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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

TEZ ONAY BELGESİ

SİYASET BİLİMİ VE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER Anabilim Dalı ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER (İNGİLİZCE) Bilim Dalı TEZLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS öğrencisi MEHMET TURAN ÇAĞLAR'nın A CONSTRUCTIVIST INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS APPROACH TO TURKEY -SYRIA RELATIONS DURING 1998-2011 adlı tez çalışması, Enstitümüz Yönetim Kurulunun 10.10.2013 tarih ve 2013-39/19 sayılı kararıyla oluşturulan jüri tarafından oy birliği / ~~oy çokluğu~~ ile Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ABSTRACT

Turkey-Syria relations since 1946 have witnessed important ups and downs. While two societies have many common features as a result of historical links, tensions and mistrusts have dominated inter-state relations. Both Turkey and Syria saw the other as the source of problems and crises since 1946. However, with the new century, bilateral relations began to change and old enemy turned into a new friend. Under these circumstances, examining bilateral relations has gained such popularity.

This thesis examines the changing nature of Turkey-Syria relations from the window of Constructivist International Relations approach. In order to understand historical enmities, prejudices and mistrusts, identities of both countries and their interests should be taken into consideration. In addition to the effects of structure, the role of agents should also be carefully examined. In historical terms, Turkey and Syria defined their corporate identities in opposite directions. Ideational factors like taking part in opposite ideological camps widened the gap between the two corporate identities. As a result, systemic interaction between them became problematic. Regional and global structural dynamics also reinforced this trend. Under these circumstances, the "Other" turned into the absolute enemy. On the other hand, as a result of the Adana Accords, tension between Turkey and Syria gradually decreased and bilateral relations began to improve. Rising interdependence, the belief about the occurrence of the common fate and common concerns about the regional developments transformed the nature of bilateral relations. For this rapid transformation, both the agents and structure played crucial role. In line with these discussions, the thesis examines the golden era of bilateral relations from Adana Accords in 1998 to the beginning of uprisings in Syria in 2011 with the Constructivist International Relations approach by focusing on the both the agents and structure.

Key Words: Turkey-Syria relations, Constructivist International Relations approach, identity and interest, Self and Other, structure and agent.

Advisor: Assistant Professor İbrahim Mazlum

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ÖZ

Türkiye Suriye ilişkileri 1946'dan beri önemli iniş ve çıkışlara tanık olmuştur. Her iki toplum tarihsel bağları sonucu birçok ortak özelliğe sahip olmasına rağmen, gerilimler ve güvensizlikler ikili ilişkilere hükmetmiştir. Hem Türkiye, hem Suriye 1946'dan beri diğerini problemlerin ve krizlerin kaynağı olarak görmüştür. Fakat yeni yüzyılda ikili ilişkiler değişmeye başlamış ve eski düşman, yeni dosta dönüşmüştür. Bu şartlar altında ikili ilişkileri incelemek ilgi çekici hale gelmektedir.

Bu çalışmada Türkiye Suriye ilişkilerinin değişen doğası, Yapısalcı Uluslararası İlişkiler yaklaşımı penceresinden incelenmiştir. Tarihsel düşmanlıkları, önyargıları ve güvensizlikleri anlamak için her iki tarafın kimlikleri ve çıkarları göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır. Yapının etkilerinin yanında, failin rolü de incelenmelidir. Tarihsel anlamda, Türkiye ve Suriye tüzel kimliklerini farklı yönlerde tanımlamışlardır. Karşıt ideolojik kamplarda yer almak gibi fikri etkenler iki tüzel kimlik arasındaki uçurumu daha da açmıştır. Bunun sonucu, iki taraf arasındaki sistemik etkileşim sorunlu olmuştur. Ayrıca, bölgesel ve küresel yapısal dinamikler bu eğilimi kuvvetlendirmiştir. Bu şartlar altında "Öteki" kesin bir düşmana dönüşmüştür. Diğer taraftan Adana Protokolü'nün sonucu olarak, Türkiye Suriye arasındaki gerilim kademeli olarak azalmış ve ikili ilişkiler gelişmeye başlamıştır. Artan karşılıklı bağımlılık, ortak kaderin oluşması hakkındaki inanç ve bölgesel gelişmeler karşısındaki ortak kaygılar ilişkilerin doğasını değiştirmiştir. Bu hızlı dönüşümde hem failler hem de yapı çok önemli rol oynamışlardır. Sözü edilenler ışığında, bu tezde 1998'de varılan Adana Mütabakatı'ndan 2011'de Suriye'de başlayan ayaklanmalar arasındaki altın dönem ikili ilişkiler açısından hem faillere hem de yapıya odaklanılarak Yapısalcı Uluslararararası İlişkiler yaklaşımıyla incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye-Suriye İlişkileri, Yapısalcı Uluslararası İlişkiler Yaklaşımı, Kimlik ve Çıkar, Ben ve Öteki, Yapı ve Fail

Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. İbrahim Mazlum

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
ASALA	Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
BDP	Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (Peace and Democracy Party)
CUP	The Committee of Union and Progress
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
GAP	Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi (Southeastern Anatolia Project)
KDP	Kurdish Democratic Party
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
OIC	The Organization of Islamic Conference
PEJAK	Partiya Jiyana Azad a Kurdistanê (The Party of Free Life of Kurdistan)
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (Kurdistan Worker's Party)
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
TESEV	Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Vakfı (The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation)
THY	Türk Hava Yolları (Turkish Airlines)
TİKA	Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı (The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency)
TRT	Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation)
UAR	United Arab Republic
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

INTRODUCTION

Turkey-Syria relations since 1946 were described with historical enmities, misperceptions and prejudices. Both Syria and Turkey tended to see the "Other" as the source of concern and threat. Especially, during the 1990s, the "Other" became absolute enemy for each of them, and Turkey and Syria began to analyze other's acts from the security perspective. Increasing tension between two states created a risk of war in 1998 and this became one of the cornerstones for Turkish and Syrian foreign policies. While chronic problems throughout the history were important reasons for the risk of war, identity crises in both countries and linking domestic problems with foreign developments composed important part of increasing tension during 1990s. In that sense, rather than international political structure, agents and identities of the actors played a central role in the creation of the sense of enmity.

On the other hand, the bilateral relations began to change after the signing of Adana Accords in 1998, and until 2011, positive and cooperative trends between two states gradually increased. In that sense, the period from 1998 to 2011 represents the golden era for bilateral relations. During this period, the distinction between the "Self" and "Other" began to blurred and improving relations between the two states began to be shown as a model for the other states of the region. However, in order to understand improving relations, change in the ruling powers of Turkey and Syria should be taken into consideration. In 2000, Bashar Asad became the new president of Syria after 30-year Hafez Al-Asad regime and this change represented an important development for Syria. On the other side, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) became the new ruling power in Turkey in 2002 and its foreign policy vision under the leadership of Ahmet Davutoğlu had an important impact on changing perceptions in the foreign policy. In that sense, while regional and international developments during the 2000s like the US invasion in Iraq or the developments in Northern Iraq made cooperation rational for both Syria and Turkey, the new interests of both sides as a result of the new identities in Syria and Turkey were the main determinants for improving relations.

In this context, the main objective of the study is to analyze the causes of improving relations between Syria and Turkey after 1998 on the basis of changing interests and identities. In order to analyze this change on the agents, the Constructivist International Relations approach is taken as the main theoretical framework. In addition to emphasizing the role of agents, effects

of structure and developments over the bilateral relations can be defined with the help of constructivist approach.

a. Research Questions

The aim of the study is to analyze changing dynamics of bilateral relations on the basis of changing interests and identities. In doing so, it will also be tried to analyze the effects of the international structure and developments over the agents and potential effects of the agents over the structure.

The research questions of the study are;

- ✓ How can we explain historical enmities between the two states on the basis of corporate identities?
- ✓ What are the effects of the international political structure over misperceptions and prejudices?
- ✓ How can we explain the "enemy" image during the 1990s and the "friend" image during the 2000s, and the transformation of relations from the enmity to friendship on the basis of the constructivist approach? What would be the limits for an overall transformation?
- ✓ How can we analyze the various dimensions of the core issues of Hatay, water and PKK in constructivist terms?

By answering these questions, the study aims to determine causal relations shaping or effecting bilateral relations besides explaining constitutive relations. In that sense, by answering "how" and "what" questions, the study aims to make predictions about the future of bilateral relations. However, making predictions within a dynamic international structure is a risky method. Especially, when we think about deep effects of the Arab Spring as the beginning of a new era for the region, the prediction about the future becomes almost impossible. However, with the help of explaining constitutive relations, at least, the study tries to explore the main logic for the bilateral relations.

b. Hypothesis

The main hypothesis of this study is that along with the structural effects, changing interests on the basis of new identities made the main impact over improving bilateral relations from 1998 to 2011. Therefore, in order to understand and explain changing nature of bilateral relations, we should analyze new agents in Turkey and Syria besides the structure.

c. Methodology

Reviewing literature and historical analyses are the main research methods used in the study. In the first chapter, a literature review was conducted to construct coherent theoretical framework for the study. In this way, the relationship between theory and practice could be established and reference points for the study could be defined. During the second, third and fourth chapters, secondary sources were also used to understand the dynamics of bilateral relations. By examining both sides' historical backgrounds, the central tenets of their identities tried to be understood. In this way, expectations and perceptions of actors in historical terms could be explained.

In the third chapter, the publications since 1998 were mainly examined. For the Turkish side, writings of Ahmet Davutoğlu- current Minister of Foreign Affairs- were analyzed to understand ideational factors behind the new foreign policy attitude in addition to the other sources. For the Syrian side, influential publications about the new identity of Syria and Bashar Al-Asad period were examined. The main defect in this part is that although official declarations of Turkish side are more reachable via the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there is no English version of the website for the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition to these, for the Turkish side, new foreign policy perspective is more coherent and holistic which resulted in many publications about Turkish foreign policy during the 2000s.

At the third and forth chapters, the secondary resources like the columns and reports of newspapers and internet resources were analyzed to understand the gradual transformation of relations. The publications about water, PKK and Hatay disputes were examined and the areas of cooperation were analyzed. In addition to these, protocols to solve these problems and discussions about the legal frameworks for cooperation areas were examined. In that sense, publications about the new cooperation areas and official and legal documents were assessed.

d. Presentation Order of the Study

In order to answer research questions presented above, the study is divided into four chapters.

The first chapter is about the theoretical framework of the study. It begins with the definition of central tenets of Constructivist International Relations approach, which is used as the main theoretical approach throughout the study. In that sense, the central place of Wendtian constructivism is examined. In this chapter, the concept of identity, role of ideational factors over material realities, effects of the structure over agents or vice versa and types of roles are explored. By analyzing the role of the ideational factors in bilateral relations, we can see the changing discourse and attitudes of the parties about core problems, whereas most of the problems still remain unsolved. By exploring the concept of identity, we can examine the categorization of identities from the Constructivist International Relations approach. In this way, we can analyze the corporate identities of both sides, their effects over social identities and results of these identities on the bilateral relations. With changing identities of parties, we can see the changing nature of relations after 1998 and we can understand the attempts for the establishment of collective identities. By analyzing agent-structure relationship, we can see positive or negative effects of structure over bilateral relations throughout the history. With the help of kinds of roles, we can see changing perceptions about the relationship between the "Self" and the "Other".

In the second chapter, the historical backgrounds of the relations are analyzed. In this chapter, the establishment of corporate identities in nation-building process and its negative effects over bilateral relations are examined. In this way, the causes of historical enmities between two states on the basis of corporate identities and the effects of international political structure over misperceptions and prejudices are explained. In addition to this, the negative effects of social identities of parties after the beginning of systemic interaction are elaborated. In that sense, some historical problems with concrete examples are analyzed. The structural effects over the bilateral relations are also examined. In that sense, the effects of being located in different ideological blocs during the Cold War are also analyzed. By showing the effects of being located in opposite directions, we can also see the effects of ideational factors over

bilateral relations. In this chapter, the 'enemy' image on the basis of identities during the 1990s is also explained.

The third chapter explores the new identities and their new interests in Syria and Turkey. New interest formulation of Bashar Asad administration and its reconstruction and redefinition efforts are elaborated in this chapter. In order to understand the effects of new identity, the reform process in Syria and its limits are examined. In addition to these, the understanding of new foreign policy of Bashar Asad administration and its limits are also analyzed. In addition to the analysis of the new identity and its redefinition of interests, the effects of international political structure over the new direction of Syrian foreign policy understanding are also elaborated. In that sense, the effects of 2003 Iraq War and 2005 Rafic Hariri assassinations are examined. Especially, Bush administration's strategy of war on terrorism and direct and indirect effects of this strategy over Syria's new identity are analyzed.

In the third chapter, the new foreign policy identity of Turkey is examined. In that sense, the central tenets of Davutoğlu doctrine are described. In this way, we can analyze the effects of ideational factors over new interest formulation. The results of the new foreign policy doctrine with concrete examples are also examined. In doing so, we can analyze the relations with the Middle East in general and with Syria in particular. In addition to these, we can also look at the understanding of the new identity about some chronic issues of Turkey such as the Kurdish issue, which was one of the main causes of identity crisis in Turkey and rising tension with Syria during the 1990s. In this way, we can also analyze at least indirect effect of changing ideational factors over bilateral relations. During this chapter, the 'friend' image on the basis of identities during the 2000s is also examined. With the help of the second and third chapters, we can compare two periods, and in this way, we can understand the transformation of the "Other" from an enemy into a friend.

The fourth chapter examines the changing understandings of the parties as a result of new identities over chronic problems and the limits of these changes for solution. In that sense, Hatay, PKK and water disputes are analyzed in this chapter. The roots of the problems are elaborated and identity dimensions of these problems especially in pre-1998 period are examined. When the post-1998 period is analyzed, we can see the effects and limits of ideational factors over these chronic problems. In this way, we can also see the effects of changing

identities and interests over these problems. Limits of new understandings over chronic problems are described in this chapter as well. In that sense, the chapter four compares the ideational factors and identity dimensions for the chronic problems in pre-1998 and post-1998 periods. Therefore, this chapter tries to analyze the identity dimensions of Hatay, water and PKK problems by comparing different time periods.

Chapter four also examines the increasing cooperation between two countries between 1998 and 2011 period by concentrating on the areas of cooperation. In addition to this, the fourth chapter also elaborates on similar attitudes of the parties towards regional developments. With reference to 2003 Iraq War, this chapter examines the effects of international political structure of Syria and Turkey leading to an increasing cooperation. In this way, we can see the attempts of both sides for the establishment of collective identity as a result of cooperation between the "Self" and the "Other". Hence, increasing cooperation in different areas is analyzed within the constructivist framework. Moreover, declarations of Syrian and Turkish officials about the common fate, which is also crucial for collective identity, are examined in this chapter. By this way, some official and semi-official speeches showing the belief about the common fate are analyzed. Moreover, by showing the belief about the common fate, we can see changing relationship between the "Self" and "Other" or in other terms, blurring of the distinction between the "Self" and the "Other".

Chapter four lastly analyzes the post-2011 era to show the limits of change, in other terms the deterioration of relations. Therefore, to examine changing nature of relations in the negative direction, both the agents and structure are analyzed. In terms of the agents, the study tries to show the limits of changing identities and interests of both countries. While the first decade of 2000s implies important changes for both Syria and Turkey, this period does not represent a radical transformation. Therefore, chapter four shows the limits of change on the basis of new identities and interests of both parties. In addition to these, the effects of the regional developments called as Arab Spring are analyzed in this chapter. Arab Spring as the critical juncture made huge impact over identities of Turkey and Syria. It caused an identity crisis in Syria. Corporate identity negatively affected the social identity and this resulted in the deterioration of bilateral relations. On the other hand, Turkey's discourse towards the region became more proactive with the start of Arab Spring. As a result of the changing discourse of

Turkish foreign policy, Turkey became a direct part of the processes. In that sense, the critical juncture in 2011 made negative effects over bilateral relations, and the positive atmosphere of the first decade of 2000s disappeared. Shortly, this chapter tries to analyze the limits of overall transformation referring to the agents and structure.

In the conclusion chapter, the post-2011 developments are elaborated briefly, and in this way, some predictions for the future of relations between two countries are made. By establishing links between pre-1998, post-1998 and post-2011 periods, coherent logic for the development and future course of the bilateral relations are tried to be constructed.

The main time period framework for the study is between October 19-20, 1998 (date of Adana Accords) and March 2011 (beginning of the protests in Syria). As mentioned above, in order to establish a coherent understanding of bilateral relations, the necessary references to both pre-1998 and post-2011 periods are made. As the theoretical framework, the Wendtian constructivist approach is applied to understand inter-state relations. In terms of the level of analysis, the individual level, state level and system level are taken into consideration. For the individual level, the new leaderships in both countries, influential foreign policy figures like Ahmet Davutoğlu and İsmail Cem are taken into consideration. For the state level, bilateral relations and areas of cooperation are considered. For the systemic level, important international and regional developments like the end of the Cold War and start of Arab Spring are taken into consideration. On the other hand, for the sake of limiting the framework of the study, most of the non-state actors are excluded such as influential economic and trade organizations or civil society organizations that push the leaderships for further cooperation during this period.

CHAPTER 1 :

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is described as "an approach rather than theory".[1] "And if it is a theory, it is a theory of process not substantive outcomes".[2] In that sense, constructivism addresses a wide range of theoretical usage. In order to refine wide range of constructivist approach, describing central tenets of constructivism can provide us coherent framework for the study. In addition to this, the understanding of Wendtian constructivism as a part of constructivist approach can also limit the wide range of constructivist thinking which provides us coherent framework for this study. In that sense, I will try to define the central themes of constructivism in this chapter and underline the major aspects of the Wendtian understanding that will be used throughout the study.

Constructivist research program deals with issues of identity in world politics and the theorization of domestic politics and culture in international relations theory. The starting question of constructivist approach is that "how an action does or not reproduce both the actor and the structure."[3] Constructivist approach responses this question like that meaningful action or behavior is possible only within inter-subjective context. For constructivist understanding, there is no objective reality and the reality is the product of actor's perceptions.[4] Therefore, critiques against the objectivity of the knowledge and the social world are one of the important critiques of constructivism against positivist approaches. Inability of objectivist approaches in foreseeing the future made the concept of inter-subjectivity irresistible for constructivism, which helps constructivist and other non-traditional approaches in explaining change in international politics. Hence, the starting point of constructivism can be seen as the inter-subjective understanding. Inter-subjective meanings are critical data for the understanding of the social world. Moreover, structure and agents can only be meaningful with inter-subjective set of norms and rules.[5] Inter-subjective structures give meaning to material structures. This interpretation

[1] Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory", **International Security**, Vol. 23, No: 1 (Summer, 1998), p. 196
[2] Hopf, p. 196
[3] Hopf, p. 172
[4] Oytun Orhan, "The Impact of Identity on Syria's Regional Policy between 1946-2000", (**Unpublished Master Thesis**, Hacettepe University Depatment of International Relations, 2010), p. 11
[5] Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, **Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach** (London: Routlegde, 2003), p.16

became one of the main alternatives to the objectivist understanding in analyzing inter-state relations. This approach also became a part of the raising challenges against the domination of the positivist approaches in International Relations studies. In analyzing Turkey-Syrian relations, applying inter-subjective understanding will lead us to the better analysis of the historical prejudices and misperceptions between two countries. Additionally, it will provide us more consistent viewpoint in understanding the transformation of the relations during post-1998 period.

Wendtian constructivism provides more suitable ground in analyzing Turkey-Syria relations. Wendt describes the state-centric view as being a tree-centric for the analysis of the forest.[6] For him, states are still the primary actors of international politics, although non-state actors are becoming more important.[7] "States are the dominant force of subjectivity in contemporary world politics"[8] which makes them the primary units of analysis.[9] Wendtian constructivism also tries to look at inter-subjectivity between actors in world politics within predictable and replicable patterns of action.[10] Therefore, in addition to constitutive relations, causal relations are also important for Wendtian constructivism, which can be helpful in understanding the changing dynamics of Turkey-Syria relations throughout the history. With the help of scientific realism, Wendtian constructivism aims to answer what questions besides how questions that helps us construct links between different time periods in Turkey-Syria relations. Wendt's constructivism also implies that alongside the shared ideas, material forces in any empirical analysis must also be considered.[11] In that sense, Wendtian constructivist approach is a suitable one to see the effects of ideas over material forces in bilateral relations. If we ignore the effects of ideas over Turkey-Syria relations, then the logic of bilateral relations could not be fully grasped. Moreover, the dynamics of culture and types of identities play important role in Wendt's constructivist approach. The central role of identities in Turkey and Syria makes the concept of identity one of the crucial concepts for the study. His explanations about the effects of

[6] Alexander Wendt, **Social Theory of International Politics,** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 9
[7] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 9
[8] Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, "Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach", **Uluslararası Hukuk ve Politika**, Vol. 3, No. 11 (2007), p. 123
[9] Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics", **International Security**, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer, 1995), p. 72
[10] Hopf, p. 199
[11] Dale C. Copeland, "The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism: A Review Essay", **International Security**, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Fall, 2000), p. 187

unobservables like international system via scientific realism[12] also make his approach more attractive in describing the effects of international system or international political structure over Syria and Turkey throughout the history.

Back to the concept of inter-subjectivity, it can be argued that it is one of central themes of the constructivist approach which is crucial to understand the relationship between the "Self" and the "Other" and the co-constitution of the agent and structure. According to the inter-subjective social context, actors develop their relations with others through the media of norms and practices.[13] In that sense, inter-subjective meanings constitute both the structure and agent. Inter-subjectivity of the identities and the interests result in endogenous understanding about them. Therefore, constructivist approaches treat identities and interests as endogenously and socially constructed.[14] Because of this, inter-subjectivity of interests and identities in the system determines changing dynamics of international politics. In this way, inter-subjectivity provides more space in explaining change in international political structure. In that sense, inter-subjective structures give meaning to material structures. Therefore, the concept of inter-subjectivity will provide us a framework to analyze changing perceptions of agents and their effects over structure for Turkey-Syria relations. Hence, we can analyze changing interests of the parties as a result of changing identities and define the role of ideational factors over material realities. With the help of the concept of inter-subjectivity, we can also analyze the ideational concerns of both new identities in Turkey and Syria during the first decade of 2000s. In that sense, before analyzing the role of identity for bilateral relations, we should take a look at the place of ideational factors within the constructivist approach and their effects on the relations.

1.1 ROLE OF IDEATIONAL FACTORS AND ITS EFFECTS ON BILATERAL RELATIONS

While constructivism does not ignore the importance of material power, it emphasizes the role of ideational factors over material reality. Constructivism sees international politics as a distribution of ideas. The description of material reality by ideational factors plays central role in the constructivist approach. For Wendt, power and interests are still important but their meaning

[12] Alexander Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations", **International Organizations**, Vol. 41, No: 3 (1987), p. 352
[13] Hopf, p. 173
[14] Enver Gülseven, "Identity Security and Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Period: Relations with the EU, Greece and the Middle East", (**Unpublished PhD. Thesis**, Brunel University Department of Politics and History, 2010), p. 36

and effects depend on actors' ideas.[15] "Interest and power do not have effects independent from the ideas".[16] According to the idealist sociology or structural idealism in Wendt's terms[17], the distribution of ideas and knowledge has more effect than material facts. Hence, "identities and interests of actors are constructed by ideas".[18] In addition, the discursive power is necessary to understand social world besides the material power. Patterned behavior "should be understood as a result of material power with social practices, institutionalized norms and inter-subjective web of meaning".[19] In that sense, "discursive practices are the source of any transformation of interests and identities".[20] As a result, the subject-object distinction of traditional understanding becomes problematic for constructivism and this provides a place for the concept of inter-subjectivity within international politics. Therefore, the discursive framework is essential to explain the behavioral outcomes in international politics for constructivism.[21] With the help of the discursive power, agents can reproduce order and predictability in their understandings and expectations. Hence, the discursive approach of the constructivists indicates that socially meaningful objects and events are the result of an interpretive construction of the world or in other terms, "socially constructed knowledge of the reality".[22] The understanding of the constructivist approach about the place of ideational factors and its relations with the discursive power can help us understand the nature of transformation of Turkey-Syria relations in the post-1998 period.

With the signing of Adana Accords in 1998, the relations between the two states began to normalize, but most of the problems remained unsolved. However, as a result of decreasing tension, the parties became more tolerable towards these problems. Although there was no radical change in the level of cooperation until 2002, the two countries' perceptions about the actions of the "Other" became more relaxed. As a result of the new governing powers with their new interest formulations in Syria and Turkey, the two countries raised the level of cooperation in nearly every issue. In that sense, although most of the historical problems remained unsolved, they did not prevent cooperation between the two parties. This trend could be explained by

[15] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 24
[16] Wendt, *Constructing International Politics*, p.74
[17] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 1
[18] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach*, p. 122
[19] Hopf, p. 178
[20] Copeland, p. 193
[21] Martin Griffiths, Steven C. Roach and M. Scott Slomon, **Fifty Key Thinkers in International Relations**, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 138
[22] Gülseven, p.23

ideational factors which played central role for both parties. In Syria, Bashar Al-Asad became the president in 2000 after 30 years of Hafez Al-Asad's rule and his new vision made Turkey a reasonable partner for him in the region. Distancing from the Cold War understanding in Syria made important ideational effect on bilateral relations. In addition to these, the aim of the Bashar Al-Asad administration for being a part of international society was one of the reasons of increasing cooperation. Furthermore, the rising importance of the Middle East in general and Syria in particular in the AKP's (Justice and Development Party) foreign policy especially under the guidance of Prof. Ahmet Davutoğlu -ex-chief foreign policy advisor to the prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and current minister of foreign affairs- made important effect on shifting foreign policy understanding. These different sets of understandings by both parties made cooperation more reasonable. Because of this, while some of the central problems remained unsolved, the new interests of both parties as a result of the new identities made cooperation sustainable and these similar interests prevented the occurrence of any crises between the two states. The change in the attitude and rhetoric of both countries was clearly observed in official and semi-official speeches. Despite the remaining problems, the speeches and declarations in post-1998 period contained friendly and tolerable motives in comparison to the hostile ones during the pre-1998 period. Analyzing this change could be accomplished mainly by examining the ideational factors and their effects over bilateral relations.

For constructivism, the social construction of actors' identities explains the genesis of actors' interests.[23] The endogenous nature of identity as a result of the holistic ontology of constructivism holds that culture constitutes role identities and their corresponding interests and practices.[24] By criticizing the traditional understanding about the exogenous nature of identity, Wendtian constructivism elaborates the constitutive effects of concept of identity besides the causal effects. In that sense, the role of identity in the construction of alliances, threat perceptions and preferences are important to understand inter-state relations.[25] The subjective understanding with discursive processes and the social construction of the social world make interests and identities core concepts for the constructivist research agenda. Therefore, "understanding how identities are constructed, what norms and practices accompany their reproduction, and how they

[23] Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, **Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach,** London: Routlegde, 2003, p.15
[24] Hidemi Suganami, "Wendt, IR and Philosophy: A Critique" Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander (Eds.), in **Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and His Critics**, (57-73), New York: Routledge, 2006, p.70
[25] Gülseven, p. 3

construct each other"[26] become central concerns of the constructivist approach. In that sense, in order to understand the changing nature of the bilateral relations as a result of ideational factors, the new identity and interests of both parties and their effects over the relations should be examined. By defining new identities and interests of the Bashar Al-Asad administration and the AKP government, we can more easily analyze the transformation of relations.

1.2**ROLE OF IDENTITY IN BILATERAL RELATIONS**

Constructivism argues that identity is the basis of interests. "Identities are necessary in order to ensure at least some minimal level of predictability and order"[27] and identities make real difference between actors within a specific structure. Based on identities of states, different states behave differently towards other states. Constructivism defines "an identity by specifying the actions that will cause others to recognize that identity and respond to it appropriately".[28] Identities perform three important functions. They "tell you and others who you are and they tell you who the others are".[29] Because of this, they are relational for constructivism.[30] Constructivism also focuses on linking the fundamental institutional structures with state identity and interests.[31] Identity is directly related with the interpretation of the material world and material gains are defined based on the actor's identity.[32] In that sense, alternative identities with sufficient material forces can cause change. Because of this, the change of identity implies change for the agent which can reproduce the structure. While structures of international politics shape agents' identities and interests, different identities of agents can affect structures as well. Identity is the central concept of the social world, and constructivism treats identities and interests as endogenous and social construct.[33] Because of different identities within different historical contexts, they are produced and reproduced rather than pre-existing entities. Therefore, reproduction and effects of the identity are two of the main concerns of constructivism.

In terms of Wendtian constructivism, his categorizations about the concept of identity will provide important framework to analyze dynamics of Turkey-Syria relations. Wendt describes four types of identity. These are corporate identity, type identity, role or social identity

[26] Hopf, p. 192
[27] Hopf, p. 174
[28] Hopf, p. 175
[29] Gülseven, p.35
[30] Orhan, *The Impact of Identity on Syria's Regional Policy between 1946-2000*, p. 14
[31] Griffiths, Roach and Slomon, p. 123
[32] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p. 9
[33] Gülseven p.36

and collective identity.[34] Type identity refers to a social category applied to the actor who shares the same characteristics like language.[35] In terms of identity construction, Wendt makes a distinction between the corporate and social identities of states. Corporate identity "refers to the intrinsic, self-organizing qualities that constitute actor individuality"[36]. States start systemic interaction with an already defined corporate identity. In that sense, physical security, predictability in relationship to the world, recognition as an actor by other actors and economic well-being are the basic interests of corporate identity.[37] Agents' similar corporate identities are more likely to identify each other positively and seek cooperation.[38] Corporate identity like type identity is the internal dimension of the concept of identity that does not require the recognition of other actors.

Constructed corporate identities determine the intention and direction of foreign policy of states. Because of this, states re-orient their foreign policy preferences in accordance with the new identity. The change of corporate identity can cause important differences. In that sense, the AKP government in Turkey implies some changes for the corporate identity of Turkey, while the Bashar Al-Asad rule can also be described as a change of Syrian corporate identity. In addition to these, "changes in corporate identity can vary from simple modifications to a complete transformation of the identity".[39] In that sense, the level of change for corporate identity directly affects the social identity and systemic interaction. Limited change of corporate identity results in simple modifications, whereas radical change of corporate identity can transform overall international orientation of the state. For Turkey-Syria relations during the 2000s, we can argue that level of change for both countries' corporate identities was not radical which prevented overall transformation of bilateral relations.

How a state satisfies its needs of corporate identity depends on how it defines the self in relation to the other which is the function of social identity. "A social identity is defined as a set of meanings that an actor attributes to itself in relation to the other, while taking the perspectives

[34] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics,* p. 224
[35] Gülseven, p. 37
[36] Alexander Wendt, 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', **American Political Science Review**, Vol. 88, No. 2, (1994), p. 385
[37] Wendt, *Collective Identity Formation and the International State*, p. 385
[38] Gülseven, p. 42
[39] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach*, p. 142

of others as a social object."[40] Therefore, social identity of states is directly related to inter-subjective relations among the states. During the course of interaction, different identities interact with each other and this produces "perception of the self and others' identities, motivations and actions"[41]. Social identities provide crucial connection for the mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures.[42] Any change in the corporate identity of the state will affect the identity formation at the systemic level or the social identity of the agent. Because of the co-determination of the agent and structure, systemic developments can also affect corporate identity. The relationship between corporate identity and state's social identity is important because any clash between two may cause unstable identities. This argument can be used for both Turkey and Syria during the 1990s. For instance, Islamic and Kurdish insurgencies during the 1900s deeply affected the corporate identity of Turkey which negatively affected the social relations of Turkey with the immediate neighbors. Turkey externalized its problems and because of this, southern neighbors turned into an enemy against Turkey. On the other hand, Hafez Asad rule witnessed a legitimacy crisis in Syria and relations of the Cold War period became almost unsustainable for Hafez Al-Asad. Under these circumstances, securitization gained priority for Syrian rule which affected the foreign relations. Therefore, discussions about the corporate identity of Syria also negatively affected the social identity. In addition to these, the confirmed identity can stay relatively stable and secure for a long period of time until a critical juncture occurs.

Collective identity is the last category proposed by Wendt and it is an efficient way to understand rising cooperation and blurred distinction between the "Self" and the "Other". "Collective identity takes the relationship between the "Self" and "Other" to logical conclusion, identification, which refers to a cognitive process in which the self-other distinction becomes blurred."[43] In that sense, interaction between actors can have a transformative effect over the social identities of actors by changing interests and identities that can help to establish the collective identity. Collective identity emerges endogenously at the systemic level and such process would generate cooperation. Rising interdependence, transnational convergence of

[40] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p.19
[41] Selen Tokuş, "Turkish-Syrian Crisis of 1998 and Its Aftermath: A Constructivist Approach" *ORSAM*. http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/yazigoster.aspx?ID=785 (1 August 2013)
[42] Maja Zehfuss, "Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison", **European Journal of International Relations**,Vol. 7, No.3 (2001), p. 322
[43] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics,* p. 229

domestic values and strategic partnership affect the emergence of the collective identity. Besides these, similar corporate identities can contribute to the collective identity formation because "states identify positively with those with similar corporate identities".[44] In that sense, defining the other as an enemy, rival or friend is very important for the collective identity formation. Wendt describes "interdependence, common fate, homogenization and self-restraint" as the four master variables of collective identity.[45] Lacking of these variables contributes selfish identities like the relations between Syria and Turkey during the 1990s. The concept of collective identity promotes mutual identification of actors. Wendtian constructivism does not see shared material interests enough for durable alliances. Collective identity, like social identity but different from type and corporate identities, is the external dimension of the concept of identity constituted with interaction.

In addition to these, subjective understandings about the "Self" and the "Other" are directly related to identities. However, identity is not only seen as a subjective or unit-level quality, but it is also a mutual construction.[46] Therefore, subjective understanding is not enough for an actor. An actor's identity acquires meaning when the other recognizes it. Because of this, inter-subjectivity is the key concept for constructivism. Depending on interactions with the "Other", the "Self" defines and redefines its identity, and bases its interests on the new definition of its identity. As a result of the centrality of the concept of identity, interaction between actors can confirm or transform the already held identities. Conceptions of the "Self" and the "Other" develop only in interaction. In this way, we can analyze the changing dynamics of inter-state relations.

The role of identity has a central place for Turkey-Syria relations. In historical terms, the corporate identities of Turkey and Syria positioned themselves in opposite directions and this negatively affected the perceptions of the "Other". After the interaction of corporate identities, the social identities of both parties were also injured. International political structure like the Cold War period also widened the gap between two countries. As a result of these, negative identification of the "Other" became usual for both parties and they did not make important efforts to change these understandings. In that sense, both sides began to see others' movements from the window of security and this prevented the establishment of the collective identity.

[44] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach*, p. 141
[45] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics,* p. 44
[46] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics,* p. 224

However, with the beginning of new periods in both countries after 2000, the new corporate identities in Turkey and Syria began to remove these negative identifications and this helped to the establishment of high level of cooperation between two states because actions of states usually stem from individuals or groups who act in the name of state and these actors in reality have ideas "about the world, the international system and the place of their state within that system"[47], which directly change the nature of relations with the "Other". For instance, after the Adana Accords, Turkey wanted to increase its interaction with Syria as a result of İsmail Cem's foreign policy vision. Later, the AKP government's new foreign policy under the leadership of Ahmet Davutoğlu aimed to minimize historical misperceptions and prejudices about the Middle East and Syria. As a result of new interests of the new identity in Turkey, corporate identity of Turkey limited negative identification with the "Other". On the other side, Bashar Asad's vision and perception were different from his father and this new vision also minimized historical misperceptions and prejudices about Turkey. In that sense, like the case of Turkey, Syria's new interests resulted in new corporate identity which also limited negative identification with the "Other". As a result of new corporate identities in Turkey and Syria, new social identities became more suitable for cooperation. In that sense, in order to understand Davutoğlu doctrine's success in Syria during the first decade of the 2000s, it is necessary to take Syria's new identity into consideration since identity is also a mutual construction. One-sided transformation cannot automatically bring transformation in relations as it is clearly seen in the relations with Cyprus or Armenia. As a result of new interests on the basis of new identities, the distinction between the "Self" and the "Other" blurred for both parties and the establishment of collective identity became more suitable for them during the first decade of the 2000s. The rising interdependence, the definition of bilateral relations as strategic partnership and the understanding about the common fate promoted mutual identification between the parties during the first decade of the 2000s which can be described as a part of collective identity for Wendt.

On the other hand, as a part of the constructivist research agenda, we should also take the effects of structure into consideration to understand ups and downs for bilateral relations. The international political structure like the bipolarity in the Cold War period or international developments like the US intervention in Iraq made direct effects over Turkey, Syria and their bilateral relations. In that sense, the international structure widened the gap between two parties

[47] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach*, p. 138

over some period of time. However, in the post-2003 period, the international structure made cooperation more rational and suitable for both Turkey and Syria. Without observing the effects of structure over agents and the agents' effects over structure, we cannot totally understand the transformation of bilateral relations. Hence, the constructivist understanding about the co-constitution of agent and structure, in other words, the structuration theory can provide suitable ground for the relationship between the agent and structure.

1.3 CO-CONSTITUTION OF THE AGENT AND STRUCTURE AND ITS EFFECTS OVER BILATERAL RELATIONS

The structuration theory is seen as the central concept of Wendtian constructivism and it says something about what kinds of entities there are in the social world, and how their relationship should be conceptualized. Hence, it is about the analysis rather than the substance of the social world. The structuration theory aims to join "agents and structures in a dialectical synthesis"[48] and with this method, it tries to overcome the subordination of one to the other. It prevents ontological reductionism within International Relations. Hence, equal ontological status of agent and structure is the key point for the structuration theory and this understanding has an important place in the Wendtian constructivism. In this way, the structuration theory gains different position from the structuralist or individualist theories and it provides a relational solution to the agent-structure problem that conceptualizes agents and structures as mutually constituted or codetermined entities. Therefore, the structuration theory differs from traditional viewpoints and "conceptualizes the agents and structures as mutually constituted or codetermined entities".[49] While the agents and structures are mutually essential concepts, they are ontologically distinct entities. Each, in some sense, is an effect of the other. Ontologically, interdependency of the agent and structure provides a new conceptualization for the agent-structure relations. In this way, Wendt's constructivism can escape from the errors of individualism and structuralism. The structurationist conceptualization of the structure is similar to structuralist's conceptualization but according to the structuration theory, social structures cannot exist independently of the agents' conceptions of what they are doing in their activity.[50]

[48] Wendt, *The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory*, p. 356
[49] Wendt, *The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory*, p. 350
[50] Wendt, *The Agent Structure Problem in International Relations Theory*, p. 359

Embedded understanding about the state agent and system structures also provides explanation about the internal organizational structure of states. According to Wendt, "domestic-economic, domestic-political, international-economic, and international-political structures"[51] have important effects over state behaviors. In addition, social structures are the results of the intended and unintended consequences of human actions, just as these actions are mediated by irreducible structural context.[52] In that sense, unlike the structuralist theories, the structuration theory addresses human intentionality and motivation. This establishes suitable framework to analyze agents' roles for Turkey-Syria relations.

In historical terms, although identities and interests of Syria and Turkey are crucial for bilateral relations, effects of the structure over bilateral relations cannot be ignored. Structural effects over bilateral relations can deeply affect the level of interactions or perceptions about the "Other" for Turkey-Syria relations. After the establishment of Turkish and Syrian states, both states' structures defined themselves in opposite directions, which can be seen as the effect of domestic-political structure. During the Cold War years, international political structure widened the gap between two countries as a result of being located in different ideological camps and added abnormality to Turkey-Middle East relations.[53] With the end of the Cold War, new international political structure created pressure over both countries as a result of increasing identity politics in the world. As a result of this pressure, both countries experienced a kind of identity crisis and began to use the "Other" for the externalization of problems like the understanding of PKK-Syria relations by Turkey during the 1990s. In that sense, the end of the Cold War made indirect structural effects over Syria and Turkey and these effects widened the gap between the "Self" and the "Other" for both parties. The US intervention in Iraq in 2003, which can be defined as the geopolitical revolution,[54] also made important structural effects over the region. After this intervention, beliefs about the common fate and the bilateral cooperation became clearer for Syria and Turkey. Therefore, the change in the structural dynamics made positive effects over bilateral relations with 2003 war in Iraq. In that sense, while identity

[51] Wendt, *The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory*, p. 366
[52] Wendt, *The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory*, p. 355
[53] Emel Parlar Dal, "The Transformation of Turkey's Relations with the Middle East: Illusion or Awakening", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 13, No. 2 (June, 2012), p. 260
[54] Volker Perthes, "Turkey's Role in the Middle East: An Outsider Perspective", **Insight Turkey,** Vol. 12, No. 4 (2010), p.1

dimension for bilateral relations was discussed in the study, the effects of structure, especially international political structure over bilateral relations, were also explored.

1.4 DIFFERENT KINDS OF ROLES AND THEIR REFLECTION ON BILATERAL RELATIONS

Different kinds of roles in terms of which states represent the "Self" and the "Other" are important concepts for Wendtian constructivism. While Wendt directly relate these roles with the different culture of anarchies in his well-known book "**Social Theory of International Politics**, Cambride: Cambridge University Press, 1999"[55], he breaks the direct link between the culture of anarchies and kinds of roles in his article "Social Theory as Cartesian Science: An Auto-critique from a Quantum Perspective" as a response to his critics.[56] In that sense, while actors' perception about the nature of the structure is crucial for the transformation of it, limited number of actors are not enough for the transformation. Because of this, the Lockean culture of anarchy does not bring automatically friendly relations between the agents. In other words, friendly relations between the limited numbers of agents do not automatically transform the structure into more peaceful or less anarchical one. In short, while culture of anarchies and its effects over the agents is problematic, his analogy for kinds of roles can provide us important framework to analyze Turkey-Syria relations. In order to explore the effects of structure over agent, concept of critical juncture can be more suitable for bilateral relations. Critical junctures refer to perceived crisis situations occurring completely policy failures, but also triggered by external events.[57] During the critical junctures, nation-state identities are challenged which can be exemplified for Syria as a result of catastrophic effects of Arab Spring. During the critical junctures, political elites also make new interest formulation which can be exemplified for Turkey as a result of changing policies towards the Middle East after the start of Arab Spring. During this period, elites can

[55] For further information about the relationship between culture of anarchy and roles of agents, see: Alexander Wendt, "Three Cultures of Anarchy*"* in **Social Theory of International Politics**, Cambride: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp.246-312

[56] For further information for critiques about the relationship between culture of anarchy and role of agents, see: Hidemi Suganami, "Wendt, IR and Philosophy: A Critique" Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander (Eds.), in **Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and His Critics**, New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 57-73, and response of Wendt to these critiques see: Alexander Wendt, "Social Theory as Cartesian Science: An Auto-critique from a Quantum Perspective*"* in Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander (eds.) **Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and His Critics,** New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 181-240.

[57] Martin Marcussen, Thomas Risse, Daniela Engelmann-Martin, Hans Joachim Knopf and Klaus Roscher, "Constructing Europe? The Evolution of French, British, and German Nation-state Identities" **Journal of European Public Policy**, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1999), p. 5

define the existing political order as inapplicable to a new context.[58] In this way, we can provide more space for agents and human intentionality.

