his anti-Western worldview (Qaemian 2022; Tasnimnews 2022). His continued presence in Iranian discourse thus reflects a broader interest in his ideas of multipolarity and civilizational resistance to the West. Iranian outlets consistently present Dugin not only as an intellectual but also as a political analyst close to the ruling elite. The Iranian ambassador to Russia has met with Dugin on several occasions to discuss international affairs (Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Russian Federation 2022; Pars Today 2023), while the influential *Tehran Times* highlighted his views on the importance of an Iran–Russia cooperation treaty, placing them alongside those of foreign ministers Sergey Lavrov and Abbas Araghchi (Tehran Times 2025). In February 2025, Dugin took part in a ceremony commemorating the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the National Day of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Russia, and his statement that Iran is the most successful country in the region was widely circulated by official Iranian media (The Islamic Republic News Agency 2025).

Yet Dugin’s enthusiastic reception among conservative media and political circles has provoked a forceful backlash from reformist thinkers (*eslahatalaban*), who view his growing influence as a symptom of Iran’s intellectual and political crisis. Unlike conservative groups, some reformist intellectuals, those aligned with the political vision of Mohammad Khatami and the current president, Masoud Pezeshkian, have been sharply critical of Dugin’s growing influence in the country. One such article characterizes Dugin’s followers as “Iranian Eschatologists” (*akhir-e zamaniha-ye Irani*), portraying them as major obstacles to developmental forces in Iran. It depicts Dugin’s “eschatological internationalism” as profoundly misguided, warning that it conflates metaphysical messianism with political opportunism, ultimately fostering sectarianism and foreign-policy adventurism that endanger Iran’s social cohesion (Ashtarian 2024). Other articles in the reformist newspaper *Sharq* criticize Talebzadeh, Mirbagheri, and other admirers of Dugin for promoting his ideology in Iran, which they find extremely polarizing and harmful (Sharq 2020; Gholami 2024). For instance reformist theologian Mohammad-Taqi Fazel Meybodi criticizes Mirbagheri’s meeting with Dugin in Qom and the subsequent fusion of Shi’i messianism and anti-modern fundamentalism with political power-seeking. According to him, Dugin serves both as an external ideological model and as a mirror exposing the pseudo-theoretical, power-driven nature of Iran’s eschatological hard-right discourse (Gholami 2024). While some critics emphasize the harm the employment of Duginism brings to domestic politics, others note that Iranian politicians and intellectuals should take into account pragmatic interests in foreign policy and the public good, not an ideology that serves another country—Russia.

For instance, Iranian political scientist Seyyed Sadeq Haqiqat critiques Dugin’s Fourth Political Theory as rhetorically powerful—capable of legitimizing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine—yet intellectually incoherent. In his conversation with *Sharq*, he argues that its influence stems not from philosophical rigor but from rhetorical excess, as Dugin constructs caricatures of liberalism and socialism to render his own worldview historically inevitable. Haqiqat characterizes this as a “straw-man” strategy, a technique shared by anti-modern thinkers from Heidegger to Iran’s contemporary

neo-Fardidians. In his view, liberalism, despite its flaws, remains a self-correcting and adaptive system, capable of renewal through welfare politics and democratic critique, unlike Dugin's static and authoritarian utopia. Similarly, socialism, he argues, cannot be pronounced dead, as social-democratic and ethical socialist traditions continue to thrive in various contexts around the world (Gholami 2023). Further exploring the conservative ideology of modern Iranian Heideggerians, *Sharq* interviewed Iranian-American academic Ali Mirsepassi, who situates Dugin squarely within the broader German-derived counter-Enlightenment tradition that, in his view, has deeply misled both European and Iranian intellectual life. Tracing a line from Nietzsche through Heidegger to contemporary right-wing and neofascist movements, he argues that this tradition produces “narratives of fear” grounded in anxiety, resentment, and hatred of the Other, which today are visible not only in European far-right politics but also “in Russia, in Mr. Dugin.” For Mirsepassi, Dugin and his Iranian proponents exemplify a style of politics that forgoes civic virtue and public good in favor of identity-based solidarity built on a sense of civilizational threat—a model diametrically opposed to the hope-oriented, virtue-centered Enlightenment he finds in British, American, and Indian experiences. In this sense, Dugin functions in his analysis as a contemporary emblem of the very anti-Enlightenment, fear-driven modernity that Iranian thinkers must consciously reject if they are to imagine a democratic and inclusive future (Gholami 2025).