Kinds of roles which states represent are described as "enemy", "rival" and "friend" that are based on subjective images or perceptions of actors.[59] Corporate identities inform agents about who is an enemy or friend and define the distinction between "us" and "them".[60] Describing the "Other" as an enemy or friend brings different conclusions because "anarchy of friends differs from anarchy of enemies".[61] In other words, "the distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation"[62]. When states define the "Other" as a friend, it will help cooperation between the "Self" and the "Other", leading to the collective identity. Whereas the response of the "Self" towards the acts of a friend can be more tolerable, the response against the acts of an enemy can be more aggressive. In order to understand this analogy, US-Canadian relations are described with friendship, whereas US-Iranian relations are described with enmity. In historical terms, Turkish-Azerbaijani relations can also be described with friendship, whereas Turkish-Armenian relations are described with enmity.[63] Therefore, material capabilities depend on "intersubjectively shared set of meanings".[64] The most crucial point is that describing the "Other" as a friend can provide suitable ground for the establishment of collective identity. Agents begin to identify positively with one another so that "security of each is perceived as the responsibility of the all".[65] It also helps to remove the distinction between the "Self" and the "Other". İsmail Cem's foreign policy vision until 2002 and Davutoğlu doctrine which can be described as the main foreign policy vision of the AKP after 2002 can be seen within the borders of this understanding. Emphasizing over the collective security, demands to increase interdependence can be seen as the proofs for the description of the "Other" as a friend. Davutoğlu doctrine has been closely examined in the next chapters to show Turkey's changing foreign policy interests. On the other hand, describing the "Other" as enemy would cause suspicion and mistrust between the "Self" and the "Other". In other words, "enemy

[58] Marcussen, Risse, Engelmann-Martin, Knopf and Roscher, p. 22
[59] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach*, p. 134
[60] Orhan, *The Impact of Identity on Syria's Regional Policy between 1946-2000*, p. 14
[61] Wendt, *Constructing International Politics*, p.78
[62] Carl Schmitt, **The Concept of the Political,** Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007, p. 26
[63] Orhan, *The Impact of Identity on Syria's Regional Policy between 1946-2000*, p. 12
[64] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach*, p. 134
[65] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics", **International Organization**, Vol. 46, No. 2, (Spring, 1992), p.400

is existentially something different and alien, so that extreme case conflicts with the enemy are possible"[66]. Power politics between the actors becomes obvious and collective action becomes nearly impossible for the parties. Agents see the "Other" as sources of threat. This kind of analogy can be used to compare pre-1998 and post-1998 periods for Turkey-Syria relations. For Turkey-Syria relations, we can see that the "Other" was described as enemy during the 1990s. After 1998, but especially after 2002, the "Other" began to transform and turn into a sincere friend or at least rival.

For Wendt, the institutions of sovereignty can transform identities and interests, by an evolution of cooperation and international efforts to transform egoistic identities into collective identities.[67] To understand improving relations and establishment of friendly relations between Turkey and Syria, the concept of cooperation occupies a central place. In addition to these, US intervention in Iraq in 2003 as a critical international development also motivated both parties for further cooperation. When we look at the agent level, for Turkey, it is argued that there is a shift towards a Kantian vision in foreign policy after 1999 with the rise of more soft-power based and cooperation-oriented foreign policies.[68] On the other side, with the Bashar Al-Asad regime in Syria, it began to give up mistrust against the international environment and it began to be more reasonable actor within international politics. However, with the deep effects of the Arab Spring on Syria, the description of the "Other" negatively changed and the bilateral relations again began to be described on the basis of enmity. Hence, the current international structure made negative effects on Turkey-Syria relations. While Iraqi War in 2003 made cooperation reasonable for both parties, the start of the Arab Spring destroyed positive trends in bilateral relations. In order to explain the decline of relations between Syria and Turkey, the concept of critical junctures can be applied. In that sense, the end of the Cold War, 2003 US invasion in Iraq and Arab Spring can be described as important critical junctures for bilateral relations. Especially, the Arab Spring prevented the occurrence of the collective identity between two states and resulted in deterioration of bilateral relations because the confirmed identity needed stable and secure environments. In short, explaining the effects of structure via critical juncture

[66] Schmitt, p. 27
[67] Wendt, *Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics*, p.395
[68] Gülseven, p. 211

rather than culture of anarchy provides more space for agents and helps us analyze turning points within the region.

In short, the constructivist research agenda provides suitable ground to understand the nature of Turkey-Syria relations. Firstly, constructivism elaborates the role of ideational factors. Although constructivism does not ignore the importance of the material reality, it provides more spaces for the role of ideational factors which made huge impact on the transformation of Turkey-Syria relations in the post-1998 period. By analyzing ideational factors, changed perceptions of the parties towards the "Other" and core issues could be easily elaborated. Secondly, for constructivism, the concept of identity performs an important role for the inter-state relations. Hence, describing the concept of identity and its dimensions would help understand the changing dynamics of bilateral relations. For constructivism, different corporate identities would bring different relations with the "Other". Therefore, change in the corporate identity directly affects the nature of systemic interaction. In that sense, changed corporate identity makes an impact on the social identity of the agent which brings different kind of relations with the "Other". Similar corporate identities provide suitable grounds for the establishment of the collective identity between the agents whereas different corporate identities could result in the occurrence of the selfish identities. This kind of analogy could be applied for Turkey-Syria relations. During the 1980s and 1990s, different corporate identities of Turkey and Syria resulted in many problems between them and caused to the occurrence of the selfish identities. On the other hand, during the first decade of the 2000s, as a direct result of the changed corporate identities of Turkey and Syria, the gap between the two corporate identities narrowed and provided suitable conditions for the establishment of the collective identity between Turkey and Syria. Thirdly, constructivism deals with the co-constitution of the agent and structure. In this way, although it does not ignore the role of the structure, it also provides space for the agent. Analyzing both the agent and structure is important for Turkey-Syria relations because both of them have direct effect on the bilateral relations. The structure during the previous decades made negative effects on the relations like the end of the Cold War although it made positive effect on the bilateral relations during the first decade of the 2000s like the effects of the US invasion in Iraq in 2003. Hence, in addition the agents, the structure also played an important role for the transformation of the relations. Fourthly, constructivism analyzes the importance of the kinds of roles and their effects on the agents. For constructivism,

the “Self” could define the “Other” as the enemy, rival or friend and each kind of roles directly affects the nature of relations. This kind of analogy is suitable to understand the changing nature of Turkey-Syria relations. Although Turkey and Syria defined the “Other” as enemy during the 1990s which resulted in the increasing tension between parties, during the 2000s, both of them began to describe the “Other” as a friend which resulted in cooperative attitudes for both countries.

Under these circumstances, Wendtian constructivism provides us a suitable framework to analyze Turkey-Syria relations. To understand historical enmities, prejudices and misperceptions, the identity of both parties should be taken into consideration. Throughout the history, the important tensions between the parties have been described as irrational and artificial. In that sense, rather than mechanistic understandings, the constructivist approach provides us more space to understand the nature of bilateral relations. In order to understand this, the establishment of corporate identities in Syria and Turkey, which created a distance between them, should firstly be examined. Secondly, with the beginning of the interaction, social identities of both parties to show widening gap between them should be analyzed. In this way, the process of identification of the “Other” as an enemy can be understood in historical terms, which contributed to selfish identities, and also the dynamics of transformation after 1998. While emphasizing over the role of agents, the effects of international political structure should be taken into consideration. In that sense, the study analyzes the effects of the bloc politics over Syria and Turkey in the next chapter by taking historical background. As a result of describing historical sources of negative identification, the causes of high degree of tension between Turkey and Syria from the beginning of 1980s till 1998 could be more easily understood. In this way, the dynamics of changing nature of bilateral relations after 1998 could also be described on the bases of identity of both countries and the international political structure. The effects of ideational factors over material reality regarding the core issues could be analyzed as well. By showing the ideational factors, the different attitudes towards continued core issues like water, PKK and Hatay issues could be analyzed. However, before analyzing the nature and dynamics of the core issues, the historical background of relations should be elaborated which would help us to understand changing nature of relations.

CHAPTER 2 : HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In order to understand misperceptions, prejudices and mistrust between Syria and Turkey, the identity construction process in both countries should be analyzed. In that sense, this chapter tries to explore corporate identities of Turkey and Syria. In order to understand identity construction periods in Syria and Turkey, central tenets of Turkish and Syrian identities should be elaborated. New Turkish identity constructed by the Republican elites during the 1920s aimed to put a distance with the Middle Eastern region and culture. On the other hand, while there were important discussions on the Syrian identity during the pre-World War II period, the central tenets of Syrian identity after 1946, which is the date of establishment of the independent Syrian state, were examined. The establishment of Ba'ath Party in 1943, which has been dominating Syrian politics since mid-1960s, also made the 1940s suitable starting point for the exploration of Syrian corporate identity. However, it should be remembered that the interaction between the two identities began during the Ottoman Empire period before the establishment of corporate identities. Negative memories of both parties negatively contributed to the relationship between the "Self" and the "Other". In that sense, the developments during the last period of the Ottoman Empire were also explored.

In this chapter, the whole-part relations were established for both parties. In that sense, the Arab image in Turkish mental map was discussed. On the other side, non-Arab image for Syria was explored. In this way, defining the overall understandings of both parties about each other becomes possible. Moreover, the bilateral relations should also be defined in detail in order to prevent the danger of constructing a reductionist understanding. For this reason, the images of both countries on the other were explored specifically. Turkey's relations with the conservative Arab monarchies developed during the course of time, but its relations with Syria remained limited. For the Syrian side, there was an understanding that relations with some non-Arab countries could develop as in the case of the relations with Iran. However, the level of relations with Turkey remained low. In that sense, we should examine the bilateral relations and the effects of the structure on them in order to elaborate the factors behind the negative identification. On the one hand, the nature of the bilateral relations throughout the history prevented the establishment of collective identity and contributed to the selfish identity for both parties. Analyzing the problems throughout the history can provide important clues to understand

the problematic nature of relations. On the other hand, the structure also made important effects on relations. With the beginning of the Cold War, two states defined themselves in the opposite directions in ideological terms. Hence, the perceptions of both parties about the international politics were deeply differentiated and some concrete examples in this chapter were analyzed in order to understand the effects of the structure and different viewpoints of both parties.

Additionally, the end of the Cold War also created important effects on the identities of both countries and these effects generated negative impacts on the bilateral relations. With the end of the Cold War, the identity politics became one of the main determinants of the international politics and it created a kind of identity crisis in Turkey. Islamic and Kurdish insurgencies were externalized by Turkey and linked with Iran and Syria. On the other side, with the dissolution of the USSR, Syria faced with a legitimacy crisis within the country. Under these circumstances, the enemy image of the "Other" reinforced by both countries and both parties made the "Other" to become an absolute enemy during the 1990s. The historical problems especially problematic relations of the 1980s as a result of Hatay, PKK and water issues[69] were the main bearers of this absolute enemy image, while the structural process also reinforced this. In that sense, the effects of the end of the Cold War era on the bilateral relations in this chapter were also analyzed.

2.1 THE LAST PERIOD OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE BEGINNING OF NEGATIVE IDENTIFICATION

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire resulted in the establishment of new nation-states in the former territories of the empire and the new map of the region required new relations between new actors. The new structure with new conditions caused to the redefinition of the interests by actors. Besides the material realities like the transformation from the empire-based system to nation-state system and the changing dynamics of the international politics, the ideational factors also deeply affected new interests articulations of the Turks and Arabs. Redefined interests by both of these states resulted in positioning themselves in the opposite directions and this created a kind of suspicion between the actors. However, before the collapse of the empire, the relations between Turks and Arabs began to deteriorate and this negatively contributed during their nation-building processes.

[69] For further infomation about the PKK, Hatay and water disputes, see Chapter 4

In terms of the construction of the negative identification, the developments before World War I and during the war made important effects on the relations between Turks and Arabs. While, Turkification period alienated the Arabs from the empire, attitudes of the Arabs during the World War I created hatred among the Turks. Because of these reasons, parties began to put some distance with the "Other". Most of the Arabs wanted to live in the empire within a decentralized administrative structure.[70] Besides, until the mid-1910s, there was no serious enmity towards the Arabs.[71] However, with the age of nationalism, the Arabs and Turks started to think and behave differently about each other. The centralization efforts of the empire created discontent among the Arabs. Turkification policies of the Committee of the Union and Progress (CUP) reinforced the Arab discontent.[72] On the other side, the Arab world began to be perceived as problematic and negative in the Turkish mental map. Turks began to see the Arabs as undisciplined and unreliable. Images of the untrustworthy Arab and backward, uncivilized Arab states became common among the Turks.[73] The motto "neither all the candy from Damascus, nor the face of the Arab" in Turkey is shown as a clear example of the psychological burden among the Turks towards the Arabs. The sense of superiority among the Turkish intelligentsia towards the ex-subjects of the Ottoman Empire, especially towards the Middle East is also an important determinant for this psychological burden.[74]

The Arab revolt of 1916 reinforced the image of the untrustworthy Arabs and this revolt was defined as an act of treason. Arab revolt is deeply resented by the Turks. It has become a recurrent illustration of duplicity of the Arabs. This act would have a huge impact on Turkish-Arab relations. "The Arabs stabbed us in the back" is a clear example to show the perception of Turks about the Arabs.[75] However, comparatively few Arabs supported the revolt. It can be described as a movement for dynastic ambition rather than broadly-based nationalist effort.[76] The bulk of the Arabs remained loyal to the center in the name of Islam. However, image of the

[70] Sabahattin Şen, **Ortadoğu'da İdeolojik Bunalım: Suriye Baas Partisi ve İdeolojisi**, 2nd edn., İstanbul: Hemen Kitap, 2010, p. 52
[71] Bülent Aras and Hasan Koni, "Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited", **Arab Studies Quarterly**, Vol. 24, No: 4 (Fall, 2002), p. 50
[72] Şerif Demir, "Dünden Bugüne Türkiye'nin Suriye ve Ortadoğu Politikaları", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Summer, 2011), p. 693
[73] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p. 114
[74] Philip Robins, **Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War**, USA: University of Washington Press, 2003, p. 95
[75] David Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations: An Update" in Moshe Ma'oz, Joseph Ginat and Onn Winckner (Ed.), **Modern Syria: From Ottoman Rule to Pivotal Role in the Middle East**, (228-242), Brighton, Sussex Academic Press, 1999, p.228
[76] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 97

Arabs appeared equivalent to treachery in the eyes of the Turks. The reinterpretation of the history by the new elites is very crucial for this negative identification.

On the Arabian side, the contemporary Arab political consciousness was shaped by the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the colonial era and anti-colonialist struggle.[77] In that sense, the Ottoman legacy is one of the important determinants for the newly constructed Arab identity. Therefore, negative identification of the Turks by the Arabs is important burden for the relations. Nationalist Arab countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt began to regard the Turks as oppressors or colonialist while the more religious-minded countries began to look on Turks as renegades of Islam.[78] Because of the Ottoman Empire's imperial past in the region, brutal and imperialist Turk image became an important determinant for Arabs' relations with new Turkish Republic. Harsh policies of Cemal Pasha in Syria against the Arabs in the last period of the empire reinforced negative identification among the Arabs.[79] The image of brutal imperialist Turks still continues to affect Turkish-Arab relations, and Arabs blame Turks for their backwardness because of the imperial legacy. The Ottoman era was considered as the main obstacle to the spread of enlightened ideas in the Arab regions. In that sense, the Ottoman period was interpreted as decay. The Arabs interpreted the Ottoman era with Arab nationalist terms and this prevented the positive identification with Turkey after the independence period.[80] The anti-Ottoman understanding played an important role for the Arab unionist in the region, and because of this, defining the "Other" as a friend became more difficult.

Another important psychological burden for the Turkish-Arab relations is Turkey's attitude towards Islam. Historically, the Arabs did not accept the Turks as good Muslims. During the intense secularization and Turkification periods, the level of criticism by Arab societies increased. The gradual shift of the Ottoman rulers from Ottomanist-Islamist views to Turkist understanding alienated the Arabs from the empire. In addition, the western and secular orientation of the new republic was interpreted as the abandonment of Islam in Turkey.[81] The use of religious elements in the Arabs' independence movement against imperialism also reinforced

[77] Aras and Koni, p. 51
[78] Kushner, p. 228
[79] Demir, p. 693
[80] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 96
[81] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p.113

this understanding. Arab states denounced the secular Turkish Republic and labeled its founders as the enemy of Islam.

All in all, in order to understand the historical background of relations, definition and re-definition of the "Self" and the "Other" should be taken into account. Images of the "Other" generated and affected the political attitudes and behaviors of both parties. Images are defined "as a subject's cognitive construction or mental representation of another actor or himself/herself in the political world".[82] In that sense, images are important to understand Turkish-Arab relations, because both of them continue to view each other in the light of these images. Negative and positive images of the "Self" and the "Other" determined the behaviors of both parties. However, images of the "Self" and the "Other" cannot be enough to understand historical enmity between Syria and Turkey. During the course of time, some of the Arab states and Turkey could establish positive relations, although the negative image of Syria continued. In that sense, the new interest formulations by the new identities in both societies should be taken into consideration because these new identities did not have any positive effects to change the negative nature of the bilateral relations.

2.2**DEFINITION OF THE SELF IN TURKEY AND SYRIA**

During the first decades of the independence, invoking, interpreting and inverting the past was extremely important for the state, nation and ideology building.[83] With the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, both Turkey and the Middle Eastern states redefined the "Self" in the same time period. Therefore, the redefinition of the corporate identities, which refers to the intrinsic and self-organizing qualities that constitute actor individuality, negatively affected the relations between Turks and Arabs. The redefinition of the preferences and interests for newly established states led to different foreign policy behaviors. In that sense, shifts in the political elites with different identities changed the identity of the state in Turkey and Arab societies, which altered the nature of the systemic interaction. Therefore, newly constructed corporate identities, which take part in the systemic interaction, damaged social identities which "is defined as a set of meanings that an actor attributes to itself in relation to the other, while taking

[82] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p. 112
[83] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 93

the perspectives of others as a social object."[84] In that sense, besides subjective understandings about the "Self" and the "Other", inter-subjective understanding is also injured. Holding different corporate identities prevented permanent cooperation between Turkey and the region. Therefore, social identities of the actors prevented mutually constitutive relationship and non-cooperative relationship affected the region's structure. However, before examining the interaction between the parties, the central tenets of their foreign policy identities should be determined by defining corporate identities.

For the Turkish side, the definition of the corporate identity after the War of Independence in Turkey determined the direction and intention of states' foreign policies. Western-oriented corporate identity prevented positive identification with the Middle East. As Turkey drew closer to the West, alienation towards the region increased. The new political values of Turkey were rationalism, progress and European identity while the values of Arabs were seen as opposed and inferior.[85] New state identity suggested that the predominance of Islam and its teachings prevented intellectual and scientific progress in these societies.[86] The westernization period in Turkey, deteriorating Arab images among the Turks, and the attitude of Turkey also created antipathy among the Arabs.

On the other side, 1920s was also the period for the construction of corporate identities for the Middle Eastern societies, although we cannot talk about independent Arab states during that period. With the effect of the mandate period in the region, the "Self" in the Middle East and the "Self" in Turkey positioned themselves in the opposite directions. The imperial legacy of the West harmed the views of the Arab societies about the West and this indirectly injured relations with Turkey in the following decades as a result of pro-western attitude of Turkey in the region. In that sense, the negative identification became clearer in the Cold War period, especially with the Arab socialist states. Because of these views of both parties, the corporate identities prevented permanent cooperation between each other. While the Arab image among the Turks and Turk image among the Arabs are good starting points to understand the roots of historical enmity between Turkey and Syria, these images are not enough to explore all dynamics of the

[84] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p.19
[85] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 100
[86] Aslı Ilgıt and Binnur Özkeneci-Taner, "Identity and Decision Making: Toward a Collaborative Approach to State Action ", in Vaughn P. Shannon and Paul A. Kowert (Ed.), **Psychology and Constructivism in International Relations: An Ideational Alliance**, (92-116), USA: The University of Michigan Press, 2012, p. 103

relations. Therefore, analyzing Syrian and Turkish corporate identities more closely will provide us more clues to understand historical misperceptions and enmities. In order to this, we should examine the foreign policy principles and tendencies of both parties and this exploration might explain why there is a wider gap between Turkey and Syria.

2.2.1Corporate Identity of Turkey and Effects on Foreign Policy

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the new elites of the Turkish Republic with the new identity reinterpreted the interests of the new state. While we can see some continuations with the Ottoman diplomacy, the differences imply breaking point which made important effect on new foreign policy identity of Turkey. The transition from the empire to nation-state brought important differences in terms of interests and policy-formulation. While this structural change is an important determinant for the changing interests, the identities of the elites are also crucial to understand the change. In that sense, continuations of and differences from the previous periods cannot only be explained by the domestic structural change, it can also be explained by the understandings and perceptions of the new elites. Thanks to these, the formation of Turkish foreign policy can be described as interplay of two variables. The first variable is the conjectural variable which is related to the special conditions of space and time. The second variable is the structural variable which can be described as the Ottoman experience and its legacy, the geopolitical realities of the new state, and the ideological foundations defined under the leadership of Ataturk.[87] This variable is important to understand continuations and differences of a new foreign policy. The Ottoman experience and its long lasting legacy provided important source for the continuing foreign policy understanding for the new state, but changing geopolitical realities of Turkey, which can be described as the transformation from the empire to nation-state and establishment of newly independent states around the republic, are important in terms of material reality for the changing foreign policy formulations. However, besides material realities, ideological foundations defined under the new leadership are important for the changing interests. This implies ideational transformation that resulted in the change of interests. Therefore, the interest formulation of the new republican elites brought important differences in the foreign policy formulations and regulatory principles with the other parties. Founding foreign

[87] Mesut Özcan, **Harmonizing Foreign Policy: Turkey, the EU and the Middle East**, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008, p. 83

policy principles and foreign policy tendencies of the new states are important keys to understand relations.

In a historical context, Turkey has two important overall principles regarding its foreign policy. The first one is the protection of the balance of power, and manipulating it for the continuation of the survival. The second one is avoiding any wars with other states, if there is not a threat of invasion.[88] These principles can be described as the continuing principles of the late Ottoman diplomacy because of the defensive position of the empire in the last centuries. On the other hand, the motto "peace at home, peace in the world" of the Turkish diplomacy contributed to passive and cautious diplomacy understanding in the foreign policy. This kind of diplomacy understanding made the preservation of the status quo as the central theme and tendency of Turkish foreign policy. In that sense, the preservation of status quo became the central tendency. On the other hand, in addition to the preservation of the status quo, the western orientation, and the elites formation of the politics are described as general tendencies for Turkish foreign policy.[89] As a result of these tendencies, the interaction with the Middle East remained limited at times when important developments were taking place in the region, some of these tendencies injured relations with the "Other".

The preservation of the status quo is not only limited to the protection of the boundaries, it is also related to the preservation of the current balance of power.[90] The protection of the current boundaries can be described as the natural outcome of the historical reality. The aim for consolidating power within the new state, danger posed from the USSR, reaching satisfactory and targeted boundaries with Lausanne Treaty in the framework of the National Pact, and the project of establishing a nation-state made the preservation of the status quo in boundaries as a desired outcome for the new elites. Unlike other defeated countries during the World War I, Turkey had no serious problem of satisfaction with the post-war order. The National Pact, which is accepted as one of the founding documents for the new state, played important role for the newly interpreted interests. Instead of interventionist assertive policy, the preservation of the borders and nation-state became the main aims in this pact. Secondly, with this document, Turkey declared its aim to be a part of the western axis, rather than being a part of alternative and

[88] Baskın Oran, "Türk Dış Politikasının Teori ve Pratiği", in Baskın Oran (Ed.), **Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar: 1919-1980**, (17-93), 16th edn., Vol.1, İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2011, p. 19
[89] Özcan, p. 82
[90] Oran, *Türk Dış Politikasının Teori ve Pratiği*, pp. 46-47

opposition to this axis.[91] We see strict commitment to this document by the foreign policy elites in the Republican era. Kirkuk and Alexandretta issues are described as the only examples which shift from traditional diplomacy in terms of territorial claims, but these regions were already defined within the borders in the National Pact. In that sense, it could be claimed that while the National Pact is one of the founding documents for the passive and balanced diplomacy, it is also a source legitimizing aggressive and proactive diplomatic maneuvers about disputed regions.

Commitment to the status quo was also an important determinant for the foreign policy formulation during the Cold War and the post-Cold War era. The foreign policy elite "remained wedded to the sanctity of the borders of states, multilateral institutions, and norms of conduct" [92], even when the systematic changes had rendered some of traditional continuities no longer tenable. In that sense, it is argued that Turkey often tended to ignore the uncontainable dynamics released by the end of the Cold War. Therefore, the preservation of the status quo, both materially and ideationally, was a suitable action in the early decades of the newly established country. The most important point of this tendency for the relations with the Middle East and Syria is that it produced a defensive foreign policy towards the region, and because of this, Turkey did not spend too much effort to change the nature of the relations.

The westernism or westernization is one the central tenets of the Turkish foreign policy understanding and this orientation can be seen institutionally. Turkey continues to place on its membership of NATO, and it pursues membership for the EU. Many factors can be counted for the aim of westernization, but the identity of the elite is the main determinant for this policy. Since the Committee of the Union and Progress, the westernization became the main aim of the elite. The Republican elite continued this tradition, many of whom also had taken part in the Committee of the Union and Progress, and the first three presidents of the new Turkish state were former CUP members.[93] The elite saw the western orientation as a means of reinforcing both their own values and positions. In that sense, the elite formation of the foreign policy directly influenced the direction of the new state. Perceiving westernization as the only way of modernization and the effects of western development model in Turkey reinforced the westernist

[91] Özcan p.84
[92] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 6
[93] Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, "Modernity, Identity and Turkey's Foreign Policy" **Insight Turkey,** Vol. 10, No. 1 (2008), p. 58

tendencies in Turkey.[94] Describing the status quo along with the lines of the West helped the establishment of close security relationship between the western countries and Turkey in the face of the military and ideological challenge from the Soviet Union. The re-emergence of Western Europe as an economic center of gravity also made the West irresistible for Turkey.[95]

On the other hand, westernization injured relations with the East as a negative effect of this process. The modernization and westernization process required that interaction with the Middle East to be kept to a minimum. Westernist understanding excluded the East and led to the alienation of the foreign policy of the country from the East, Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. The Middle East began to be seen as the backward zone of conflict, which resulted in cautious and non-interventionist approach towards the region.[96] The western civilization was superior to the eastern civilization for the elites of Turkey, and because of this, the links between the society and the Ottoman past should be broken.[97] This alienation created a kind of burden and prejudice for the relations with the non-western actors and caused negative identification with the "Others". Because of this, as the constructivism argues, relations with the "Others" could not only be conducted in rationalist terms, and ideational factors deeply affected the relations. The most obvious example of this was observed in the relations with the Middle Eastern countries. This brings us again to the analysis that the identity-interest relationship is one of the crucial concepts to understand the foreign policy formulation in Turkey. However, the effects of the structure on this kind of conceptualization should not be forgotten. The Cold War structure resulted in strict commitment to the westernist understanding at least until 1960s. High level of tension between the USSR and USA limited space for maneuver for the other states during that period. On the other hand, Turkey's definition of interests identical to the USA also limited options that Turkey had for foreign policy choices, which resulted in strict commitment to the westernist understanding. However, in order to understand the role of the identity on the interest formulation, we should analyze the effects of elites in the formation of politics.

The elites deeply influence the direction of the foreign affairs. Any change in the elite formation, or the increasing or decreasing effects of any institutions can change foreign policy choices. In that sense, the cultural characteristics and identities of human beings have huge

[94] Oran, *Türk Dış Politikasının Teori ve Pratiği*, pp. 50-51
[95] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p.7
[96] Parlar Dal, p. 247
[97] Bozdağlıoğlu, Modernity, *Identity and Turkey's Foreign Policy*, p. 60

impacts on foreign policy formulations. Effects of the elites are closely related to the constructivist approach and it is an effective way to understand the evolution of Turkish foreign policy because constructivism concentrates on the role of the agents in the system. When we think about the effects of the elites in Turkey, especially during the establishment phase, effects of the actors gain more importance. Therefore, both westernist and status quo tendencies of the Turkish foreign policy can be explained by the role of the agent besides the structural effects.

Within this framework, the Kemalist elite during the establishment period created the founding principles for Turkish foreign policy and the Kemalist ideology has become a key factor in defining the national interests, and the foreign policy was implemented via cooperation between the military and foreign policy elite. The main foreign policy goal of Turkey has been to be a member of the western family.[98] The constitutional and legal framework legitimizes the role of military elites in the foreign policy formation in the following decades like the establishment of the National Security Council. In that sense, the western orientation is directly related to the identity of the Kemalist elite. The West is not only used for geographical area, it also refers to the civilization; which is constructed on the capitalism and the supremacy of human rationality.[99] With its admiration to the scientific rationalism, and its identification with the western model of development, Turkish foreign policy moved towards Europe and away from the Middle East.[100] Therefore, this new identity prevented empathy with the Middle Eastern societies.[101] For the Kemalist elite, there existed only one civilization, and it meant the European civilization. Because of this, Kemalism provided important parameters within which the foreign policy would be framed. In that sense, while the effects of the period for the founding principles should be taken into account, we must also consider the effects of identity on these principles and tendencies. In addition to this, the defensive and status quo minded foreign policy understanding is also related with the Kemalist identity of foreign policy. The motto "Peace at home, Peace in the World" is the product of the Kemalist identity and this motto became one of the main understandings for the protection of the status quo in the following decades.

[98] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p. 57
[99] Özcan, p. 85
[100] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 160
[101] Philip Robins, "A Double Gravity State: Turkish Foreign Policy Reconsidered", **British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies**, Vol. 33, No. 2 (November, 2006), p. 201

The elite formation of politics is not special to Turkey. For the Syrian case, the elites also played crucial and central role for the interest formulation. The elites in Syria played an important role for the consolidation of the Ba'athist ideology after the establishment period. For the ideologs of the party, intellectuals should guide the society in the revolution process. In that sense, the elite formation of the politics in Syria looks similar to the Turkish case. Both countries emphasized the mission of the elites to transform the society and state. While the elite formation of the politics is important for establishing principles for both countries, they interpreted the new order and new interests differently. Therefore, the most crucial point was that the elites of both countries formulated interests in the opposite directions, which resulted in widening gap between the two identities. In Turkey's discourse, being a part of the West and modernized world was crucial since the anti-imperialist discourse did not have its place among the elite. The Ottoman Empire did not witness any direct western imperial invasions, and it prevented any kind of important prejudices against the West in Turkey unlike Syria. Additionally, the mode of production and class structure in Turkey were more developed than Syria. Hence, the capitalist mode of production and western development model were seen as the only ways for the modernization, because during the 1920s, Soviet revolution had not been completed yet.[102]

On the other hand, the anti-imperialist discourse in Syria and the antipathy towards the West were clear within the elites of Syria. Even the word 'West' can create hatred and suspicion because of the imperial legacy and negative image of the West in the region. In that sense, the Syrian elites and intellectuals ideationally differed from their counterparts in terms of the cooperation with the West. On the other hand, Soviet development model was as an alternative model against the western development model during the establishment period of the Syrian state in 1940s, and this model was seen as more suitable for the Syrian elite in the following decades. These totally different discourses broadened the gap between two countries. In that sense, before examining the interaction in the systemic level between Turkey and Syria, the corporate identities of both countries put some distance with the "Other". Analyzing the constitutive principles of the Ba'ath identity that made huge impact on Syrian corporate identity will show us more gaps between two corporate identities.

[102] Oran, *Türk Dış Politikasının Teori ve Pratiği*, p. 53

2.2.2Corporate Identity of Syria and Effects on Foreign Policy

Anti-western ideas after the World War I gained importance in Syria and became one of the most central political stances in the country. This stance in the following periods determined the direction of foreign policy and caused suspicions towards the allies of the West, like Turkey. Until 1946, it is hard to speak of an independent Syrian identity, but important intellectual movements in Bilad Al-Sham deeply affected not only modern Syria, but also the whole region. Syria became one of the most important countries for the Arab nationalism during the 20th century, and the Arab national movement sprang up from the Syrian soil since the beginning of the century. Because of these, Syrians at least in their own eyes began to see themselves as the bellwether of the Arab world[103] and this understanding still occupies a place for the Syrian politics.

After the independence of Syria, the new identity of society and state became one of most important questions in the country. This discussion was not only related to Syria but to the whole region. In that sense, the national and supra-national identity discussions intersected. This intersection caused problems both in Syria, at the state-level, and in the Middle East, at the sub-system level. In that sense, the construction of the "Self" and the "Other" in Syria cannot be thought separately from the identity construction process in the region. After the World War I, Syrian nationalism, Pan-Syrian nationalism and Pan-Arabism became the main ideologies in the country.[104] While we can see long rivalry between three ideologies in Syria, the common feature of these ideologies was that these tended to exclude non-Arab societies like the Turkish society.

After the end of World War II, the ideas of the old elites like "Liberation" and "Independence" began to be short of satisfying the demands of the new generation of elites in Syria. The progressive views of 1920s began to be perceived as conservative in 1940s by the younger generations. Under these circumstances, the Ba'ath ideology can be described as the one of the first ideologies in the region, aimed at adding new dynamism to the old struggle for the independence, and to realize the Arab unity in revolutionary ways.[105] Therefore, the name of the Ba'ath which means "Awakening" in Arabic language symbolizes the radical transformation of the Arab world. Arabism plays the central role for the Ba'ath ideology, and within this project,

[103] Eyal Zisser, **Asad's Legacy: Syria in Transition**,New York: New York University Press, 2001, p. 2
[104] Şen, pp. 109-110
[105] Şen, p. 153

the non-Arab societies have small footprints. In that sense, after the mid-1940s, the Ba'ath ideology and Ba'athist identity played crucial role for the establishment of corporate identity. In that sense, analyzing Ba'athism provides us the central tenets for the main direction of the Syrian foreign policy and shows us the effects of the ideational factors on the foreign policy identity.

The Ba'ath party was one of the most influential political parties in the Middle East to realize Arab unity, and it became the most important actor to determine Syria's direction since its independence. Syrian Ba'ath Party was established in 1943 with the discourse of "Unity, Independence and Socialism".[106] These slogans became the trinity of the Arab nationalist politics throughout the Arab world.[107] The ideas of Michel Aflaq and Salah Bitar who were the founders of the Ba'ath Party made huge impact over the principles of the party.[108] These principles became the main principles of the state after the Ba'ath Party captured power in 1963. According to the Ba'athist ideology, the Arabs have been artificially divided into smaller states; and the aims of the party were awakening (Ba'ath) the Arab nations and leading their unification.[109] It aimed to transform the existing political culture and formulate new beliefs and values in the Arab world. In that sense, like in the example of Turkey, the elites' identity and ideas deeply affected the identity of Syria. Shortly, slogans of unity, independence and socialism played an important role over the foreign policy identity of Syria, which indirectly put some distance with Turkish corporate identity.

For the Ba'athist ideology, the unity as a principle comes first. At the establishment period of the party, it rejected the artificial national boundaries, and defined itself as the party of the Arab world rather than Syria. In this way, the Ba'ath party questioned the colonialism and imperialism in the region. On the other hand, the nationalistic Pan-Arab views of the party can be seen as a breaking point from the Ottoman past. In that sense, Pan-Arabism put some distance with non-Arab societies and drew a line for the relations with Turkey. This line affected the relations between the "Self" and the "Other". With this principle, Turkey became one of the "Others" and was excluded from the idea of the unity.

[106] Patrick Seale, **The Struggle for Syria,** Great Britain: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1986, p.153
[107] Raymond Hinnebusch, **Syria: Revolution from Above**, London: Routledge, 2001, p. 31
[108] Şen, p. 115
[109] Hinnebusch, *Syria: Revolution from Above,* p. 30

Aflaq described the independence as being free from the foreign domination and domestic exploitation.[110] Hence, the Ba'ath party was against Iraqi, Hashemite, western and even Soviet influences.[111] Syrian independence was also related to socialism. The salvation from the ruling class and imperialism would bring social justice and independence. The independence could only be realized by the establishment of social justice. The socialist understanding of the Ba'ath Party was much more local understanding and there was no strong relationship with the international socialism. The party rejected both western democracy and Marxist communism. The founders of the party could not see these alternatives as sufficient to solve social and economic problems of the Arab societies. Therefore, the party wanted to formulate a distinctive socialist model for the Arab societies. The Arab socialism was described as the most effective way to realize the Arab nationalism and the Pan-Arab idea. It would provide economic justice and equality which could establish suitable grounds for the unity. For Ba'athism, socialism was a tool rather than an aim. However, the party renamed itself as "Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party" in 1953.[112] These principles helped the Ba'ath party to reformulate the country's interests and determined the foreign policy understanding of Syria in the following decades.

Ba'athism aiming this Arab unity is still the official ideology in Syria. The relative success of Arabism in Syria as the common identity ensured that the Syrian foreign policy would be shaped by Arabism.[113] According to the party's declaration, the foreign policy of the state is being conducted in accordance with the interests of the Arab nationalism. Therefore, Syria's foreign policy was rooted in the Arab national identity. Syrian identity was seen as artificial creation of the imperialism, and because of this, the defense of all-Arab causes is central for the Syrian foreign policy formulation. In addition to this, the Arabs should resist all kinds of foreign domination and influence in their countries. The Ba'ath party was one of the first Arab organizations to adopt the policy of non-alignment.[114] Because of this, Aflaq criticized Truman aids to Turkey and Greece. He saw this kind of acts would result in foreign domination. While at the beginning, the party wanted to put some distance with the USSR because of the attitude of

[110] Patrick Seale, **Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East**, Londan: University of California Press, 1988, p. 31
[111] Seale, *Struggle for Syria*, p. 177
[112] Şen, p. 162
[113] Hinnebusch, *Syria: Revolution from Above*, p. 139
[114] Şen, p. 169

the Soviets on the issue of Palestine, then in the following decades, Syria began to approach them in the context of the necessitates of the Cold War.

On the other hand, although the principles of the Ba'ath party played crucial role for the foreign policy identity of Syria, we cannot define permanent foreign policy stance of Syria until the "Correction Revolution" of Hafez Al-Asad in 1970 due to the political instabilities in Syria. In the period after 1970, Syria could produce more consistent and continuous foreign policy identity as a result of Hafez Asad rule.[115] While pan-Arabism preserved its central role within the Syrian foreign policy, the tools and means radically differed until 1970. Especially, after 1966, Syria began to train Palestinian fedayeens against Israel, and made propaganda against the pro-western states and groups in the region as a result of the capture of power by the radical neo-Ba'athist understanding. Beside this, ties with the USSR were strengthened during this process. However, with the 1967 defeat against Israel, the neo-Ba'athist understanding began to lose legitimacy in Syria, and under these circumstances, Hafez Al-Asad captured power with the help of the actors having more realist and pragmatic understanding. From 1970 to 2000, the realist and pragmatic interpretation of the Ba'athism, which can also be described as Asadism, constituted the foreign policy identity of Syria. Therefore, Syria's definition of the national interests and role formulation could be characterized as Syro-centric Arabism since 1970s.[116]

With the Correction Revolution, Hafez Al-Asad called for the suspension of the revolution in the interests of Syrian and Arab unity for the recovery of the lost territories.[117] In that sense, Asad rule signaled the departure of an ideologically based foreign policy to a much more pragmatic one.[118] In this way, Hafez Asad planned to end the isolation of Syria in the region which was resulted from the radical policies of the Neo-Ba'athist government after 1966.[119] According to Hafez Al-Asad, the Syrian national security doctrine had to achieve two interlocking elements. First was the gaining independent fighting capability against Israel.[120] Asad believed the importance of the strong military power. The humiliation of the 1967 defeat

[115] Nikolaos Van Dam, **The Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society under Asad and Ba'ath Party,** London: I.B. Tauris Press, 1997, p. 137
[116] Hinnebusch, *Syria: Revolution from Above,* p. 141
[117] Hinnebusch, *Syria: Revolution from Above,* p. 58
[118] David W. Lesch, **The New Lion of Damascus: Bashar Al-Asad and Modern Syria**, London: Yale University Press, 2005, p. 29
[119] Van Dam, p. 71
[120] Zisser, p. 13

against Israel made huge impact on Asad. This defeat was one of the decisive turning points in Hafez Asad's political life.[121] Therefore, the relations with Israel played a central role for Asad's foreign policy understanding. Secondly, Asad aimed at relying on the Soviet Union for economic, political and military support, and strategic backing in the event of possible threat. For Asad, the USSR umbrella was not only crucial against the USA, but also important for reaching strategic parity with Israel. These pragmatic steps of Asad brought military and economic advantages to Syria in the short-run.

While Asad tried to manipulate the regional and international conjunctures to maintain stability and provide security within a pragmatic understanding, Pan-Arabism was the main aim of the leadership in the long term.[122] In addition, whereas the close relations with the USSR injured Aflaq's description of independence, the worldview of the Syrian Ba'ath regime continued during the Asad era, especially around the nationalist Pan-Arab understanding. Because of this, the definition of the "Self" and the "Other" did not change much during Hafez Al-Asad rule. Like the most Syrians, Asad also saw the Syrian identity as Arab and Syria as a part of the wider Arab nation. In that sense, the policies of realism and pragmatism are not adequate to understand Syria's foreign policy motivations during the post-1970 era. The character of the leadership, the definition of the "Self" and the "Other" and the identity of the state were keys to understand the direction of Syrian foreign policy.

To sum up, Turkey and Syria defined identities and interests in the opposite directions. "Sincere" friendly regimes of Turkey like Israel and the USA were seen as the enemies by Syria. Friendly regimes of Syria like Egypt and the USSR were also enemies for Turkey. These definitions prevented the construction of a collective identity between the two states. The Cold War period produced structural effects to reinforce these definitions. However, before examining the effects of the structure, the systemic interaction between the countries with concrete examples as a part of the social identities should be examined to understand the reinforcing process for the negative identification between the "Self" and the "Other".

[121] Seale, *Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East,* p. 143
[122] Zisser, p. 70

2.3SYSTEMIC INTERACTION AND SOCIAL IDENTITIES OF THE COUNTRIES

Until the sign of Adana Accords in 1998, the bilateral relations of Turkey and Syria could be divided into three phases. The period from 1946 to 1960 can be described as the beginning of the interaction between two identities. In this period, their social identities clashed as a result of the regional developments, and it led to the increase in the level of the negative identification between Turkey and Syria. The second period includes the years between 1960 and 1980. A kind of Détente took place between two countries during this period. While there was no important tension between Turkey and Syria, the parties did not spend sufficient effort to change their perceptions against each other. However, while the negative identifications of both parties were continuing, there did not occur a high degree of tension between them. The last period is from 1980 to 1998 in which the historical problems became more obvious and the "Other" turned into an absolute enemy. Both countries began to perceive each other's acts from the window of security and two states came on the verge of war as a result of increasing tension in 1998. This kind of categorization helps us analyze the historical misperceptions and mistrust between two countries. In this way, the background of the enemy image during the 1990s could be understood better.

2.3.1Beginning of Systemic Interaction and Reinforcement of the Negative Identification

The interaction between two identities reinforced the negative images for both parties from the establishment of the Syrian state till 1960. While the domestic struggle to capture power prevented the establishment of a stable identity in Syria, Turkey's assertive policy attitude towards the region negatively affected the bilateral relations and prevented the establishment of the collective identity. In that sense, analyzing the period between 1946 and 1960 by concrete examples provides important clues to understand the historical mistrust and misperceptions that affected the social identities of both parties. However, before mentioning the cornerstones of this period for the bilateral relations, the relationship between two states should be indicated that it had not been unproblematic during the previous years because of Hatay issue.[123] After the annexation of Hatay by Turkey, this issue became one of the main concerns of the independent

[123] For further information about the Hatay dispute between Syria and Turkey, see Chapter 4.

Syrian state and became the most important source of hostility during the pre-World War II period, which made negative effect on the relations between the "Self" and the "Other".[124] Therefore, two countries could not make a good start for their bilateral relations after the end of the World War II. Since the end of the World War II in 1945 till the rise of the bipolar structure by Truman doctrine in 1947, Turkey tried to establish good relations with the Middle Eastern countries in order to end the isolation on the international arena, which was the result of Turkey's neutrality policy during the World War II.[125] Within this aim, Turkey recognized the independence of the most of the Middle Eastern countries. However, Syria was an exception because of its claim over Hatay. Therefore, Turkey delayed its decision to recognize the independence of Syria. Although the crisis was solved by the help of Iraq at that time, Syria brought Hatay issue on the table again in 1950s. In that sense, developments right after the war negatively affected the bilateral relations between two countries. The regional and international developments between 1946 and 1960 also reinforced negative identifications between Turkey and Syria which widened the gap between them.

During the Cold War years, Turkey generally preferred non-intervention policy when it came to the Middle Eastern affairs and the policy avoided long-term entanglements in the Middle East except the unsuccessful Baghdad Pact project.[126] After Truman doctrine and the rise of the Cold War, Turkey chose to be a part of the western axis and its relations with the Middle East began to be formulated within the western security perspective after this period. Turkey adopted a security-oriented understanding towards the Middle East and considered the region as the source of problems. Turkey's perception of the region through the NATO glasses undermined its credibility among some of the Middle Eastern countries which adopted socialist and communist ways of development and modernization.[127] However, the most important reason of the negative image of Turkey in the region and the suspicions of the Arabs against Turkey was its assertive and pro-western policies during 1950s. This policy harmed Turkey's image among the eyes of the Arabs and removing this negative image became almost impossible in the following decades.

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[124] Tayyar Arı and Ferhat Prinççi, "Turkey's New Foreign Policy towards the Middle East and the Perceptions in Syria and Lebanon", **Akademik Bakış**, Vol. 4, No. 7 (Winter, 2010), p. 8

[125] Melek Fırat and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, "Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1945-1960", in Baskın Oran (Ed.), **Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar: 1919-1980,** (615-635), 16th edn., Vol.1, İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2011, p. 616

[126] Alexander Murinson, "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy" **Middle Eastern Studies**, Vol. 42, No:6 (November 2006), p. 945

[127] Tarık Oğuzlu, "Soft-Power in Turkish Foreign Policy" **Australian Journal of International Affairs**, Vol. 61, No: 1 (March 2007), p. 85

While Turkey made attempts to remove this image by following a more balanced foreign policy towards the region afterwards, these were not successful in overcoming Arabs' negative identification.

Back to 1950s, Turkey's interests were defined in identical terms along with the West and the USA and these policies offended the Arab states. While Turkey's rigid western oriented stance prevented the dialogue with the Middle Eastern Arab states, its decision to join the western bloc and its western oriented policies towards the region increased the already existing anti-Turkish feelings among the Arabs. This understanding harmed the relations because of the imperial legacy of the West in the region and prevented the positive identification between two countries and resulted in increasing suspicion against the "Other". In this period, Turkey wanted to be the leader of the region as the representative of the western world, but failed to take anti-colonial and independence movements into consideration.[128] Turkey as a part of the western alliance misread the independence movements in the region. It ignored the rights of self-determination of the ex-colonies and did not understand the attempts of these countries to establish third bloc within the Cold War context. Description of Turkey as the satellite of the West by the Arab states caused permanent mistrust and suspicion between the parties and this understanding prevented the cooperation in the following decades. In that sense, the period between 1946 and 1960, which can be described as the beginning of the systemic interaction between two corporate identities, widened the gap not only with Syria in particular, but also with all Arab societies in general. In order to understand the dynamics of negative identification with the Arabs and Syrians, a number of examples can be given, but some of them have a deep effect on the bilateral relations.

The first important development in the region during this period was the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. The Israeli-Palestinian problem lies at the heart of the regional problems and still continues to be among the most important ones in the Middle East. Turkey was the first Muslim state recognizing the state of Israel on March 28, 1949.[129] This recognition was strongly criticized by the Arab states since the recognition of Israel by any Muslim state was considered as an act of treason. However, the western orientation of Turkish foreign policy was crucial for the recognition of Israel. For the Turkish elites, the recognition was a pragmatic

[128] Mesut Özcan and Ali Resul Usul, "Understanding the New Turkish Foreign Policy: Changes within Continuity, Is Turkey Departing from the West?" **Usak Yearbook,** Vol. 4, (2011), p. 172
[129] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1945-1960*, p. 617

decision that arose from the ties with the western powers[130], but Turkey began to be described as the satellite of western imperialism by the effect of the rising Arab nationalism in the region. On the Syrian side, the establishment of the state of Israel made traumatic effects as most of the Arab countries. Syria was the part of the losing camp in 1948 Arab-Israeli War and this defeat deeply affected the Syrian foreign policy route. Syrian-Israeli relations are still problematic and the anti-Israeli discourse forms a crucial part of the Syrian foreign policy discourse. In that sense, Turkey's rush decision to recognize Israel created disappointment on Syria. This contributed to the negative understanding about the "Other" in the following decades.

Another important development which made negative effect on the bilateral relations from 1946 to 1960 was the Baghdad Pact project. Like the Israeli case, the Baghdad Pact project widened the gap not only with the Syrians but also with the Arab societies. The Baghdad Pact was formed by Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and the United Kingdom in 1955 in order to contain Soviet threat in the region. It can be defined as the strongest interaction of Turkey with the region during the Cold War and the extension of the NATO obligation. Because of this, the western-oriented foreign policy formulation was clearly seen in the case of Baghdad Pact. According to pact, the countries of Northern Tier had to coordinate and cooperate to defend the interests of the region and it would "resist the common threat to all free peoples".[131] In that sense, according to the US strategy, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Syria could play an important role for this project.[132] While the USA wanted from Syria to be a part of the Baghdad Pact, Syria tended to pursue Egypt during the 1950s. Turkey wanted to be the leader of the pact, and because of this, applied active diplomacy instruments in the region. In order to convince the Arab states to take part within the Baghdad Pact, Turkey paid visits to Syria and Lebanon. However, Syria refused to be a part of the pact with the effects of Egypt.

With the contribution of Syrian domestic developments, the Baghdad Pact became one of the main points for enmity throughout the history. During 1955, Ba'athist Arab nationalists became stronger within Syrian politics and began to support the Non-Alignment movement.[133] Syrian left, including the Ba'ath party did not like Turkey because of its full membership in the

[130] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach,* p. 116
[131] Seale, *The Struggle for Syria***,** p.188
[132] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1945-1960*, p. 620
[133] Michael B. Bishku, "Turkish-Syrian Relations: A Checkered History", **Middle East Policy,** Vol. 19, No: 3 (Fall, 2012), p. 38

NATO, and its opposition to the Soviet Union and communism in general.[134] For Syrian left, Turkey was the Trojan horse or in other words, a gendarme of American imperialism in the Middle East.[135] The support of the USSR to the independence movements had created sympathy within the Ba'ath Party.[136] The Ba'ath Party, which defined unifying the Arab states as its mission, saw the Baghdad Pact as the vehicle to protect Israel, and protested this organization. Syria concluded that the Baghdad Pact was organized to divide Arab world. Israel and its western allies were more dangerous enemies than the USSR for Syrian Ba'ath Party. Therefore, for Syria like Egypt, the Baghdad Pact was a new instrument of imperialism to recolonize the Arab world. For Syria and Egypt, Turkey as an ally of Israel was the friend of Zionism and the enemy of Arabism.[137] As a result, these developments led to a military agreement for a unified command between Syria and Egypt on October 20, 1955.[138] In addition to this, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria decided to sign an agreement for the empowerment of the military, economic and political structure of the Arab world, and decided not to take part in the Baghdad Pact.[139] However, Turkey defined high degree of anti-western attitude of Syria and unified command with Egypt as dangerous, and threatened Syrian radicalism with intervention in 1955.[140] Turkey reacted to this decision harshly and warned Syria because of the close relations with Egypt. In that sense, the Baghdad Pact caused an increased tension between two states and resulted in the permanent damage for the bilateral relations.

When we look at the consequences of this project, we can conclude that the Baghdad Pact not only negatively contributed to the relations with Syria, it also harmed Turkey's image in the region. Turkey misjudged the aspirations of the Arabs and resulted in counter-productive movements. Turkey in the region moved with Cold War and non-regional logics, but for the countries of the region, before the Soviet threat, problem of Israeli state was upper hand. In that sense, security and Cold War-oriented foreign policy attitudes in this period caused unsuccessful results. Rapprochement of pro-western states that felt the danger of Soviet communism created discontent among anti-western and Arab nationalist states which could also be described as the

[134] Sadik J. Al-Azm, "The 'Turkish Model': A View from Damascus" **Turkish Studies**, vol. 12, No. 4 (2011), p. 637
[135] Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, p. 300
[136] Şen, p. 202
[137] Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, p. 223
[138] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p. 119
[139] Seale, *The Struggle for Syria*, p. 224
[140] Hinnebusch, *Syria: Revolution from Above*, p. 142

pro-Soviet such as Syria and Egypt.[141] Turkey's relations with Egypt and Syria deteriorated and Non-Alignment Movement put some distance with Turkey. As a result, the Baghdad Pact project reminded the Ottoman imperial past in the region. Beside this, the pact failed in terms of aims at the establishment period. While the pact continued until 1979 with different names, with the withdrawal of Iraq in 1958 as a result of military coup d'état, the pact lost its only Arab ally. Non-Arab character of the pact showed the mistrust of the Arab societies towards the organization. The Baghdad Pact case showed the different perceptions of Turkey and Arab states. While Turkey saw the pact as a defense organization, Arab states saw the pact as a tool of imperialism, and a threat for independence. However, relations between social identities of both countries did not end with 1955 Baghdad Pact project. 1957 crisis between Syria and Turkey, which was also affected by Cold War logic like the Baghdad Pact project, resulted in widening the gap between two identities.

During the 1950s, one of the most important problems between two countries was the 1957 Syrian crisis and it negatively affected Turkey's image in the eyes of Syrians.[142] After the Suez Canal crisis, the USSR wanted to increase the level of cooperation with the countries of the region and Syria became one of the access points for the USSR in the region. Syria and the USSR signed an agreement on economic and technical cooperation in 1957. These agreements included infrastructure investments, a 500 million-dollar worth economic and military aid to Syria.[143] In this way, the USSR gained a way to penetrate Middle Eastern politics for the first time during the Cold War.[144] On the other hand, the USA wanted to diminish the power of the communism throughout the world. With Eisenhower doctrine, rolling back of the communism became one of the most important foreign policy priorities of the West. While Turkey welcomed Eisenhower doctrine, Syria and Egypt were the most reactive states against this doctrine.[145] This was a clear example of positioning both states in different directions. After the domestic developments in Syria and rapprochement with the USSR, Turkey began to see Syria as the Soviet satellite. Turkey began to feel the Soviet threat not only from the north but also from the south. Turkey pushed for western intervention on Syria as a result of rising Cold War logic in the

[141] Özden Zeynep Oktav, **Limits of Relations with the West: Turkey, Syria and Iran,** İstanbul: Beta Press, 2008, p. 127
[142] Cengiz Dinc and Mustafa Yetim, "Transformation of the Turkish Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East: from Non-Involvement to A Leading Role" **Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations**, Vol. 11, No: 1, (Spring 2012), p. 69
[143] Fahir Armaoğlu, **20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi: 1914-1995**, Vol. 1-2, İstanbul: Alkım Press, 2004, p. 507
[144] Armaoğlu, p. 507
[145] Armaoğlu, p. 503

region.[146] Under these circumstances, Turkey stationed about 37.000 soldiers on the Turkish-Syrian border to deter Syria.[147] Both Syria and Soviets protested this decision and Turkey and Syria came to the edge of war. With the help of international community, this tension decreased, but level of mistrust between Turkey and Syria increased. The "Other" began to turn into an absolute enemy during the 1950s and ideological and ideational factors began to dominate politics for both parties. Effects of ideational factors were also felt with the establishment of United Arab Republic between Syria and Egypt.

The United Arab Republic in 1958 was established between Syria and Egypt with the help of anti-western attitude of both countries and this alliance created a kind of dissatisfaction among the pro-western states in the region. While Turkey was preferring Egypt-Syria rapprochement rather than Syria-USSR rapprochement, it was also problematic for western allies. Hence, the formation of the UAR contributed to mutual suspicion and mistrust between Turkey and Syria[148] and because of this, Israel and Turkey decided to cooperate more.[149] This cooperation aimed to prevent the spread of communism threat. On the other hand, from the perspective of Syria, commitment to Pan-Arabism was the main tool of gaining power and guaranteeing survival within a weak and fragmented society.[150] In that sense, identity-based foreign policy from the 1950s had dominated Syrian foreign policy. Arabism and rejection of pro-western non-Arab states became important determinants for Syria. However, Syria could not meet expectations from this unification because of Nasser's one-man rule and leave from the UAR in 1961 with the coup of conservatives. On the other hand, in 1963, anti-western Ba'ath Party totally gained power in Syria and became the main actor of the Syrian politics.[151] From this date, Ba'athist understanding became the only route for Syria, and if there would be change in the following years, it was only the façade of the Ba'athism.

All in all, bilateral and regional developments during the 1950s caused suspicion and mistrust between two states. In that sense, period from 1946 to 1960, which was the period of first systemic interaction between independent Syria and Turkey, contributed to the sense of

[146] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p.119
[147] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1945-1960*, p. 630
[148] Kushner, p. 229
[149] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1945-1960*, p. 647
[150] Raymond Hinnebusch, "Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership" **Review of International Affairs**, Vol.3, No. 2 (Winter, 2003), p. 192
[151] Rifat Uçarol, **Siyasi Tarih, 1789-2001**, 7th edn., İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2008, p. 896

enmity and negative identification. Attempts of Turkey for the Baghdad Pact caused closer relations between the USSR and Syria and damaged bilateral relations, which were weak and unstable with acute "Turcophobia".[152] Beside these examples, Turkish attitudes during Suez Canal crisis in 1956, Bandung Conference in 1955, Lebanese crisis in 1956, and problems with Iraq after the military coup in 1958 were important examples to demonstrate Turkey's pro-western position in the region, which contributed to the negative identification between Syria and Turkey. Turkey's position during this period and overall developments reinforced Arab nationalism in the Middle East and remembered imperial legacy of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey's pro-active foreign policy in the region came to an end with 1960 military coup and Turkish foreign policy in the region was guided by "the principles of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of the Middle East and non-interference in the conflicts between Middle Eastern states"[153] until 1980s. Turkey during the 1960s and 1970s tried to pursue balanced policies in the region. However, Arab states continued to doubt against Turkey in these periods as a result of Turkey's attitude in the region during the 1950s. Especially during Cyprus problem, attitudes of Arab states created frustration for Turkey. While Turkey's attempts to pursue more balanced policies in the region were welcomed by Syria in some cases, these attempts would not be enough to erase negative image of Turkey. However, besides Turkey's attitude during the 1950s, Syria's new path with Ba'athist understanding also prevented the removal of negative identification.

2.3.2 Détente and Continuation of Negative Identification

Period from 1960-1980 can be defined as the détente period between Syria and Turkey. While there has not been high degree of tension between two states, we also cannot talk about totally friendly relations between the parties. In this sense, although there were positive developments between two countries, identities of both parties prevented permanent cooperation. After disappointed policies of 1950s with the contribution of frustrations of Turkey within western alliance system during the 1960s, Turkey became aware of the importance of non-western world. Because of this, Turkey tried to correct its mistakes of previous periods during 1960s and 1970s. In that sense, the disappointment at 1964 conference of Non-Aligned states and Johnson letter showed the importance of non-western states to prevent isolation in international

[152] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 99
[153] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p. 120

arena. After Johnson letter, Turkey tried to counterweight superpowers, and in order to do this, wanted more calm relations with the Third World. In this period, Turkey avoided some pacts about the region, which could create reactions by the Arab states. Turkey during this period began to seek the friendship of the Arab countries in the region and not to side with one camp or another.[154] This change was clearly seen during 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars. During these wars, Turkey did not let the US to use its military bases. Besides these, Turkey participated in humanitarian assistance to Arab countries during 1967 war, and acted with Arab states in the UN, demanding the end of Israeli occupation.[155] Turkey declared that they were against the territory gain by the use of force during the war, and this became the main foreign policy principle towards Arab-Israeli conflicts.[156] Good relations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) at the end of 1970s and letting PLO to open office in Ankara showed us the rapprochement with the Arabs.[157] Beside these, Turkey became a member of Islamic Conference in 1972.[158] On the other hand, Turkey never cut the relations with Israel. Turkey did not label Israel as the aggressor.[159] Turkey also did not oppose Camp David Accord unlike Arab states. During these wars, Turkey tried to express its sympathies toward the Arabs without offending Israel. In that sense, during 1960s and 1970s, Turkey did not change overall foreign policy principles.[160] However, Turkey's changing attitude did not help with the radical transformation of relations. It basically stemmed from two important determinants. Firstly, Turkey's balanced policy was also passive and cautious towards the region. Secondly, 1960s was also remembered by the victory of the Arab nationalist regimes in the Middle East, which had deep suspicions towards Turkey. In that sense, we see ups and downs within bilateral relations, which prevented the establishment of collective identity.

After Syria's decision of leaving from the United Arab Republic, Turkey saw this development as the domestic affairs of Syria and became the second recognizant state of the new

[154] Kushner, p. 229
[155] Özcan and Usul, p. 177
[156] Armaoğlu, p. 847
[157] Çağrı Erhan and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, "Arap Olmayan Ülkelerle İlişkiler, 1960-1980", in Baskın Oran (Ed.), **Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar: 1919-1980,** (796-807), 16th edn., Vol.1 , İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2011, p. 800
[158] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p. 124
[159] Bishku, p. 42
[160] Melek Fırat and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, "Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1960-1980", in Baskın Oran (Ed.), **Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar: 1919-1980,** (784-796), 16th edn., Vol.1, İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2011, p. 795

Syrian government.[161] In that sense, Turkey began to give up aggressive policies towards Syria during the 1960s. However, Syria began to apply aggressive and ideological foreign policy during the 1960s, especially after 1966 with neo-Ba'ath coup. In that sense, Syria's foreign policy identity became a problem for bilateral relations. Therefore, Ba'athist radicalism during the 1960s prevented any radical positive transformation for bilateral relations. Effects of Syrian radicalism were shown in 1965 as a result of Cyprus issue. Syria warned Turkey about the Cyprus issue in 1965 and threatened Turkey with intervention, if Turkey would happen to invade Cyprus.[162]

After 1966 Neo-Ba'ath coup in Syria, the whole Middle Eastern region witnessed the most extreme leftist government in the region.[163] Radicalism of the new government materialized with closer relations with the USSR and more rigid policies against Israel.[164] Syrian radicalism continued until the Correction Revolution in 1970 and prevented positive transformation for bilateral relations. On the other hand, Turkey's attitude during 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars prevented clear enmity between countries and contributed to the détente between parties. After the 1967 war, Turkey provided food, clothing and medicine to Arab countries, including Syria.[165] Because of Turkey's policies during the 1967 War, Syria thanked Turkey. However, this kind of act of Turkey should be examined within the context of Arab-Israeli conflict because pro-Arab stance of Turkey during the conflicts motivated Turkey for this aid. On the other hand, with Correction Revolution in 1970 by Hafez Al-Asad, Syria began to apply more pragmatic and realist foreign policies, which removed radical tendencies within Syrian foreign policy. While pragmatic line of father Asad helped for the continuation of détente between two countries, new foreign policy understanding of Asad was also problematic for Turkey. In that sense, ups and downs within bilateral relations continued during the 1970s.

Rise of Syria with Hafez Asad in the region was not only important for Arab nationalism but also important for the dynamics of the region. While father Asad used pragmatic instruments in foreign policy choices, close relations with the USSR maintained its central importance and during the 1970s, cooperation between the USSR and Syria increased. In 1972,

[161] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1960-1980*, p. 786
[162] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p.121
[163] Şen, p. 250
[164] Şen, p. 252
[165] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1960-1980,* p. 790

Asad could get a 700 million-dollar worth military and economic support from the USSR.[166] Reliance on the USSR for political, economic and military support became one of the central tenets of Hafez Asad. In 1972, there were about 30.000 Soviet advisers in Syria.[167] This trend continued during the 1980s and they signed the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1980.[168] As a result of these developments, Syria became the first coming consumer of Soviet armament among the Third World countries and Syria clearly became a pro-Soviet state in the region.[169] Increasing pro-Soviet attitude of Syria was a source of concern for Turkey, but Soviet aids were crucial for Syria in order to establish strategic parity against Israel. In addition to the close relations with the USSR, continuation of the central place of Arabism during Hafez Asad period also failed to remove negative identification between Turkey and Syria.[170]

The level of tension between two states decreased during the 1960s and 1970s, but we cannot see any positive developments for the solution of historical problems during these periods. While trade expanded and several agreements of cooperation were signed between Turkey and Syria during this period, confidence and trust could not be built between parties.[171] In addition to the historical problems of two states, new problems occurred along Turkish-Syrian border and negatively contributed to the relations. The use of Syrian territories by illegal armed groups against Turkey deteriorated bilateral relations during the 1970s and this became one of the most important issues during the following decades. In addition, smuggling continued during these periods and Turkish-Syrian border had been mined until 1969 to stop smuggling.[172] However, this could not prevent smuggling and it continued to be a problem between two states. Beside this, the issue of lost properties of the citizens within other's territory could not be resolved and this added another problem for the bilateral relations. We also see that both countries did not take important steps to solve these problems during these periods, and mistrust and negative perceptions between Turkey and Syria prevented parties from taking initiatives. In that sense, psychological burdens between parties were important determinants for the continuation of problems. With the removal of these burdens during the 2000s, parties began to

[166] Şen, p. 282
[167] Lesch, s. 31
[168] Lesch, p. 43
[169] Şen, p. 295
[170] Demir, p. 691
[171] Kushner, p. 230
[172] Bishku, p. 42

take initiatives to solve problems. In that sense, ideational factors were very important to understand the nature of relations and we can see the effects of ideational factors more obviously within bilateral relations during the 1980s and 1990s. As a result, examining 1980s and 1990s will show us the identity dimension of relations.

2.3.3 Increasing Tension and Reinforcement of Enemy Image

1980s can be described as the end of the détente between two countries and most of the unsolved problems, which resulted in the increase of tension in 1990s, became obvious in the 1980s. In that sense, while parties became absolute enemy for the "Self" in the 1990s, sources of this enmity began during the 1980s. On the other hand, although relations with the region during previous decades were consistent with the relations with Syria, Turkey's relations with Syria showed negative trends whereas relations with Arab states showed positive trends during the 1980s. In that sense, construction of whole-part relations for the 1980 became more difficult and special nature of relations between two countries on the basis of identities became more obvious. Therefore, from 1980s to 1998, historical misperceptions and prejudices became the main determinant of relations, which can be examined by the help of identity of two countries and ideational factors.

Turgut Özal's foreign policy mentality is described as the shift from traditional foreign policy mentality in Turkey. He tended to see foreign policy as the tool of "international trade relations".[173] Therefore, in 1980s, interaction between Turkey and the Middle East widened from the diplomatic ground to commercial fields. He aimed economic inter-dependency to stabilize and soften the bilateral relations with neighbors. He criticized the passive and cautious attitude of the ministry of the foreign affairs and tried to activate other foreign policy tools. In this period, Turgut Özal -the former president and prime minister of Turkey- pursued economic and cultural cooperation between Turkey and its neighbors. In 1980s, Middle Eastern countries became an important market for Turkey. In this period, Turkey tried to pursue bilateral relations, especially economic relations rather than general policies from western viewpoint.[174] At the end of the decade, estimated 94.000 Turkish workers had been working in Arab states.[175] Economic openings to the region with agreements like the Economic Cooperation Organization with Iran

[173] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 209
[174] Özcan, p. 113
[175] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 211

and Pakistan in 1985 helped Turkey to increase foreign trade volume. With the effect of the Iraq-Iran war, export rate increased from 22.2 % in 1979 to 35 % in 1984, and import rate increased from 18.1% in 1979 to 40.6% in 1984.[176] In 1960s, this ratio was only 8% for Turkey's total trade.[177] Beside these, societal interactions during this period also contributed to the increasing economic transactions. Arab tourists constituted an important part of the tourism income in this period. Related to the economic concerns, "positive neutrality" during the Iran-Iraq war was also important for Turkish foreign policy choices about the politics of region. Turkey's positive neutrality policy during the Iran-Iraq war created successful result for Turkey when two combatants looked for representation in other's capitals through Turkey to protect their interests after the collapse of diplomatic relations in 1987.[178] In that sense, balanced policy of previous periods continued, but this balance was not protected by passive foreign policy attitudes. Balanced policy identified with active foreign policies. Turgut Özal's emphasis on Islamic identity also contributed to relations with the region and limited negative perceptions about the region. In 1980s, Turkey continued its stance in some political issues. While Turkey continued to support Arab's position in the struggle with Israel, it rejected any radical action against Israel. In that sense, Turkey tried to retain balance between two sides. On the other hand, Turkey continued its support to PLO. While Turkey tried to encourage PLO to moderate its policies towards Israel, any acceptable steps for the majority of the Arab world were also acceptable for Turkey.[179] After the independence declaration of Palestine in 1988, Turkey was one of the states, which recognized the new Palestinian state. It was the fifth country in the world and the first one in the western bloc recognizing independent Palestine.[180]

On the other hand, its relations with Syria during this period witnessed crises. Especially Kurdish issue and water dispute were the main problems between two states and both issues created a risk of war in 1990s. Hatay dispute maintained its importance for bilateral relations and three problems interlocked with each other. Three problems dominated bilateral relations and still they cannot be solved totally.[181] In that sense, reductionist understanding about

[176] Melek Fırat and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, "Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1980-1990", in Baskın Oran (ed.), **Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar: 1980-2001**, (124-148), 8th edn., Vol.2 , İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2005, p. 148
[177] Bishku, p. 42
[178] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 57
[179] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 248
[180] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1980-1990*, p. 129
[181] See Chapter 4 for the analysis of water, PKK and Hatay issues

the Arab societies could not explain the problematic nature of relations. As a result of systemic interaction with social identities of both countries, Turkey and Syria could not establish positive relations and social identities reinforced negative identification between parties. As a result of the reinforcement period, two states came into the edge of a war in 1998. In addition to intractable nature of the problems, new developments also contributed to problems like development projects in both countries, which needed more amount of water. Moreover, structural effects also reinforced enmity between two countries. As a result of the end of the Cold War, two countries witnessed new problems and these problems indirectly contributed to identity crisis. Identity crisis in domestic politics affected the social identities of the actors and this negatively affected bilateral relations. In that sense, post-Cold War era resulted in the externalization of problems for parties. During the 1990s, Syria began to be described as the sources of problems in Turkey, which negatively affected bilateral relations. Structural weaknesses and being slow to update themselves to a new order caused inconsistent policies for both of them. Both internal and international developments increased paranoia about the security and the survival of the state for Syria and Turkey. Therefore, although 1980s was the beginning period for intractable problems between Syria and Turkey, with the end of the Cold War, identity dimension became clearer for these problems, which created risk of war in 1998.

The end of the ideological rivalry resulted in the rise of historical and cultural factors all around the world and these also affected the Middle East. Regional changes included state collapse, civil war, superpower intervention and invasion. Protection of Turkey from the surrounding instabilities and prevention of conflicts became an important foreign policy goal for Turkey.[182] Because of this, during the 1990s, Turkey became a part of the problems of the Middle East. On the other hand, Turkey wanted to exploit new political structure as a part of winning camp of the Cold War. Principle of non-intervention into the Middle Eastern affairs changed dramatically when Turkey obtained an important role in the Gulf War. Gulf War implies the changing foreign policy attitude of Turkey from the active non-involvement policy into an active involvement policy. However, in terms of results for Turkey, Gulf War negatively affected Turkey. The destabilization of Iraq caused security and economic problems for Turkey. An influx of huge number of Kurdish refugees, exploitation of the chaotic environment by PKK in the Northern Iraq and economic loses because of the declining trade relations with Iraq raised

[182] Özcan, p. 104

questions about the immediate collaboration with the USA during the war. Turgut Özal's words for the future of Mosul and Kirkuk also caused suspicion about the imperialistic ambitions of Turkey in the region, and resulted in fear among the states of region.[183]

In addition to Gulf War, rising activities of ethnic and religious groups in Turkey engaged attention to the south. With the disappearance of the threat from the north and developments in the south made the Middle East a focus point for Turkey. Suspicion of cooperation of some neighbors with PKK-led insurgency and Islamist movements helped security-oriented views to dominate Turkish politics. Under these circumstances, Turkish military gained upper hand in Turkish politics and this did not only affect domestic politics, but also foreign relations. Interference of domestic problems with the problems of the region caused perceiving the region from the window of security. In that sense, domestic politics subordinated foreign policy in 1990s in Turkey. However, this viewpoint harmed the relations with the Arab states during the 1990s and brought close relations with Israel. As a result, identity crisis in Turkey raised the level of security-oriented views towards the region and determined the relations with Israel and Arab states.

Identity discussions in Turkey dominated the politics during the 1990s and these discussions directly affected relations with the region. From 1990 to 1997 because of the domestic instabilities, the Minister of Foreign Affairs changed 11 times and this average was unusual for Turkey.[184] Rising Islamic identity and the attempts of Erbakan were seen as the threat against state identity by Kemalist elite and resulted in identity crisis in domestic politics. In that sense, rediscovering ethnic and religious identities in Turkey was a crucial threat for official twin identities, secularism and Turkish nationalism. From 1995 to 1997, Turkish politics was dominated by the struggle between Kemalist identity and Islamist identity[185] and this struggle deeply affected the relations with the Middle East. Beside this, Kurdish insurgency also contributed to the identity crisis in Turkey and became one of the most important issues not only for domestic politics, but also for foreign policy choices. In that sense, political Islam and Kurdish separatism posed existential threats against the secular and unitary character of the Kemalist state. National Security Document of 1995 defined irredentism and Islamic

[183] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p. 129
[184] Baskın Oran, "Dönemin Bilançosu, 1990-2001", in Baskın Oran (Ed.), **Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar: 1980-2001,** (203-242), 8th edn., Vol.2, İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2005, p. 239
[185] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 160

fundamentalism as the main security threats against Turkey and these concepts were linked with Syria and Iran.[186] As a consequence of rising identity politics, interventions in Northern Iraq, strategic cooperation with Israel and problems with Syria dominated foreign policy choices of Turkey. As a result of these developments, Turkey-the USA-Israel triangle became the main axis of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East during the 1990s, but this axis widened the gap with Arab states in the region.[187]

While cooperation areas with the Middle Eastern states were limited, relations with Israel reached the peak in 1990s. For the politics of region, in 1990s, Turkey's most important ally was Israel. Turkey was in search of friendship in the region against the supporters of PKK. PKK and water issues of Turkey with southern neighbors made Israel the important partner in the region. Israel's tense relations with Iran who was seen as the supporter of Islamic insurgency and tense relations with Syria who was seen as the supporter of Kurdish insurgency in Turkey made both states to be on the same side for the politics on the region. In that sense, external threats to identity of Turkey were balanced with close identity in the region. Close relations can be materialized with agreements in various areas. Turkey and Israel signed "Military Training and Cooperation", "Free Trade" and "Defense Industry Cooperation" agreements in 1996.[188] Leaking of this agreement to public was explained as a threat of Turkey against Syria for its support for terrorism.[189] Until 2000, two states signed 11 agreements in military areas.[190] These states took part in airsea rescue maneuver, "Reliant Mermaid" with the USA in 1998.[191] Turkey wanted to put pressure over Syria to expel Öcalan with the high-degree of military relationship with Israel. However, after the close relations with Israel during the 1990s, Turkey was accused of shifting from traditional balance policy in the region.

Beside the strategic aims and concerns for Turkish-Israeli alliance, rise of identity politics in the world was also important. Therefore, threats against the state identity made Israel

[186] Meliha B. Altunışık and Lenore G. Martin, "Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 12, No: 4 (2011), p. 571
[187] Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP era", **Turkish Studies,** Vol. 10, No: 1 (March, 2009), p. 17
[188] Özcan, p. 122
[189] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 260
[190] Çağrı Erhan and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, "Arap Olmayan Devletlerle İlişkiler, 1990-2001", in Baskın Oran (Ed.), **Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar: 1980-2001**, (568-579), 8th edn., Vol.2 , İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2005, p. 571
[191] İlhan Uzgel, "AB ve NATO'yla İlişkiler, 1990-2001", in Baskın Oran (Ed.), **Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar: 1980-2001,** (243-325), 8th edn., Vol.2, İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2005, p. 273

an important ally in the region. Engagement to democracy, western alliance system and principles helped both of them for the establishment of alliance. For Turkish elite, Israel had also the same aims, which were modernizing and westernizing the country within the principles of democracy and secularism. This was an alliance of moderate, pro-western states in the Middle East. Elite of the both states shared similar political values, and more important than these, both parties identified themselves with Europe and the West. In that sense, beside the strategic calculations like the common threat perceptions, identities of both states also played an important role. Identity crisis and instable domestic politics in Turkey during the 1990s helped Israel see the sincere friendly regime in the region. Therefore, mutual interests of both countries were linked to their mutual identity. Rejection by the Arabs also helped with a common sense of otherness between Turkey and Israel in 1990s. However, close relations with Israel on the basis of mutual identity perception widened the gap between Syria. During close relations with Israel, the historical enemy of Syria, Syria began to feel surrounded by enemies.

During 1990s, the close relations with Israel shaped Turkey's image in the Middle East. For Israelis, this rapprochement was the "most important regional realignment since Sadat went to Jerusalem."[192] However, signing agreement with Israel on military cooperation deeply affected the dynamics of the region. Turkey with Israel declared Syria, Iran and Iraq as the common threat for both states in 1997. Arab states and Iran were enemies or at least rivals in the region for both, and Israel and Turkey as the representatives of the "civilized and the free world" determined to cooperate against the sources of problems. As a result, this rapprochement harmed relations with the Arab states and cooperation with Israel was compared with Baghdad Pact.[193] Joint military drills and intelligence sharing between Israel, Turkey and the USA caused reactions by Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and the Arab Union. Region was divided along Arab and Non-Arab lines and Turkish-Israeli cooperation was described as the most important threat by the Arab states. Abdul Halim Khaddam - former Deputy President of Syria- described Turkish-Israeli rapprochement as the biggest threat to the Arabs since 1948.[194] With this rapprochement, image of "terrible Turk"[195] was reinforced among the Arab societies. From 1996,

[192] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 240
[193] Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Olmayan Devletlerle İlişkiler, 1990-2001*, p. 575
[194] Özcan, p. 122
[195] Parlar Dal, p. 248

Egypt and Syria expressed their concerns about Israel-Turkey rapprochement[196] and Arabs states with Iran wanted to counter Israel-Turkey alliance. Especially Syria tried to exploit this rapprochement in order to get the support from the Arab world against Turkey. With the impact of Syria, Arab countries criticized Turkey's rapprochement with Israel during the 1997 OIC Summit.[197] Syria's effort to activate Arab union shows the usage of identity-based foreign policy against Turkey. Syria made visits to Russia, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates to show their discontent about the close relationship between Israel and Turkey, and tried to balance Israel-Turkey rapprochement by establishing closer ties with Egypt and Iran.[198] In addition to the increasing efforts of Syria to mobilize Arab world, Syria also increased the level of military cooperation with Armenia and Greece. Syria signed defense accord with Greece in 1995, which permitted Greek warplanes to use Syrian airspace, and this brought the relations to the breaking point.[199] After this agreement, concept of "two-and-a-half-wars"[200], which was against Greece, Syria and PKK, was introduced to Turkish foreign policy literature. Turkey began to see itself by fighting not only against PKK, but also against Greece and Syria. For Syria, despite important problems with Turkey, Israel was the main enemy. On the other hand, Turkey's problems with Greece were more complicated and long-term. In that sense, while Syria blamed Israel to use Turkey against Syria, Turkey blamed Greece to use Syria against Turkey. Therefore, beside direct problems, two states indirectly contributed to enmity. Turkish-Israeli rapprochement contributed Syrian-Turkish tensions and two states led to troop build-ups along the frontier in 1996[201] and in 1998, Syria harshly reacted against joint airsea maneuver between Israel and Turkey. As a result, from the Baghdad Pact, Turkey for the first time became the "Other" in this degree. Perception of Arabs about Turkey as the "Other" continued until the end of the decade. In that sense, with the effects of structure, rising identity crisis in Turkey and close relations with Israel resulted in revival of Turcophobia in the region. On the other hand, Turkey's relations with Syria were more damaged. Firstly, identity crisis was linked with Syria as a result of Syria-PKK relations. Secondly, cooperation with Israel was same as cooperating with the biggest enemy of Syria. Therefore, after the Cold War, gap between two identities widened and

[196] Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Olmayan Devletlerle İlişkiler, 1990-2001*, p. 575
[197] Kemal Kirişçi, "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of Trading State", **New Perspectives on Turkey**, No. 40, 2009, p. 31
[198] Hinnebusch, *Syria: Revolution from Above*, p. 161
[199] Özcan, p. 116-117
[200] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 171
[201] Özcan, p. 122

contributed to the enemy image and Israel became one of the main determinants for bilateral relations.

On the Syrian side, the end of the Cold War also had negative effects on Syrian identity. Syria as a part of the losing camp faced with internal and international pressures. The USSR and the socialist states of Eastern Europe had been the source of inspiration for Syria. Moreover, the USSR was the most important partner of Syria not only in terms of material support, but also in terms of ideological support. In that sense, collapse of these models contributed to the internal and ideological crisis within Syrian society. In addition, as the pioneer of anti-western stance in the region, and as the leader of Arab nationalism and resistance front against Israel, this structural change deeply damaged Syria. Dissolution of the USSR ended Syria's ability to exploit bipolarity and narrowed its options in foreign policy.[202] Within the new order, Syria would face with absolute hegemonic power, and militant policy against Israel became risky and problematic. Syria witnessed US pressure during the 1990s and this pressure limited the maneuver area of Syria. In order not to be victim of the new order, Syria sought to modify its traditional policies and it had to apply more defensive foreign policy understanding after the end of the Cold War. Moreover, in order to break isolation, it took part in the Gulf War and Middle Eastern peace process.

The situation inside Syria was not also encouraging like Turkey. Worsening economic situation and rising domestic discontent were important problems at the beginning of new era. Therefore, Syria faced not only with international pressure, but also with domestic pressure. Since 1963, the Ba'ath regime repressed more than seven major anti-regime disturbances.[203] Because of this, domestic discontent was an important problem for Asad rule. In that sense, the end of the ideological confrontation in world politics was the best time to show domestic discontent with regime and it was a good opportunity to announce the deficiencies of the Hafez Asad rule. "Asadcescu" became an important motto to show Syrians' discontent with Asad rule. Rising Islamic fundamentalism also continued to occupy central place within domestic discontent. Relations with Islamic fundamentalism of regime had been problematic during the Cold War years. Especially from 1976 to 1982, war against fundamentalism reached its peak

[202] Kushner, p. 230
[203] Hinnebusch, *Syria: Revolution from Above,* p. 85

within country. However, with the end of the Cold War, demands of Islamic movements became more obvious. In order to integrate these movements into the system, regime loosened its pressure. In relation to this understanding, regime released political prisoners, which were the members of Islamist movements. However, domestic Islamic movements were not satisfied with limited openness and continued to be the biggest domestic opposition towards the regime during the 1990s.

Economic problems also contributed to the rise of domestic discontent within the country and created existential threat against the Asad regime. In order to be a part of new economic order and counter domestic economic problems, Syria witnessed deepening of the economic liberalization. Encouragement of economic activities and raising the living standards of the masses became priority for Asad rule. Measures taken at the beginning of the decade were designed to maintain existing situation within Syria. "Market economy without any political price" policy, also known as "Chinese model", became the main understanding of Syria during 1990s.[204] In this way, Syria did not have to abandon the ideological worldview. In that sense, limited liberalization was totally related to the preservation of the status quo in Syria. However, this limited economic liberalization in order to save the day would not bring political liberalization, and this would become the most important problem during the following years. In addition to these, integration to world capitalist market to overcome domestic problems, which was dominated by the ideologically hostile states, would also be hard for Syria.[205]

All of these problems resulted in a kind of identity crisis in Syria like Turkey. Questions about the legitimacy of Asad rule, increasing economic problems and domestic opposition increased the concerns about the security of Syrian identity. Discontent from different opposition groups became more obvious in this period. Beside the demands of the society for more freedom, Islamic identity continued to challenge the regime. On the Turkish side, identity crisis within Turkey and interconnected nature of domestic and international problems made Syria the main target not only for material security but also for security of the state identity. Rising ethnic and religious insurgencies in Turkey and Turkey's response with military means negatively affected relations with Syria. Kemalist identity was the determining factor for bilateral relations during the 1990s and dramatized the dangers posed by neighbors. Syria continuously remained on the

[204] Zisser, p. 213
[205] Hinnebusch, *Syria: Revolution from Above*, p. 103

agenda of the NSC, and Turkish-Syrian relations were defined as the security issue.[206] As a result, with the rise of identity politics in the region, both states found themselves in opposite directions. With structural dynamics of the post-Cold War era, changing expectations and perceptions of the actors made the "Other" as the absolute enemy. Insecure identities of the actors increased the level of aggressiveness towards the "Others". Especially domestic instabilities directly affected the stances of the actors in the region. Under these circumstances, the "Other" state became an important source for legitimacy. Psychology of surrounding enemies of both states caused the externalization of the problems. With the old problems like water issue, Hatay dispute and PKK issue, identities of both states brought them to the edge of war in 1998. Therefore, 1990s represented the tensest relations between two countries. Shortly, identities of both states continued to determine bilateral relations in this period and negative identification continued during the 1990s. The only issue, which created limited cooperation, was the concerns about the future of Iraq. In terms of results, these cooperation attempts did not produce any successful consequences. During the 2000s, Iraq became one of the cooperation areas between two countries. In that sense, limited cooperation over Iraq helped to limit mistrust between the parties during the 2000s by showing similar projections about the future of Iraq.

Iraq's situation after the Gulf War helped limited cooperation between the "enemies" and this trend reinforced after 2003. Most important area for cooperation was the concerns about Iraq, but this was a common perception about the situation rather than the coordinated cooperation. After the Gulf War, questions about the stability in Iraq, rising Kurdish activities and de facto situation in Northern Iraq created common fears for Syria and Turkey. Both countries agreed on the preservation of the unity of Iraq.[207] During 1990s, Turkey continued to express common concerns about the developments in the region with Iran and Syria. In 1991, with joint statement, Syria and Turkey declared their sensibility about the territorial integrity of Iraq. Both states expressed their will to establish mechanisms for close cooperation and coordination about the situation. Moreover, in 1992, delegates of Iran, Syria and Turkey came together in Ankara, and expressed their concerns about the territorial integrity of Iraq after the developments in Northern Iraq.[208] In 1994, in order to solve problems in Iraq, the USA arranged

[206] Ilgıt and Özkeneci-Taner, p. 107
[207] Kushner, p. 231
[208] Uzgel, p. 264

Paris meeting and invited KDP (Kurdish Democratic Party) and PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) to this meeting. However, there was no reference to security concerns of neighbors in this meeting. In that sense, Iran, Turkey and Syria held a meeting in 1994 and declared their opposition to potential Kurdish state in Northern Iraq.[209] Turkey along with Syria and Iran made series of consultations about the situation in Northern Iraq from 1992 to 1995.[210] Informal, ad hoc consultations between these states helped with the mutual reassurance about the lack of territorial ambition in Iraq. It was important because Syria had feared a Turkish takeover of Northern Iraq after the potential dismantling of Iraq.[211]

On the other hand, this consensus in theory did not automatically bring permanent cooperation in practice. Mistrust between two states prevented long-lasting cooperation. Both states communicated with different actors in Northern Iraq and both of them tried to use closest actors for them. Turkey tried to adopt itself to new circumstances and began cooperation with Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq to marginalize PKK in the region. Close relations with KDP and PUK were not welcomed by Syria and caused interruption in the process of rapprochement. Therefore, both actors had different visions about the future of Iraq and Northern Iraq. However, after the US invasion in 2003, both states again came closer for the situation in Iraq and Iraq and this unity became one of the most important points for rapprochement. In that sense, the most important point is that Syria and Turkey with limited cooperation in 1990s could remove mistrusts towards the "Other" about the future of Iraq during the 2000s. Interactions between sides helped the establishment of common stances after 2003. Because of this, in order to understand close relations between Syria and Turkey, we should take US presence in the region and concerns about the future of Iraq into consideration. However, these regional developments would not be enough to understand changing nature of relations during the 2000s. The main determinant for cooperation was changing interests of parties as a result of new identities in both countries rather than structural effects. Therefore, we should look at redefinition of interests by new identities besides structural effects to analyze friendly relations during the 2000s.