Dugin's modular translation: reasons for success and their limits

The success of Alexander Dugin in reaching foreign audiences can be explained through two interrelated components. The first is his elaboration of a doctrine deeply rooted in esoteric, occultist, and eschatological traditions as well as geopolitics, thus allowing him to translate current transformations of the international order into a metaphysical language. The second is his role as a doctrinal chameleon: Dugin possesses broad cultural literacy and can therefore adjust his references to almost any context, referring to European thinkers in Europe, Latin American ones in Brazil, Confucius in China, and Islamic figures in the Middle East (see Piccoli, Laruelle and Cuenza, and Laruelle and Liu in this issue). In this way, Dugin's speeches are microtargeted and crafted for specific audiences to generate easy resonance.

An important element of Dugin's resonance in Muslim contexts is his reliance on the Traditionalist School, especially the writings of René Guénon (who converted to Islam and took the name of 'Abd al-Wahid Yahya), whose critique of modernity and affirmation of perennial wisdom profoundly shaped twentieth-century Islamic intellectual circles (Sedgwick 2004). Because Traditionalism accorded Islam a central place within its metaphysical hierarchy—emphasizing Sufism and Shi'i esotericism as privileged expressions of Tradition—Dugin's use of Guénon provides a ready bridge to Muslim audiences. Dugin has also been deeply influenced by Geydar Dzhemal (1947–2016), who blended Islamic philosophy (especially Shi'i political theology and metaphysics), Marxist critiques of capitalism, and elements of European political philosophy. He frequently emphasized the global struggle against Western imperialism and modernity, framing Islam as a revolutionary, antisystemic force (Laruelle 2016; Sibgatullina and Kemper 2017).

Last but not least, the historical experiences of Middle Eastern societies have been shaped by their painful interaction with the West, thereby facilitating the reception and adoption of Dugin's anti-Western thought. His theories resonate with Middle Eastern postcolonial intellectuals because his critique of Western universalism and advocacy of civilizational plurality align with their search for alternatives to liberal modernity, even if this reception overlooks the paradox that Dugin's Eurasianism simultaneously legitimizes a form of imperialism in Russia's "near abroad."

And, obviously, Dugin's outspoken defense of Palestine, framed as part of a broader civilizational struggle against Western hegemony, enhances his legitimacy in the Middle Eastern context, where solidarity with the Palestinian cause remains a predominant marker of political and moral credibility. A controversial yet nevertheless central aspect of Dugin's worldview is his long-standing antisemitism³ and anti-Zionism. From his early writings to his recent interviews, Dugin has portrayed Judaism and Zionism as embodiments of what he calls "nomadic" or "chaotic" forces undermining rooted civilizations. He repeatedly frames Zionism not only as a geopolitical project aligned with Anglo-American imperialism but also as a metaphysical manifestation of liberal modernity itself, casting Israel as a forward base of the "Antichrist civilization." This discourse frequently slides into conspiratorial modes, echoing older European antisemitic tropes, even as Dugin couches it in the vocabulary of "civilizational struggle." In the Middle Eastern context, however, his sharp anti-Zionist rhetoric has bolstered his credibility, since solidarity with Palestine remains a key moral and political touchstone.

The three case studies demonstrate that Dugin's reception in the Middle East can be understood as a modular translation: actors extract pieces that resonate with their preexisting narratives and discard the rest, meaning that Dugin's reception functions as a mirror for local ideological anxieties. His writings, persona, and symbolic capital are mobilized in ways that do not necessarily entail fidelity to his philosophical system in its globality but nonetheless grant him visibility across diverse publics. This underlines that Dugin operates less as a transnational "public intellectual" in the Habermasian sense and more as a floating signifier of global postliberal discontent. Across all three contexts, Dugin's reception has been mediated not so much by sustained philosophical engagement with his dense works—only a few of his books are, in fact, translated—than by media ecosystems and selective symbolic cues.