[209] Melek Fırat and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, "Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1990-2001", in Baskın Oran (Ed.), **Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar: 1980-2001,** (551-568), 8th edn., Vol.2, İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2005, p. 559
[210] Özcan, p. 132
[211] Zisser, p. 86

To sum up, historical misperceptions and prejudices became two of the important determinants of the bilateral relations and the identities of both parties occupied the central place for historical enmity. Interaction between two societies began during the Ottoman Empire period. Betrayer image of the Arabs and brutal image of the Turks during the last decade of the Empire negatively affected the relations between two societies, which also determined the direction of relations throughout the history. With the age of nationalism and the dissolution of the Empire, two societies began to emphasize their diversities, which resulted in widening gap between two sides. The strict commitment to the western world by Turkey and the centrality of anti-western attitude within Syrian politics prevented the positive identifications of both states towards each other. Definition of interests by the new elite of both countries in opposite directions also caused putting some distance between two corporate identities. Under these circumstances, the social identities also became problematic. With the rise of the bipolar structure, both sides began to commit themselves to different blocs, which reinforced the enemy image. These commitments contributed to selfish identities during the Cold War years. Especially, the developments between 1945 and 1960 and between 1980 and 1998 contributed to strengthening of enemy image for both parties. As seen in the case of Turkey's attitude during the Baghdad Pact project to become a leader of the region, its aggressive and pro-western policies damaged relations with Syria after 1945. During this period, social identities of parties injured and created permanent damages for bilateral relations. After 1960, Turkey tried to pursue a more balanced policy towards the region, but this could not be enough to erase the negative memories of the previous decades. On the other hand, the centrality of the Pan-Arab ideology in Syria and increasing radicalism in Syrian politics also prevented rapprochement during the 1960s. From 1960 to 1980, there was no important tension between two states, but parties also did not spend much effort to erase negative perceptions about the relations. After 1980, bilateral relations again began to deteriorate and this brought two sides to the edge of war in 1998. After 1980, PKK and water issues began to dominate bilateral relations and these issues tried to be used as leverage against the "Other". Hatay dispute also resurfaced during this period and it was linked with water and PKK problems. Under these circumstances, the solution of problems was not easy. With the end of the Cold War, both states faced with identity crisis, which reinforced enemy image for the parties and problems became more intractable. During this period, on the one hand, Turkey began to externalize its domestic problems like the case of PKK. On the other hand, Syria securitized its problems like

the case of water issue. As a result of these developments and intersection of the core problems, selfish identities became dominant and both countries began to watch the other's movements from the security window. As a result of increasing tension, two states came to the edge of the war in 1998, which was the tensest year for bilateral relations. However, with the sign of Adana Accords, the main security concern of Turkey, PKK issue, was removed from the table. After 1998, the tension gradually decreased and gave path for cooperation. On the other hand, the main determinant for cooperation during the 2000s was changing ruling powers in both countries. In that sense, while İsmail Cem's foreign policy understanding helped Turkey for building confidence with neighbors, the AKP government with its holistic and coherent foreign policy understanding had a massive effect. On the other side, Syria began the new era with Bashar Asad. The cooperation between two countries became suitable with the reinterpretation of interests by both of them. In addition to these, the US intervention in Iraq in 2003 restarted concerns of Turkey and Syria about the future of region. As a result of these developments, the bilateral relations witnessed its golden age during the 2000s. In order to analyze this, we should examine the new interest formulations in Syria and Turkey by new ruling powers and the effects of the international structure over the region and both countries.

CHAPTER 3 : REDEFINITION OF SELF AND OTHER IN SYRIA AND TURKEY AFTER 1998, AND FOREIGN RELATIONS DURING 2000s

During the 2000s, bilateral relations between Syria and Turkey showed positive trends and at the end of the decade, bilateral relations were seen as strategic partnership. Although removal of main security concern of Turkey with Adana Accords[212] in 1998 helped for further cooperation between two countries, new governing powers with their new interest formulations had central importance for improving relations because both of them redefined the "Self" that changed relations with "Other" in the system. New corporate identities shaped new interests and carried them into international system by interacting with the "Other".[213] In that sense, while international political structure had important effects on relations with the US presence in the region, redefinition of the "Self" and the "Other" in Turkey and Syria occupied central place. The evolution of selves in a dialectical process can help overcome historical enmities between parties.[214] In order to understand the changing nature of bilateral relations as a part of constructivist research agenda, we should look at both structure and agent. In this way, we can escape from structuralist understandings, which cannot explain rapid transformation of bilateral relations. In order to understand transformation of bilateral relations, we should first look at redefinition processes in both countries, which narrowed psychological gap, and then regional developments, which contributed redefinition processes.

3.1 TURKEY'S REDEFINITION OF THE SELF

Turkey's redefinition process began after the end of the Cold War, even after 1980s with Turgut Özal period. With Özal period, Turkey began to give importance to economic relations with neighboring regions, and as a result of domestic economic reconstruction, Turkey aimed a kind of economic interdependence with neighbors. On the other hand, with the end of the Cold War, bipolar structure of the international system ended and Turkey repositioned itself like other states. Under these circumstances, Turkey aimed at applying multi-dimensional diplomacy. In that sense, political and economic openings to other regions gained importance. During the 1990s, Turkey tried to be more effective in the Central Asia and used cultural and historical ties

[212] See Chapter 4 for the results of Adana Accords
[213] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach*, p. 139
[214] Martina Warning and Tuncay Kardaş, "The Impact of Changing Islamic Identity on Turkey's New Foreign Policy", **Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations**, Vol. 10, No.2-3 (Summer-Fall 2010), p. 136

for new foreign policy approach. On the other hand, relations with the Middle East witnessed ups and downs. Although Turkey tried to expand its economic ties with the region, political relations witnessed interruptions. Attempts of RP (Welfare Party) could not bring successful results for Turkey and these attempts contributed indirectly to the identity crisis in Turkey. However, using historical and cultural ties with the region began during the 1990s. Turkey as a part of multi-dimensional diplomacy understanding began to take more roles within United Nations peace forces. With the effects of civil and ethnic society organizations, Turkey raised its voice in Balkans and Caucasus. In 1997, İsmail Cem became a new minister of foreign affairs and during his tenure; he tried to formulate consistent and holistic foreign policy understanding. He supported multi-dimensional and active foreign policy understanding and aimed to resolve problems with neighbors. Most of his views and projects were carried on by the AKP government during the 2000s. His regionally centered foreign policy understanding aimed to normalize relations with neighbors and this understanding was used by the AKP government.

On the other hand, redefinition process could not bring successful results in every area for Turkey. Political and economic openings to Central Asia could not meet the expectations of Turkey. Turkey's ambitious plans about the Middle East after the Gulf War prevented long lasting cooperation with the region. Ambitious policies of RP did not only scare Turkey but also resulted in crisis with some Middle Eastern countries. Domestic instability during the 1990s also resulted in interruption of foreign policy approaches. Rising Kurdish and Islamic insurgencies began to dominate foreign relations and military bureaucracy gained upper hand for some relations like the relations with Iran, Iraq and Syria. However, after 2002, the AKP government exploited means and tools of the 1990s and could create more comprehensive foreign policy understanding. Especially during the first period of the AKP, new government shared common concerns with Kemalist state and these common concerns positively contributed to foreign policy understanding. In that sense, rejection of March 1 proposal and support of the AKP government by Sezer's Syria visit after Hariri assassination reinforced new foreign policy understanding and prevented any crucial crisis unlike period from 1995 to 1997. In that sense, İsmail Cem's foreign policy understanding could be operated during the AKP government and with the help of

democratization and political stability; Turkey could increase its effectiveness in foreign relations.[215]

3.1.1 Post-Cold War Era and Redefinition of the Self

With the end of the Cold War, the USA declared their victory and became the only superpower in the world politics. The USA wanted to be the hegemonic and regulatory power of the world politics after the end of the Cold War. While western alliance declared its absolute victory, it was also the beginning of the new era. Winners of the Cold War began to project "New World Order", but the end of the balance triggered the rise of old problems and resulted in the emergence of new problems for the new period. During the 1990s, the number of conflicts increased, and the rules of the Cold War became ineffective to respond to the crises of the post-Cold War era. In order to project the "New World Order", western allies began to intervene the conflict zones directly. Interventions in Iraq, Somali, Bosnia and Kosovo showed the will of the winners for the protection of order, and in this way, they could draw new legal borders of the new order.[216]

As a result of new political structure, most important threat of Turkey disappeared and Turkey tried to expand its area of influence. In order to maximize benefits and minimize risks, Turkey began to apply more active foreign policy at the beginning of the 1990s. Özal's activism in the post-Cold War era aimed at taking advantage of the new possibilities while minimizing the negative consequences of the new era.[217] In that sense, Turkey directly or indirectly wanted to take part in construction of the new world order. Turkey began to raise his voice about the problems in Iraq, Somali, Bosnia and Kosovo. As a result of this, Turkey tried to be a part of international society. Turkey wanted to be a part of international organizations and tried to act with international community about the crises to get a valuable place in the new era. The AKP government reinforced these attempts during the 2000s. Project about being a part of international society during the 1990s continued with the AKP government. For example, Turkey tried to take part in UN peace forces after Hezbollah-Israel crisis.

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[215] Perthes, *Turkey's Role in the Middle East: An Outsider Perspective,* p.1
[216] Oran, *Dönemin Bilançosu, 1990-2001*, pp. 210-211
[217] Nicholas Danforth, "Ideology and Pragmatism in Turkish Foreign Policy: From Atatürk to the AKP", **Turkish Policy Quarterly**, Vol. 7, No: 3 (Fall, 2008), p. 89

During the post-Cold War era, although relations with the European Union and European countries showed negative trends because of the human rights record of Turkey, US-Turkey relations gradually improved. As a result of this, Turkey became an important actor to fill ex-Soviet areas for the USA. On the other hand, the US support also motivated Turkey for more active foreign policy approach in these regions. In that sense, Turkey tried to establish good relations with Caucasian states and tried to increase its effectiveness in the Central Asia. However, during the 1990s, these attempts could not produce satisfying results. Results of cooperation did not meet the expectations of Turkey in the Central Asia and Central Asian states did not want a new "big brother" in the region. Because of the historical problems with Armenia and crisis between Armenia and Azerbaijan also prevented Turkey to establish healthy links with the region. However, establishing healthy relations with neighboring regions entered into Turkish foreign policy agenda at the beginning of 1990s. In addition, Turkey began to give importance to economic relations during Özal's era in 1980s. This trend continued after the end of the Cold War and economic relations with the ex-Soviet states and Russia gradually developed. Establishment of the Black Sea Economic Organization is the clear example of rising importance of economic power within foreign policy during the 1990s. In that sense, although concept of economic interdependence became more obvious during the AKP era, structure of this concept was established during the 1980s.

Emphasis over cultural relations also began in 1980s and became more obvious during the 1990s. Özal continuously emphasized the importance of cultural interaction during the 1980s and this emphasis had positive effects on the relations with the Middle East. In addition, cultural and economic interaction with the Kurdish groups of Iraq began during Özal era and created a kind of economic interdependence with the region. In that sense, differentiation between PKK issue and Kurdish issue began in Özal period, but this process witnessed important fluctuations during the 1990s. However, the AKP government during the 2000s would use this legacy. Because of the rising of cultural and economic tools, AKP foreign policy agenda is continuously compared with Özal's agenda. In that sense, during the 2000s like Özal period, economic and cultural ties with the Middle East strengthened. On the other hand, with the end of the Cold War, cultural ties like the economic relations were used towards other neighboring regions. After the end of the Cold War, cultural ties with the Central Asia, Caucasus and Balkans strengthened and concept of cultural interaction began to occupy an important place in the agenda of Turkish foreign policy.

During the 1990s, ethnic and cultural associations also pushed Turkey for cultural interaction. In that sense, in some issues Turkey tried to use its cultural ties to increase its effectiveness as in the case of Bosnia.

Emphasis over Islamic identity also became more obvious with RP (Welfare Party) and RP aimed to increase the level of interaction with the Islamic countries. Erbakan promised to turn Turkey into a leader in the Muslim world[218] and in order to do that, he made efforts to be the part of the Islamic organizations and made contacts with Islamic groups in the region. Alternative and parallel international order project of Erbakan with the concept of Islamic cooperation resulted in pro-Arab stance in the region and increased the level of interaction with the Muslim countries. However, Erbakan's contacts with Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and Ennahda of Tunisia caused reactions by Egypt and Tunisia governments. In 1996, Erbakan was warned by Mubarak to end cooperation with Muslim Brotherhood.[219] In that sense, Erbakan's attempts ended with disappointments in terms of results. On the other hand, Erbakan's foreign policy attempts scared Kemalist state and this fear contributed to identity crisis in Turkey. However, we can conclude that interaction with sub-groups in different regions is not an innovation of the AKP government. Both Özal's contacts with Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq and Erbakan's contacts with pro-Islamic actors provided a framework for the AKP government especially after 2007.

On the other hand, all these new understandings in Turkish foreign policy could not produce a holistic and concrete foreign policy agenda. Different governments tried to use different means and tools, which prevented sustainable foreign policy stance. In that sense, until İsmail Cem period, Turkish foreign policy witnessed important ups and downs. As a result of ethnic and religious insurgencies and domestic instability, military bureaucracy or in other terms, security-oriented views began to dominate some foreign relations of Turkey. Under these circumstances, stick rather than carrot became more obvious. Therefore, security-oriented views dominated the relations with the immediate neighbors, which prevented going beyond the borders. Turkey hardened its stance against Northern Iraq, Iran, Syria and Greece and this resulted in being surrounded by the "enemies". Security oriented views began to decrease with İsmail Cem period with the help of removal main security concern of Turkey in 1998. With İsmail Cem tenure, Turkey could develop coherent foreign policy agenda for the first time after

[218] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, p. 132
[219] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 152

the end of the Cold War and this agenda provided suitable grounds for the AKP government during the 2000s. In that sense, clues of new foreign policy identity in Turkey were seen at the end of 1990s.

From 1997 to 2002, İsmail Cem as the minister of foreign affairs tried to formulate new foreign policy perception on the basis of multi-dimensional and pro-active diplomacy.[220] He tried to use his personal relations to improve relations with the neighbor Greece, and because of this he was described as the first minister breaking the limits of traditional foreign policy.[221] Regionally based foreign policy understanding of İsmail Cem aimed to improve relations with neighboring regions.[222] İsmail Cem like Ahmet Davutoğlu believed that Turkish foreign policy had been alienated from the neighboring regions during the previous decades and Turkey should reformulate new understanding, which should be fed from Turkey's rich identity and historical assets. To him, with the help of these aspects and Turkey's democratic and pluralistic structure, Turkey could play more effective role in the neighboring regions and even could become a model. According to İsmail Cem, concepts of Islam and secularism or East and West did not contradict with each other.[223] He defined Turkey as both a European and Eurasian country, which needs multi-dimensional foreign policy understanding. Cem also thought that Turkey could also play more effective role with the help of its "historical geography" in neighboring regions and he also advocated the rise of economic means within foreign policy rather than sheer military force.[224] As a result of this understanding, Turkey began to develop its relations with the neighboring regions at the end of the 1990s.

This new understanding also positively contributed to the relations with the Middle East in general and with Syria in particular. He supported to take more active and positive role in the region in the relations with the Middle East, and when it came to the relations with Syria, he supported the normalization of relations with a historical enemy.[225] Multi-dimensional foreign policy understanding with the help of growing diplomatic, economic and societal relations not

[220] Ziya Öniş, "Multiple Faces of the 'New' Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique", **Insight Turkey**, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2011), p. 49
[221] Ozan Ömerci, "İsmail Cem's Foreign Policy (1997-2002)" **SDU Faculty of Arts and Sciences Journal of Social Sciences,** Vol. 23 (May, 2011), p. 242
[222] Kılıç Buğra Kanat, "Continuity of Change in Turkish Foregin Policy under the JDP Government: The Cases of Bilateral Relations with Syria and Israel", **Arab Studies Quarterly**, Vol. 34, No. 4 (Fall, 2012), p. 240
[223] Ömerci, p. 224
[224] Can Dündar, **Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim: İsmail Cem Anlatıyor**, İstanbul: Can Press, 2012, p. 206
[225] Ziya Meral and Jonathan Paris, "Decoding Turkish Foreign Policy Hyperactivity", **The Washington Quarterly**, Vol. 33, No. 4 (October, 2010), p. 78

only helped with the relaxation of the relations with Greece but also with Syria. Therefore, without İsmail Cem period, we cannot totally understand the normalization of relations with Syria. In that sense, rapprochement between Syria and Turkey began before the AKP government. For the relations with the Middle East, Cem supported to take a mediator or conciliator role in Palestine-Israel conflicts.[226] He also tried to organize a conference between Iraq and its neighbors to prevent potential US invasion in Iraq. He was also against to act with the USA for a potential intervention in Iraq, which would alienate Turkey in the Middle East.[227]

When we look at the views of Ahmet Davutoğlu and policies of the AKP especially between 2002 and 2007, we can see overlapping understanding with İsmail Cem period. In that sense, AKP government sustained most of Cem's initiatives during the 2000s like the African opening and meetings between Iraq's neighbors. Because of this, while İsmail Cem's understanding was described as social democrat constructivist approach, Davutoğlu's understanding was described as conservative constructivist approach[228], which shared many common points especially towards the Middle East and Syria. "Regionally-centered foreign policy depending on national interests"[229] understanding helped the AKP government for further cooperation with neighbors during the 2000s. This activism began during İsmail Cem period, utilizing historical and cultural assets of Turkey and attempting to improve relations with neighbors, and as a result, the new approach gave successful results in 2000s. On the other hand, İsmail Cem period can be seen as the starting point for new foreign policy perception which helped the AKP government to realize its foreign policy agenda. Under these circumstances, normalization of relations with Syria and the Middle East became a common ground for Turkish elite during the 2000s.

As a result of the new perception, during the 2000s, Turkey has claimed to develop comprehensive and holistic foreign policy approach.[230] In this period, Turkey emphasized the improving relations with neighboring regions and increasing economic interdependence, and

[226] Dündar, p. 213
[227] Dündar, p. 240
[228] Burhaneddin Duran, "Türk Dış Politikası Ortadoğululaşıyor mu?" in Kemal İnat, Burhaneddin Duran and Muhiddin Ataman (Ed.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2008**, (385-402), İstanbul, Küre Press, 2009, p. 394
[229] William Hale, **Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000,** 2nd edn, London, Frank Cass Publisher, 2003, p. 207
[230] Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring", **International Policy and Leadership Institute: Turkish Foreign Policy Brief Series,** (2012), p. 1

desire to play role of mediation and promotion of the soft power.[231] All of these approaches, which could not been applied successfully during the 1990s, helped with the construction of new foreign policy identity in Turkey. With the effects of İsmail Cem and Ahmet Davutoğlu, foreign policy change of Turkey during the 2000s is described as adjustment change, which defines the change in the level of effort.[232] Adjustment change is much more quantitative rather than qualitative in nature and it defines the change in the scope of recipients.[233] While Turkey was interested in immediate neighbors in the Middle East in 1990s, Turkey's activism became region wide and went beyond the security issues during the 2000s. In addition to adjustment change, Turkish foreign policy also witnessed program change, which refers to changes in methods and means without changing basic foreign policy purposes.[234] It is much more qualitative in nature and involves new instruments of statecraft.[235] During the 2000s, Turkey mainly used diplomatic means rather than military threat and focused on soft power assets and economic interdependence and promoted mediation roles.[236] In that sense, western-oriented policy during the 2000s continued, but the preferences and style of Turkish foreign policy changed. Shortly, goals of Turkish foreign policy and international orientation did not change during this period and Turkey continued its international stance, which prevented radical transformation of interests, but adjustment and program changes helped to reformulate interests, which resulted in rapprochement with Syria. Turkey's new activism in the region helped to remove imaginary prejudices about Syria and the Middle East.[237]

3.1.2 The AKP Government

During the AKP period, Turkey could construct holistic and coherent foreign policy understanding and with the help of regional and international developments, Turkey could increase its profile and influence within international politics. With the help of domestic stability and democratization periods, Turkey could materialize foreign policy openings projected after the end of the Cold War and could give up security-oriented views, especially towards the Middle East and southern neighbors. In that sense, on one hand, Turkey continued to develop its

[231] Altunışık and Martin, p. 569
[232] Altunışık and Martin, p. 570
[233] Charles F. Hermann, "When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy", **International Studies Quarterly**, Vol. 34, No.1 (March, 1990), p. 5
[234] Altunışık and Martin, 570
[235] F. Hermann, p. 5
[236] Altunışık and Martin, p. 571
[237] Talip Küçükcan, "Arab Image in Turkey" **SETA**, Research Report, No. 1 (June, 2010), p. 10

relations with the EU, Russia, ex-Soviet countries and Balkan states, which were projected after the end of the Cold War, and on the other hand it established healthy links with Syria, Iran and Iraq in 1990s. Relations with the Middle East became the most successful foreign policy area of Turkey during the 2000s, and identity of new ruling power in Turkey played an important role for this success.

During the 2000s, Turkey witnessed important domestic transformation with democratization process as a result of EU membership process. Transformation of Turkey had three pillars, and these were democratization in domestic politics, efficiency in economy and proactive foreign policy for new foreign policy elite.[238] At the end of the 1990s, democratization process in Turkey began and provided suitable grounds for further democratization during the 2000s. Relations with the EU motivated Turkey for further democratization and this process also helped with the rise of new foreign policy tools. As a part of the relations with the EU, Copenhagen political criteria since 2002 resulted in important domestic reform process.[239] Seven EU harmonization packages were adopted in 2003, which had a direct effect not only on domestic politics but also on international politics. In 2005, Turkey became an acceding country for the EU membership.[240] All these reform attempts also decreased the role of military in foreign affairs[241], which helped to realize the soft power. As a result of democratization and desecuritization process, security issues began to be perceived as normal political issues.[242] Democratization process resulted in transformation of Turkey from "post-Cold War warrior"[243] to the soft power. With this transformation, Turkey increased its effectiveness within international politics and it successfully penetrated into the politics of neighboring regions. In addition to these, rising economic power and economic interactions with neighboring regions also helped Turkey become more effective actor in neighboring regions. Economic interactions began to be seen as a tool of problem solving means in Turkey and this positively contributed to relations with old enemies. In that sense, although usage of economic means began with Özal

[238] Ahmet Davutoğlu, "The Three Major Earthquakes in the International System and Turkey", **The International Spectator: International Journal of International Affairs**, Vol. 48, No. 2 (June, 2013), p. 4
[239] Robins, *A Double Gravity State: Turkish Foreign Policy Reconsidered*, p. 206
[240] Ahmet Sözen, "A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 11, No. 1 (March, 2010), p. 114
[241] F. Stephen Larrabee, "Turkey's New Geopolitics", **Survival**, Vol. 52, No. 2 (April-May, 2010), p. 161
[242] Bülent Aras and Rabia Karakaya Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation: Desecuritization of Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iran", **Security Dialogue**, Vol. 39, No. 5 (October, 2008), p. 495
[243] Kirişçi, *The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of Trading State*, p. 33

period, problematic relations with neighbors prevented the operation of these means. With the improving relations with neighbors, economic means became more obvious. Increasing pro-activity within Turkish foreign policy also became important features of the 2000s. Taking more responsibilities and risks in foreign policy increased the profile of Turkey, and by this way Turkey was able to reach beyond its borders.

As a result of domestic transformation, and political and economic stability, Turkey could develop holistic foreign policy understanding during the 2000s. On one hand, Turkey was going to be able to restart unfinished projects, develop continuing relations and open new foreign policy areas. In that sense, Turkey tried to minimize problems with neighbors as a part of zero-problem policy, become the problem solver by taking mediation role, increase its effectiveness by taking an active role in international organization, create economic interdependence with gradually developing economy, establish healthy ties with sub-groups of neighboring regions and materialize its soft power with new tools and means. As a result of these efforts, Turkey became aware of the multi-dimensional foreign policy understanding during the 2000s.

In order to realize multi-dimensional foreign policy understanding, mediation role for Turkey became important during the 2000s and Turkey tried to become the mediator for different long-lasting inter-state problems.[244] Beside inter-state crisis between Israel and Syria and Afghanistan and Pakistan, Turkey also used its mediation power between intra-state groups like Iraq and Lebanon.[245] By the mediation roles, Turkey wanted to increase its visibility in the world politics.[246] According to Turkey, mediation roles would reduce potential disputes and conflicts in neighboring regions, which also could contribute Turkey's development and increase its effectiveness.[247] With mediation roles, Turkey could become security provider and peace-broker in the neighboring regions. With the help of multi-dimensional and rhythmic diplomacy, Turkey as the problem solver could realize zero-problem policy with neighbors. Therefore, in order to apply zero-problem policy, disputes between the neighboring states and within these states

[244] Birgül Demirtaş, "Turkish-Syrian Relations: From Friend 'Esad' to Enemy 'Esed'", **Middle East Policy**, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring 2003), p. 114
[245] Ekrem Eddy Güzeldere, "Turkish Foreign Policy: From 'Surrounded by Enemies' to 'Zero Problems'", **C.A.P. Policy Analysis**, No. 1, (2009), p. 19
[246] Henri J. Barkey, "Turkish Foreign Policy and the Middle East", **Ceri Strategy Papers,** No. 10 (June, 2011), p. 3
[247] Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Resolution of Conflicts and Mediation" http://www.mfa.gov.tr/resolution-of-conflicts-and-mediation.en.mfa (13August 2012)

should be solved.[248] Taking initiatives for the solution of problems in the region and multi-dimensional foreign policy understanding would lead to the realization of zero-problem policy[249], which was the central foreign policy principle of Turkey during the 2000s. In order to realize multi-dimensional foreign policy understanding, Turkey also applied active policies. In that sense, as a part of rhythmic diplomacy, Davutoğlu paid around 100 foreign visits during his first year as the foreign minister.[250] On the other hand, although some of the initiatives of 1990s can be realized in 2000s, identity of new ruling power with new interests also had crucial effect on foreign policy of Turkey. Ahmet Davutoğlu and his foreign policy vision became the most important reference points for the foreign policies of the 2000s. As some of his views reinforced previous foreign policy initiatives, some views brought new understandings especially for the relations with the Middle East and Syria. In that sense, his understanding about the place of Turkey and international politics would show us the ideational factors over foreign policy approaches.

After 2002, just like İsmail Cem, Ahmet Davutoğlu had a similar effect over foreign policy formulation of Turkey. In that sense, ideational factors continued to influence foreign policy choices of Turkey after 2002. Davutoğlu as a foreign policy advisor and minister of foreign affairs had a direct effect on the AKP government. Foreign policy choices of the AKP government during the 2000s were symbolized with Ahmet Davutoğlu. With the help of previous foreign policy tools and means, Davutoğlu was able to create holistic foreign policy understanding. He supported the redefinition of the self to increase Turkey's effectiveness and this redefinition process resulted in important developments, especially for the relations with the Middle East. In that sense, Davutoğlu's views show us the ideational factors behind Turkey's foreign policy choices and identity dimension of new foreign policy perception.

3.1.2.1 Davutoğlu Doctrine

Ahmet Davutoğlu, as an advisor and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, has a huge impact on the evolution of foreign policies of Turkey, and foreign policy choices of the AKP government are identified with him. In addition to this, Davutoğlu's perception about the world

[248] William Hale, "Turkey and the Middle East in the 'New Era'", **Insight Turkey,** Vol. 11, No. 9 (2009), pp. 156-157
[249] Abdulgani Bozkurt, "Sıfır Sorun'dan Sıfır Çözüm'e: Türkiye, Suriye Politikasından Dolayı Dostsuz mu Kalıyor?", **Ortadoğu Analiz**, Vol. 4, No. 42 (June, 2012), p. 36
[250] Meral and Paris, p. 80

politics is more suitable for constructivist approach. In that sense, constructivist approach provides us more suitable framework for new foreign policy stance of Turkey because this doctrine emphasizes the re-definition of interests and gives crucial role for the actor within international politics. According to Davutoğlu, international politics and choices of actors are directly related to worldview of the actors. Different actors look at the structure from different perspectives, and in this way actors can redefine the "Self". Therefore, he gives space for the actor within international politics. As a part of this understanding, being objective towards the realities of the social world is impossible.[251] In that sense, he also rejects objectivist understanding of positivist approaches. For him, subjectivity is the inevitable necessity for the social science. Having a position within international politics is an advantage for an actor. Besides, time and space are important for foreign policy choices for Davutoğlu. Time-dimensional positioning makes actors more effective within international politics. In order to create a future-oriented vision, actors should understand the "dynamics of the flow of the history".[252] He rejects timeless understanding about the nature of international relations. Because of this, he sees the arguments of neo-realism about timeless truth as unacceptable. To him, history and geography play an important role for the actor. Turkey should establish new paradigm with the help of historical and geographical depths after the end of the Cold War.[253] In light of this understanding, Davutoğlu tries to reformulate Turkey's foreign policy interests and position within international politics during the 2000s. In that sense, looking new interest formulation as a result of new leadership will help us understand the dynamics of improving relations with Syria.

Traditionally, Turkey was defined as middle power state.[254] Related to this definition, Ahmet Davutoğlu also defined Turkey as the regional state in historical terms.[255] However, Davutoğlu thinks that the definition of Turkey as the medium power or regional state can be changed with the re-interpretation process. Material power cannot be enough to define the capability of actors. Beside material power, historical, geographical and psychological factors are

[251] Gürkan Zengin, **Hoca: Türk Dış Politikası'nda 'Davutoğlu Etkisi',** İstanbul: Inkılâp Press, 2010, p. 53
[252] Davutoğlu, *The Three Major Earthquakes in the International System and Turkey*, p. 2
[253] İbrahim Kalın, "Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey", **Perceptions,** Vol. 16, No. 3 (Autumn, 2011), p. 10
[254] For the definition of medium power state, see: Baskın Oran, "Dönemin Bilançosu, 1980-1990", in Baskın Oran (Ed.), **Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar: 1980-2001**, 8th edn., Vol.2 , (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2005), pp. 29-30
[255] Ahmet Davutoğlu, **Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,** 61st edn. İstanbul: Küre Press, 2011, p.74

also important for him like İsmail Cem. By re-interpretation process with the help of these elements, Turkey could be big power. In this way, Turkey could play a global role besides the regional role and could become the central state which was the wing state during the Cold War years.[256] Being in the center at the intersection of multiple regions, Turkey could reposition itself from the periphery to the centre[257] because the new global system is more dynamic, multi-dimensional and less controllable[258] that provides more space to Turkey within the new international order. In order to realize this aim, Turkey should use its geopolitical position for the opening towards the neighboring regions in the dynamic environment of the post-Cold War era. Geopolitical situation within dynamic structure would help with the transformation of Turkey from the regional power to global power. Therefore, Turkey should redefine its position over ideational and geographical bases.[259] In addition, Turkey should give up acting as a mere bridge between the Muslim world and West and should act as the problem solver to contribute regional and global peace[260] with the help of multi-dimensional maneuver capability.[261] Turkey should be security and stability provider state in neighboring regions as a result of historical responsibilities.[262] In order to realize this aim, Turkey should act as the easterner in the East and act as the westerner in the West. Therefore, Turkey should narrow the psychological gap with the neighboring regions. In order to be an effective actor in the world politics, Turkey should not alienate the neighboring regions and should use its weight in these regions by improving relations. Turkey should be the subject of regional affairs not the object.[263] As a result, Davutoğlu doctrine calls for active engagement with all regional systems in the neighboring regions. Foreign policy should be seen as a series of mutually interlocking and reinforcing processes rather than series of bilateral relations.[264] In this way, Turkey could rediscover its historic and geographic identity[265] and this rediscovery would raise Turkey's prestige and

[256] Zengin, p. 20
[257] Joshua W. Walker, "The Sources of Turkish Grand Strategy- 'Strategic Depth' and 'Zero-Problem' in Context", **IDEAS Report,** (2011), p. 6
[258] Kalın, *Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey,* p. 6
[259] Warning and Kardaş, p. 125
[260] Hale, *Turkey and the Middle East in the 'New Era'*, p. 144
[261] Murat Yeşiltaş and Ali Balcı, "AK Parti Dönemi Türk Dış Politika Sözlüğü: Kavramsal Bir Harita", **Bilgi**, No. 23 (Winter, 2011), p. 5
[262] Paula Sandrin, "Turkish Foreign Policy After the End of the Cold War: From Securitising to Desecuritising Actor", **Changing Turkey**, (September, 2009), p.7
[263] Birgül Demirtaş, p. 117
[264] Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 9
[265] Murinson, p. 953

importance within the western alliance. Most of these views were also supported by İsmail Cem. In that sense, a kind of continuity could be established between post-1998 and post-2002 periods.

On the other hand, Davutoğlu underlines the fact that by only rediscovering geographic and historic identity, it is not enough to improve relations with the neighboring regions. With the decline of bloc politics, multi-dimensional foreign policy understanding is also important, because proximity to the power centers is no more effective. With the increase of grey areas for power politics, static diplomacy is ineffective. For the AKP government, during the previous decades, superpower dependent policies in these regions prevented Turkey from increasing its effectiveness and weakened Turkey. During the 1990s, Turkey's passive foreign policy understanding resulted in a heavy price for Turkey. Superpower dependent policies during the previous years prevented active policy and resulted in "psychological sense of inferiority".[266] In the new world order, Turkey should adopt a point of view that is based on its won historical and geographical background.[267] In order to establish foreign policy vision, objectives should be in line with national priorities. However, in order to determine foreign policy objectives, Turkey should also give up security-oriented and defensive foreign policy understanding because Turkey as a result of defensive foreign policy understanding chose absolute domination or absolute abandonment for foreign policy choices[268], which prevented the production of a position within international politics. In that sense, throughout the history, Turkey could not produce intermediate approaches towards other states, which limited Turkey's effectiveness in neighboring regions. Davutoğlu thinks that, in the new international environment, total diplomatic effectiveness is being measured with international prestige, which is the result of political, cultural and economic domains in the new era.[269] In that sense, balanced approach towards all regional and global actors and economic interdependence with neighboring regions would increase the effectiveness of Turkey.[270] By giving up traditional foreign policy understanding, Turkey could also stay away from psychological reflexes on the basis of threat perception, which might deeply affect relations with the neighbors, especially with Syria during the 1990s.

[266] Davutoğlu, *Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring*, p. 4
[267] Kalın, *Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey,* p. 19
[268] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p. 53
[269] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* pp. 261-262
[270] Danforth, p. 91

Ahmet Davutoğlu purports that psychological burdens of the Turkish elite during the Cold War years prevented cross-border activities and could not produce socio-psychological legitimacy among the public.[271] In that sense, perceptions about foreign policy led foreign policy choices. Therefore, according to Davutoğlu, perceptions are important for foreign policy choices and targets are related to strategic identity and mentality. Psychological background deeply affects the choices. For the psychological burden, debates over identity and history play crucial role. After the end of the Cold War, Turkish elite defined Turkey as periphery country, but this indirectly contributed to the identity crisis within Turkish society.[272] Therefore, foreign policy attitudes directly linked with the identity construction. Contradictions between the social identity and corporate identity resulted in alienation towards the corporate identity. Instable corporate identity caused the widening of gap with the others and this resulted in negative identification with the "Other." Therefore, social identity also became problematic.

In order to solve this problem, actor should redefine its historical memory. Turkey should reconstruct its culture, psychology, institutions and system. Turkey should construct the link between yesterday, today and tomorrow with the help of historical depth and establish a healthy link between domestic, regional and international parameters with the help of geographical depth.[273] Therefore, geography and history should be used with time and space determinants. In this way, geo-strategic and geo-cultural integration should be done. With the establishment of sense of belongings to the same cultural region, Turkey and its neighbors could produce cooperative foreign policy attitudes and rely on win-win logic for relations and collective identity could be established. In order to establish the identity, Turkey should produce pro-active, multifaceted, forward-looking and innovative foreign policy.[274] In that sense, the strategic depth doctrine calls for active engagement with all neighboring regions. Otherwise, Turkey would be a passive and affected actor within the world politics in the new era because of the geographical and historical positions of Turkey.[275] In that sense, he criticizes passive, securitized and state-centric foreign policy understanding of previous periods.[276] As a result, Turkey could not isolate itself from the world politics. Any kind of isolation attempts can result in domestic disintegration

[271] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p. 58
[272] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p.91
[273] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p.552
[274] Güzeldere, p. 14
[275] Sözen, p. 109
[276] Birgül Demirtaş, p. 111

in the long run. Therefore, as a part of constructivist approach, re-interpretation of the Turkey's position and foreign policy identity would bring a different actor within international politics. With the help of these principles and new interest formulation, according to Ahmet Davutoğlu, negative image of Turkey in neighboring regions could be removed.

In addition to the new interest formulation, identity of new ruling power also plays an important role for new foreign relations. In that sense, identity of the AKP government has played an important role for the improving relations with the Middle East, which has become the most successful application zone of new Turkish foreign policy identity. For the AKP, despite Turkey's historical and cultural ties with the Middle East, the Republican elite have ignored it throughout the history. In that sense, the AKP leadership unlike its predecessors glorifies the Ottoman past and puts an emphasis on the historical and cultural ties with the region.[277] Ideational links of the AKP with the Middle East and the Islamic world provide suitable grounds for cultural, diplomatic and economic cooperation.[278] This kind of approach is also suitable for the background of the leadership because perception of the role within international system is directly related to cultural backgrounds of the leadership. The identity of leadership is closer to Islamic Middle Eastern identity, which helped remove negative perceptions. The image of the Middle East region and Middle Eastern societies in the minds of new ruling power is different from the previous governments and this pushed for new activism in the Middle East and North Africa. Hence, ties of the new ruling power with the Middle East resulted in the increasing foreign policy activism in the region.[279] New foreign policy identity of Turkey challenged positivist-modernist traditional understanding, which rejected the heritage of the Ottoman history.[280] Identity of the ruling power had a huge impact on the re-definition of new interests and led to new approaches towards the Middle East. Whereas new foreign policy approaches created overall activism for Turkey, identity of new government brought the relations with the Middle East to the fore. However, in order to understand new approaches within foreign policy as a part of redefinition of interest and relations with the Middle East as a part of the role of

[277] Altunışık and Martin, p. 577
[278] Öniş, *Multiple Faces of the 'New' Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique*, p. 57
[279] İbrahim Kalın, "Debating Turkey in the Middle East: The Dawn of a New Geo-Political Imagination?", **Insight Turkey**, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2009), p. 83
[280] Sözen, p. 107

identity, we should look at the importance of the Middle East and Syria for new foreign policy elite.

3.1.2.2 Importance of the Middle East for the AKP Government

During the 2000s, Turkey could transform from the agent of the West to the partner in political, cultural and economic cooperation in the eyes of the Middle Eastern neighbors.[281] New foreign policy understanding in Turkey and ideational factors played crucial roles for this transformation. Therefore, analyzing motivations of Turkey and the AKP government behind increased activism in the region will provide us important clues for the relations with Syria. According to AKP government, after the end of the Cold War, crisis and problems in the Middle East could be opportunities rather than risks. However, with the Gulf War, rapprochement between Turkey and Israel resulted in giving up balance policy and this had some negative consequences for Turkey. Because of this, during the 1990s, Turkey began to be seen as a threat against Arab nationalism in the region.[282] Therefore, Cold War reflexes would not transform the relations in the positive manners with the Middle East in the post-Cold War era because these reflexes became unsustainable in the new environment.[283] Prejudices about the Arab societies also contributed to alienation within the region.[284] In order to improve relations with the region and remove negative images, for new elite, Turkey should rebuild its position in the Middle East on four principles. The first principle is the security for everyone, not particular group or country. The second one is giving priority to dialogue to solve crisis. The third principle is the economic interdependence and the last one is the cultural coexistence and plurality.[285] As a result of these principles, Davutoğlu in 2013 defined Turkey's regional vision as "promoting full regional integration, maximizing political dialogue, establishing high-level strategic cooperation councils, finalizing visa exemption and trade agreements, building energy and trade networks, protecting cultural diversity, and respecting ethnic and sectarian pluralism"[286]. He describes the ideal regional order as the cooperation of actors around democracy and true economic interdependence.[287] In these ways, Turkey should erase its small partner of the USA in the

[281] Bishku, p. 50
[282] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p.414
[283] Warning and Kardaş, p. 128
[284] Altunışık and Martin, p. 577
[285] Özcan and Usul, p. 173
[286] Davutoğlu, *The Three Major Earthquakes in the International System and Turkey*, p. 10
[287] Davutoğlu, *Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring*, p. 5

region[288] and neighboring regions should be seen as areas of opportunity and responsibility.[289] With the isolated economies, order in the Middle East could not be established.[290] Economic and human interactions occupy a central place for the relations with the region.[291] Moreover, with the help of improved cultural and economic relations, realization of soft power would be easier in the region.[292] With the help of these policies, a new psychology in Turkey and the region can be developed, which would minimize spillover effects of negative regional developments, and policy of zero-problem can be constituted for the relations with the Middle Eastern countries.

According to the AKP government, short-term considerations should not harm prestige of Turkey in the region and in relation with this; Turkey should not be seen as the extension of any global bloc. Totally western-oriented policies would create a kind of alienation within the region and this would prevent positive relations with the region like the relations during the Cold War. Problems with neighbors, especially chronic problems with southern neighbors are also preventing the usage of potential power. Problematic relations with Iran, Iraq and Syria would prevent Turkey to become an effective actor in the region. Therefore, in order to formulate holistic and consistent policies towards the region, Turkey should solve its problems with southern neighbors because confronting Arab nationalism and Arab lobby have the potential to weaken Turkey within international politics.[293] In that sense, bilateral relations with each Arab state could prevent potential isolation in the region. With new perspective, Turkey should get rid of traditional prejudices to end alienation. Turkey should give up traditional security understanding and it should give priority to economic and cultural cooperation. Increasing economic and cultural cooperation would also help with the decrease of security threats from the region.[294] In that sense, besides economic considerations, cultural cooperation related to identity played an important role for the relations with the Middle East.[295] As a result, growing economic presence and cultural sphere of influence became important tools for soft power of Turkey

[288] Fatih Bayhan, **Dip Dalga Davutoğlu: Türkiye'nin Stratejik Aklı,** İstanbul: Paradoks Press, 2012, p. 160
[289] Tarık Oğuzlu, "The Arab Spring and the Rise of the 2.0 Version of Turkey's 'Zero Problems with Neighbors' Policy", **SAM Papers**, No. 1 (February, 2012), p. 4
[290] Özlem Tür, "Economic Relations with the Middle East under the AKP-Trade, Business Community and Reintegration with Neighboring Zones", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 12, No. 4 (December, 2011), p. 592
[291] Tür, p. 593
[292] Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Süleyman Elik, "Turkey's Growing Relations with Iran and Arab Middle East", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 12, No. 4 (December, 2011), p. 643
[293] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p.416
[294] Birgül Demirtaş, p. 114
[295] Öniş, *Multiple Faces of the 'New' Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique*, p. 54

during the 2000s towards the region.[296] The AKP government thinks that Turkey should play a major role in the region with the help of geographical and historical realities. Building images with the help of cultural and historical affinities, Turkey could increase its role in the region. Staying away from the Middle East would not prevent the negative effects of developments in the region. By staying away from the Middle East, Turkey lost its effectiveness in the region and it produced undesirable political and economic consequences for the region during the 1990s. Regional and global powers did not take Turkey into consideration for important Middle Eastern developments because of the passive attitude of Turkey towards. This clearly was seen during the Middle Eastern peace process with the exclusion of Turkey from the process. Therefore, the AKP government called for an active engagement with the Middle East, especially with Syria, Iran and the Gulf States.[297] Otherwise, Turkey would totally lose its importance in the world politics.

In addition to taking active part within the politics of region, the AKP government argues that Turkey has a potential for being a leading power in the region. It emphasizes the importance of playing a more effective role as an "order-instituting" country in the neighboring regions.[298] In that sense, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu described the mission of Turkey as the construction of the order in the region in 2009.[299] For the AKP, Turkey should change its viewpoint towards the region and should promote freedom, which could produce legitimacy and peace in the region. In this way, promotion of freedom helped Turkey realize the zero-problem policy during the 2000s.[300] The AKP advocates being a part of regulatory mechanisms for the region and supports assertive policies in neighboring regions. Turkey should propose comprehensive peace plans to end chronic problems with neighbors, which help the development of economic and cultural relations.[301] Turkey should also develop its relations with sub-groups of the region and should use inter-communal interaction on the basis of cultural and economic cooperation rather than interactions between regimes or bureaucratic interactions. Turkey should take details of different societies into consideration and follow the dynamics of the region, which

[296] Sevilay Kahraman, "Turkey and the European Union in the Middle East: Reconciling or Competing Each Other?", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 12, No. 4 (December, 2011), p. 708
[297] Murinson, p. 953
[298] Hale, *Turkey and the Middle East in the 'New Era'*, p. 144
[299] Zengin, p. 301
[300] Yeşiltaş and Balcı, p. 7
[301] Güzeldere, p. 14

became very crucial for the post-Cold War politics.[302] Desecuritized, active and sensible foreign policy understanding would increase the effectiveness of Turkey in the Middle East.[303] In short, according to the AKP, by the help of economic and cultural interdependence, Turkey should lead regional security cooperation and become a security and stability provider in the region.[304]

For the new foreign policy elite, by taking these steps, Turkey can be the role model for the Middle Eastern region. For them, Turkey is the only country, which can integrate with modernity. Democratic structure and improving economic situation can be examples for the states of region.[305] With the western-oriented principles, Turkey could use its soft-power potential. In addition, historical, psychological and socio-cultural elements should be taken into consideration for the relations because with the rise of identity politics in international politics, Turkey could use its cultural dimensions towards the Middle East. However, in order to realize this aim, Turkey should also pay attention to dynamic strategic competition in the region and carefully watch inter-regional and intra-regional alliances.[306] Alliance of the states of the region with global powers could affect the position of Turkey in the region. In that sense, interaction between different regions should increase during this period and monolithic approach should not be taken for the new age. By increasing effect on the region, Turkey could guarantee its security with multi-dimensional and rhythmic diplomacy, and in this way, Turkey could adopt itself easier to new environment within dynamic international order. In addition, Turkey began to describe the potential improving relations with the Middle East as an opportunity not only for national interests but also for regional peace. Consciousness about the common fate would prevent the negative consequences of global power shifts.[307]

Shortly, the AKP government with the leadership of Ahmet Davutoğlu aimed to increase its effectiveness in the region during the 2000s. In this way, Turkey could prevent negative consequences of regional developments. Moreover, Turkey could increase its cultural and economic interactions with the region, which provide stability and security. In this way, Turkey could be potential security and stability provider in the region. However, we should also mention that the AKP government in practice aimed to establish a healthy link with almost all groups in

[302] Yeşiltaş and Balcı, p. 15
[303] Birgül Demirtaş, p. 111
[304] Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 9
[305] Zengin, p. 207
[306] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p.396
[307] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p.414

the region during its first tenure after 2002 and paid attention to continuation of a balanced policy. However, during its second tenure after 2007, the AKP government began to lose balance towards the Arab-Israeli issue and relations with Israel gradually deteriorated. During its third tenure after 2011, with the effects of Arab Spring, Turkey became an important part of developments in the region. In that sense, the Middle East in the minds of new elite in Turkey was also transformed. While at the beginning of 2000s, Turkey aimed to prevent alienation in the region, at the beginning of 2010s, it began to show itself as the norm and peace promoter in the region. However, we can also argue that Turkey's relations with the region except Israel until 2011 were consistent.

New understanding about the region made Syria as the central access point for the region. Firstly, Syria was a neighbor of Turkey and negative relations with the neighbor directly affected the relations with the region. Secondly, Syria as an anti-western actor in historical terms provided a chance for Turkey to erase the image of being a tool of western imperialism in the region. Thirdly, as a result of cultural and geographical closeness with Syria, establishment of cultural and economic interdependence with the region can be much easier via Syria. In that sense, in order to improve relations and increase effectiveness in the region, Syria would provide a gateway for Turkey, according to the new foreign policy identity.

3.1.2.3 Importance of Syria for the AKP Government

For the AKP government, Syria has a special place within the Arab Middle Eastern societies and improvement of relations with this state would help Turkey in the region. Syria could provide an access point to Turkey within the region and improving relations with Syria would be an example for the region. In that sense, Syria's special position for Turkey provided one of the main motivations for establishment of positive relations and Syria became the center of new Turkish foreign policy understanding towards the region.[308] However, I have to mention that in this part of the study, most of the views of Turkey are related to Turkey's foreign policy stance of the 2000s towards Syria. In that sense, these views cannot totally explain new attitude of Turkey towards Asad regime after the start of Arab Spring. Although some of the views about Asad rule and Syria show continuity, some of the views, especially about the Asad administration show important changes. In that sense, views about Syria and Asad rule should be

[308] Birgül Demirtaş, p. 115

separated. Syria's importance for Turkish foreign policy has been continuing after the start of Arab Spring, but positive thoughts and hopes about Asad administration totally disappeared. Therefore, in this chapter in particular and in this study in general, views of Turkey about Syria and Bashar Al-Asad represent views of the 2000s.

According to the AKP government, historically, because of the artificial borders of the imperialism, each state in the region defined area of influence beyond the borders. In that sense, like other states, Pan-Arab ideology of Syria created crisis with non-Arab societies in the region like with Israel and Turkey. This also created crisis with Arab states in the region like the tension between Iraq and Syria.[309] On one hand, dissolution of the USSR undermined the legitimacy of the secular, socialist Ba'athist ideology in the region. As a result, with the end of the Cold War, pan-Arab idea of Syria witnessed a crisis. Arab nationalism, which was active, offensive and assertive during the 1950s and 1960s, became passive, defensive and reactive after the end of the Cold War. On the other hand, for new foreign policy perception in Turkey, real effects of the Cold War reached the region with the Arab Spring with the rise of demands for democratization.[310] Crisis within the Arab societies after the end of the Cold War also resulted from the lack of legitimacy of the elite among the societies of these states. In order to minimize legitimacy problem, Arab states needed an enemy. In that sense, according to the AKP government, Turkey-Israel rapprochement helped legitimacy for Arab states in the region, which could result in negative consequences for Turkey. This contributed to the negative identification among Arab societies.

On the Turkish side, because of cultural and political prejudices, Turkey moved away from the rhythm and the realities of the region. Diplomatic and political distance between Syria and Turkey, which are very close in terms of geographical and cultural realities, created a psychological break between two states. Negative identification of the "Other" in Turkey and describing the cultural and historical aspects of the "others" as the problems towards the modernization created obstacles for bilateral relations. In that sense, alienation from cultural and historical realities widened the gap between two countries. For Davutoğlu, Turkish-Syrian relations throughout the history have been irrational, ignoring the extraordinary potential for bilateral relations. Because of this, third parties could exploit this "no war no peace" situation

[309] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p.362
[310] Davutoğlu, *The Three Major Earthquakes in the International System and Turkey*, p. 5

during the 1990s like the close relations between Israel and Turkey, and between Syria and Greece. The lack of dialogue between Turkey and Syria served Israel and Greece during these periods.[311] In that sense, the AKP government did not define some bilateral problems as the core issue for the region like the water problem. For it, water dispute never caused a war or a risk of war. Problem is much more related with the periodic fluctuations and regional or global manipulations. Because of this understanding about the nature of historical problems, Turkey could establish more relaxed relations with Syria although these problems remained unsolved. For the AKP government, ignoring Syria and the lack of initiative towards Syria was a setback for Turkish diplomacy. Turkey should attach importance to low-level interaction between societies beside high-level diplomatic interaction. Taking initiative during tense relations would increase the effectiveness and prestige of Turkey. Therefore, Turkey has a potential power with historical depth to break this psychological burden in the region. In that sense, new foreign policy perception of Turkey assigns an important role to the actor for the transformation of relations, and the transformation of the image of the Middle East region and Middle Eastern societies. However, in order to break psychological burden, Turkey should take the realities of the region in the consideration.

Firstly, while the AKP government supports the transformation of the region, it claims that the transformation should be done from inside rather than dictating from the outside. Secondly, it thinks that Turkey should not ignore the importance of charismatic leadership in the region although the concept began to be questioned after the end of the Cold War. Thirdly, Turkey should look at Syria with the new leadership under the changing social realities of Syria during the 2000s.[312] In that sense, Turkey should leave reductionist understanding towards the region.[313] Turkey should see Bashar Asad as the representative of the new generation as the chance for better relations. In that sense, the AKP government also emphasized the changing identity of Syria and its potential transformative and constructive effects at the beginning of 2000s.[314] In that sense, for Turkey, Bashar Asad was different from Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Ben Ali of Tunisia because Bashar Asad was a representative of new generation who could realize

[311] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p.403
[312] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p.414
[313] Kalın, *Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey,* p. 5
[314] Tarık Oğuzlu, "Turning 'Risk' into 'Opportunity': Turkey's Approach towards Syria, A Western/European Actor in the Middle East", **Electronic Journal of Political Sceince Studies**, Vol. 2, No. 2 (June, 2011), p. 34

transformation in Syria easier. This attitude continued for a short time after the start of conflicts in Syria, and Turkey trusted Bashar Asad for reform process. However, Bashar Asad's violent response to the uprisings since 2011 removed positive thoughts of AKP government and Turkey. In that sense, Turkey's perception of Bashar Asad radically changed after the start of Arab Spring, which also had negative effects on bilateral relations.

On the other hand, Syria as a country was also important in the agenda of the AKP government during the 2000s. Attempts of Turkey for cooperation and joint actions towards the regional developments were clear examples to show the importance of Syria. During the 2000s, Turkey became an active part of the politics in the region and pro-active policy was seen as the only way to prevent negative effects of the regional developments. In that sense, Turkey emphasized the importance of cooperation with the countries of the region. Therefore, during 2003 Iraq War, Turkey got the support of the countries of the region from the USA as a response against the demand of the US participation. Especially, the support of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria was important for Turkey.[315] In that sense, Turkey gave importance to regional legitimacy about any international development. Searching for Syria's support for intervention was also an important indicator for the cooperation between Syria and Turkey on the issue of Iraq. In addition to central place of Syria for the regional politics, for the AKP government, Turkey's situation is directly related to the situations of Iraq and Syria. Any problem between these states would directly affect the others. In that sense, positive identification with neighbors and specifically with Syria is an important cornerstone for cooperation and positive relations. Beside sectorial cooperation, both countries could provide paths for new openings for the other one. While Syria can be a door for the south of Turkey, Turkey can be a door for the north and west of Syria. In this way, economic integration with natural hinterland could be realized and Turkey's improving relations with Syria could also increase interaction beyond the borders with states like Egypt and Iran in the region.[316] Because of this, Turkish-Syrian line is important for the south of Mediterranean for the AKP government, which would make crucial contributions to Turkey's foreign policies.

Because of the central importance of the Middle East and Syria for the AKP government, relations with Syria showed positive trends during the 2000s. Reinterpretation of historical

[315] Zengin, p. 123
[316] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p.405

processes and breaking psychological burden by the help of new foreign policy formulation, Turkey-Syria relations witnessed its golden era. While core problems remained unsolved, good wills of the parties reinforced cooperation process. Two states began to remain silent about the status of Hatay. Two states wanted to propose joint projects to remove obstacles about the water issue. Cooperation against PKK reached its peak. Turkey became mediator and facilitator for the problem of Syria similar to the ones between Syria and Israel or Syria and Iraq in 2009. Syria expressed its will for Mesopotamia vision and declared to be a part of this vision in 2009, which aimed economic integration in the region. Turkey began to define Syria as the strategic partner. Shortly, for Turkey, Syria who was the main obstacle for the relations with the Arab world during the previous decades became a door within the Arab world for Turkey later on. In this process, changing perception of Turkey played a crucial role. However, in order to fully understand the changing nature of relations, we have to look at transformation of Syria because collective identity is a two-way process, which is related to inter-subjectivity that shapes the behavior of actors.[317] By taking changing leadership in Syria into consideration, we can understand why Turkey-Syria relation is the most successful example of zero-problem policy with neighbors.[318] On the other hand, before looking at the redefinition process in Syria, we should look at application of new foreign policy identity of Turkey, which would show us the identity dimension of foreign policy and its limits.

3.2 **TURKEY'S FOREIGN RELATIONS DURING THE 2000s**

Turkey was described as the country that lacked self-confidence in foreign policy by new elite politicians during the 2000s.[319] In that sense, the most important change for foreign policy vision in the 2000s is the self-confidence in comparison with the 1990s. The number of diplomatic mission abroad increased from 160 in 2002 to 221 in 2013 as a result of pro-active foreign policy understanding.[320] After 1998, encirclement psychology began to be criticized; new principles were formulated during this period. With the help of new interest formulation, Turkey wanted to remove the old problems of conventional diplomacy and tried to reformulate its position in the new century. In that sense, Turkey diversified its tools and strategies towards the neighboring regions. During the 2000s, new understanding in Turkish foreign policy with the

[317] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach*, p. 121
[318] Henri J. Barkey, "The Evolution of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East", **TESEV,** (June, 20102), p. 5
[319] Özcan and Usul, p. 170
[320] Davutoğlu, *The Three Major Earthquakes in the International System and Turkey*, p. 4

help of international environment helped Turkey to take new initiatives to improve bilateral relations. As a result, Turkey removed the visa application with most of its neighbors and organized joint Council of Ministers to increase the level of cooperation with neighbors. "Zero-problem with neighbors" policy had a huge impact on the trade relations with neighbors. Increasing economic and trade links enabled Turkey to deploy its soft power more effectively. With these attempts, artificial borders of the region became meaningless.[321] Especially improving economic relations with Greece, Syria and Iraq played an important role for the improvement of relations.[322] All of these principles created consistent and holistic foreign policy approach. In that sense, analyzing these principles will provide us important clues for new foreign policy identity of Turkey, which affect social identities and in some cases provide paths for the establishment of collective identities.

3.2.1 Policy of Zero-Problem with Neighbors

Policy of zero-problem with neighbors became one of the central approaches within Turkish foreign policy. With İsmail Cem period, Turkey wanted to normalize its relations with neighbors and continued with the AKP government, which was also supported by important Kemalist figures like Ahmet Necdet Sezer. As a part of this policy, Turkey tried to improve relations with neighbors and wanted to reach beyond the neighbors. Giving up the psychology of being surrounded by enemies helped Turkey realize zero-problem policy.[323] As a result of this approach, Turkey gave importance to continuation of improvement of relations with Russia, which had negative image in Turkish mental map in historical terms. Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan and Vladimir Putin met four times from 2005 to 2010.[324] Medvedev signed High-level Strategic Cooperation Agreement with Turkey. Both states signed 17 different agreements about economic cooperation and accepted to remove visa application between two states.[325] In that sense, Russia beside Iraq and Syria became a part of social and economic integration project for Turkey. Improvement of bilateral relations was described as dual normalization (political and economic).[326] This normalization helped both states with the diminished threat perceptions and improved economic partnership and energy trade. Bilateral relations during the 2000s began to

[321] Tür, p. 594
[322] Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 19
[323] Yeşiltaş and Balcı, p. 9
[324] Özcan and Usul, p. 182
[325] Zengin, p. 384
[326] Özcan and Usul, p. 182

be described as geo-economics cooperation, which had been described as geopolitical rivalry throughout the history.[327] The US intervention in Iraq also reinforced rapprochement process between Russia and Turkey. Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Turkey in 2004, which was the first visit of Russian President after 32 years, and this visit raised some concerns about the US intervention. During this visit, parties made a joint declaration on the "Deepening of Friendship and Multidimensional Partnership" to increase cooperation and confidence between two countries.[328] Turkey's new paradigm about the situation and more independent policy from the USA also helped this rapprochement. Both Russia and Turkey had common concerns about the attitude of the USA towards Syria, Iran and Iraq. The imperial tone of the USA brought two countries closer in strategic sense.

Turkey also wanted to normalize relations with Armenia during the 2000s. The visit of Turkish President Abdullah Gül to Armenia for a football match between Turkey and Armenia, and Turkey's intention to open Armenian border for trade were attempts for the normalization of relations. Moreover, after the Georgian-Russian War in 2008, Turkey proposed the Caucasus Security and Cooperation Platform, following the example of Balkan Stability Pact and invited Armenia to take part in this platform.[329] In that sense, while Turkey aimed to take initiatives for peaceful solutions in the region, it also tried to include Armenia within these initiatives. On August 31, 2009, Armenia, Turkey and Switzerland signed "Establishment of Diplomatic Relations" and "Improvement of Bilateral Relations" protocols, which aimed to improve the relations and establish diplomatic relations.[330] With these protocols, both countries agreed on a timetable for the normalization of relations. However, reservations of Armenian Supreme Court prevented the normalization of relations. Freezing the approval process for protocols in Armenian assembly also prevented to find solutions to the problems. On the other hand, Turkey's concerns about Azerbaijan also slowed down rapprochement process. Turkey refused to open Turkish-Armenian border before the settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.[331]

Turkey also took initiatives to solve Cyprus problem during the 2000s as a part of zero-problem policy. As a part of the EU candidacy process, Turkey gave up conventional

[327] Oğuzlu, *Soft-Power in Turkish Foreign Policy*, p. 94
[328] Larrabee, p. 168
[329] Özcan and Usul, p. 183
[330] Zengin, p. 397
[331] Bishku, p. 46

understanding to see Cyprus issue as the national security issue. Turkey showed its willingness to end status quo along the lines of Annan plan to find internationally acceptable solution. Turkey began to see Cyprus issue as an obstacle for the relations with the EU and Turkey gave up resistance to negotiations.[332] This attitude was described as the fundamental shift for the issue. Acceptance of Annan plan, which was rejected by Southern Cyprus in 2004, removed the pressure of international society from Turkey about the uncompromising position.[333] Kofi Annan also declared his good will in a report to remove isolation in Northern Cyprus.[334] With these attempts, Turkey could take political advantage over South Cyprus and tried to be "one step ahead"[335] in the Cyprus negotiations.

Turkey also had important effects for the situation in Iraq as a part of zero problem policy. Turkey tried to apply non-military means to prevent potential problems in Iraq post-war. After the mid-2000s, Turkey began to look at Iraq issue from a different perspective rather than PKK-based security window[336] and tried to move as the guarantor of stability in Iraq. Turkey began to describe itself as having distant relationship with all groups in Iraq.[337] Turkey tried to develop equidistant approach towards all groups in Iraq. As a consequence of these dialogues, Sunni groups gave up boycott policy and began to take part in political process. Turkey played an active role in the participation of Sunni groups in 2005 election.[338] Participation of Sunnis in political life in Iraq also brought successful results for Turkey. In addition to these, Turkey increased its level of interaction with Kurdish groups of Iraq at the beginning of 2008.[339] Therefore, Turkey wanted to establish dialogue with sub-groups of Iraq in order to prevent inter-communal conflicts, which could result in the disintegration of Iraq. In addition to unilateral efforts, Turkey also tried to activate international society about Iraq. As a peacekeeping rhythmic diplomacy, Turkey increased its efforts about the situation in Iraq. In that sense, Turkey in the first hand formed Iraq's Neighbors Initiatives, which was projected by İsmail Cem in 2003 with the participation of Iran, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq to solve problem

[332] Özcan and Usul, p. 180
[333] Zengin, p. 376
[334] Bayhan, p. 98
[335] Sözen, p. 117
[336] Zengin, p. 154
[337] Özcan and Usul, p. 174
[338] Sözen, p. 115
[339] Özcan and Usul, p. 175

without the war and to strengthen ties with immediate neighbors.[340] With this initiative, Turkey suggested Iraq to cooperate with UN inspector to remove the suspicions about the mass destruction weapons.[341] In this way, Turkey aimed to restructure the future of Iraq within the framework of the UN with active involvement of regional actors rather than unilateral American initiative. In the following years, this initiative enlarged with the inclusion of the EU and the Organization of Islamic Conference.[342] From 2003 to 2008, members of the initiative had meetings 15 times to solve Iraq's problems.[343] Moreover, Turkey's efforts to form regional initiatives and increase effectiveness within international organizations were not limited to Iraq's situation. During the 2000s, Turkey increased its efforts to have a more influential role within international organizations, which provided Turkey more power to become order provider within international politics.

3.2.2 Increasing Role in International Organizations and Multi-Dimensionality

Like the example of Iraq's Neighbors Initiative, Turkey wanted to increase its effectiveness within international society during the 2000s. In order to realize this aim, it both tried to form regional and international forums and tried to be a member of existing organizations. With the help of these organizations, Turkey aimed to increase its visibility within the international society. Although Turkey tried to take steps for these kinds of initiatives like taking an active role for the establishment of Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, intensity of these steps increased during the 2000s and yield to more successful results. In order to realize this aim, Turkey made an application for the non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council in 2004 and on June 1, 2009, Turkey became a member of UN Security Council after 50 years.[344] Turkey could take the votes of 153 countries for the membership. With the increasing interaction with Arab states, Turkey could take the full support of the members of the Arab League for this membership. Turkey also signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2004 with the Arab League and both sides accepted the empowerment of cooperation in 2006.[345] Beside these, meetings of NATO and OIC (The Organization of Islamic Conference) were held in İstanbul in 2004. In addition, Turkey supported and promoted the

[340] Kahraman, p. 702
[341] Murinson, p. 954
[342] Altunışık and Martin, p. 576
[343] Ahmet Davutoğlu, **Teoriden Pratiğe Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar**, İstanbul: Küre Press, 2013, p. 20
[344] Zengin, p. 309
[345] Bayhan, p. 174

Alliance of Civilizations, which was initiated by Spain in order to foster cross-cultural tolerance and understanding. Turkey became one of the active actors of this project and the Alliance of Civilizations initiative has been launched under UN auspices since 2005.[346] Turkey promoted this project within different international organizations and showed these attempts as the moral and normative aspects of the new Turkish foreign policy as a part of global role and global responsibility. Turkey also defined this initiative as an attempt to overcome prejudices, stereotypes and reciprocal misgivings among different cultures and societies.[347] Turkey also took part in the UN forces after Lebanese crisis, which was welcomed by the states of region and Turkey spent $20 million for humanitarian aid and $30 million for the reconstruction of Lebanon.[348] Moreover, with the rising activism in the international organizations, Eklemeddin İhsanoglu became the general-secretary of the Organization of Islamic Conference in 2005.[349] Turkey-skeptic Arab countries did not object to the election of a Turkish for the head of OIC. This election was also seen as the proof of increasing interaction of Turkey with the Islamic Middle East.[350] With increasing effectiveness within international society by the help of international organizations, Turkey tried to move beyond the neighbors as a part of multi-dimensional foreign policy and tried to transform its potential in order to be a global power in the world politics.

Maybe the most important example of multi-dimensionality was the increasing role in African continent. African Plan shows us the overlapping understanding between Kemalist state and the AKP government and this plan shows the importance of pro-active policy to increase effectiveness in international organizations. "Opening out to Africa" action plan was the product of İsmail Cem in 1998,[351] but this plan was materialized in 2005 with the declaration of the 2005 as the Year of Africa. As a consequence of the opening plan, Turkey became an observer member in African Union in 2007. The same year, African Union declared Turkey as the strategic partner in trade. [352] Turkey decided to open 10 new embassies in Africa in 2009. In

[346] Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 11
[347] Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Alliance of Civilization Initiative, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-alliance-of-civilizations-initiative.en.mfa (18 August 2012)
[348] Arı and Prinççi, p. 13
[349] Bishku, p. 46
[350] Philip Robins, "Turkish Foreign Policy since 2002: between a 'post-Islamist'Government a Kemalist State", **International Affairs**, Vol. 83, No. 2 (2007), p. 301
[351] Kemal Kirişçi and Neslihan Kaptanoğlu, "The Politics of Trade and Turkish Foreign Policy", **Middle Eastern Studies**, Vol. 47, No. 5 (September, 2011), p. 713
[352] Zengin, p. 447

addition to increasing diplomatic and economic relations, TIKA also opened new offices to provide economic and social support to African countries. With these attempts, besides taking support of the African countries in the international arena, Turkey also aimed to enlarge foreign policy vision beyond the neighboring regions. As a result of the increasing level of cooperation, Turkey could take the support of 51 of 53 African states for the non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council.[353] Increasing economic interactions with the region was also an important parameter for the AKP government for the relations with the continent. Result of these attempts showed that improvement of relations with other actors would increase prestige and trust which would help Turkey to become a member of international society and gain the support to be a member of the UN Security Council or an observer member in African Union. On the other hand, another important tool to increase international effectiveness was to be mediator or facilitator between conflicting parties and this tool was used by Turkey during the 2000s.

3.2.3 Mediation

Turkey during the 2000s tried to expand its area of influence beyond the neighbors not only by increasing interactions, but also by proposing peace initiatives. As a result of this policy, Turkey began to take new initiatives to solve problems in neighboring regions and played mediator roles. In this way, Turkey wanted to become the problem solver, which could increase Turkey's effectiveness in the world politics. Besides solving problems with neighbors, Turkey also wanted to contribute to the solution of the problems between neighbors, which contributed to zero-problem policy.[354] Aims for taking mediation role began before the AKP period like İsmail Cem's ideas for mediation between Israelis and Palestinians, but these roles became much clearer during the 2000s. During the 2000s, Turkey began to take more active role for mediation and tried to initiate regional mechanisms for peace building. Although most of these attempts could not produce successful results, Turkey partially increased its profile within international politics.

As a result of these attempts, Turkey restarted its efforts to increase effectiveness in Balkans. As a consequence of improving relations with the region, Ahmet Davutoğlu paid a visit to Montenegro, which was the first visit by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs after 130

[353] Zengin, p. 444
[354] Perthes, *Turkey's Role in the Middle East: An Outsider Perspective,* p.2

years.[355] In addition, the President Abdullah Gül visited Serbia in 2009. This visit was the first visit of a Turkish president after 23 years. In that sense, besides helping Bosnia, Turkey did not break down relations with Serbia. Moreover, Turkey also endeavored to improve relations between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. As the consequence of Turkish efforts, on October 1, 2009, Turkey, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina declared Tripartite Cooperation Agreement.[356] This attempt created successful results and helped with the establishment of confidence building measures. Bosnia sent an ambassador to Serbia for the first time after the beginning of the conflict within the framework of confidence building measures. During the 2010, Turkey continued to mediate between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.[357] As a result of the confidence building measures, Balkan Summit was organized in İstanbul in 2010. Serbian president came to Turkey for the first time for this summit since 1878.[358]

Another important mediation role was between the West and Iran, so Turkey wanted to play an important role for the relations between Iran and the West during the 2000s. Turkey played a facilitator role in the nuclear issue of Iran. While Turkey was not happy with Iran's nuclear ambitions, it did not want to alienate Iran from this issue. In that sense, Turkey supported a peaceful solution for the problems. Turkey during the 2000s tried to move along with the lines of the EU about Iran issue and Turkey began to be seen as a reliable actor by Iran to tell its concerns and aims to international society. As a result of increasing trust of Iran in Turkey, Turkey helped open blocked negotiations between the West and Iran about nuclear energy in 2006. While Turkey's position towards Iran's nuclear program created disappointment for the USA, it was welcomed by Germany, France and Britain.[359] Both Iran and the West began to see Turkey's facilitator role as crucial for the solution of problem.[360] Turkey again helped restart the talks in 2007. In 2010, Turkey also voted against sanctions in Iran at UN.[361] Although Turkey's attitude resulted in concerns within European states during 2010, it caused an increased prestige of Turkey among Iranian society. Turkey with Brazil could convince Iran to accept the nuclear swap deal, which was rejected by UN Security Council and western governments.[362] As a result

[355] Zengin, p. 441
[356] Burhaneddin Duran, p. 439
[357] Kirişçi and Kaptanoğlu, p. 716
[358] Burhaneddin Duran, p. 439
[359] Danforth, p. 92
[360] Oğuzlu, *Soft-Power in Turkish Foreign Policy*, p. 94
[361] Öniş, *Multiple Faces of the 'New' Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique*, p. 52
[362] Paul Salem, "Arap Dünyası'nda Türkiye'nin İmajı", **TESEV,** (July, 2011), p. 2

of Turkey's efforts, according to 2010 TESEV (the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation) public opinion poll, 61% of Iranian society was in favor of Turkey's facilitator role for the solution of problem.[363]

In addition to the facilitator role between Iran and the West, Turkey also wanted to be a part of solution for Arab-Israeli problems. Increasing involvement of Turkey in the chronic Palestinian problem, seen as dangerous and slippery by former governments, was shown as a proof for increasing activism of Turkey in the region. The Ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Gül expressed Turkey's will to be a mediator between Palestinian-Israeli and Israeli-Syrian relations during his Israel visit in 2005.[364] While Palestinian side became happier by this proposal than Israel, Israeli side also emphasized the role of Turkey for the solution of problem. In that sense, chairman of the PLO, Mahmoud Abbas wanted Turkey to take on a more active role for the politics of region and the restructuring Palestinian economy. Abbas's approach was welcomed by Israel and supported Turkey's efforts for the economic reconstruction of Palestine.[365] As the consequence of increasing activism for the problem, Turkey played an important role for the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, which was kidnapped by Hamas militants.[366] In addition, Turkey took important roles as a mediator between Syria and Israel,[367] which reinforced cooperation and trust between Syria and Turkey. However, increasing relations of Turkey with Syria and Iran, psychological gap between the social bases between the AKP and Likud party and increasing activities of Israel in Northern Iraq prevented the establishment of full confidence between Israel and Turkey.[368] Israel became uncomfortable with the improving relations of Turkey, which was the main ally in the region during the 1990s with Syria and Iran, the main enemies in the region. New foreign policy stance of Turkey towards the Arab-Israeli conflict began to be seen as the removal of neutrality for Turkey, which undermined Turkey's facilitator role between Israelis and Arabs. With the improving relations with Arab states, Turkey gave up sharing the "sense of otherness"[369] with Israel in the region, which had been one of the main reasons for high level of cooperation during the 1990s. Turkey's acceptance of the leader

[363] Mensur Akgün, Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar, Jonathan Levack and Gökçe Perçinoğlu, **Ortadoğu'da Türkiye Algısı 2010**, İstanbul: TESEV Press, 2011, p.18
[364] Kemal İnat, "Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikası 2005" in Kemal İnat and Ali Balcı (Eds.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2005**, (1-38), Ankara: Nobel Press, 2006, p. 24
[365] İnat, *Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikası 2005*, p. 29
[366] Bayhan, p. 178
[367] For more detailed information, see: Chapter 5
[368] İnat, *Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikası 2005*, p. 23
[369] Parlar Dal, p. 256

Hamas Khaled Mashal in the country resulted in criticism from the West[370] and widened the gap between Israel, the USA and Turkey in 2006. Israel began to compare Hamas and the PKK and also increased the level of criticism against Turkey. After the Gaza operation of Israel, Turkey increased its hostile rhetoric against Israel.[371] Especially after 2009, Turkey began to lose balance between two sides and it was accused of having anti-Israeli rhetoric in the region by Israeli officials. As a result of these developments, Turkey-Israel relations showed negative trends during the first decade of the 2000s, which can be seen as the most important obstacle against the zero-problem policy.[372]

3.2.4 Economic Interdependence

Another important foreign policy activity during the first decade of the 2000s was increasing economic interactions with neighboring regions. While increasing economic interaction goes back to 1980s, problematic relations with southern neighbors prevented sustainable economic relations. In that sense, on one hand, improving political relations contributed to economic relations, on the other, increasing economic activities helped with the relaxation of political relations. Hence, the policy of economic interdependence became one of the central tenets of Turkish foreign policy during the first decade of the 2000s, and as a result of increasing economic relations, Turkey began to be described as the trading state with the "emphasis on cooperation and dialogue"[373] in this period instead of "coercion and confrontation"[374]. In 2008, foreign trade constituted 45% of the Turkish GDP.[375] During 2001-2002, 8% of total trade was with neighbors, but this rate reached around 30% in 2008, and between 2005 and 2008, the volume of trade with neighbors increased 300%.[376] Foreign trade with neighbors increased from $9.6 billion in 1995 to $67.7 billion in 2007 and to $88.3 billion in 2008.[377] As a consequence of rising economic activities, Turkey's export reached to $134 billion and import reached to $440 billion at the end of 2000s.[378] Turkish exports to Russia,

[370] Bozdağlıoğlu, *Modernity, Identity and Turkey's Foreign Policy*, p. 70
[371] Barkey, *The Evolution of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 3
[372] Salem, p. 5
[373] Kirişçi, *The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of Trading State*, p. 40
[374] Walker, p. 7
[375] Kirişçi and Kaptanoğlu, p. 705
[376] Zengin, p. 221
[377] Kirişçi and Kaptanoğlu, p. 707
[378] Bayhan, p. 232

Caucasus and Central Asia also increased from $1.6 billion in 2000 to $8.4 billion in 2007.[379] Total trade volume with Russia reached to $15 billion in 2009.[380] Turkey with Georgia also proposed new projects for transportation to increase the level of cooperation in economic area with the states of Caucasus. At the end of the decade, the trade with the Middle East and Africa constituted 27% of Turkey's export, 11% of imports and 17% of overall trade.[381] North Africa and the Middle East's share in Turkey's total merchandise trade increased from 11.4% in 2002 to 16.2% in 2008.[382] Total trade with the Middle Eastern countries increased from $4.4 billion in 2002 to $26 billion in 2010.[383] Turkish exports to Middle Eastern countries reached to 11.9 billion dollars in 2007 and Turkey's exports to the Middle East reached about 21.5 % of Turkey's total exports in 2010.[384] In 2005, investment from Gulf States in Turkey reached to $1.7 billion.[385] Trade volume increased from $720 million in 2002 to $6 billion in 2008 and trade increased from $6 billion to $18 billion during the same period with African continent.[386] During the first decade of the 2000s, Turkish construction firms invested around $35.5 billion in the Middle East.[387] Total trade volume between Iran and Turkey increased from $1 billion in 2000 to $2.3 billion in 2004 and to $10.2 billion in 2008.[388] On the other hand, policy of economic interdependence was not only related to obtaining material gains by the help of trade. It was also related to zero-problem policy. With the help of economic interdependence, the establishment of sustainable peace and regional stability would be much easier. In that sense, increasing economic interactions were seen as a tool of peace building process and Turkey tried to increase its economic relations with Syria, Iraq and Iran or in other terms, with old enemies.

Turkey tried to remove the risks in Iraq with the concept of economic interdependence. Turkey wanted to establish "Mesopotamia Common Economic Basin" with Iraq and Syria.[389] With the help of good relations with them, Mesopotamia vision could be established, increasing the level of interdependence between the parties. In that sense, Turkey gave huge importance to

[379] Güzeldere, p. 14
[380] Sözen, p. 115
[381] Tür, p. 598
[382] Hale, *Turkey and the Middle East in the 'New Era'*, p. 144
[383] Ziya Öniş, "Turkey and the Arab Spring: Between Ethics and Self-Interest", **Insight Turkey**, Vol. 14, No. 3, (Summer, 2012), p. 56
[384] Barkey, *Turkish Foreign Policy and the Middle East*, p. 5
[385] Küçükcan, p. 18
[386] Zengin, p. 447
[387] Tür, p. 595
[388] Hale, *Turkey and the Middle East in the 'New Era'*, p. 153
[389] Zengin, p. 154

Syria for the future of Iraq. More than establishing good bilateral relations, Turkey aimed a kind of economic integration among three states. With the help of economic interdependence, former enemies could turn into profitable partners, which could positively contribute to the stability of the region. During the 5th Arab-Turkish forum, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu expressed the importance of greater economic activity, and even integration for the well being of the region.[390] In that sense, with the help of economic interdependence and even integration, Turkey wanted to increase the level of well being of three states and marginalize the chronic problems like terrorism in the region. As a consequence of improving economic relations, Turkey signed "High-Level Strategic Cooperation Agreement" with Iraq and Syria, which increased the level of economic interdependence. With these agreements, Turkey aimed integration in the areas of trade, infrastructure, transportation, and energy. The proposal also aimed joint cabinet meetings once a year under the leadership of prime ministers of both countries.[391] Periodical meetings between the ministers of both states were decided. As the consequences of good relations between Iraq and Turkey, economic and political relations improved. Turkey and Iraq signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2006 to train Iraqi security forces and diplomats in Turkey.[392] Turkish firms operating in Iraq exceeded 1000 and the number of Turkish workers were around 20.000 in Iraq in 2006.[393] All these positive developments removed most of the central problems between the two states and the Turkish President paid a visit to Iraq in 2008 for the first time after 33 years.[394] Policy of increasing economic interdependence was also used towards Northern Iraq, and in this way, Turkey aimed to marginalize PKK in the region. Because of this, relations with the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) occupied an important place for the Turkish foreign policy especially after the mid 2000s. With the policy of economic interdependence, relations in the region normalized and in 2010 trade with the Northern Iraq reached to $ 5.2 billion.[395] In this way, Turkey could find an important ally against PKK in the region and Turkey also aimed to use these relations for domestic politics with "Kurdish Opening". After these attempts, Turkey could establish a healthy dialogue with Iraqi central administration until the beginning of the crisis between Baghdad and

[390] Kirişçi and Kaptanoğlu, p. 707
[391] Zengin, p. 191
[392] Kemal İnat, "Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikası 2006" in Kemal İnat and Muhittin Ataman (Eds.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2006**, (1-54), Ankara: Nobel Press, 2008, p. 12
[393] İnat, *Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikası 2006*, p. 31
[394] Zengin, p. 192
[395] Tür, p. 596

Erbil and until the beginning of problems between the vice-president Hashimi and the Prime Minister Maliki. In that sense, economy was not a tool only for economic well-being, but also a tool for minimizing risks with neighbors. We should also mention that while these principles played an important role for the Turkey's new foreign policy stance, usage of soft-power to realize these principles also made crucial effects. In that sense, another important concept of new foreign policy understanding was the rise of soft power and new foreign policy attitude of Turkey began to be described with the concept of "soft power".

3.2.5 Increasing Use of Soft Power

Soft power is "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments" [396] whereas the hard power is the ability to coerce. In that sense, while the hard power is based on a country's military and economic power, soft power arises from "a country's culture, political ideas and policies" and "soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others".[397] As a result, there is a close relationship between the securitization of foreign policy issues and use of hard power. Beside this, hard power is also related to instrumental logic of action. Therefore, if the actor's goal forces others to make a cost-benefit analysis through coercion, hard power becomes in operation. On the other hand, soft power underlines the significance of the perceptions of the actors.[398] Therefore, soft power is related to civilian and normative instruments. With the help of soft power, power-holder would change other's behaviors in line with the power-holder because other actors view power-holders' identity and policies as legitimate.[399] Therefore, for soft power, legitimacy is a requirement and credibility and the ability to persuade constitute the main elements of soft power.[400] This legitimacy could stem from the values owned by the actor, political, economic, social, and cultural institutions of a country or methods used in the execution of a foreign policy.[401] Multilateral approach and win-win strategy in foreign policy also increase the soft power potential of the actor. Zero-sum approach contradicts the idea of soft power. The centrality of the actor for the use of soft power with non-traditional means and tools, and logic of appropriateness is more suitable for

[396] Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 17
[397] Joseph Nye, **Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics**, New York: Public Affairs, 2004, p. 5
[398] Oğuzlu, *Soft-Power in Turkish Foreign Policy*, p. 81
[399] Nye, p. 6
[400] Kalın, *Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey*, p. 8
[401] Oğuzlu, *Soft-Power in Turkish Foreign Policy*, pp. 83-84

constructivism. Therefore, constructivism explains the concept of soft power easier than Realism in foreign policy.

In historical terms, Turkey applied instrumental logic to deal with security threats and because of this, it applied hard power measures to minimize these risks. As a result, historically, military or hard power played an important role for Turkey and became the most important complementary element of diplomacy. Although we can see some attempts for the use of soft power after the end of the Cold War, problematic relations with the neighbors prevented realization of this power. In that sense, October crisis with Syria in 1998 was a clear example of the use of hard power in Turkish foreign policy. However, the changing dynamics of international structure and the rise of other tools within foreign policy attitudes affected Turkey's foreign policy perception. With the transformation from securitization to politicization process with the help of the EU reforms, soft power in Turkish foreign policy began to increase. Historical and cultural ties with neighboring regions, democratic institutions and free market economy were described as the tools of soft power of Turkey[402] which were used towards the Middle East during the first decade of the 2000s. In that sense, desecuritization process helped the use of soft-power in Turkish foreign policy. Politicization process prioritized negotiation and consensus-building measures rather than military measures as the tools of conflict resolution.[403] With the help of soft power, Turkey also tried to make new friends and wanted to maximize its influence in neighboring regions. Multilateralism, win-win and cooperative approaches in the first decade of the 2000s also helped the rise of soft power in Turkish foreign policy. As a part of win-win approach, emphasis on dialogue and negotiation helped the improvement of relations with immediate neighbors.[404] Turkey wanted to play responsible and active role in the neighboring regions for regional peace and stability and this helped increase its credibility in the neighboring regions and the West. Turkey's stability and peace discourses, positive constructive approaches, rising economic power and democratic system were used towards the neighboring regions as the tools of soft-power during the 2000s.[405] In that sense, the new elite argued that Turkey was pursuing a value-based foreign policy[406] and aimed to use soft power potential to

[402] Yeşiltaş and Balcı, p. 6
[403] Oğuzlu, *Soft-Power in Turkish Foreign Policy*, p. 88
[404] Sandrin, p. 10
[405] Zengin, p. 258
[406] Kalın, *Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey,* p. 8

improve relations. Multilateralism and legitimacy of the applied policies became important rhetoric of Turkish foreign policy as a part of soft power.[407] Therefore, Turkey's decision to reject March 1 proposal, which was about supporting the US for Iraqi intervention and critiques towards Israel for its attitude in Gaza and Lebanon as the part of value-based foreign policy stances[408], increased the prestige of Turkey in the region.[409] Shortly, on one hand, European Union membership process increased the prestige of Turkey in the neighboring regions; on the other hand, improving relations with the neighboring regions increased the importance of Turkey in the eyes of western allies.

The start of the negotiations with the EU helped Turkey to be seen as a model in the Middle East. According to 2009 TESEV public opinion poll, 64% of participants in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Syria concluded that Turkey's membership process would increase its effectiveness in the Middle East.[410] After the negative consequences of globalization process over the Middle Eastern countries, Turkey's transformation began to be seen as an ideal way for the countries of region. Similar positions of the EU and Turkey towards the problems of the Middle East also legitimized Turkey in the eyes of Middle Eastern societies and helped Turkey to materialize its soft power in the region. Similar positions of both sides towards the Iraq's future, Iran's nuclear policies, Palestinian-Israeli dispute, attitude towards Bashar Asad's Syria during the 2000s and the transformation of the Middle East are clear examples for the increasing soft power of Turkey in the region and in the eyes of the EU.[411] Rise of soft power also made important direct and indirect effects on the relations with Syria. As the consequence of the desecuritization process, the change in the understanding towards the Kurdish problem in Turkey helped to improvement of bilateral relations with Syria which had been seen as the source of Kurdish insurgency in Turkey.[412] In that sense, change in the domestic politics with desecuritization process and change in foreign policy perception with the rise of soft power directly affected relations with Syria.

[407] Öniş and Yılmaz, p. 17
[408] Kalın, *Debating Turkey in the Middle East: The Dawn of a New Geo-Political Imagination?*, pp. 87-88
[409] Meliha Benli Altunışık, "Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu'daki 'Yumuşak Gücü' ve Önündeki Engeller", **TESEV,** (Temmuz, 2011), p. 1
[410] Mensur Akgün, Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar and Gökçe Perçinoğlu, **Orta Doğu'da Türkiye Algısı**, İstanbul: TESEV Press, 2009, p.25
[411] Akgün, Senyücel Gündoğar and Perçinoğlu, *Orta Doğu'da Türkiye Algısı*, p. 91
[412] Aras and Polat, p. 499

As a result of new foreign policy perception on the base of soft power, Turkey increased its effectiveness and prestige in the Middle East. According to public poll in Arab societies, 78% of people wanted Turkey to play a mediation role for Israel-Palestine problem in 2010.[413] This percent was higher in Jordan, Palestine and Syria. Ethical and responsive foreign policy rhetoric is supported by Arab societies. These societies also see Turkey as the 2nd economic power of the region after Saudi Arabia and expect Turkey to exceed Saudi Arabia in the following 10 years and more than half of these people were supporting Turkey's EU membership process.[414] As a result of improving relations with the region, positive thoughts about Turkey also increased from 75% in 2009 to 85% in 2010 among the societies of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan. Moreover, 2010 TESEV public opinion poll showed increased effectiveness of Turkey in these societies. According to the same research, 75% of these societies had positive thoughts about the role of Turkey for peace in the region. 73% of them also agreed on increasing effectiveness of Turkey in the region and 78% of the participants suggested Turkey to increase its effectiveness in the region. The same research also concluded that 66% of the participants saw Turkey as the potential model for Middle Eastern countries and described Turkey as the successful combination of Islam and democracy.[415] "Conservative modernization"[416] project of Turkey began to attract Middle Eastern countries. In that sense, economic and political development, integration of Islamist groups into political life also began to be seen as the model for Middle Eastern countries by Arab societies.[417] As a result, increasing interaction between two sides destructed negative understanding about the "Other" and helped remove the negative memories of the past.