In Turkey, Dugin's modality of reception is that of strategic translation. Dugin has been embraced primarily by secular nationalists and Eurasianists who care about the strategic alliance between Russia and Turkey. His ideology resonates with civilizational nationalism and provides rhetorical validation for a Turkish pivot away from NATO and the European Union and toward Russia and China. His emphasis on "geopolitical codes" and framing Eurasia as a cultural–historical destiny provides Turkish Eurasianists and neo-Ottoman thinkers with a conceptual language. Additionally, Dugin's notion of "large spaces" (*großraum*), inherited from Carl Schmitt,

³Dugin's antisemitism extends to Arabs as well, as he reproduces old Orientalist tropes that frame Islamic intellectual history as a struggle between an Aryan-solar tradition and a Semitic-lunar one. In this dichotomy, the Aryan (Persian/Iranian) tradition is associated with creativity, spirituality, and wisdom, whereas the Semitic tradition is portrayed as overly legalistic and materialistic (Dugin 2014a,b; Knysht 2022).

serves as a tool for imagining a Turkish strategic identity embedded in a multipolar Eurasian order—one that transcends national borders and post-Cold War constraints.

Yet the Turkish reception highlights the extent of selective forgetting. Dugin's earlier anti-Turkish statements, including his denunciations of Pan-Turkism and competition in Central Asia and the Caucasus, are ignored or downplayed. The primary receptive audience for Dugin's books, tweets, and speeches consists of two distinct groups: the nationalist-imperialist circles surrounding Doğu Perinçek—distinguished by their simultaneous commitment to maintaining Turkey's secular Kemalist system while pursuing Turkish military, political, and civilizational dominance—and anti-Western Islamist factions aligned with the AKP. Dugin maintains a dedicated following among certain readers and listeners, standing out as one of the few post-Soviet thinkers who is regularly given a platform on Turkish television channels, in newspaper columns, and across other media outlets.

In the Arab world, Dugin's modality of reception is that of a symbolic amplifier. His appearances on Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and Al Mayadeen reduce his complex metaphysics to a posture of apocalyptic anti-Zionism, which resonates widely with local audiences in the post-October 7 environment. While often articulated in crude conspiratorial terms, Dugin's linkage of Zionism with global liberal hegemony allows actors across the region to incorporate his work into existing discourses on post-colonial resentment and Western imperialism. His denunciations of Israeli actions as genocide and his framing of Gaza as a frontline in an eschatological struggle align with popular Arab sentiments. His explicit endorsement of "the Axis of Resistance" and calls for Russian alignment with anti-Western forces in Arab countries further lend credence to his image as a transcivilizational revolutionary rather than a narrow Russian nationalist.

Yet a significant limitation to Dugin's adoption across the Arab Islamic world lies in his critique of Sunnism. He has consistently expressed fascination with Shi'ism and Sufism, while showing clear disdain for Sunni revivalist movements, especially different strands of Salafism. Consequently, Dugin's resonance is strongest among anti-Western ideologues in Hezbollah-aligned media, Ba'athist revivalist circles, Syrian loyalists, and antiliberal intellectuals seeking to globalize their critique of the West by incorporating Russian and Eurasian counterhegemonic discourses. Conversely, "Sunni intellectuals" who interview or cite him—such as Al-Nafisi (2022a,b) or Al Jazeera's influential anchor 'Ali al-Dafiri (Al Jazeera 2021b,a), who conducted more than two hours of interviews with him—are mainly interested in Dugin as an anti-Western critic and the so-called "brain of Putin," a symbolic key to understanding Russia's conflict with the West. All these actors use Dugin to lend philosophical depth and foreign validation to their existing positions, but their adoption of his ideas is selective and instrumental. He is rarely engaged as a full-fledged theorist, and more often mobilized as a useful foreign dissident who confirms regional narratives of resistance and Western hypocrisy.