In addition to the positive effects of Turkey's soft power on Arab societies, in diplomatic terms, Turkey also increased its credibility in the eyes of the USA and Israel for the solution of core Middle Eastern problems. Israeli officials called Abdullah Gul for the release of Israeli soldier kidnapped by Palestinians in 2006.[418] As a response to this request, Davutoğlu went to Syria and negotiated with Bashar Asad and Khaled Mashal for the solution of problem.[419] Israel

[413] Altunışık, p. 1
[414] Altunışık, p. 2
[415] Akgün, Senyücel Gündoğar, Levack and Perçinoğlu, *Ortadoğu'da Türkiye Algısı 2010*, p.12
[416] Öniş, *Multiple Faces of the 'New' Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique*, p. 57
[417] Altunışık, p. 1
[418] "İsrail Türkiye'den Yardım İstedi", *Milliyet*, 28 June 2006, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2006/06/28/dunya/axdun01.html (2 July 2013).
[419] İnat, *Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikası 2006*, p, 39

also wanted Turkey to take part in international force in Lebanon after the crisis between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006.[420] As a result of the rising influence of Turkey in the world politics, the ex-foreign minister of the USA, Hillary Clinton declared that they would solve problems with rising powers in the world, one of which was Turkey, during the Council of Foreign Relations.[421] In that sense, while Israel and the US were uncomfortable towards the increasing interaction and cooperation between Turkey and "problematic actors" of the region, they tried to use Turkey's rising soft power in times of important crises in the region. Especially with Obama administration, Turkey became an important actor for the normalization of Syria for the USA. Obama administration like Turkey began to think that encouragement of Asad regime would transform Syria into a "responsible stakeholder"[422] in the region. Help of an insider for the problems of the Middle East remained indispensable for the USA, Israel and even the EU.[423]

During the 2000s, Turkey's soft power also increased with including business circles, civil society establishments, and intellectuals in foreign policy actions. Bureaucratic understanding within foreign policy cannot be enough for the soft power. In that sense, new means and tools should be introduced to become more effective actor in the world politics. Therefore, like TIKA, THY, TRT or Yunus Emre cultural centers, some semi-official or official organizations helped the rise of soft power of Turkey.[424] TIKA (The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) became an important tool for Turkish foreign policy, which carried out demand-driven development projects in different regions.[425] TIKA in 2002 was operating in less than 15 states, but this number rose to 86 in 2007 and 111 in 2009. It also became active in 37 of 53 African states, which was an important factor to take the support of African countries for the UN Security Council non-permanent membership. Development aids of Turkey were less than $ 100 million in 2003, but this number rose to $ 339 million in 2004 and $ 780 million in 2008. Total number of projects of TIKA between 1992 and 2002 were 1454 but this number also rose to 1667 in 2008.[426] As a result of the aid activities of TIKA, after 2005 and 2006, the UN declared

[420] "İsrail'den Gül'e: Türk Ordusu Bölgeye Gelsin", *Radikal,* 21 August 2006, http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=196422 (4 July 2013).
[421] Zengin, p. 322
[422] Oğuzlu, *Turning 'Risk' into 'Opportunity': Turkey's Approach towards Syria, A Western/European Actor in the Middle East*, p. 35
[423] Parlar Dal, p. 259
[424] Kalın, *Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey,* p. 21
[425] Phar Kim Beng, "Turkey's Potential as a Soft Power: A Call for Conceptual Clarity", **Insight Turkey**, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2008), p. 23
[426] Zengin, p. 454

Turkey with Brazil and South Korea as donor countries. TIKA also has three offices in the Middle East: in Syria, Afghanistan and Palestine, which shows center of gravity in understanding of new Turkish foreign policy in the region.[427]

THY (Turkish Airlines) also helped the rise of soft power of Turkey during the first decade of the 2000s. Turkey decided to explore new markets with the help of THY. THY had 69 planes in 2003 but number of planes rose to 132 in 2009. During this period, THY also decided to open 23 new air routes in the world. In 2008, the rate of passengers from the Middle Eastern states increased 54% and passengers from African states increased 38%. With the help of THY, the number of third country nationals entering Turkey increased from 10 million in 2000 to 23 million in 2007.[428] Visitors from neighboring countries also increased from 3.4 million in 2002 to around 9 million in 2009 and 10.9 million in 2010.[429] International flights of the THY also reached to 130 destinations at the end of 2010.[430] THY also became the 4th biggest airline company in Europe during this period. In that sense, THY was also used for the political and economic opening policies towards the other regions.

With the new channels of TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), Turkey also wanted to raise its effectiveness in the neighboring countries. With the Kurdish channel, Turkey wanted to reach Kurds of Syria, Iraq and Iran. Moreover, with the opening of Arabic TRT in 2010, TRT El-Turkiye, Turkey also reached the Arabs of the region. With this channel, Turkey could reach 350 million Arabs in the Middle East.[431] With these channels, Turkey aimed to remove negative perceptions about Turkey among Middle Eastern societies. Beside this, Turkey with the help of media increased interaction with these societies. Programs of the private channels attracted these societies. TV series in Turkey could get the attention of these societies and became very popular. 78% of people expressed watching at least one Turkish TV series in their life, according to 2009 TESEV public poll.[432]

On Syrian side, foreign policy stance was much more complicated than Turkey. Although Turkey could establish coherent foreign understanding with the help of Davutoğlu doctrine, as a

[427] Bayhan, p. 214
[428] Kirişçi, *The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of Trading State*, p. 50
[429] Kemal Kirişçi, "Turkey's Engagement with Its Neighborhood: A 'Synthetic' and Multidimensional Look at Turkey's Foreign Policy Transformation", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Sptember, 2012), p. 320
[430] Kirişçi and Kaptanoğlu, p. 710
[431] Zengin, p. 459
[432] Altunışık, p. 2

result of US presence in the region and Rafic Hariri assassination, increasing effects of regional developments pushed Syria to a more pragmatic line. In that sense, whereas Turkey could improve its international and regional prestige, which had been negative during the 1990s for some of the regional and international actors, Syria could not prove its good will to the international society. During the 2000s, Turkey's relations with the West witnessed crises, but these crises could not change the nature of alliance. Only relations with Israel at the end of 2000s witnessed an important crisis. On the other hand, Syria's relations with the USA, Israel and sometimes Lebanon narrowed the options of Syrian regime. Ups and downs within the relations with the EU, Iraq and other regional states also prevented the establishment of coherent foreign policy understanding. Under these circumstances, non-state groups became important allies of Syria which also created problems with the West. However, we should also mention that the Syrian regime during the first decade of the 2000s tried to improve Syria's international prestige. In that sense, besides traditional allies like Iran and Russia, the pro-western actors of the region also became crucial for Syria to decrease the pressure of the USA and Israel and to become a part of the international society.

3.3 **SYRIA'S REDEFINITION OF THE SELF**

In June 2000, Bashar Al-Asad became the new president of Syria by getting 97.29% of the total vote in nationwide referendum and Syria entered a new path with his presidency.[433] During his inaugural speech, he made economic reform a clear priority and criticized certain policies of the past because while his father was the product of the Cold War, Bashar Asad is the product of the technological age. In that sense, Bashar Asad's accession to power was described as the generational change which could response the necessities of globalization and the new world order.[434] For Bashar Asad, in order to join the outside world, new economy, new administration and new international relations were required and these could only be achieved by a new mentality by the government and society. With these reforms, Bashar Asad declared his aim to change the "operational philosophy of Syrian society".[435] Therefore, education and human resource development were important priorities for Bashar Asad to restructure business, politics and culture. According to him, economic reforms would also help move from ideology to actual

[433] Lesch, p. 81
[434] Hinnebusch, *Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership*, p. 190
[435] Lesch, p. 238

facts. In this way, for Bashar Asad, Syria would define socialism rather than socialism defining Syria.[436]

On the other hand, although Bashar Asad period represents important breaks with his father's rule, limits of transformation remained questionable. In that sense, like the case of Turkey, reinterpretation process in Syria was not radical. In addition to these, the liberal instinct of Bashar Asad was also limited. Although Syria with Bashar Asad entered into a reinterpretation process, this aimed to save the status quo rather than shaking it. Bashar Asad period can be described as the change within stability and continuity, which can be described as the new path to preserve status quo in Syria.[437] International political structure and developments like US intervention in Iraq in 2003 and Rafic Hariri assassination in Lebanon also weakened the power of Asad rule within the international society. Therefore, responding to disturbance gained priority for the new Syrian foreign policy identity. Moreover, domestic political structure, like the old elite in Syria and Ba'ath establishment prevented radical steps within the country. Therefore, domestic and international structures limited the options of new rule in Syria. In addition, aims of new administration were also limited which prevented total transformation of Syria. However, we should not forget that new administration in Syria was one of the key determinants to understand improving the bilateral relations. In that sense, analyzing the process of reinterpretation of interest by a new identity and limits of this process will help us understand the changing nature of relations both after 1998 and after 2011. We should also mention that Bashar Asad rule's aim was related to the reconstruction of the domestic politics rather than foreign policy area. However, this process also affected their foreign policy identity.

On the other hand, redefinition process did not begin with Bashar Asad in Syria. Since 1970, Syria has witnessed different redefinition processes at the beginning of almost every decade in order to sustain the status quo in the country. With the Correction Revolution, Hafez Asad suspended the radical agenda of neo-Ba'athist understanding and pragmatism became the main understanding of the foreign policy. After the long-lasting conflicts with Muslim Brotherhood from 1976 to 1982, Syria witnessed redefinition process with limited economic and political liberalization. With the end of the Cold War, Syria faced with important domestic and international developments, which pushed Syria for further reforms. As a result of these, Syria

[436] Lesch, p. 215
[437] Zisser, pp. 212-213

tried to narrow the gap with the West and aimed a limited economic liberalization. In that sense, some of Bashar Asad's reform attempts were formulated by his father. However, Bashar Asad tried to formulate a more holistic process, especially for the domestic politics. In addition, Bashar Asad, the representative of new generation, increased hopes for change both in domestic politics and in foreign affairs. In that sense, Turkey became happier to see Bashar Asad as the president rather than Rifaat Asad who was the influential figure of the old guards. Under these circumstances, Turkey-Syria relations showed positive trends during the first decade of the 2000s and the gap between the "Self" and "Other" narrowed as a result of redefinition of the Self and changing perception of the "Self" about the "Other".

3.3.1 Post-Cold War Era and Redefinition of the Self

Although Syria witnessed limited economic and political liberalization after 1982, the end of the Cold War narrowed the options of Syria. In that sense, both in domestic politics and foreign affairs, Hafez Asad faced with important problems and these problems pushed Syria for reform process. In domestic politics, Syrian regime planned to take economic measures without threatening the political stability. Therefore, the regime aimed at concentrating over economic and social spheres with the help of limited economic liberalization.[438] However, political liberalization continued to be seen as a threat against political stability and security. Similar concerns were shared by Bashar Asad after 2000. Like his father, he defined Syrian political system as a special democracy and rejected western liberal political system. In addition, he also emphasized the importance of social and economic reforms in order to overcome the chronic problems of Syria. On the other hand, Bashar Asad's reform attempts were much more comprehensive than his father's, and in some points, these attempts included criticism of policies of his father. In that sense, although his views about Syria were not totally different from his father, he was more reform-minded and technocrat rather than the man of old guards. Under these circumstances, with the dynamics of regional developments and improving relations with Turkey, Turkey became an important partner for Syria, which had not been seen during his father era. Therefore, not only regional developments, but also a new perception of Syrian rule made Turkey irresistible for Syria. For the foreign affairs of Syria, the end of the Cold War also had negative effects on Syria and pushed Hafez Asad to a more pragmatic line in the region. Some

[438] Zisser, p. 188

points of this new line was also followed by Bashar Asad during the 2000s but this line made cooperation with Turkey easier although pragmatism during the 1990s could not transform the bilateral relations. In that sense, changing perceptions of parties after 1998 made cooperation much easier for both countries.

With the dissolution of the USSR, Syria lost main material and ideational ally within the world politics and this loss had a negative impact on Syria's domestic and foreign affairs. With the Gulf War, pressure over Syria increased and Syria began to be seen as the next victim of the new international structure. In order not to be damaged by the structural change, it took part in coalition forces against Iraq during the Gulf War, and it had to soften its stance against Israel. With the end of the Cold War, Syria gave up the resistance against Middle East peace process. Therefore, the Gulf War not only implies the new regional order for Syria, but it also implies the start of peace process between Israel and Syria. Therefore, in the post-Cold War era, preservation of the status quo in the region became the most important foreign policy aim for Syria.[439] In order to break the isolation in the region, Syria took part in Gulf War coalition. Syria realized that it would not achieve its aims by remaining in opposition to the USA. In order to become an effective actor rather than a victim in the new order of the region, Syria wanted to exploit this situation. Peace with Israel continued to be an important part of Syria's agenda. Indeed, peace with Israel was seen by new administration as a requirement for domestic reform process, but the position of Syria towards Israel did not change too much during the 2000s. In that sense, whereas Hafez Asad rule aimed to "maximize territorial recovery and minimize the normalization of relations"[440], new administration did not have too much problem in the normalization of relations with Israel. On the other hand, relations with the USA turned from positive to negative in 2000s. With taking part in coalition forces, the US-Syrian relations began to improve during the 1990s but with US intervention in Iraq in 2003, relations gradually deteriorated and under these circumstances, Turkey turned into an important regional partner for regional developments. Increasing cooperation and interdependence, which had lacked during the 1990s, positively contributed to relations and two countries became friends at the end of 2000s.

Gulf War implies the end of the Cold War in the region and it had important effects on the politics of region. Taking part in multinational forces during the Gulf War was seen as the only

[439] Zisser, p. 68
[440] Hinnebusch, *Syria: Revolution from Above*, p. 162

way to break isolation in the world politics for Syria. Therefore, during the Gulf War Syria sent 17.000 soldiers to Saudi Arabia for a multinational force. By sending troops to anti-Iraqi coalition, Syria would get $3 billion from Gulf countries, Germany and Japan.[441] Beside this, Syria also wanted to improve relations with the USA by taking part in coalition forces. In order to improve relations, in 1990, Syria also restored full diplomatic relations with the USA.[442] In addition, by taking part in international coalition, Syria wanted to be a part of a moderate camp in the Arab world.[443] Syria needed the help of Gulf countries, especially the help of Saudi Arabia to continue the struggle against Israel. With the Gulf War, Syria-Egypt-Saudi Arabia axis could be established. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia transferred between $ 2.5 and 3 billion to Syria in return for the support to multinational forces.[444] By getting help from Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Syria could become the most important voice of Pan-Arabism and Palestinian issue.[445] Therefore, Gulf crisis helped Syria become the center of Arab world again.

Another important development for the region and Syria during the 1990s was the Middle East peace process. Middle East peace process began between Israel, PLO, Lebanon and Jordan in 1991, and with the efforts of the USA, Syria also took part in the peace process.[446] With this process, Syria accepted direct talks with Israel for the first time. After the end of Cold War, strategic parity with Israel became almost impossible and Syria began to look for different strategies in this struggle. Since 1967, struggle with Israel had been the top priority for Syria. However, "reliance on military force in settling Arab-Israeli conflict lost its credibility for Syria."[447] In that sense, the regional and international reality of the decade with American pressure over Syria forced Syria to enter peace negotiations with Israel.

On the Syrian side, it also wanted to be a legitimate actor in the eyes of the USA to continue the struggle against Israel. In this way, Syria could use diplomatic ways as leverage against Israel, because military means were seen as ineffective without the help of a superpower. Therefore, Syria did not abandon its goals; instead, it began to use other means to reach these goals. In that sense, peace was a strategic option for Syria rather than an irreversible path. This

[441] Şen, p. 298
[442] Zisser, p. 49
[443] Lesch, pp. 53-54
[444] Zisser, p. 62
[445] Hinnebusch, *Syria: Revolution from Above*, p. 159
[446] Uçarol, p. 1009
[447] Lesch, p. 53

clearly was seen during Madrid Peace Process. From 1992 to 1996, the progress in peace process was hopeful for all parties, but in terms of results, Syrian-Israeli peace process could not bring permanent peace accord between the parties. Israel did not accept the proposal of Syria over the territory for peace. In 1996, the rise of Netanyahu into power in Israel created a deadlock in the peace process.[448] Until the 1999, this deadlock and disappointment had continued between Israel and Syria. This period was also the brightest period for Turkey-Israel relations and this also contributed to the feeling of being surrounded by enemies. In order to create more space and increase effectiveness in the region, Syria began to establish closer links with Iraq and Iran. With these cooperation attempts within the region and outside the region, Syria could maintain its anti-imperialist stance and continue to have the upper hand in Arab ideals. However, the US invasion in Iraq in 2003 recreated pressure over Syria and resulted in more pressure for peace with Israel, because the USA blamed Syria for the failure of Israeli-Syrian peace process.[449]

During Bashar Asad era, Syria tried to continue most of its relations in the region. On the one hand, Syria tried to strengthen ties with anti-western actors; on the other, it aimed to improve relations with the moderate camp of the region although most of the relations began to lose momentum. Israel and the USA continued to be top priority of Syria's foreign policy agenda. However, during the 2000s, the new administration tried to transform Syria into a more reasonable actor within the world politics, which would ease economic and political problems of Syria. Syrian rule continuously put an emphasis on the peace with Israel as the American pressure gradually increased over Syria. With the Hariri assassination, regional and international pressures over Syria increased. Under these circumstances and as a result of improving relations with the pro-western actor, Turkey could provide lifeline to Asad regime. Moreover, in order to realize economic and social reforms, Turkey could provide main gate in the region, especially with the European countries. Therefore, on the one hand, increasing economic and social cooperation, Syria planned to overcome negative effects of reform process, on the other; Turkey became an inevitable partner to communicate its concerns to the international society. In that sense, with increasing trust, Turkey began to be a friend of Syria in the region, which maybe the most important difference from Syrian foreign affairs of 1990s. At the end of the 2000s, enemies of 1990s became friend. However, in order to understand Turkey's place for Syrian regime, we

[448] Zisser, pp. 72-73
[449] Hinnebusch, *Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership*, p. 202

should look at redefinition process under Bashar Asad rule and effects of regional developments in Syria.

3.3.2 Bashar Asad Era

Bashar Al-Asad became the first president of Syria after 30 years in 2000. Bashar Al-Asad was described as the modernizer, the representative of the younger generation and committed to reform.[450] He made continuous emphasis on improving and modernizing economy, education and administration. Although conservative elements caused skepticism towards political and economic reform, reform-minded bureaucrats supported Bashar Asad's reform agenda.[451] His reform-minded understanding created a hope not only for the Syrian society but also for the states like Turkey. Because of this, Turkey put Syria in a different place in the region and continued hopes for a peaceful change after the start of the Arab Spring in 2011. On the other hand, protection of the status quo remained the top priority of Asad regime. These reform attempts aimed to preserve the status quo rather than a radical transformation. In that sense, it can be argued that both internal and external factors pushed Syrian rule for further reforms. During the 2000s, both economic and political structures became almost unsustainable for Syria. In order to overcome economic and political problems, Bashar Asad planned limited economic and political liberalization like his father. Hence, structural forces, which can be defined as the external factors, pushed new administration for reform process. On the other hand, liberal instinct of Bashar Asad, which can be defined as the internal factors, planned to deepen reform process in Syria. Hence, administrative, technological and educational reforms were much more related with the perception of technocrats within Bashar Asad administration. In this way, Syrian rule planned to transform Syria without threatening order and stability. However, reform process needed domestic and regional stability but regional developments during the 2000s narrowed the area of maneuver of the Syrian rule. Both economic and political structures along with international and regional developments weakened the hands of the new rule, which prevented the transformation of Syria. Ba'athist understanding and socialist economic structure harmed the reform process. Under these circumstances, to continue the reform process in Syria and to break regional isolation, Turkey became an important partner in the region. As a result of improving

[450] Hinnebusch, *Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership*, p. 195
[451] Volker Perthes, **Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change**, Adelphi Paper, No. 336, New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 25

relations with Turkey, Syria could find space and at the end of the decade, Turkey could transform into a friend in the eyes of the Syrian regime.

Main concern of the new administration in Syria was domestic transformation in order to overcome unsustainable deficiencies of the system. In order to realize this aim, Syria needed to minimize problems with neighbors. In that sense, on the one hand, peace with Israel continued to occupy an important place, on the other, Syria tried to improve relations with neighbors like Iraq and Turkey. However, relations of Syria with countries of the region showed important ups and downs, which made sustainable relations with Turkey more crucial. Because of this, reform process in Syria should be understood in terms of its importance in having good relations with Turkey. The new rule aimed at administrative, economic, political and technological reforms in Syria to catch up new dynamics of international politics although these reform attempts had important limits. However, Turkey's transformation during the 2000s began to be seen as an ideal model for Syria, which can be described as evolutionary transformation.

The first priority of new administration was the administrative reform. Whereas administrative reforms were related with new understanding of Bashar Asad and his cadres, they were also result of unsustainable political structure of Syria. Hence, both reformist instinct of new elite, internal factor, and political structure, external factor, were important for administrative reform process in Syria during the first decade of the 2000s. As a part of the administrative reforms, Bashar Asad brought French consultants to restructure ministries.[452] By strengthening the ministries, parliament and state institutions, Bashar Asad aimed to limit the power of Ba'ath party. According to Syrian constitution, Ba'ath party was defined as the leading power of society and country, which provided limitless power to the party within the Syrian politics.[453] Syrian constitution has provided more than half of the seats of the parliament to Ba'ath party, and in this way, Ba'ath party could control the parliament.[454] In that sense, the party's role was a potential obstacle for the establishment of a new understanding in Syria. As a consequence of the administrative reforms, the party's role was redefined from leading to

[452] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 24
[453] Hediye Levent, "Suriye Krizinin Dinamikleri ve Aktörlerin Değerlendirilmesi", **Ortadoğu Analiz**, Vol. 4, No. 44 (Agust, 2012), p. 36
[454] Davut Dursun, "Ortadoğu Siyaseti Üzerine Notlar" in Kemal İnat and Ali Balcı (Ed.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2005**, (311-332), Ankara: Nobel Press, 2006, p. 325

planning, guidance, supervision and audit in 2003.[455] In this way, the influence of state institutions and Bashar Asad's personal influence increased whereas the party's influence decreased. From 2000 to 2005, more than 1.900 decrees, laws and orders were signed by Bashar Asad for restructuring Syrian administrative system.[456] A new generation took over almost all levels of political life. 23 of 35 ministers within the first government of Bashar Asad period were new faces.[457] After the 2002 election, 178 members of 250 of the chamber were newcomers and 60% of high-level military and civil officials also changed during the first years of Bashar Asad.[458] Although there were important steps for a new administrative structure in Syria, these steps did not result in a total transformation for the domestic structure. Firstly, ministers in key positions remained the same and the new faces were not totally the members of new understanding. Whereas the high number of old guards who were against a dramatic transformation of Syria were removed from their posts during the first years of Bashar Al-Asad and last years of Hafez Al-Asad, most of them continued to preserve their influence in Syrian politics.[459] Ba'ath party also continued to be dominated by the status quo elements rather than true reformists and technocrats. Military and security elite was against change and reform in Syria, which would weaken their position and influence in Syrian politics. A true political reform would lead to the decline of Alawi dominated politics in Syria. In that sense, the domination of old guards in the political life created obstacles for a total administrative transformation in Syria.[460] In addition, Bashar Asad and his cadres were represented via media between the conservatives who support the continuation of the system and pro-democrats who support a rapid and radical transformation of the system among the elite.[461] He placed reformist technocrats in the government. In that sense, the new reformists of administration were technocrats rather than pro-democrats. New cadres planned to modernize Syria with implementing administrative reform and removing economic weakness rather than enacting political reform. Administrative reforms also did not result in political tolerance to the opposition groups. According to the new party law, new parties were led for the organization outside the umbrella of the National

[455] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 25
[456] Lesch, p. 201
[457] Zisser, p. 168
[458] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 9
[459] Zisser, p. 169
[460] Hinnebusch, *Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership*, p. 197
[461] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, pp. 15-16

Progressive Front, but religious and ethnic parties were not allowed. In this way, regime wanted to prevent the legalization of Muslim brotherhood and Kurdish parties in Syria.[462] With the Bashar Asad period, Muslim Brotherhood renounced violence and began to develop a democratic discourse but the emergence of an Islamist party outside the regime's control was still unacceptable for the new administration.[463] In that sense, the regime's domestic threat perception did not radically change during Bashar Asad period.

Economic challenges were also important problems for new elite and economic reforms were mostly product of the external factors. Economic problems had been important sources for political discontents during the previous decades and economic reforms had been also important priority for Hafez Asad to overcome political discontent. Moderate Islamists and radical Islamists used economic problems to criticize the regime. Radical Islamists increased the level of resistance against the regime in the times of economic crisis whereas moderate Islamists began to advocate other models for Syria like conservative democracy in Turkey after the mid-2000s.[464] In that sense, Syrian administration prioritized economic reforms over political reforms: creating jobs and feeding the population were more important for him. Economic deterioration has a risk to give way to social unrest, which can let Islamic extremism grow. Hence, economic and political structures forced Syrian rule for economic reform process during the 2000s. While the economic growth in 2003 was around 3%, the unemployment rate was about 30%.[465] The rate of population growth was also harbinger of future economic problems. Rising unemployment rate, dependence on oil revenues, limited private capital and questions about social stability because of economic problems were seen as threats against the new rule. New elite also used the concept of modernization as the key word to correct economic deficiencies. In order to solve economic problems, Bashar Asad expressed the need to modernize regulatory environment, remove bureaucratic obstacles, improve education and qualify cadres and expand information technology.[466] As a part of the economic reform process, new banking law enacted in 2001 allowed the establishment of private banks.[467] Moreover, employment offices and the "Agency for the Fight against Unemployment" were established; the tax-reform law passed; and the

[462] Zisser, p. 227
[463] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 22
[464] Lesch, p. 209
[465] Lesch, p. 222
[466] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 32
[467] Oktav, p. 100

establishment of private universities was permitted by law.[468] However, the lack of transparency, continuation of corruption and bureaucratic resistance like the doubts about the benefits of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership prevented rapid economic transformation. In addition, socialist character of the state and an unsettled dispute with Israel also prevented the total transformation of the economic structure.[469] Economic situation was also seen as the cornerstone for the survival of the regime for Syrian administration rather than transformation of the Syrian society. In that sense, economic reforms were much more related to the survival of the regime and regional standing. Within time, maximum economic progress with minimum political progress became the main aim of the new administration like Hafez Asad administration.

The most obvious reform area to elaborate the internal dimension of reform process in Syria was technological and educational reforms. Technological and educational reforms were mostly product of the reformist instinct of Bashar Asad and his cadres. By the help of these reforms, the new elite planned to catch up the globalized world which would help Syria overcome the long-lasting problems in the long-run. For Bashar Asad, with educational and technological reforms, raw material for Syria would be brain rather than labor.[470] He saw closed society as a handicap for the globalized world, and as a result, he opened Syria to internet. In that sense, he removed restrictions over the use of technological tools. Ordinary citizens gained a right to access Internet with Bashar Asad's warnings in 1999. Until this date, even using a cellular phone had been banned.[471] The new administration supported the use of internet in Syria and planned to increase connectivity to at least 5% of population in order to reinforce technological modernization.[472] As a part of the educational reforms, the new regime aimed to demilitarize all levels of education and dropped national culture classes in universities. The Syrian regime also wanted to increase the level of technology in the universities with the introduction of computers.[473] For the new elite, the use of internet would help not only catch up

[468] Lesch, p. 32
[469] Hinnebusch, *Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership*, p. 196
[470] Lesch, p. 214
[471] Zisser, p. 183
[472] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 33
[473] Lesch, p. 207

developments in the world but also get Arab information and views on the Internet.[474] However, the security establishment continued to create obstacles over the use of internet.

On the other hand, the new administration also signaled a move towards political openness. However, the political openness policy of Bashar Asad was similar with his father's political reforms. Political reforms aimed to decrease the level of domestic discontent rather than the overall political transformation. Hence, political reforms were much more related with the external factors rather than the reformist instinct of the new elite. By the help of political reforms, Syrian rule aimed to preserve the status quo rather than shaking it. With the Damascus Spring in 2000, Syrian administration gave general amnesties to political prisoners, licenses to private newspapers, provision of political forums for open criticism and discarded the personal cult of his father.[475] Whereas Syria's media landscape became more pluralistic with the effects of globalization and technocrats within the administration, the requirement of a license from the prime minister caused important obstacles for the creation of free press. He also declared an amnesty for around 600 Islamist and leftist political prisoners.[476] In addition, around 250 political prisoners were released in 2004. In 2005, there were less than 1000 political prisoners in Syria, which was quite below the average in the Middle East region.[477] Moreover, in the first years of the new administration, the Syrian Human Rights Association for the defense of democratic freedoms and human rights was opened as the consequence of the Damascus Spring. In comparison to the 1980s and the 1990s, the 2000s witnessed a more transparent and free civil society in Syria. With the lack of any acute crisis during this time, the Syrian civil society could find space to live in Syria. After four decades, the first private newspaper Al-Dumari was published in 2001.[478] In 2005, as a part of the political reform, the Asad rule softened the law of emergency in the country after 42 years. Besides this, Asad rule also removed the law for the approval of intelligence for some bureaucratic acts.[479] The UN ranked Syria as the 3rd safest country in the world in terms of the low incidence of crime in 2004.[480]

[474] Zisser, p. 161
[475] Lesch, p. 83
[476] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 13
[477] Lesch, p. 85
[478] Lesch, p. 89
[479] "Suriye'den Tarihi Reformlar", *Milliyet*, 9 June 2005, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/06/09/dunya/dun01.html (5 July 2013)
[480] Lesch, p. 118

As a part of political openness, "the memorandum of 99" was published by intellectuals and these intellectuals declared their expectations from the new administration. The participants of the memorandum wanted the removal of the state of emergency in Syria, release of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, a general amnesty, establishment of a state law, establishment of intellectual and political plurality, end of censorship and freedom of expression and press.[481] The new administration did not react against this memorandum and this helped with the beginning of a public debate in Syria and breaking off complex fears within the country. The organizers of the memorandum of 99 released the "basic document of the committee" for the revival of the civil society in 2001, which repeated the same demands and raised the level of criticism against the Ba'ath regime.[482] By the help of the democratic reformist elite, intellectuals began to criticize the regime and developments of the Hafez Asad era. However, increasing level of criticism created fear for the Syrian regime and Syrian elite saw these moves as a threat against the stability. Asad defined ideal development for Syria in small steps since he saw big steps as a threat. For the new administration, the national unity, the Ba'ath Party, the armed forces and the legacy of Hafez Asad were not open to discussion.[483] He described democracy as a country-specific concept, which is composed of a unique history and the tradition of a country.[484] In that sense, within a short time period, "Damascus Spring" in Syria turned into "Damascus Winter" for the Syrian society and this turning indicated the limits of the change for Syrian administration. During 2010, the Asad administration released the prisoners of the Damascus Declaration to show its goodwill but this would not be enough to re-create hopes for a change.[485]

For the Syrian administration, saving the system was the priority and this priority only resulted in a limited change for Syria. The new political elite defined Syrian political system as a special democracy for Syria. A more transparent administration and fighting against corruption became important slogans of the new rule but it did not promise for a radical transformation of the political system to a liberal democracy. For the regime, the rapid transformation of the system could cause a snowfall effect like in the Eastern European countries at the beginning of

[481] Hasan Duran, "Adana Protokolü Sonrası Türkiye-Suriye İlişkileri" in Kemal İnat, Muhittin Ataman , Fuat Aydın and Bilal Yıldırım (Ed.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2011**, (501-518), İstanbul: Açılım Kitap Press, 2013, p. 506
[482] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 16
[483] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 17
[484] Lesch, p. 218
[485] Mustafa Yetim, "Suriye 2010" in Kemal İnat, Muhittin Ataman and İsmail Numan Telci (Ed.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2010**,(253-286), İstanbul, Açılımkitap Press, 2012, p. 277

the 1990s. Therefore, a serious political reform could jeopardize the positions of the status quo elements, which were crucial for the maintaining the stability for the new administration. Whereas the new leadership created hopes of negotiating Syria's inclusion in the world order, the Asad administration aimed to preserve identity and interests during this inclusion. Syrian administration aimed to give momentum to the reform process without threatening the establishment principle of the state and wanted the reform process to be compatible with the Arab identity of the Syrian society in foreign relations.[486] In that sense, there was not a great departure from Hafez Asad's understanding.

As a result of the domestic transformation, foreign policy identity of Syria also witnessed change during the Bashar Asad period. However, like domestic politics, limits of change in foreign relations were also questionable. Both external factors like regional developments and internal factors like the will of the new elite for the inclusion of Syria to the international society played crucial role for the new interest formulation in Syria during the first decade of the 2000s. Centrality of Arab and Syrian identities continued during this period. However, with the new administration, the foreign policy identity became more moderate, which helped rapprochement with Turkey. Syria with the new political elite could limit the Cold War like understanding, which also helped to normalization of the relations with Turkey. On the other hand, regional developments narrowed the area of Syria for maneuver within the international politics. Therefore, both agent and structure made Turkey as the rational and inevitable partner in the region during the 2000s. As a result of this, the level of cooperation increased and relations began to be shown as a model for the Middle East. However, before examining the bilateral relations, we should take a look at the important foreign policy developments in Syria, which pushed Syria to Turkey for further cooperation.

3.4 **SYRIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS DURING THE 2000s**

We cannot see a radical transformation within Syria's foreign policy perception during the 2000s. Bashar Asad tried to keep most of his father's foreign policy approaches. However, Bashar Asad, as the representative of the new generation, tried to give up the traditional Ba'athist security understanding, which made limited impact over the foreign relations of Syria. Bashar

[486] Hinnebusch, *Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership*, p. 195

Asad with his presidency tried to remove the negative image of Syria within international politics and tried to narrow the gap with the West. Raising the prestige of Syria in the region, establishment of good relations with the EU and the neighboring countries and the removal of Syria from the list of states sponsoring terrorism were seen as the targets of the Syrian rule as the new administration in Syria.[487] In that sense, as the ideational factor, the level of mistrust towards the West partially decreased which made positive impacts over the relations with Turkey. Redefinition process in Syrian foreign policy made Turkey a reasonable partner for Syria. On the other hand, the regional and international developments also pushed Syria to Turkey to realize these aims. One month later after the beginning of the Bashar Asad period, Israeli-Palestinian-American Summit in Camp David failed, two months later Intifada II began in Palestine, four months later, Ariel Sharon rose in power in Israel and one year later, 9/11 occurred in the USA.[488] In his third year, the US made an intervention in its neighbor. In that sense, the Syrian rule had to face with the breakdown of the Middle Eastern peace process, the Iraqi War and the consequences of this war until the end of 2003. Under these circumstances, the positive atmosphere of the 1990s for Syria disappeared in the 2000s. The new administration found itself in a rough environment. Under these circumstances, relations with the EU and pro-western states of the Middle East besides traditional allies like Iran and Russia gained importance to decrease the American pressure. On the other hand, increasing pressure of the USA became a reality of Syria, and this reality limited the change. Because of increasing risks for Syria at the beginning of the decade, Asad mostly relied on his father's advisors in foreign and security policy. This reliance prevented a radical transformation of foreign policy identity of Syria and close relations with the anti-US camp in the region kept its priority. In that sense, we should look at Syria's foreign policy identity during the 2000s from three paradigms. The first paradigm was problematic relations with the USA and Israel. The second paradigm was improving relations with the traditional allies within the region and outside the region in order to obtain leverage against Israel and pro-Israeli USA. First two paradigms were much related with the external factors which made impact over Syrian foreign policy identity. These factors pushed Syrian regime to the pragmatic foreign policy understanding. Third paradigm was a rapprochement with 'reasonable' pro-western actors in order to become a part of international

[487] Hasan Duran, p. 505
[488] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 41

society and to close the gap with western regional and global powers besides aiming to decrease the American pressure. This paradigm was much more related with the internal motivation of new rule for the construction of new foreign policy identity.

3.4.1 Problematic Relations with the USA and Israel

Israel has been the top issue of Syrian foreign policy throughout the history and relations with Israel mainly determined the way for Syria. On the other side, the relations with the USA are also important for Syria, especially after the end of the Cold War. With the end of the Cold War, relations with the USA and Israel began to show a positive trend. By taking part in the coalition forces during the Gulf War, the relations with the USA began to normalize. In addition, the start of the Middle East peace process helped to ease the high level of tension with Israel during the 1990s. However, during the 2000s, positive trend of 1990s totally disappeared with the collapse of peace process and the increasing pressure of the Bush administration. In that sense, problematic relations with the USA and Israel had a huge effect on Syria's foreign policy choices during the first decade of the 2000s.

The US pressure mostly determined foreign policy choices of Syria during the 2000s. According to Export Administration Act, Syria had been in the list of states sponsoring terrorism in the USA since 1979.[489] In that sense, Syrian Accountability Act, which passed in September 2002 right before the intervention in Iraq, imposed additional sanctions on Syria and increased the pressure over Syria.[490] The USA proposed Syrian Accountability Act to Syria in order to mandate sanctions because of Syria's occupation of Lebanon, possession of weapons of mass destruction, and sponsorship of Hamas and Hezbollah.[491] For the USA, there would be no compromise with states that support violence in the region. Consequently, positive Syrian steps in one issue would not be viewed as compensating for the negative steps in other issues.[492] Cooperation of Syria over Al-Qaeda in the region would not ease the attitude of the US and the USA continued to define Hamas and Hezbollah as the terrorist organizations in the region. Syria began to think itself as the next target of the USA.

[489] Lesch, p. 104
[490] "Syria under Bashar (I): Foreign Policy Challenges", **ICG Middle East Report**, No. 23, Amman/Brussels, 2004, p. 3
[491] Hinnebusch, *Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership*, p. 203
[492] "Syria under Bashar (I): Foreign Policy Challenges", **ICG Middle East Report**, No. 23, Amman/Brussels, 2004, p. 3

Syria tried to follow dual strategy towards the USA during the 2000s. On the one hand, Syria cooperated with them in some issues and began to use public diplomacy especially towards the USA. After 9/11 attacks, Bashar Asad sent a message by a radio channel to the USA for an international cooperation against terrorism and to guarantee the protection of basic human rights.[493] The Syrian administration saw itself as the last bastion of secularity against the rising radical Islamism and wanted to use this card towards the USA. In 2002, Syria as the non-permanent member of UN Security Council voted for UN Security Council Resolution 1441 in favor of the return of UN inspectors to Iraq.[494] Syria defended this vote as a hope for preventing a war in the region. Cooperation on international terrorism especially about al-Qaeda and exchange of information about the al-Qaeda related groups partially decreased the pressure over Syria. The USA did not define Syria within the axis of evil because of its cooperative attitude in post-9/11 period. In addition to these, Syria saw the US patronage as the necessity for the Syrian-Israeli peace process. As a result, Syria also joined peace initiative of Saudi Arabia in 2002. However, these attempts would not be enough to remove the overall pressure of the USA on Syria. While Syria expressed its will to share experiences against the extreme Islamism, after the Iraq War, it was marginalized by the USA.

Syria's cooperation expectations with the USA to decrease pressure were not met. During the 2000s, the USA continuously accused Syria of supporting Iraqi war effort, shipping military technology to Iraq and providing support to Iraqi officials in Syrian territories.[495] The USA defined the shipping of military technology by Syria as an act of enemy, which could make Syria on the side of the war.[496] The USA also declared their suspicions about WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) in Syria.[497] However, Syria denied possessing any WMD and any efforts to solve this problem for Asad should be region-wide to address Israel in the region.[498] Syria's strong belief about the double standard of the USA against the problem of the WMD in the region widened the gap between Syria and the USA. During this period, the US officials described Syria as not responding to the US demands to end terrorist activities in the region. Some other officials began to define Syria as a rogue or dangerous state. However, Syria in this period emphasized

[493] Lesch, p. 104
[494] Lesch, p. 118
[495] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 50
[496] "Washington Şama Sert Çıktı", *Milliyet*, 29 March 2003, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/washington-sama-sert-cikti/dunya/haberdetayarsiv/29.03.2003/6636/default.htm (4 July 2013)
[497] "Ve Sıra Suriye'ye Geldi", Milliyet, 14 April 2003, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2003/04/14/guncel/agun.html (3 August 2013)
[498] "Syria under Bashar (I): Foreign Policy Challenges", **ICG Middle East Report**, No. 23, Amman/Brussels, 2004, p. 22

over making a difference between terrorism and legitimate acts of resistance against a foreign occupation. In that sense, offices of Palestinian groups in Syria and relations with Hezbollah continued to be problems between the two states. However, this attitude of Syria caused its exclusion from the Summit of Sharm al-Sheikh in 2003 about Arab-Israeli roadmap and this exclusion harmed Syrians' thoughts about the patronage of the US for Israel-Syria peace process.[499] The USA wanted Syria to remove all concerns to re-start negotiations between Israel and Syria. The USA rejected to move on the peace process until Syria fundamentally changed its policies. For the USA, Syria was at the wrong side of the history because of the global war on terrorism and the growing democracy in the Middle East. Shortly, the pressure of the USA increased over Syria during the 2000s.

On the other hand, Syria rejected the aggressive policies and presence of the USA. While Bashar Asad emphasized the importance of potential cooperation with the USA over global terrorism and peace and stability in the Middle East, he criticized the reactive policies of the USA to solve the problems of the region. As the prospects for war grew, Syria began to show its discontent about the intention of the USA and reacted against any intention for an intervention. Syrian rule called for Arab Defense Agreement after the beginning of invasion, which aimed to defend any Arab country under the risk of a war.[500] While the US pressure forced Syria to cooperate over the future of Iraq, Syrian leadership continued to oppose the occupation of Iraq. In that sense, Syria expressed to end the occupation of the USA and wanted Security Council Resolution for a solution of the problem. Syrian leadership and media continuously defined invasion in Iraq as "the step for the Israelization of the Middle East, the Americanization of the oil and the destruction of the Arab nationalism"[501]. With the anti-war discourse, Syria's popularity in the region increased. Syria defined the increasing pressure of the USA as a part of the New Middle Eastern project. In that sense, Syrian administration planned to increase Syria's domestic and regional prestige with resisting the pressure of the USA.[502]

However, the US pressure also did not bring successful results for the USA. Economic links with the EU countries, new agreements with regional and international actors helped for the break of isolation. Continuation of financial and economic sanctions of the USA for a long time

[499] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 59
[500] "Syria under Bashar (I): Foreign Policy Challenges", **ICG Middle East Report**, No. 23, Amman/Brussels, 2004, p. 17
[501] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 51
[502] Oktav, p. 112

and rising foreign investments in Syria also decreased the chance of effectiveness of US policies for the isolation of Syria.[503] As a response to US pressures, the Syrian regime continuously stated his commitment to Arabism and tried to show the threat of the US as the threat against not only for Syria but also for all Arab nations. As a result, both the US pressure and policy of isolating Syria increased the effectiveness of Syria in the region. On the other hand, for the Bush administration, breaking ties with Palestinian organizations and Hezbollah was a precondition for engagement with Syria.[504] In that sense, the US preferred sticks without carrots towards Syria and this caused pressure on Syria. The Syrian side saw these demands not as a solution, but for an increased pressure over the Syrian regime. The US attitude was against the regime in Syria rather than Syria's foreign policies. With the transformation of Iraq, the influence of Shias in the region increased and Shia crescent began to be seen as a threat by the USA, Israel and conservative Sunni regimes.[505] In that sense, Syria as a part of Shia crescent was seen as a threat by pro-American regimes. Therefore, the USA saw Israeli air strike against Palestinian camp within the border of Syria as a reasonable action and declared their support for this action.[506] Increasing pro-Israeli stance of the USA in the 2000s destroyed the credibility of the USA in the eyes of Syrians.

The pressure of the USA over Syria also continued in mid-2000s. It especially gained a different dimension after Rafic Hariri assassination. With Hariri assassination, other international actors got closer to the line of the US against Syria. In that sense, the area for maneuver narrowed for Syria within the international society. Syria was described as "tyranny" with Zimbabwe, Northern Korea, Iran, Cuba, Belarus and Burma by the 2006 National Security Strategy document of the USA.[507] This document also defined Syria with Iran as the terrorist states which chose the wrong side for the war on terrorism. Bush in May 2006 wanted to prolong the sanctions over Syria, which was taken in 2004.[508] In addition to these, the US administration blacklisted Syria not fighting against human trafficking in 2006.[509] Besides this, interaction with

[503] Oktav, p. 119
[504] "Syria under Bashar (I): Foreign Policy Challenges", **ICG Middle East Report**, No. 23, Amman/Brussels, 2004, p. 10
[505] Oktav, p. 107
[506] Berna Süer, Suriye Dış Politikası ve Irak Savaşı in Mehmet Şahin and Mesut Taştekin (ed.), **2. Körfez Savaşı,** (201-226), Ankara: Platin Press, 2006, p. 221
[507] "The National Security Strategy of United States of America", **The White House**, Washington 2006, p. 3
[508] "Bush Suriye'ye Ambargonun Uzatılmasını İstedi", *Hürriyet*, 9 May 2006, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=4383739&tarih=2006-05-09 (23 July 2013)
[509] " Şam ve Tahran Yine Kara Listede", *BBC*, 6 June 2006, http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/news/story/2006/06/060605_trafficking.shtml (8 July 2013)

opposition groups in Syria increased in the mid-2000s. In 2005, the USA suggested Syria to take steps for democratization in addition to the older suggestions they made on the same point.[510] As a part of this, the USA supported opposition groups in Syria and helped them to make a conference in the name of "Democracy in Syria and the Rights of Kurds" in 2006 in the USA.[511] In February 2006, Middle East Partnership Initiative of the US Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the allocation of $5 million to the Syrian civil society for the improvement of democracy in Syria.[512] In addition, the US congress decided to make an $80 million dollar worth aid to Syrian opposition in 2008.[513] However, Syria described this act as an intervention in its domestic affairs.

Until the Obama administration, the tension between Syria and the USA remained high. With the Obama administration, engagement with Syria became important and US pressure over Syria began to decrease. The US ambassador, who was withdrawn after the Hariri assassination in 2005, restarted his mission in Syria in 2010.[514] With diplomatic engagement, the USA aimed to make Syria a more reasonable actor in the region for the long lasting problems of the region. However, the prolongation of sanctions over Syria by the Obama administration showed the continuation of the negative image of Syria in the eyes of the Obama administration.

The central importance of Israel for Syrian foreign policy continued during the 2000s. Israel's centrality did not only continue for the Syrian regime but also continued for the Syrian society. According to 2010 TESEV research, 54% of the Syrian society described Israel as the biggest threat.[515] This rate was much higher than the region's average. Therefore, Syria's vital foreign and security interests remained the same during the 2000s. Syria's zero-sum logic about the relations with Israel continued and an honorable settlement with Israel preserved its priority.[516] The new administration continued Syria's stance against Israel, defined Israel as antagonist and prioritized the return of Golan Heights and protection of rights of the

[510] Nebi Miş, "Suriye 2005" in Kemal İnat and Ali Balcı (Ed.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2005**, (220-243), Ankara: Nobel Press, 2006, p. 237
[511] Nebi Miş, "Suriye 2006" in Kemal İnat and Muhittin Ataman (Ed.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2006**, (281-318), Ankara: Nobel Press, 2008, p. 294
[512] Miş, *Suriye 2006*, p. 297
[513] Mehmet Ali Ediboğlu, "BOP Çerçevesinde Orta Doğu ve Suriye Gerçekleri", **21. Yüzyıl**, No. 33, (September, 2011), p.19
[514] Yetim, p. 263
[515] Akgün, Senyücel Gündoğar, Levack and Perçinoğlu, *Ortadoğu'da Türkiye Algısı 2010,* p.17
[516] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 43

Palestinians.[517] Therefore, nationalistic stance towards Israel did not change during the 2000s. On the other hand, peace talks with Israel played an important role for Syria in the first decade of the century. The new administration was aware of the advantages of a potential peace to pursue the modernization project in Syria.[518] Whereas Bashar Asad's reaction towards the Intifada II was described as the attitude of a foreign policy hawk by Israel, Bashar Asad continuously expressed his desire to resume peace talks with Israel. In 2003, Bashar Asad expressed his intention to restart peace talks with Israel. In the summer of 2004, Bashar Asad re-expressed his will to renew peace talks with it. By showing this intention, Syria wanted to decrease the pressure of the US. In that sense, Syria supported Saudi Middle East Peace initiative in 2002 and demanded for effective and constructive American engagement.

On the other hand, while Syria wanted Israel's withdrawal from Golan Heights and restart of negotiations from the point at which talks had been disturbed, Israel did not need any engagement under US pressure over Syria. Israel also tried to increase pressure over Syria during the 2000s. It attacked a Syrian radar station in Lebanon in 2001. In addition, Israel launched an air strike against a Palestinian camp in Damascus in 2003, which was the first Israeli attack in Syria in almost thirty years.[519] The US casted a blind eye towards these developments and showed their pro-Israeli stance in the region. In addition to Israel, the USA also wanted Syria to cut ties with the Palestinian organization and Hezbollah. However, Syria described Hezbollah as the legitimate resistance organization and cutting ties with Hezbollah and Palestinians was an unrealistic target for Syria as long as Syrian-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts continued. Because of the increasing pro-Israeli stance of the USA, Syria wanted Turkey to make contributions to the peace process as a consequence of improving relations. While Israel had suspicions about the role of Turkey, both states saw Turkey as the potential actor for a third party contact.[520] On the other hand, at the end of the decade, bilateral relations began to deteriorate. With the interruption of peace talks, both states threatened the other in 2010.[521]

Shortly, new political elite aimed to finalize a peace with Israel during the 2000s, although Syria's demands and concerns did not change too much. However, the regional atmosphere

[517] Lesch, p. 157
[518] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 54
[519] Lesch, p. 166
[520] Lesch, p. 169
[521] Yetim, p. 272

during the 2000s was negative and the positive atmosphere of 1990s was lost. Under the increasing US pressure over Syria, Israel did not spend too much effort for peace while the Syrian rule continuously made emphasis over the importance of peace. Under these circumstances, Turkey became a reasonable actor for Syria for decreasing US pressure and continuation of talks with Israel. In that sense, on the one hand, Turkey could provide lifeline for Syria to decrease pressure; on the other, increasing level of cooperation and trust between Turkey and Syria made Turkey as a valuable actor in the region. This trend was reinforced after the assassination of Rafic Hariri, which was related with increasing US pressure and relations with Israel.

Another important development for Syria, which resulted in more pressure, was the assassination of ex-Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in Lebanon. Syria had to withdraw its forces from Lebanon, which had been deployed there since 1976, as a result of the Hariri assassination in 2005.[522] For Bashar Asad like his father Hafez Asad, Lebanon could not be neutral as long as the conflict with Israel continued. However, with the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon in 2000, the international society and Lebanese civil society increased their pressure over Syria for withdrawal.[523] The assassination of Rafic Hariri in 2005 increased existing pressure of the USA and international society over Syria for the withdrawal from Lebanon. Even Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which were important partners of Syria during the 1990s, raised their voices for the withdrawal from Lebanon. As a consequence of these pressures, with the withdrawal of Syrian forces on April 26, 2005, Syria's 29 years presence in Lebanon ended.[524] The withdrawal of Syria was described as an important development for the balance of region. While Israel defined this act as the beginning of a new era, Iran expressed its concern about potential power vacuum in the region.[525] Whereas Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon was important for losing a bargaining card against Israel, it could continue its influence within Lebanon with the help of proxies within Lebanese politics. Continuation of the assassinations in Lebanon[526] after the withdrawal also increased the level of criticism of the USA and anti-Syrian Lebanese opposition

[522] Nuri Salik, "Beşar Esad Dönemi Suriye Dış Politikasında Pragmatizm ve Türkiye-Suriye İlişkilerinin Geleceği", **Ortadoğu Analiz**, Vol. 3, No. 35, (October, 2011), p.23
[523] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 56
[524] "Suriye Lübnan'dan Çekildi", *NTVMSNBC*, 26 April 2006, http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/320834.asp (6 July 2013)
[525] Miş, *Suriye 2005*, p. 227
[526] "Lübnan'da Kara Liste Suikasti", *Milliyet*, 22 June 2005, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/lubnan-da--kara-liste--suikasti/dunya/haberdetayarsiv/22.06.2005/120994/default.htm, (2 July 2013)

groups against Syria. In that sense, this withdrawal did not end Syrian influence in Lebanon and did not remove the international pressure from Syria.

With the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers, Syria's relations with Lebanon reached another dimension in 2006. As a result of the kidnapping event, Israel started "Summer Rains" operation in Lebanon. Killing of 55 civilians in Lebanon during the Israeli attacks was described by Asad as the state terrorism.[527] Asad also defined the result of the conflict as the victory of Hezbollah and showed Israel's reluctance for peace and USA's preventive war understanding in the region as the main causes of violence.[528] This reaction of Asad against the policies of the USA and Israel increased the popularity of Syria among the Arab societies. On the other hand, the US and Israeli officials accused Syria of having relations with the kidnapping issue. Because of this, US officials rejected the proposal of Syria for the start of a dialogue between the USA and Syria in order to solve the Israeli-Lebanese crisis. Bush described Syria as the "continuing, unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy and economy of the US" [529] because of Syria's policies in Iraq and Lebanon and relations with Hezbollah.

Until the end of the decade, the tension between Lebanon and Syria continued. However, Syria at the end of 2000s tried to normalize relations in order to reconstruct Syria's influence in Lebanon. The Syrian administration signed a decree to begin diplomatic relations with Lebanon and to open an embassy in Beirut on October 14, 2008.[530] Syria and Lebanon signed a series of agreements to improve economic and political relations. In addition to these, both states also signed agreements on legal, tourism and removal of the double taxation.[531] With the normalization of relations, Syria could restore its prestige and effectiveness in Lebanese politics. Aiming for the improvement of relations was not limited to Lebanon for Syria. In order to break the US pressure and to gain leverage against Israel, relations with the anti-western actors occupied a central place for the Syrian administration. In that sense, cooperation with anti-western actors was reinforced during the first decade of the 2000s.

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[527] Miş, *Suriye 2006*, p. 287
[528] "Esad: Direniş Bölgeyi Değiştirdi", *BBC Türkçe*, 15 August 2006, http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/news/story/2006/08/060815_assad_speech.shtml (15 July 2013)
[529] "US Renews Sanctions on Damascus", *BBC*, 6 May 2005 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4520245.stm (6 August 2013)
[530] Nebi Miş, "Suriye 2008", in Kemal İnat, Burhaneddin Duran and Muhiddin Ataman (Ed.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2008**, (237-278), İstanbul, Küre Press, 2009, p. 243
[531] Yetim, p. 267

3.4.2 Increasing Cooperation with the Anti-Western Camp

As a result of tense relations with the USA and Israel and developments in Lebanon, anti-American and anti-Israeli actors of the region gained importance for the Syrian administration. By the help of these actors, Syria planned to gain strategic parity with Israel and decrease the pressure of the USA during the first decade of the 2000s. Therefore, Hezbollah and Palestinian groups became the most important allies to balance Israel in the region during the 2000s. While Hezbollah became one of the crucial issues for the US pressure in the region during the 2000s, Syria tried to preserve this card. Relations between Hezbollah and Syria were described as unacceptable for the USA by Bush administration. However, Hezbollah was not on the EU's terrorism list, so demands of the USA to disarm Hezbollah were refused by Syria.[532] The Syrian administration also wanted to improve Syria-PLO relations with the recognition of legitimacy of the Palestinian authority after al-Aqsa intifada.[533] In addition to these, the leader of Hamas, Khaled Mashal resided in Damascus, which was important for the increasing cooperation between Hamas and Syria. The USA could not activate the international society to take action against Syria for its support to terrorist organizations, and this made these groups more important for Syria to obtain leverage against the USA and Israel. The unconditional support of the USA to Israel in the region also made these groups crucial for Syria. By increasing cooperation with Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad, Syria aimed to increase the level of deterrence against Israel and the USA.

Another important ally of Syria in the Middle East during the 2000s was Iran. Syria and Iran became an important axis against the US presence and Israel's aggressiveness in the region. While bilateral relations between the two states were positive in the previous decades, relations reached the level of strategic partnership during the 2000s. Therefore, pressure of the US resulted in closer cooperation between Iran and Syria; both of them were uncomfortable due to the US policies in the region. The Bush administration criticized hostile attitudes of Iran and Syria towards the coalition forces in Iraq and declared their will to take military measures against these attitudes in 2007.[534] As a result of the isolation policy and threats of the USA, each of them

[532] Oktav, p. 119
[533] Hinnebusch, *Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership*, p. 200
[534] Nebi Miş, "Suriye 2007", in Kemal İnat, Murat Yeşiltaş and Muhittin Ataman (Ed.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2007**, (249-278), İstanbul: Küre Press, 2009, p. 263

unconditionally supported the other and began to establish common front against the USA and Israel.[535] On the one hand, Syria declared its support for Iran's nuclear energy program, and on the other, Iran supported Syria after Lebanese crisis with the assassination of Hariri. Besides the common stance against the US pressure, they also made cooperation against Israel and declared their support for the Palestinian resistance against Israel to establish the Palestinian state in 2006.[536] Both states continued to support resistance groups of the region during the 2000s. Common stance towards the Iraq issue also improved bilateral relations. During the visit of ex-Vice President of Iran Parviz Davoodi in Syria in 2008, he expressed the importance of cooperation between Syria, Turkey and Iran for the future of Iraq.[537] As a consequence of developing relations, Iran and Syria signed Defense and Cooperation agreement in 2006.[538] Iran and Syria also signed nine cooperation agreements in 2008.[539] Syria, in addition to relations with Turkey, also defined relations with Iran as the strategic partnership in 2009.[540] Relations with Iran were also crucial during the 2000s because the good relations with Saudi Arabia and Egypt in the 1990s began to lose momentum in the 2000s. The gap between these countries widened during the 2000s. Therefore, Syria also needed Iran for economic relations because level of cooperation with Saudi Arabia and Egypt during the 1990s became unsustainable for Syria. Shortly, Iran and Turkey became the most important partners within the region for Syria during the 2000s. Syria also tried to improve relations beyond the Middle East. Especially, relations with Russia played an important role for the position of Syria within the international politics. Putin's Cold War like understanding of the Middle East helped with closer cooperation with Syria. In that sense, Russia continuously supported Syria's position in the Middle East peace process. Asad visited Russia in 2005, 2006 and 2008 in order to balance the US pressure in the region and break international isolation.[541]

Another important foreign policy maneuver of Syria was about the relations with Iraq. While describing Iraq as the anti-western actor is difficult, problematic relations of Iraq with the USA made Iraq an important actor in the region. Besides, in order to prevent negative

[535] "İran ile Suriye Ortak Cephe Kuruyor", *Hürriyet*, 17 February 2005, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=297299 (7 August 2013)
[536] Miş, *Suriye 2006*, p. 309
[537] Miş, *Suriye 2008*, p. 268
[538] Miş, *Suriye 2006*, p. 310
[539] Miş, *Suriye 2008*, p. 269
[540] Nebi Miş, "Suriye 2009", in Kemal İnat, Muhittin Ataman and Cenap Çakmak (Ed.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2009**, (211-256), İstanbul: Küre Press, 2011, p. 246
[541] Miş, *Suriye 2008*, p. 265

consequences of the US intervention, Syria gave importance to relations with Iraq, but relations began to improve before the intervention. With the beginning of Bashar Asad period, Syria began to improve economic and political relations with Iraq. Syria and Iraq reopened its borders, removed visa requirements, increased economic and trade interactions with the beginning of Bashar Asad era. For economic relations, Syria improved relations with Iraq and reopened pipeline at the end of 2000, which had been closed during Iran-Iraq War.[542] In this way, two states accepted transportation of oil via Syria's territory. Syria could get a profit around $1 billion annually by re-exporting Iraqi oil.[543] Besides the reopening of oil pipeline, the railway link was re-established and trade exchange increased. Both states also signed an agreement for a tariff reduction in 2001, which aimed to eliminate trade restrictions.[544] By the help of economic relations with Iraq, Syria could partially solve its domestic economic problems. In addition to economic relations, political relations also improved during the 2000s. High-level visits between two countries had become routine since 2001.[545] Iraqi and Syrian governments in 2004 agreed to improve security along the common border and improve diplomatic relations, which deteriorated after the Iran-Iraq war. Syria deputed an ambassador to Iraq for the first time after 26 years in 2008.[546] While the bilateral relations between two states began to deteriorate after 2008, close relations of Syria with different groups in Iraq and softening of Syria's attitude towards the Maliki government in Iraq prevented the breakdown of relations with Iraq in 2010.[547] Syrian-Iraqi hostility for decades began to be replaced with strategic alignment, which aimed to limit Israel's influence in the region.

3.4.3 Attempts to Normalize Relations with Pro-Western Camp

Whereas Syria continued its relations with anti-western camp, with Iraq, Iran, Hezbollah and radical Palestinian groups, it also gave importance to relations with pro-western actors. With the improvement of relations with pro-western actors, Syria aimed to overcome economic problems and wanted to become a more reasonable and legitimate actor in the eyes of international society in addition to breaking international pressures. In that sense, relations with

[542] Hinnebusch, *Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership*, p. 200
[543] "Syria under Bashar (I): Foreign Policy Challenges", **ICG Middle East Report**, No. 23, Amman/Brussels, 2004, p. 16
[544] Lesch, p. 181
[545] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 49
[546] Miş, *Suriye 2008*, p. 239
[547] Yetim, p. 270

the West and western actors had a central place for the new political elite, which made main impact over Syrian foreign policy identity. While relations with these actors lost momentum after the Hariri assassination, Syria tried to improve at least normalize relations with Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt and the EU. With improving relations with them, Syria aimed to protect itself from US pressure. Although there were important political differences among these actors, Syria wanted to increase the level of cooperation in the economic realm. Therefore, Syria also tried to continue to have a loose alliance with Saudi Arabia and Egypt and wanted to warm the bilateral relations with Jordan and the EU in 2000s.[548] In order to break the isolation, Syria also tried to establish alliances beyond the region. In this period, Syria also began to consider the importance of economic function of regional and international relations, which could help to overcome the economic problems of Syria. Especially, relations with Europe became a strategic priority for Syria. In addition to the similar attitudes towards the US position in Iraq, economic relations between the two parties improved and could be described as economic partnership during the 2000s. In order to improve the economic relations, the EU and Syria signed a landmark trade accord in 2004.[549] The European Union signed a cooperation agreement with Syria in 2006, which aimed for a $ 200 million worth aid to Syria between 2007 and 2013.[550] Syria and the EU also signed a partnership and cooperation agreement on December 14, 2008.[551] In addition, the EU and Syria signed a memorandum of understanding in 2010, which provided $170 million to improve business and economy in Syria until 2013.[552] With these agreements, the European Union clearly rejected the view of the USA for the isolation of Syria and supported the transformation efforts of the new administration. With these steps, Syria could partially break the isolation in the international society.

While the European Union preferred engagement with Syria, the EU continued their critical position towards Syria in the political realm. In that sense, the different position of the EU from the USA in understanding Hezbollah did not prevent criticisms against Syria. On the other hand, Syria during the 2000s witnessed problems with the EU because of the political suggestions of the union, which sometimes created tensions between two sides. While

[548] Hinnebusch, *Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership*, p. 200
[549] Lesch, p. 225
[550] Miş, *Suriye 2006*, p. 313
[551] Miş, *Suriye 2008*, p. 243
[552] Yetim, p. 266

constraining the old guards and security forces was welcomed by Europe, imposing neo-liberal policies by the EU as the price of partnership limited Syria's hand.[553] In that sense, besides the old guards, the new elite also began to feel pressure of the EU for transformation of Syria. In addition, European countries criticized the regime's attitudes during the Damascus Spring towards the opposition groups in 2006. European officials called Syria to review the political situation. However, Syria also saw these calls as an intervention in its domestic affairs. On the other hand, with the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers, the number of critics from the European officials increased against Syria. In that sense, the EU showed its discontent about the role of Syria within the politics of the region. However, the EU during the 2000s did not cut off its relations with Syria and tried to improve economic relations, which was seen as a more effective tool to soften Syria's position in the region.

In addition to the EU, Syria also tried to warm bilateral relations with the pro-western states of the region. Especially, Iraq and Lebanon issues forced Syria to foster cooperation with pro-western states. Therefore, Syria tried to establish regional and international alliances to cope with Israeli and the US pressure during the Bashar Asad period. In addition to political concerns, political conflicts during the 1990s with Iraq, Jordan and Turkey negatively affected bilateral economic relations. Economic relations with Gulf States were directly related to political relations with these states. Under these circumstances, tense relations with the neighboring countries negatively contributed to the economic problems. In that sense, improving relations with the countries of the region would also help Syria's deteriorated economy. Because of this, during the 2000s, Jordan and Syria increased cooperation especially for natural sources[554] and wanted to initiate new projects for natural resources. Syria began to improve bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia in 2009, which was described as the redefinition of regional stance of Syria in the Middle East.[555] With the declaration of Syria to send an ambassador to Lebanon, relations with Saudi Arabia began to improve. Besides this, common stance of Saudi Arabia and Syria towards the government crisis in Lebanon also helped for the improvement of relations with

[553] Hinnebusch, *Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership*, p. 207
[554] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 46
[555] "Relations with Turkey Kindle Hopes in Syria", *NY Times*, 15 December 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/15/world/middleeast/15syria.html?_r=0 (1 July 2013)

Saudi Arabia.[556] However, most stable and positive relations as a part of the improving relations policy with pro-western states were established with Turkey. In that sense, although Syria witnessed ups and downs with pro-western actors, relations with Turkey witnessed a golden age.

At the regional level, developments during the first decade of the 2000s pushed parties closer to each other and cooperation for both countries became irresistible. With the US intervention in Iraq, nightmares of Turkey and Syria revived and the post-war situation became the source of concern for both of them. In addition, uncompromising policies of the USA for Turkey and increasing anti-terrorist rhetoric for Syria made the USA an unwanted temporary neighbor for Syria and Turkey. Because of this, both the US policies and future of Iraq became main concerns of Turkey and Syria and these concerns made cooperation more reasonable. Issue of Israel also pushed parties to each other. The state of Israel was one of the main determinants for enmity during the 1990s but in 2000s, relations of Turkey and Syria with Israel pushed sides to each other. For Syria, relations with Israel continued to occupy central place, but the increasing pro-Israeli attitude of the USA forced Syria to look for new friends in the region. Under these circumstances, Turkey as the member of NATO played an important role for its stabilizing role in Syria-Israel relations. On the other hand, Turkey-Israel relations began to lose momentum during the 2000s as a result of the domestic stability and relaxation of the PKK problem in Turkey. In that sense, Turkey's dependency to Israel in the region decreased and Turkey could balance its policies in the region. However, after 2007, Turkey-Israel relations gradually deteriorated and this deterioration pushed Turkey to look for new friends in the region to increase its effectiveness. In addition, the 2005 Hariri assassination also pushed parties to each other. After 2005, the international pressure over Syria increased and Syria looked for support to break this pressure. As a result, Turkey as a member of western alliance system provided lifeline to Syria. On the other side, Turkey could find another opportunity to increase its effectiveness and materialize its new foreign policy perception in the Middle East. On the other hand, redefinition of interests in both countries made cooperation more desirable for Turkey and Syria. During the 2000s, Turkey tried to improve relations with the Middle East and Syria wanted to warm relations with the West. In addition, sides' perceptions about the "Other" began to change. Although this change was reinforced with regional and international developments, new

[556] "Syrian and Saudi Leaders Pledge Support for Lebanon", *BBC*, 30 July 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-10809231 (12 August 2013)

corporate identities also made a huge impact on transformation. Turkey and Syria began to remove negative perceptions about the "Other", which helped with easing their stance towards historical problems and parties began to see potential gains with cooperation, which resulted in transformation of "Other" from the enemy to a friend. In that sense, independent from the effects of regional developments, Turkey and Syria also pushed each other for further cooperation in 2000s, which gave way to the establishment of a kind of collective identity formation between Syria and Turkey.

To sum up, both Turkey and Syria witnessed redefinition processes during the 2000s which made direct effect on the bilateral relations. Although both of them began to redefine their identities and interests after the end of the Cold War, the negative effects of the end of the Cold War prevented the agents from finishing these processes. However, during the first decade of the 2000s, both of them could redefine their new interests as a result of the new governing powers in Turkey and Syria. Turkey after the October crisis in 1998 could remove its main security concern and planned to establish healthy relations with Syria in particular and with the region in general. In post-1998 period, Turkey aimed at the normalization of relations with the southern neighbors. Decreasing security-oriented views and democratization process made direct impact on the new corporate identity of Turkey which changed the nature of systemic interaction. As a result of redefinition process, Turkey could establish positive relations with the neighboring regions. During the first decade of the 2000s, Turkey tried to be mediator or facilitator for the long-lasting problems of the neighboring regions. In addition, Turkey planned to increase its role within international society by taking part in international initiatives and organizations. By the help of increasing economic relations and interdependence with the neighboring regions, Turkey wanted to improve its relations with neighbors and in this way, it planned to realize the zero-problem policy. As a result, Turkey with the help of these tools and means could increase its international and regional prestige which also made positive effects on the relations with Syria.

On the other hand, Syria also witnessed a redefinition process with the Bashar Asad presidency. After 2000, Syria both planned to finish Hafez Asad's reform initiatives and aimed at reconstructing Syrian political and economic structure. Although unsustainable economic and political conditions of Syria forced the new ruling power for further reforms in the country, the reform-minded technocrats of the new administration also created internal incentives for reforms.

In that sense, whereas political and economic structures played important role for the redefinition process, Syria also planned to overcome chronic problems with the reform process. Similar to the domestic structure, the international structure also forced the new administration for the redefinition of the interests. Under the increasing American and Israeli pressures, policies of the previous decades became unsustainable for Syria. Hence, Syria planned to decrease these pressures in the region with the help of the close relations with the anti-western actors. On the other hand, Syria aimed at turning into a more reasonable actor within the international society to overcome economic and political problems. In that sense, relations with the pro-western actors gained importance for the new administration. Under these circumstances, Turkey turned into an irresistible and rational actor for Syria in the region.

CHAPTER 4 : TRANSFORMATION OF RELATIONS DURING 2000s AND TURNING OF OTHER INTO A FRIEND

As a result of the new relationship between Syria and Turkey, bilateral relations witnessed golden age during the 2000s. In almost all areas, cooperation between two states increased and began to be shown as a model in the region. Changing interest formulation by new identities in Syria and Turkey played a crucial role for this rapid transformation. With the help of new ruling powers in Turkey and Syria, relations transformed from "eternal animosity"[557] into friendship. Regional and international developments also reinforced rapprochement process between parties and at the end of the decade, bilateral relations began to be shown as a model for the rest of the region. In that sense, although pragmatic reasons were important for cooperation at the beginning of the decade, at the end of the decade, cooperation reached its peak and gave way to a kind of collective identity. Transformation from the pragmatic reasons to friendship can be easily seen in the transformation of core problems. At the beginning of the decade, both countries preferred to be silent towards any negative developments about historical problems but at the end of the 2000s, parties began to take more responsibility for the solution of problems as a result of increasing trust between them. In that sense, comparison of pre-1998 and post-1998 will help us see the changing perceptions of both parties about the nature of problems. Moreover, analyzing developments about these problems during the 2000s will show us the increasing level of cooperation within time. In addition, analyzing cooperation areas will also give important information about the collective identity formation. At the end of the 2000s, cooperation in different areas resulted in a high level of strategic cooperation between two countries and relations began to be described as common fate and destiny. In that sense, relations at the end of decade raised ideas about the establishment of collective identity although these ideas had to disappear with the start of the Arab Spring.

4.1 TRANSFORMATION OF CORE ISSUES DURING 2000s

After the signing of the Adana Accords, bilateral relations began to relax and this relaxation had positive effects on core issues of parties. Although regional developments are important for new stances of sides about these issues, gradually rising trust is also one of the

[557] Oğuzlu, *Turning 'Risk' into 'Opportunity': Turkey's Approach towards Syria, A Western/European Actor in the Middle East*, p. 34

main determinants for changing the perceptions. In that sense, level of cooperation increased gradually and at the end of 2000s, parties began to take more initiatives for the solution of problems.

The dispute over the status of Hatay, division of the waters of Euphrates, Tigris and Orontes and Syria's persistent support to the PKK prevented the establishment of a collective identity between two countries and nature of relations became uncooperative during the 1990s.[558] In that sense, Hatay dispute, water issue and the PKK issue became central issues for parties during the previous decades and contributed to enmity between them. On the other hand, these issues gained different dimensions during the 2000s although they were not totally resolved between Turkey and Syria because of their sui generis nature. This nature of issues also affected the level of cooperation on them. In that sense, whereas cooperation against the PKK was high during the 2000s, we cannot see the same level of cooperation about the status of Hatay.

Until 2003, sides' doubts continued towards the "Other" about these problems and parties did not want to spend too much effort to solve these problems. In that sense, the period until 2003 was described as a trust-building process between Turkey and Syria.[559] On the other hand, as a result of changing perceptions about the nature of issues and blurring the distinction between the "Self" and the "Other", parties became more tolerable towards these issues. As a part of attempts to establish collective identity, Turkey and Syria tried to take initiatives towards these issues, which had been used as leverage against the "Other" during the previous decades. Hence, in order to understand changing perceptions about the core problems, constructivist research agenda will provide us a more concrete understanding. On the other hand, Wendtian thinking will provide us an understanding why these problems could not be resolved during the 2000s because Wendtian thinking provides more spaces for material reality. In that sense, ideational factors could not overcome material reality because of sui generis nature of issues.

Turkey-Syria relations entered a new era with the Adana Accords in 1998. Therefore, the Adana Accords is accepted as a symbolic turning point for bilateral relations. After this accord, relations began to normalize and helped define the "Other" as the friendly state in the following

[558] Yüksel Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis in Turkish-Syrian Relations: A Prospect Theory Approach", **Turkish Studies,** Vol. 3, No. 2 (Autumn, 2002), p. 44
[559] Selen Tokuş, "Turkish-Syrian Crisis of 1998 and Its Aftermath: A Constructivist Approach" *ORSAM*. http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/yazigoster.aspx?ID=785 (1 August 2013)

years. With the Adana Accords, Syria committed not to allow Öcalan and the PKK to enter into Syria. Beside this, Syria would not allow the PKK camps inside Syria and not provide any logistical or material help to the organization. Syria also prohibited all activities of the PKK and its subsidiaries in Syria and beside this, Syria would not allow any activities against the security and stability of Turkey within the framework reciprocity. Syria would not allow the transition of the PKK militants to third countries and would also take all measures to fulfill these commitments. In addition to these, the parties decided on more cooperation to operate the protocol. In order to realize it, a direct phone line would be established between the high-level security officials. Parties also decided to appoint two officials to other's diplomatic missions for cooperation and coordination. Moreover, if Lebanon accepted, it would also be a part of these mechanisms to prevent the PKK activities. Turkey also proposed security-building measures and mechanisms to Syria during the convention.[560] After the Adana Accords, Turkey approached to agreement cautiously because of the perception of Syria among Turkish elite. In that sense, the Adana Accords did not automatically remove mistrust between the parties. On the other hand, a change in Turkish foreign policy began mostly in these years with the leadership of İsmail Cem. İsmail Cem defended to solve problems with immediate neighbors to increase Turkey's diplomatic effectiveness in neighboring regions, which was also carried on by Davutoğlu. In that sense, peace with Syria was also important for İsmail Cem. In addition to the Adana Accords and Turkey's new perception about the position of Syria, beginning of the Bashar Asad era in Syria which resulted in a new identity formation in Syria in 2000 and beginning of the AKP era in Turkey which resulted in new identity formation in Turkey in 2002 made crucial effects over the relations. Ahmet Davutoğlu shared common concerns and views with İsmail Cem, which provided a comprehensive understanding towards Syria after 1998. The US presence in the region and concerns about the future of Iraq also had important effects on cooperation.

On the other hand, the Adana Accords is also important for the bilateral relations because it helped to remove the main security concern of Turkey, the PKK issue from the agenda. Without this kind of step, the improvement of bilateral relations could be more difficult for the Bashar Asad administration and AKP governments. In that sense, removal of the core concern, which directly affected Hatay and water issues, provided suitable grounds for forming new

[560] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1990-2001*, p. 567

identities in both countries. Analyzing the transformation process of these issues will help us see identity dimension of the relations and limits of the new identities.

4.1.1 PKK Issue

The PKK issue became the main problem between Syria and Turkey during the 1980s and 1990s and it was the main source of tension that brought two states to the edge of war in 1998. PKK-Syria relations go back to 1980s. During the Iran-Iraq war, Syria supported Iran and like Iran, tried to use the Kurdish communities to weaken Iraq in the region. In this way, Syria could be the only leader of the Arab world.[561] However, the PKK also utilized from this policy of Syria. With the logistical and material helps of Syria, Kurdish groups gained power and this disturbed Turkey. The PKK could finish its structural deficiencies with the shelter of Syria and Syria housed the PKK leadership during the 1980s.[562] According to Turkish Security Council (NSC), Syria gave support to the PKK in Syria, Lebanon and Northern Iraq.[563] In this period, Turkey accused Syria of having a secret plan to take back Hatay and the PKK was supported for this aim. Turkey accused Syria of undermining Turkish territorial integrity by giving support to the PKK and placed Syria as the number one on the PKK supporter list.[564] Turkey warned Syria about current situation and threatened to use force if the situation would not change. Therefore, Syria in 1983 expelled the PKK and ASALA militants from Syria.[565] Beside this, two states signed an agreement on border security in 1985. However, Turkey continued to be disturbed by the PKK-Syria relationship.

In order to regulate the bilateral relations, Özal made a visit to Syria in 1987. This visit was the first of the five initiatives of the Turkish side within six years and aimed to address Syria's concerns about water and put an end to Syria's sponsorship of the PKK.[566] While this visit was not very successful in terms of the aims of Turkey, two states signed two agreements on security and economic cooperation about water sharing. Turkey agreed to guarantee current amount of water in exchange for an anti-terrorist assurance from Syria with the 1987 Protocol.[567] The 1987 Protocol was the first security agreement containing an economic cooperation protocol, which

[561] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1980-1990*, p. 131
[562] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 173
[563] Bishku, p. 45
[564] Aras and Koni, p. 54
[565] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1980-1990*, p. 134
[566] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 175
[567] Ilgıt and Özkeneci-Taner, p. 104

was related to the water dispute between Syria and Turkey.[568] Although two states signed security protocols on the PKK issue, Syria never fully cut its support to the PKK. Syria exploited the PKK issue to use it as leverage against Turkey in the water dispute. In 1989, Özal accused Syria of not complying with the 1987 Protocols. Özal threatened Syria about the agreement on water if Syria would continue to support the PKK.[569] Turkey wanted to use the water dispute as leverage on Syria but Syria also did not want to lose the PKK card before the water dispute was solved. This interconnection of the two issues dominated the relations during the 1990s. On the other hand, non-compliance of Syria to the 1987 Protocol widened the psychological gap between Turkey and Syria. Turkey defined Syria's unwillingness about the agreement as a tactical movement and up to 1998, Turkey continuously accused Syria of being the prevaricator.[570] The image of the Syrians proved to be untrustworthy in the eyes of Turks, and this prevented any long-lasting attempts from solving the issues. Until the capture of Öcalan, Turkey had considered Syria as the main reason for the PKK problem. It is also argued by the Turkish side that Syria provided 80% of the basic necessities of the PKK camps in the Northern Iraq.[571]

After the Gulf crisis, the PKK increased its influence in the region and became the number one problem of Turkey during the 1990s.[572] In 1990s, Turkey indexed its relations with other states on their stance towards the PKK.[573] In that sense, Turkey's bilateral relations were dominated by the PKK issue and this was obviously reflected in relations with Syria. Turkey saw the PKK issue as the result of an international conspiracy web and put Syria at the center of this web. Turkey continued to use diplomatic tools to cut off the Syrian support to the PKK in 1990s. After the visit to Syria in 1992, two states signed a security protocol and Syria recognized the PKK as an outlawed organization.[574] With this protocol, parties projected cooperation on terrorist activities and smuggling, and extradition of terrorists. In return for the compliance to this protocol, Turkey guaranteed to provide sufficient amount of water to Syria. Therefore, the PKK issue was reconnected with the water dispute. "Water card against the PKK card"[575] became the

[568] Oktav, p. 85
[569] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1980-1990*, p. 139
[570] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 98
[571] Sezgin, p. 48
[572] Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000*, p. 199
[573] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 175
[574] Kushner, pp. 236-237
[575] Kanat, p. 234

usual route of the bilateral relations. However, parties could not reach a solution about the water issue. Because of this, Syria accused Turkey of using water as leverage against Syria. In 1992, National Security policy document defined the Kurdish separatism as the major threat[576], which negatively contributed to the bilateral relations. In 1993, Turkey and Syria signed a common memorandum, and for the first time, Syria accepted the PKK as a terrorist organization. As a result of this agreement, Syria and Turkey declared that they would prevent any activity that would damage their neighbor's security and stability.[577] After this, Syria requested a meeting from Turkey to solve the water dispute but Turkey did not see Syrian efforts against the PKK enough and rejected this meeting request.[578] In 1995, the PKK made terrorist attacks over Hatay and Turkey accused Syria of not taking effective measures against PKK. In 1995, Turkey froze its official contacts with Syria.[579] The PKK issue began to dominate bilateral relations. In 1996, Turkey gave nota to Syria for the extradition of Öcalan. After the nota, Turkey and Israel signed an agreement on military cooperation. In 1996, Turkey accused Syria of causing aggression and declared its will to take any self-defense measures against Syria under the Article 51 of the UN Charter.[580]

Bombings in the Syrian cities in May and June 1996 also resulted in the accusation of Turkish intelligence by Syria because of the PKK issue.[581] In 1997, NSC (National Security Council) declared Syria with Iran as the supporters of the PKK and suggested using political, economic, even military measures against these states. Turkey proposed 12 conditions to Syria in 1998 in order to normalize the bilateral relations but Syria rejected this proposal.[582] While Turkey conveyed to Syria its terms for good neighborhood policy, during 1998, tensions in bilateral relations continued to increase and Turkey toughened its stance against Syria. Syria's zigzagging about the solution of the issue ended in disappointments and mutual suspicions up to 1998. In 1998, Syria obviously became the most dangerous enemy of Turkey. In the late September 1998, Turkey's ex-Military Chief of Staff, Hüseyin Kıvrıkoglu accused Syria of waging an undeclared war against Turkey.[583] President Demirel also expressed that Turkey was

[576] Sandrin, p.3
[577] Barry Rubin, **The Truth about Syria,** New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 119
[578] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1990-2001*, p. 558
[579] Ilgıt and Özkeneci-Taner, p. 104
[580] Bishku, p. 45
[581] Zisser, p. 92
[582] Uçarol, p. 1162
[583] Rubin, p. 120

running out of its patience against Syria. On October 5, diplomatic relations were cut off and Turkey began to shift 10.000 military reinforcements to the Syrian border and threatened Syria with military action.[584] After this threat, Iran and Egypt started to intense diplomatic activity,[585] and by the help of these states, the tension between two countries could be decreased and diplomatic relations restarted. With expel of Öcalan on October 17 from Syria, the parties came together on October 19-20 in Adana. The US pressure over Syria also helped expel of Öcalan from Syria.[586]

Until the sign of the Adana Accords, Turkey described Syria as the number one external enemy of Turkey. PKK-Syria relations totally destroyed bilateral relations in the eyes of both societies and Syria became an absolute enemy for Turkey. Identity crisis and instable domestic political atmosphere in Turkey also made Syria an important enemy for the externalization of the problem. Conflicts within the country were defined as the manifestations of an external threat by the security elite in Turkey.[587] Until 1998, Turkish corporate identity unquestionably defined Syria as an enemy, which prevented reformulation of bilateral relations. The capture of the PKK leader had an important effect on changing security perception from hard security to soft security understanding in Turkey, which helped redefinition of enemies and friends in the region during the 2000s. In that sense, the capture of Öcalan had the most important effect on breaking link between Syria and the PKK although the PKK issue remained unsolved.

While the Adana Accords was an important step for the normalization of relations, it could not explain the transformation of relations. In that sense, we should look at new identities and new interest formulations in both states. With the İsmail Cem era, Turkey aimed to solve problematic relations with the neighbors on the basis of cultural and historical ties. Ahmet Necdet Sezer- former president of Turkey- also supported this understanding and because of this, he attended to Hafez Asad's funeral in 2000, which was also described as the second turning point for bilateral relations.[588] Sezer's visit was interpreted as the intention of Turkey to improve bilateral relations. Former vice-president Khaddam's visit to Turkey in November 2000 was also

[584] Sezgin, pp. 49-50
[585] Özcan, p. 117
[586] Uzgel, p. 304
[587] Sandrin, p. 4
[588] Arı and Prinççi, p. 9

interpreted as the intention of Syria to improve relations with Turkey.[589] With Bashar Asad's presidency, Turkey also could remove its concerns because Rifaat Asad had a potential to become the new president who had had close relations with the PKK. In that sense, Bashar Asad's more moderate attitude helped for rapprochement. With the AKP government, Syria gained much more importance for Turkey and this helped cooperation on security areas. However, the most important step to remove concerns about the PKK was changing perception of Turkey towards the issue, especially in the second half of 2000s.

As a result of the new perception and policy of the Kurdish opening in Turkey, Turkey began to give up describing the PKK as a product of the international web of conspiracy and began to differentiate the PKK problem and the Kurdish issue. Turkey began to voice Kurdish issue and tried to define it independently from the PKK issue, especially after 2007. As a consequence of desecuritization process, Turkey began to define the PKK issue as a security issue whereas the Kurdish issue began to be described as a political issue that necessitates a political solution.[590] In that sense, during the 2000s, Turkey made a difference between PKK-led terrorism and the Kurdish issue. Cooperation with the Kurdish Regional Government against the PKK during the military operations in 2008[591] shows the changing attitude about the Kurds of the region. Turkey began to give up describing Kurdish movements as an existential threat.[592] Increasing civil engagement of BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) in Turkey and abroad also helped to change existing views about the PKK in Turkey.[593]

Solving the Kurdish issue was not only important for domestic politics but also crucial for foreign affairs for the AKP government. The AKP government linked domestic security to regional security[594], which helped to create a more holistic program against the issue. Domestic stability of Turkey needed regional stability, which required minimum tension with the immediate neighbors.[595] In that sense, although practical steps to solve the problem intensified especially after 2008, in theory, solving the problem had a central importance for the new elite. For the new government in Turkey, Turkey should solve its Kurdish problem, because this

[589] Kanat, p. 239
[590] Oğuzlu, *Soft-Power in Turkish Foreign Policy*, p. 88
[591] Kirişçi, *The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of Trading State*, p. 30
[592] Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Spring", **Third World Quarterly**, Vol. 34, No. 3 (May, 2013), p. 450
[593] Oray Engin, "The Game Changer: Syria, Iran and Kurdish Independence", **World Affairs,** (May/June 2013), p. 67
[594] Parlar Dal, p. 253
[595] Larrabee, p. 158

problem has a potential to replace Arab-Israeli geo-ethnic struggle of the 20th century with a potential geo-ethnic struggle between Turkish-Arab-Iranian societies in the 21st century.[596] Kurdish nationalism began to be described as a potential factor for the instability in the Middle East by Turkey.[597] In that sense, Kurdish issue is not only a domestic problem for Turkey, it is also an important catalytic for the relations with the Middle East for the AKP government. Hence, Turkey should stay away from any ethnic-based tensions in the region and should produce inclusive solutions to these problems and the Kurdish problem should be solved on the basis of cultural, economic and political legitimacies. By solving Kurdish issue, Turkey could be a dominant power in the Middle East[598] and increase its prestige in the region. By solving the issue, Turkey could contribute to stopping the political and cultural disintegration in the region and could easily materialize its soft power potential.

For the new political elite, solving Kurdish issue and overcoming domestic legitimacy problem can be a model for the states of the region because domestic politics also has effects on the foreign policy choices. For the AKP government, if Turkey did not solve the problem, this problem would weaken the hand of Turkey in foreign relations with the neighboring regions.[599] Therefore, Turkey should continue to take initiatives for regional peace after the PKK issue has been solved. Turkey should take initiative for cultural opening in the region, which should include the different societies of the region. This kind of inclusive cultural initiative requires not regarding the region as the center of problems. Hence, beside the military measures, Turkey began to use political, social and economic measures for the solution of the issue. The issue is directly related to socio-cultural and socio-political integration within the region. Therefore, the problem should be solved in cultural, economic, political and diplomatic dimensions. Solving the Kurdish issue would help Turkey as the norm producer in the region.[600] As a result, by solving the issue with new approaches, Turkey could solve its biggest domestic problem, which has had effects over the stability of corporate identity of Turkey and it could reinforce its effectiveness in the Middle East.

[596] Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu,* p.440
[597] Gunter, p. 453
[598] Zengin, p. 342
[599] Zengin, p. 331
[600] Oğuzlu, *The Arab Spring and the Rise of the 2.0 Version of Turkey's 'Zero Problems with Neighbors' Policy*, p. 11

Under these circumstances, neighbors who have an important amount of Kurdish population turned into important allies for the solution of problem. Rapprochement with the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq would help Turkey for a democratic opening to Turkey's Kurdish population.[601] Giving up the red line strategy towards the Kurds of Northern Iraq[602] helped the AKP government establish a dialogue with the Kurdish groups of the region. Since 2008, Turkey has increased its engagement with KRG, whose support and cooperation were seen as a necessity for the Kurdish issue.[603] Turkey aimed to put pressure on the PKK in Iraq with close cooperation with KRG.[604] Suggestion of the KRG to abandon the armed struggle[605] is an important indicator of increasing cooperation. In that sense, while policy of Kurdish opening aimed to contribute to the domestic dimension of the problem despite important fluctuations, continuation of dialogue and contacts with neighbors and Kurdish groups like KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government) aimed to resolve the issue at the region-wide scale, which would contribute to the increasing influence of Turkey. In that sense, ideational factors had important effects on changing nature of the problem.