By contrast, Iran demonstrates the deepest engagement with Dugin's ideas. In the Iranian case, Dugin's modality of reception is that of a metaphysical interlocutor. Unlike in the Arab or Turkish cases, Iranian Traditionalists and conservative intellectuals have engaged directly with Dugin's metaphysical critique of modernity and his notion of a multipolar order. They have found in his writings on Tradition, modernity,

and multipolarity a set of conceptual tools compatible with Shi'a eschatology. Indeed, Dugin's ideological affinities with Shi'a messianism—particularly the Mahdist expectation of a just world order—position him as a philosophical interlocutor rather than a foreign ideologue. His reading of Western modernity as a Dajjalian structure and his vision of Russia as *katechon* (the restraining force against apocalypse) overlap with Iranian theological–political concepts that see history as structured by a metaphysical battle between truth and deviation. Iranian Traditionalists read Dugin not simply as an analyst of the West, but as an *'arif*, a gnostic voice articulating the metaphysical stakes of global order. Although some conservative Iranian clerics have remained skeptical of Dugin, arguing that his Orthodox framework cannot be reconciled with Shi'a theology, others have treated his system instrumentally, extracting its antimodern critique while sidelining its Christian foundations.

This metaphysical mode of reception, however, is far from uncontested. While conservative and traditionalist circles have embraced Dugin as a spiritual ally articulating a shared eschatological vision, reformist thinkers in Iran interpret this very enthusiasm as symptomatic of a deeper intellectual crisis. They argue that what appears as a metaphysical dialogue is, in fact, a political alliance cloaked in sacred language—an attempt to legitimize authoritarian policies and geopolitical dependency through the idiom of messianism and anti-modern critique. The reformist critique of Dugin thus reveals far more than an isolated rejection of a foreign thinker—it marks a broader struggle over the meaning of modernity, reason, and political ethics in contemporary Iran. For reformist intellectuals, Duginism functions as a mirror reflecting the internal contradictions of Iran's hard-right discourse: its fusion of apocalyptic theology with political authoritarianism, its aestheticization of tradition, and its dependence on external, anti-liberal ideologies for legitimacy. Their engagement with Dugin reveals a deep anxiety within Iran's intellectual field about the return of “sacred politics,” in which metaphysical narratives are weaponized for temporal power. They see conservatives' engagement with Dugin's eschatological geopolitics as an ideological populism that utilizes people's anti-Western sentiments and political idealism, representing Russia to the Iranian public as a metaphysical and eschatological ally rather than as a foreign country with its own national interests. Ultimately, Dugin's reception in Iran—celebrated by conservatives and repudiated by reformists—exposes a defining split in the country's intellectual landscape: between those who gain symbolic capital by preaching civilizational confrontation and alternative development, and those who mobilize people around possibility of dialogue with the “West” and Western modernity.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis presented here demonstrates that Dugin's global ideological offer operates less as a coherent doctrine than as a modular system. Its core elements—multipolarity, antiliberalism, spiritual traditionalism, and apocalyptic critique—can be selectively adopted, rearticulated, or ignored depending on the receiving context. Dugin offers a high “translational” quality that explains his unusual global mobility as a discursive resource. His rise reflects growing disillusionment

with the failed promises of liberal globalization and the exhaustion of nationalist and socialist projects in much of the non-Western world. What he provides is not a system to be adopted wholesale, but a repertoire of concepts and images that can be mobilized to articulate resistance in diverse idioms. His critique of Atlanticism overlaps with postcolonial vocabularies, even as his Orthodox metaphysics remains largely alien.

This dynamic is best understood within the wider horizon of postliberalism. In the Muslim world, postliberalism signifies both a rejection of the universalist claims of Western liberal modernity and an attempt to retrieve or reinvent alternative civilizational models. Dugin's antiliberalism, filtered through Guénonian Traditionalism, resonates because it echoes long-standing Islamic critiques of modernity as spiritual decay. His discourse lends external legitimacy to Muslim intellectuals who frame the future not in terms of liberal integration but in terms of civilizational sovereignty, religious authenticity, and eschatological expectation. Even when his Orthodox symbolism is not embraced, his language of multipolarity and cultural authenticity dovetails with Muslim postliberal imaginaries that seek to provincialize the West and restore transcendent sources of political order.

Dugin is thus representative of a new class of postliberal ideologues whose influence lies in their symbolic flexibility rather than doctrinal coherence. Their ideas travel because they can be disassembled and recombined within local traditions, speaking to a shared postliberal imaginary without demanding uniformity. What emerges is not a story of unilateral influence but of creative appropriation, in which local actors assert their agency by reshaping imported symbols to fit their own ideological horizons.

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