In short, changing perception of Turkey about the interrelated nature of domestic and foreign affairs are obviously seen in the Kurdish issue and the relations with the Middle East. According to the AKP government, the Kurdish issue is related not only to domestic politics but also to foreign and security policies, which have direct effects on relations with neighbors.[606] Turkey began to see solving the Kurdish issue as the key for improving relations with the neighboring regions during the first decade of the 2000s. On the other side, Turkey began to see improving relations with the neighboring regions as having a transformative effect on the Kurdish issue. Rather than use of a stick towards the neighbors, Turkey looked for the help of these states. Good relations with the neighbors brought the help of these states for the war against the PKK. Under these circumstances, help of the southern neighbors became crucial for the solution of the problem. Therefore, the Syrian regime turned into a reasonable actor for the solution of the problem in the region for Turkey. On Syrian side, Kurdish population in Syria began to have a risk to destabilize the Syrian politics after the de facto situation in Northern Iraq.

[601] Barkey, *The Evolution of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 3
[602] Robins, *A Double Gravity State: Turkish Foreign Policy Reconsidered*, p. 206
[603] Larrabee, p. 162
[604] M. Gunter, p. 451
[605] Barkey, *Turkish Foreign Policy and the Middle East*, p. 7
[606] Kahraman, p. 699

In that sense, high level of engagement with the PKK could have negative effects over Syria. During the 2000s, the PKK had a potential for turning into a security risk for Syria. Therefore, giving up the PKK card was not too difficult. Changing perception of Syria about the Kurdish issue also help narrow the gap between the "Self" and the "Other".

With the improving relations with Syria, Turkey planned to increase its ability to deal with the PKK terrorism. As a result of the new perception of Turkey towards the issue, cooperation between Turkey and Syria against the PKK became easier. During the 1990s, the PKK issue was seen as a product of international conspiracy web and Syria was at the center of this web. However, with the politicization process in Turkey, Syria with the help of good relations became an important partner for the problem. On Syrian side, concerns about the Syrian Kurdish population also made Turkey an important partner. In that sense, cooperation against the PKK became easier for the parties, which had been intractable during the 1980s and 1990s. After signing of the Adana Accords, Syria gave up the PKK card and this contributed to the trust between the two countries. With the rising of trust and the US intervention in Iraq, both states increased the level of cooperation against the PKK and this became one of the most successful cooperation areas between the two countries during the 2000s. In that sense, the level of cooperation gradually increased right after 2002 and at the end of the decade, this cooperation reached a peak. While we cannot see important steps taken for the solution of the problem until 2002, as a result of the increasing trust between the parties, Turkey and Syria increased the level of cooperation after 2002.

In 2002, the ex-deputy president of Syria, Abdul Halim Khaddam, during the visit of Turkish scholars and journalists in Damascus expressed that the PKK file was closed for Syria.[607] This expression by such an important figure like Khaddam was significant since it showed that Syria had given up the PKK card. After the US intervention in Iraq, Syria began to witness problems with its Kurdish population and hardened its stance against the Kurds. Under these circumstances, Syria increased the level of cooperation with Turkey. In 2003, Syria handed the PKK militants over to Turkey after the military and intelligent operations against the Kurdish population in Syria. The Syrian regime imprisoned a PKK member for being a member of this

[607] Naki Özkan, "PKK Dosyası Kapandı", *Milliyet*, 16 May 2002, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/05/16/siyaset/siy02.html , (6 August 2013)

illegal organization and for organizing illegal activities against a neighboring country in 2004.[608] Another PKK member was also imprisoned in 2005 because of the same reasons. Imprisoning the PKK members in Syria for organizing illegal activities against Turkey is a crucial example, which shows an increasing cooperation between the two countries. At the end of the 2005, Syria also accepted the "Biji Serok Apo" slogan as a crime and described this slogan as a threat against the state security.[609] Bashar Asad declared his support for Turkey's decision for a war against the PKK during his visit in Turkey in 2007 and defined his support as the decision of the Syrian society.[610] Bashar Asad also defined that the loss of one side would be also a loss for the other side in this war. Asad's declarations about the PKK in 2007 showed an increasing cooperation on the PKK issue. This kind of expressions by the Syrian rule continued but concrete cooperation reached its highest level in 2010. Bashar Asad defined the bilateral relations at their highest level and showed his intention for further cooperation against terrorism during the Strategic Cooperation Council in 2010 and both countries expressed their will for more cooperation on the PKK issue. Asad proposed on October 11, 2010 that if it would be useful for the solution of the problem, he could pass amnesty for the Syrian PKK militants and could accept them into Syria. He also declared his support for the PKK's giving up weapons to become a legal political actor in Turkey and if Turkey would take steps, he declared that he could accept 1500 Syrian PKK militants back to Syria in the same year.[611] During the same meeting, Erdoğan also announced that there would be cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and intelligence organizations of both states on the PKK activities in 2010.

To sum up, the Adana Accords played an important role for the solution of the problem between Turkey and Syria. In addition, Turkey began to change its traditional views about the nature of the problem and this change helped to break the link between Syria and the PKK, and more importantly between the PKK and the Kurdish entity. In addition to this, the PKK as a foreign policy tool is not an existential tool for Syria. Therefore, giving up the PKK card was easier for Syria. Until 2002, we cannot see important steps for cooperation on the problem.

[608] "Suriye, PKKlıya 4 Yıl Hapis Verdi" *Milliyet*, 28 December 2004, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Guncel/HaberDetay.aspx?aType=HaberDetayArsiv&KategoriID=24&ArticleID=250898&PAGE=1, (8 August 2013)
[609] "Suriye de 'Biji Serok Apo' Sloganını Suç Saydı" , *Milliyet*, 29 December 2005, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/12/29/dunya/dun03.html, (9 August 2013)
[610] Miş, *Suriye 2007*, p, 257
[611] "El-Esad Erdoğan ile Ortak Basın Toplantısında: Suriye-Türkiye İlişkileri Büyük Adımlar Atarak İki Ülke Arasında Stratejik Ortaklık Halini Aldı", *SANA*, 12 October 2010, http://sana.sy/tur/236/2010/10/11/312577.htm, (3 August 2013)

However, with the US intervention in Iraq, the parties began to take more initiatives for cooperation. After 2003, Turkey and Syria began to take more concrete steps and at the end of the decade, cooperation between the two countries reached its peak. On the other hand, solutions of Hatay and the water dispute were not easier for the parties because of the sui generis nature of the issues. Therefore, we see fluctuations about two issues, especially for the Hatay dispute.

4.1.2Hatay Dispute

Hatay dispute is one the most important historical problems between Syria and Turkey. Indeed, Hatay's annexation to Turkey before the establishment of an independent Syrian state had catastrophic effects on the Syrian corporate identity. Anti-Turkish feelings helped to shape Syrian Arab nationalism and Alexandretta dispute over which Syria claimed sovereignty rights, materially reinforced this feelings.[612] In that sense, Hatay issue became an important part of the Syrian national identity. Syria could not accept the annexation of Hatay by Turkey and this became one of the central problems for historical mistrust. Syria declared Hatay issue as the issue of all the Arab nations like the Palestinian issue.[613] On the Turkish side, Hatay province was included within the borders of Turkey according to the National Pact, which made Hatay an important part of homeland of the new Turkish state.[614] Therefore, Hatay issue turned into an intractable problem between two countries and still remains unsolved. On the other hand, in times of peace, parties preferred to remain silent about the status of Hatay. While in times of tension, it became one of the most important topics of discussions between Turkey and Syria.

Alexandretta district was accepted within the borders of Syria in 1921 Agreement by special administration between France and Turkey. However, this agreement could not solve the problem between the parties. This dispute went to the League of Nations in 1936 and accepted Alexandretta as "entité distincte".[615] With the decision of the council, Hatay became independent in domestic affairs, but dependent on Syria in foreign affairs. Beside this, Alexandretta region was renamed as Hatay.[616] After this decision, Syrian society began to protest these

[612] Aras and Koni, p. 52
[613] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1945-1960*, p. 616
[614] Demir, pp. 696-697
[615] Coşkun Topal, "Sancak (Hatay) Sorunu ve İkinci Dünya Savaşı Öncesi Süreçte Arap Kamuoyundaki Etkileri", **Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi,** Vol. 11, No. 2 (Aralık 2009), p. 4
[616] Armaoğlu, p. 349

developments.[617] In 1938, the state of Hatay declared its independence and in 1939, Hatay became a part of Turkey with French-Turkish agreement. In return for this agreement, Turkey accepted the independence and territorial integrity of Syria. However, Damascus continued to see Hatay as a part of Syria and defined Turkey as the occupying power.[618] It did not recognize the annexation to Turkey. The elite of Syria defined Turkey's attitude as having imperial ambitions over Syria even Lebanon. Hatay issue was the first step to divide Syria, which would threat the honor of all Arabs.[619] Syrians had especially fears about Turkey's secret plans about Aleppo.[620] In order to prevent the annexation of Hatay, Syrian intellectuals called for all Arab societies to stop this "invasion".[621] On the other hand, Turkish side argued that Hatay was an integral part of Turkey. As a result of conflicts on Hatay, Turkey abolished 1926 friendship agreement with Syria.[622]

Although parties preferred to remain silent about Hatay issues in times of détente, Hatay dispute linked with other issues during the 1980s and 1990s. Both the water issue, which resulted from the discussions over Orontes River and the PKK issue caused by the activities of the PKK militants over Hatay, put the Hatay dispute at the center of bilateral relations. This interconnectedness was clearly seen during the time of crisis. At the end of the 1980s, tension in the bilateral relations increased. Both the water dispute and the PKK issue began to dominate bilateral relations. Within this atmosphere, in 1989, boundary violations occurred in the border and Syria brought up its old claims about the status of Hatay.[623] In 1990s, with the increasing tension between Syria and Turkey, Syria restarted its claims over Hatay and claimed that it was a part of Syrian territory under the occupation of Turkey. With related other core issues, the parties began to raise their voices about the status of Hatay. The PKK attacks to Hatay and leaking of PKK terrorists in Hatay via Syria resulted in deterioration of the bilateral relations from 1995 onwards.[624] Attacks of the PKK in Hatay were perceived by Turkey as a message of Syria. Turkey accused Syria of supporting the PKK for activities in Hatay. In that sense, Syria's support to the PKK, especially in Hatay caused the hardening of Turkey's policy against this

[617] Topal, p. 4
[618] Kanat, p. 234
[619] Topal, p. 5
[620] Ercan Karakoç, "Atatürk'ün Hatay Davası", **Bilig,** No. 50 (Summer, 2009), p. 104
[621] Topal, p. 6
[622] Karakoç, p. 111
[623] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1980-1990*, p. 140
[624] Oktav, p. 87

country. The visit of Israeli ambassador to Hatay in 1996 after a military agreement between Israel and Turkey was also important for the Hatay dispute.[625] This visit was perceived by Syria as a show of strength of Israeli-Turkish cooperation over the status of Hatay. While the tension in the bilateral relations increased, parties' stances became harder about Hatay. The ex-Commander of Land Forces of Turkey, Atilla Ateş went to Hatay and said that Hatay was an inseparable part of Turkey on September 16, 1998.[626] He also added that "If Turkey does not get what it wants; it would acquire the right to take any kind of precautions"[627]. In that sense, Turkey always doubted about Syrian irredentism for Hatay, which built important background for continuous mistrust between the parties. On the other side, Syrian Minister of Information made a declaration about Hatay as the national issue, which Syria will never give up. In addition to these, the spokesman of NSC declared that if water dispute with Syria was solved, tomorrow they could bring up the subject of Hatay.[628] In that sense, three core issues were interrelated with each other and problems became intractable. Like the water and the PKK issues, the tension in the Hatay dispute was decreased with the help of the Adana Accords in 1998. With the expelling of Öcalan, the tensions over the water and Hatay issues softened. In that sense, the PKK issue at the center of problems tied solutions for other issues.

On the other hand, we should mention that during the post-1998 process, there was not much effort to solve this issue. It stems from mainly two reasons. Firstly, the issue of Hatay is an important part of both the Ba'athist and Syrian identities and the status of Hatay, to some extent, was seen similar to the status of Golan Heights, which would weaken the hands of Syrian authority about Golan Heights. In that sense, there is not too much room for the status of Hatay for Syria. Secondly, there are not many options for the status of Hatay. Establishment of a win-win logic is more difficult for the status of any territorial part. On the other hand, as a result of the increasing interaction and cooperation, the parties stopped to see the other as a threat against their territorial integrity, which eased the positions of parties about the status of Hatay. Syria did not formally recognize Hatay's status and Hatay continued to be shown as a part of Syria, but the parties tried to formulate intermediary tools for the issue, but these tools aimed not to harm the

[625] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 261
[626] Uçarol, p. 1162
[627] Ömerci, p. 232
[628] Oktav, p. 89

bilateral relations rather to solve the issue. These tools helped the parties for further cooperation in different areas and both Turkey and Syria became more tolerable towards the Hatay issue.

Until 2002, the sides preferred to be silent about the status of Hatay and the Hatay issue continued to be an obstacle to establish confidence and trust between Turkey and Syria. However, as a result of increasing cooperation and trust, the parties began to show their goodwill about Hatay issue. In 2002, in his interview, Khaddam mentioned that Hatay dispute could be solved with the help of improving relations, by adding that Hatay dispute was also used by foreign powers to sabotage bilateral relations. In that sense, for him, Hatay was not an obstacle for the bilateral relations.[629] The position of Turkey towards the issue was also similar at the beginning of the decade. Turkey did not define Syria's position about the issue as an important obstacle for the bilateral relations. In 2003, the Turkish delegation visited Syria to restart the bilateral talks about the issues of terrorism and Hatay province.[630] After this step, the parties began to take symbolic steps about the Hatay dispute in order not to create an obstacle against improving the bilateral relations. In 2003, Syria began to show Hatay as a part of Turkey in tourism maps as a result of the improving relations although Hatay was shown as a part of Syria in school maps.[631] On the other hand, during the world tourism fair in March 2003, Hatay was shown as a part of Syria by Syrians, which caused reactions by the Turkish visitors of fair. Ups and downs in the solution of the problem also continued during 2004. In 2004, Hatay was also shown within the borders of Syria by the Syrian state television. In order to overcome the Hatay dispute, Turkey offered establishing a joint trade center in Hatay, which was accepted by the Syrian regime.[632] It is also argued that with the Free Trade agreement signed between Turkey and Syria in 2004, Syria covertly accepted the de facto border between the two states. According to territory definitions within the agreement, Hatay was defined within the Turkish territories. Because of this definition, Syria had renounced this agreement in 2003, but Syria accepted to sign in 2004.[633] On the other hand, the Syrian Oil Ministry continued to show Hatay within the

[629] Avni Özgürel, "Suriye ile Yeni Bir Sayfa", *Radikal*, 20 May 2002, http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=38162 (5 August 2013)
[630] Murinson, p. 956
[631] "Suriye'den ilk Somut Adım", *Milliyet*, 18 January 2003, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Guncel/HaberDetay.aspx?aType=HaberDetayArsiv&KategoriID=24&ArticleID=262432&PAGE=1 (6 August 2013)
[632] "Hatay Ticaret Merkezi Olacak, Sorun Aşılacak", *Milliyet*, 8 January 2004, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/hatay-ticaret-merkezi-olacak--sorun-asilacak/siyaset/haberdetayarsiv/08.01.2004/23075/default.htm (8 August 2013)
[633] "Suriyeden Sınır Tanıyan Anlaşma", *Milliyet*, 6 January 2004, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/suriyeden-sinir-taniyan-anlasma/siyaset/haberdetayarsiv/06.01.2004/22890/default.htm (9 August 2013)

borders of Syria during the visit of the ex-Minister of State, Kürşat Tüzmen. However, Tüzmen expressed that there was not a big problem for the bilateral relations. During Erdoğan's Syria visit, he asked Bashar Asad for formal recognition of the status of Hatay as a part of Turkey, but his proposal was rejected by Asad in 2009.[634] Hatay continued to be shown within the borders of Syria and this created a discussion between the government and the opposition in Turkey in 2011.[635] However, the AKP government did not want to harm the bilateral relations because of Hatay's status.

Shortly, the status of Hatay remained insoluble between the two countries, but the parties tolerated with this situation not to injure the improving relations. Hatay continued to be seen as a part of homeland for both parties. Therefore, Hatay is an important part of the national identity for both countries, which resulted in zero-sum logic for the solution of issue. In addition, Syria also has further fears about the situation since it can become an unfavorable example for the status of Golan. In that sense, cooperation over Hatay remained limited during the 2000s. On the other hand, both parties could take more initiative for the solution of the water dispute although these initiatives could not totally resolve the issue. However, Turkey and Syria were able to increase the level of cooperation, and at the end of the decade, joint projects could be proposed for the solution of the dispute whereas sui generis nature of the issue prevented a total solution.

4.1.3 Water Problem

Negotiations about sharing the waters of Euphrates and Tigris rivers among Syria, Turkey and Iraq goes back to 1960s, but in 1980s, sharing these waters became a problem among the three states. The states began to see these natural resources as a part of their national security. With development projects in these countries, water began to be perceived from the window of national security. In that sense, water as a natural resource became a part of independence and national development.[636] In the Cold War context, negative identification of the parties prevented a solution. Mistrust between Turkey and Syria became one of the main obstacles for permanent cooperation. Therefore, beside the special nature of the issue, security-oriented views and

[634] "PM Vows to Build Model Partnership with Syria", *Today's Zaman*, 24 December 2009, http://www.todayszaman.com/news-196473-pm-vows-to-build-model-partnership-with-syria.html (16 August 2013)
[635] Melih Aşık, "Balyoz Sohbeti", *Milliyet*, 2 March 2011, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Yazar.aspx?aType=YazarDetay&ArticleID=1359174&AuthorID=59&b=Balyoz%20sohbeti&a=Melih%20Asik&KategoriID=24 (2 August 2011)
[636] Tuğba Evrim Maden, "Türkiye-Suriye İlişkilerinde Suyun Rolü", **Ortadoğu Analiz**, Vol: 3, No: 35 (Kasım, 2011), p. 35

negative identification of the "Other" made the dispute insoluble. During the 1960s and 1970s, both Iraq and Syria worried about the dam construction projects in Turkey because of a possible reduction in the amount of water. Syria also increased demand for water in 1980s due to the agriculture based export development programs.[637] Therefore, over use of these resources and construction of dams created problems between upstream and downstream states. Large exploitation of these waters became a problem between the states and turned into a foreign policy issue. In 1980s, the water dispute began to be related to the PKK issue, and because of this, the water issue became a political one, even a security issue in 1980s rather than a technical one.[638]

In order to solve the water-sharing dispute, a joint technical committee was established in 1980 between Iraq and Turkey, and Syria joined this committee in 1982. Meetings of joint technical committee ended in a deadlock.[639] The joint technical committee held 22 meetings from 1980 to 1992,[640] but these meetings could not find long-lasting solutions to the dispute. Bilateral and multilateral negotiations or suggested projects like Peace Water Project in 1988 could not remedy the dispute. With the 1987 Protocol, Turkey guaranteed a flow of 500 cubic meters per second, but the decrease of this amount created political problems between two states in the following years. Syria feared that Turkey could use the control of these rivers to disrupt the volume of water.[641] Syria also began to describe the water card as a tool of Turkey to increase its influence in the region. On the other hand, Turkey wanted to include Orontes basin, which begins in Lebanon and flows through Syria before emptying in Hatay in water negotiations, but Syria defined this as forcing Damascus for an agreement, which would legitimize Turkey's annexation of Alexandretta.[642] Syria defined Orontes River as national water because of its claims over the status of Hatay.[643] Because of this, Syria left 1993 talks with Turkey not to include the waters of Orontes River.[644] In that sense, Hatay dispute was connected with the problem of water sharing. Like the relationship between the PKK issue and water sharing, Hatay dispute also contributed to the political deadlock between the parties.

[637] Aras and Koni, p. 53
[638] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1980-1990*, p. 140
[639] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 231
[640] Maden, *Türkiye-Suriye İlişkilerinde Suyun Rolü*, p. 35
[641] Kushner, p. 231
[642] Oktav, p. 88
[643] Mehmet Dalar, "Asi Nehri'nin Türkiye-Suriye İlişkileri Üzerindeki Etkisi ve Geleceği" **Ortadoğu Analiz**, Vol. 2, No. 15 (March, 2010), p. 110
[644] Dalar, p. 110

While the Gulf crisis helped for rapprochement about the security of the region, stances of the parties about the water issue did not change in this period. In 1991, with a joint statement, both states declared their will for cooperation on security, but they did not change their positions in the water dispute. Indeed, reduction in the amount of water to 165 cubic meters in 1991 was interpreted as a hostile attempt by Syria.[645] Syria was not satisfied with the Economic Cooperation Protocol signed in 1987 on the water issue and wanted to change the terms of the deal.[646] Syria continued to support the allocation of water but Turkey saw the development of common projects as a solution to the dispute.[647] Iraq and Syria had signed an agreement about the cross border flows in 1989. Therefore, Turkey remained as the only obstacle on water issue for Syria. In 1993, Turkey declared its will to solve the Euphrates flow question with Demirel's visit to Damascus. In that sense, Turkey and Syria would have solved the dispute with quotas to be allocated to the sides by the end of the year.[648] However, the year ended with a crisis in the bilateral relations due to the Syria-PKK relations.

With development projects in both countries, the problem gained another dimension. In 1983, with the start of South Eastern Anatolia Project (GAP), Iraq and Syria began to increase their voices about not only the amount of water, but also the quality of the water.[649] Syria had been concerned about the GAP project which could have adverse implications regarding the water issue.[650] The water dispute began to occupy a central place after this ambitious project. On the other hand, with the GAP project, utilization of Euphrates waters became more important for Turkey. After its realization, Turkey does not only use the water of these rivers for domestic economy, but also want to be more effective in foreign trade relations with project investment and discovery of new markets.[651] On Syrian side, development projects became important to realize social and economic reforms after 1980s. With these projects, the Syrian administration aimed to increase the well-being of the Syrian society and wanted to decrease domestic discontent. In order to realize these projects, Syria needed much more water. In that sense, water became a part of national security and domestic stability for Syria. In that sense, development projects in Syria and Turkey made the dispute more intractable.

[645] Aras and Koni, p. 53
[646] Özcan, p. 117
[647] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1990-2001*, p. 555
[648] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 234
[649] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1980-1990*, p. 143
[650] Kushner, p. 230
[651] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 236

During the 1990s, identity dimension of the dispute became clearer. In 1995, Syria internationalized the water dispute and carried the issue to the agenda of Arab states, and in this way, it tried to show the problem as a problem of the whole Arab societies. With the help of eight Arab states, Syria gave nota to Turkey about the problem.[652] With the participation of Arab states, Syria announced Damascus Declaration and wanted a fair agreement on sharing the waters. However, Turkey harshly rejected the Arab League's intervention. Turkey as a response to Damascus Declaration called on Syria to give up terror as a foreign policy tool.[653] Moreover, in 1996, Syria and Iraq, which cut off diplomatic relations in 1980, came together to determine a common stance towards the water issue and Turkey's attitude.[654] Both states could activate the Arab League and pass a draft on the resolution about the allocation of the water. In that sense, Syria tried to activate the Arab world about the water issue and tried to gain new allies for leverage against Turkey. Israeli-Turkey rapprochement after the signing of military agreement also helped Syria activate the Arab states in the region and tried to put pressure on Turkey about the water dispute. After the draft on the resolution by the Arab League, in 1996, Turkey wanted to include the waters of Orontes River in negotiations. Moreover, Turkey rejected any agreement if Syria would continue to support the PKK and hardened its stance as a result of Syria's efforts for the internalization of water dispute. On the other hand, Syria accused Turkey of forcing Syria into an agreement on Orontes River, which would legitimize Turkey's annexation of Hatay.[655] However, internationalization of the issue did not stop there, and became a part of the Arab-Israeli peace process.[656] In 1999, the water of the Euphrates and Tigris became an issue between Syria and Israel during the peace talks. However, Turkey warned both countries to stay away from the water issue.[657] On the other hand, we should mention that in addition to the effects of historical enmity between Turkey and Syria and development projects after 1980, sui generis nature of the issue is also an important obstacle for the solution of the dispute. In that sense, approaches and theses of the parties were also another important problem for water sharing.

Theses of the parties about the nature of the issue made the dispute more intractable. There were three areas of disagreement among the parties. The first was the defining the nature of the

[652] Demir, 708
[653] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 177
[654] Uçarol, p. 1032
[655] Oktav, p. 88
[656] Maden, *Türkiye-Suriye İlişkilerinde Suyun Rolü*, p. 36
[657] Uçarol, p. 1014

problem. While Turkey wanted to combine basins of Euphrates and Tigris, Syria saw the nature of the dispute as the waters of the Euphrates. The second was determining who gets what from these waters. Turkey supported sharing of the waters with the principle of equity but Syria supported allocation for the solution. The third was determining the needs of the parties. Turkey wanted to determine the needs of the parties by self-declaration. On the other hand, Syria and Iraq wanted to determine the need by objective assessments.[658] For these different theses, definition of these waters plays a crucial role. Turkey describes Euphrates and Tigris rivers as transboundary waters but Iraq and Syria describe them as international waters, and see tripartite agreement as the solution.[659] Iraq and Syria have an agreement for sharing the water, but they failed to persuade Turkey for water allocation.[660] On the other hand, Turkey claims to have sovereignty rights over the waters within Turkish borders and rejected tripartite agreement. Because of this, Turkey did not ratify the "1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses"[661] because this agreement defined Euphrates and Tigris as international waters and could weaken the hands of Turkey during the negotiations. Turkey also did not become a part of the convention after the normalization of the relations because of the "sui generis" nature of the issue for Turkey. In that sense, breaking the link with other problems cannot guarantee the solution for the disputes. De-politicization of the bilateral problems or desecuritization of water issue cannot be enough because of the sui generis nature of the water issue. In that sense, on one side, for Turkey, waters of these rivers make up a special issue and are not directly related to the PKK issue. On the other side, despite the "sui generis" nature of the issue, it was also used against Syria's support to the PKK. The flow of water was raised to above 900 cubic meters in the aftermath of October crisis with Syria in 1998 and this clearly showed interconnectedness of water dispute and the PKK issue for Turkey at least for short-term strategic aims.[662] However, with the ease of tension after 1998, Turkey and Syria became more tolerable towards water dispute. At the beginning of the decade, the parties preferred to remain silent towards the issue, but at the end of the decade, as a result of increasing cooperation and trust, the parties began to take more responsibility for the solution of the dispute.

[658] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p 231
[659] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1980-1990*, p. 146
[660] Aras and Koni, p. 53
[661] Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War*, p. 235
[662] Aras and Koni, p. 53

As a result of improving bilateral relations, both countries began to discuss about engaging in joint projects, which could positively contribute to the solution of the problem. At the end of the decade, concrete steps began to be taken for joint projects but with the start of the civil war in Syria, these steps were postponed. However, during the 2000s, the water dispute did not increase the tension between the parties. Syria and Turkey became more tolerable towards the needs of each other. In that sense, water dispute, which was one of the key areas for the increasing tension during the 1980s and 1990s, turned into a technical problem during the 2000s. In 2002, Khaddam expressed his positive thoughts about the solution of the water dispute. [663] Davutoğlu also expressed similar views about the dispute. Because of the drought during the summer of 2000, Turkey could not release 500 cubic meters of water to Syria but Syria tolerated Turkey's excuses and any dispute between the parties did not come out.[664] This was shown as a consequence of mutual trust between the two states. In order to increase the level of cooperation over the water issue, Turkey and Syria signed General Organization for Land Resources (GOLD) Protocol in 2001.[665] In addition, Turkey agreed to resume talks over the waters of Euphrates.[666] The Syrian Prime Minister came to Turkey to discuss the water issue between the two countries in 2003.[667] The Turkish Prime Minister expressed that Syria could use more waters of Tigris, which would contribute to the solution of the water dispute in 2004.[668] In 2004, Turkey and Syria declared their will for the construction of a joint dam over Orontes River.[669] The Prime Minister Erdoğan went to Syria as the guest of Bashar Asad for the opening of Aleppo Stadium in 2007.[670] With this visit, both states agreed on the construction of the joint dam over Orontes River, which was proposed in 2004. In 2008, the Prime Minister Erdoğan wanted help from Bashar Asad because of the shortage of water in Orontes River. Bashar Asad opened penstocks in Syria in order to overcome the shortage of water in Turkey. Asad defined this movement as the help of brother and sister society.[671] As a result of these developments, Asad also initiated a research program in

[663] Naki Özkan, "PKK Dosyası Kapandı", *Milliyet*, 16 May 2002, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/05/16/siyaset/siy02.html (6 August 2013)
[664] Oktav, p. 100
[665] Maden, *Türkiye-Suriye İlişkilerinde Suyun Rolü*, p. 37
[666] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 47
[667] Selin İnançlı and Mehmet Zeki Ak, "Türkiye'nin Komşu Ortadoğu Ülkeleri ile Ticari İlişkilerine Ekonomik ve Siyasi Gelişmelerin Etkisi", in Kemal İnat and Ali Balcı (Ed.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2005**, (385-404), Ankara: Nobel Press, 2006, p. 399
[668] Aras and Polat, p. 509
[669] "Suriye ile Ortak Baraj Projesi", *Milliyet*, 25 August 2004, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/suriye-ile-ortak-baraj-projesi/ekonomi/haberdetayarsiv/25.08.2004/43868/default.htm (5 August 2013)
[670] Miş, *Suriye 2007*, p. 254
[671] Mehmet Ezer, "Beşşar Esad Sözünü Tuttu, Komşu Ülke Baraj Kapaklarını Açtı", *Milliyet*, 28 April 2008 http://gundem.milliyet.com.tr/-/gundem/gundemdetay/28.04.2008/521878/default.htm (28 July 20013)

order to prevent this kind of problems. Common technical committee meetings about the water issue, which stopped in 1992, also restarted in 2007 by also continuing in 2008 and 2009. The sides declared their will for the solution of the water dispute with these meetings but because of Syria's claims over Hatay, the parties could not reach an agreement on the water of Orontes River until 2009.[672]

During the joint cabinet meetings of the high level strategic cooperation council, parties accepted further cooperation over the waters of these rivers and quality of these waters. In that sense, the strategic cooperation councils between Turkey and Syria had positive effects on cooperation attempts about the water issue. Both parties also re-expressed their will for a construction of friendship dam over Orontes River.[673] The sides also accepted cooperation over water of Tigris with 2009 Memorandum of Understanding as a result of the first high-level strategic cooperation council meeting.[674] With the participation of Erdoğan and Syrian Prime Minister Itri, the construction of Orontes Friendship dam started in 2011, which was an important and symbolic step to show their intention to overcome old problems between the two states.[675] With this project, the parties accepted to use the water of Orontes fifty-fifty.[676] However, with the start of the Arab Spring and deterioration of the bilateral relations, this common project was postponed.

In short, Turkey and Syria could not totally resolve the water problem because of the sui generis nature of the issue. On the other hand, as a result of the changing perception about the "Other", the water issue could not be an obstacle for the improvement of the relations. The parties at least in theory began to regard the issue as a technical one unlike the 1990s and this understanding helped ease the tension about the issue. In that sense, attempts for a solution of the dispute like the joint dam project over Orontes River are important indication of an increasing trust and positive identification between Turkey and Syria.

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[672] Tuğba Evrim Maden, "Ortadoğu için Örnek Bir İşbirliği: Türkiye-Suriye Asi Nehri Dostluk Barajı", *ORSAM*, 7 February 2011,http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/yazigoster.aspx?ID=1488 (17 July 2013)
[673] Maden, *Türkiye-Suriye İlişkilerinde Suyun Rolü*, p. 38
[674] Vakur Sümer, "TBMM'de Kabul Edilen Türkiye-Suriye Mutabakat Zaptı ve Dicle'de Yeni İşbirliği Dönemi", *ORSAM*, 29 March 2011, http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/SuKaynaklari/analizgundemgoster.aspx?ID=1682 (3 August 2013)
[675] "Utri ve Erdoğan Dostluk Barajının Temelini Attılar", *SANA*, 7 February 2011, http://sana.sy/tur/236/2011/02/07/330430.htm, (1 August 2013)
[676] Tuğba Evrim Maden, "Ortadoğu için Örnek Bir İşbirliği: Türkiye-Suriye Asi Nehri Dostluk Barajı", *ORSAM*, 7 February 2011,http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/yazigoster.aspx?ID=1488 (17 July 2013)

To sum up, we can claim that level of cooperation differentiated for the solution of core issues because of the different nature of each issue. In that sense, material reality prevented solution of these disputes. On the other hand, as a result of the changing perceptions of the parties about the "Other", or in other terms, as a result of ideational factors, Turkey and Syria tried to apply positive attitudes towards the core problems and tried to make more cooperation for the solutions. Therefore, level of cooperation differentiated for core disputes. For the status of Hatay, the parties could not find a solution. The sides generally preferred to be silent not to harm the bilateral relations, but positions of Turkey and Syria did not change towards the status of Hatay. Cooperation over the water issue gradually increased although the parties could not find a complete solution. In that sense, level of cooperation over the water issue was higher than cooperation over the status of Hatay. As a result of the increasing cooperation, Syria and Turkey began to take more responsibilities for the solution of the water dispute. Although the parties could not find a solution for the problem, during the 2000s the sides continued to show their good wills and tried to come up with joint projects. The most important cooperation area during the 2000s on the core problems was the cooperation against the PKK. Cooperation against the PKK began with the Adana Accords and with the overall trust, the level of cooperation also increased. Although the regional developments made cooperation reasonable for the parties, Syria and Turkey also did not want to injure the improving bilateral relations because of the PKK. In addition, the changing perception of Turkey about the nature of the issue and the potential risk or threat of the PKK for Syria also reinforced the cooperation process. In that sense, whereas Turkey protected its doubts about Syria-PKK relations until 2002, after 2002, both states increased the level of cooperation, which became one of the most successful examples for bilateral cooperation. On the other hand, interruption of the rapprochement process due to the Arab Spring also prevented further cooperation over the problems. As a result, a collective identity between the two countries could not be totally established and the core problems partially resurfaced.

Shortly, Turkey and Syria tried to solve their core disputes during the 2000s. Although the parties could not resolve these disputes as a result of their changing perceptions, both of them began to be more tolerable and cooperative. However, cooperation areas were not limited with the core issues. During the 2000s, cooperation in almost every area increased, which positively contributed to the transformation of the core issues. These cooperation areas resulted in a

positive process for the establishment of a collective identity although the Arab Spring destroyed this process. The rising interdependence via cooperation and belief of a common fate are two important determinants of the constructivist understanding for the establishment of a collective identity. In that sense, analyzing the increasing cooperation between the parties and the belief of a common destiny will show us the identity dimension of the bilateral relations.

4.2 **TRANSFORMATION OF OTHER INTO A FRIEND**

During the 2000s, the other began to turn into a friend for both parties and the bilateral relations witnessed the most cooperative era in this period. While the decrease of the tension between two countries is important after the Adana Accords, intention of the parties to improve relations is also important for this transformation. Therefore, on the one hand, the ideational factors made important effect over the transformation of core issues; on the other hand, gradually increasing cooperation during the 2000s positively affected the nature of the relations. At the end of the decade, as a result of the cooperative attitudes of the parties, the bilateral relations began to be described with a collective identity although the Arab Spring totally destroyed this process. However, besides the transformation of core issues in the eyes of the new foreign policy identities of both countries, increasing bilateral cooperation and similar stances towards the regional developments made positive effects over the relations. As a result of this process, believes about the common fate and destiny became much clearer and in some cases, Turkey began to be shown as a model for the transformation of Syria. Shortly, at the end of the decade, the distinction between the "Self" and the "Other" blurred and the enemy of the 1990s turned into a friend.

4.2.1 Increasing Cooperation and Interdependence

While the cooperation in political issues was limited at the beginning of the 2000s, economic cooperation was promising and the economic cooperation became the most important cooperation area during the 2000s. The economic relations were also directly related with the political relations. Because of this, the economic relations between the two states had been negatively affected by the political tensions during pre-1998 era. Turkey's amount of export to Syria decreased from $ 308 million in 1996 to $ 232 in 1999. On the other hand, Turkey's

amount of import from Syria decreased from $ 456 million in 1996 to $ 307 million in 1999[677] as a result of the October crisis in 1998. With the normalization of relations after the Adana Accords in 1998, the economic relations began to reach its peak. In addition to the normalization of relations, the economy had an importance place for both Syrian administration and the AKP rule. In that sense, the importance of economic interdependence in the foreign policy understanding of new government in Turkey made Syria a reasonable economy partner. On the other side, in order to solve economic problems and to integrate into world economy, Turkey was an important country for the new elite in Syria. They aimed reduction of rent-seeking corruption, economic liberalization and opening to the world market.[678] Turkey could also play an important role in linking Syria to the EU for an overland traffic as a part of Euro-Mediterranean partnership between Syria and Europe.[679] Because of this, Bashar Asad expressed Syria's pleasure about the offset of negotiations between Turkey and the EU and described Turkey as the link between Syria and the EU.[680] For the Syrian rule, with the membership of Turkey, Syria would be a neighbor of the European Union. Shortly, the new actors in both countries saw the economic development as the engine of modernization and this understanding made the economic relations central to both actors. As a result of the new understanding about the role of economy, both states tried to make new initiatives to increase further level of economic interaction during the 2000s. In that sense, besides the normalization of relations, the new initiatives made a huge impact on the economic relations, which created a kind of interdependence between the two countries.

In the aftermath of the October crisis, both states increased the level of economic interaction. In 1999, double taxation was abolished and mutual investment was encouraged and as a result of this, the volume of trade between Syria and Turkey reached $ 700 million.[681] After the Adana Accords, Turkey sent a minister of state to Syria in order to strengthen the Joint Economic Commission.[682] Turkey declared its aim to reach $ 1 billion for trade volume with

[677] İnançlı and Ak, p. 394
[678] Hinnebusch, *Globalization and Generational Change: Syrian Foreign Policy between Regional Conflict and European Partnership*, p. 195
[679] F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, **Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty**, Santa Monica: National Security Research Division (RAND), 2003, p.146
[680] Miş, *Suriye 2005*, p. 241
[681] Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, *Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler, 1990-2001*, p.567
[682] Kanat, p. 239

Syria in 2003.[683] In order to foster economic cooperation, during the 2000s, new agreements were signed between Syria and Turkey and these steps began to be shown as a model for the region. Turkey signed its first free trade agreement with Syria in the region in 2004,[684] which came into force in 2007. Enlargement of the US sanctions after Hariri assassination prevented further trade activities between two countries, but with the free trade agreement, the bilateral trade relations continued to improve. Turkey's export to Syria increased from $184 million in 1999 to $797 million in 2007 as a direct result of the free trade agreement.[685] In January 2007, bilateral trade development agreement entered into force, which aimed the removal of customs until 2019.[686] The two states also signed a partnership council protocol, which aimed to increase the volume of trade of both countries in 2008.[687] Trade volume between Syria and Turkey increased from $729 million in 2000 to $2.754 million in 2008.[688] Syria and Turkey also signed two agreements to regulate transportation of convicts and cooperate on legal and trade relations in 2009.[689] With these agreements, Syria removed $250 custom fee, which had been taken from Turkish trucks in Syrian border. In this way, the cost of transportation decreased around 25-30% for the Turkish carriers in 2009.[690] Foreign trade between the two states experienced a boom in 2010, which increased to $2500 million from $1750 million in 2009.[691] In 2010, Turkey earmarked $247 million for Syria in order to use for infrastructure projects. Moreover, at the end of the decade, Turkey's investment in Syria reached to $700 million.[692] In 2010, $70 million was invested to rehabilitate the railway line between Syria and Turkey.[693] As a result of the improving relations, the Syrian press began to define the bilateral relations as the strategic alliance in 2008.[694] In that sense, rising economic cooperation between Turkey and Syria derived not only from economic considerations, but also from a positive identification between the

[683] Çiğdem Toker, "Tüzmen'den Suriye'ye 'Meksika' Önerisi", *Hürriyet*, 2 February 2002, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=125502 (4 August 2013)
[684] Zengin, p. 224
[685] Özcan and Usul, p. 174
[686] Miş, *Suriye 2007*, p. 259
[687] Miş, *Suriye 2008*, p. 256
[688] Hale, *Turkey and the Middle East in the 'New Era'*, p. 152
[689] Miş, *Suriye 2009*, p. 213
[690] "Suriye'ye Yük Taşıyan Türk Araçlarına Vergi Müjdesi", *Milliyet*, 18 February 2009, http://ekonomi.milliyet.com.tr/suriye-ye-yuk-tasiyan-turk-araclarina-vergi-mujdesi/ekonomi/ekonomidetay/18.02.2009/1061180/default.htm (8 August 2013)
[691] Yetim, p. 260
[692] Kirişçi and Kaptanoğlu, p. 709
[693] Tür, p. 595
[694] "Suriye Basınında Esad'ın Türkiye Ziyareti", *Zaman*, 18 October 2007, http://www.zaman.com.tr/dunya_suriye-basininda-esadin-turkiye-ziyareti_602657.html (23 July 2013)

parties. As a result of the increasing economic interdependence, the distinction between the "Self" and the "Other" blurred and this contributed to the belief about a collective identity.

Another important cooperation area during the 2000s was energy. There were important steps taken to overcome the water dispute between the parties.[695] Another important development for the cooperation on energy was in natural gas and oil. In 2001, Turkey and Syria signed an agreement for the transportation of Egyptian natural gas. With this cooperation, Syria and Turkey aimed to transport Egyptian natural gas to Turkey via Syria. In order to realize this project, Syria also signed agreements with Jordan and Egypt in 2001.[696] Syria and Turkey with the contribution of Egypt accepted the construction of 3rd phase of the Arabian natural gas pipeline in 2008. Two countries also signed an agreement on cooperating on energy, capital markets, marine and aviation on January 2, 2008.[697] With this agreement, two states also aimed to construct a joint industry region in Syria. For further cooperation on oil, Syrian Prime Minister Itri announced the will of both parties to sign an agreement to establish joint oil companies in 2008 during the Turkish-Arab Economy Forum on June 12-13.[698] As a part of this will, the Syrian Ministry of Energy declared the establishment of a joint oil exploration company between Turkey and Syria on October 4, 2010, which would operate in 7 oil fields in Syria.[699] As a result of cooperation on oil, the Turkish oil company (TPIC) has been importing and exporting oil products and crude oil since 2008.[700] As a result of these steps, the economic relations witnessed a boom during the 2000s and helped with the positive identification between the parties. The economic cooperation also helped Turkey and Syria for further cooperation in other areas.

During the 2000s, both countries also increased the level of cooperation on security issues. Although cooperation against the PKK had important effects on cooperation on security[701], both states increased the level of security cooperation, which enabled the establishment of a mutual trust between the parties. In January 2002, the Syrian Chief of Staff paid a visit to Turkey for the

[695] For detailed information about the developments to overcome water dispute, see: Chapter 4
[696] İnançlı and Ak, p. 398
[697] Miş, *Suriye 2008*, p. 239
[698] Miş, *Suriye 2008*, p. 256
[699] "Türkiye Suriye'yi Yedi Koldan Fethedecek", *Taraf*, 5 October 2010, http://www.taraf.com.tr/haber/turkiye-suriye-yi-yedi-koldan-fethedecek.htm (25 July 2013)
[700] Arı and Prinççi, p. 10
[701] For detailed information about the cooperation against PKK, see: Chapter 4

first time in history and two states signed a military training cooperation agreement.[702] With this agreement, the parties accepted the exchange of military personals for training and education. In addition, eight meetings were held between the high level officials in order to increase the cooperation on security issues in 2002.[703] Both countries also agreed to cooperate on a number of issues like crime and terrorism with these agreements. As a part of the security cooperation, Syria extradited to Turkey 20 people who had connections with the bombings in synagogues and the British Bank in İstanbul in 2005.[704] Both states also increased the cooperation on military issues during 2009. Land forces of the two states made an exchange of border troops.[705] This military exercise is very crucial for the bilateral relations because it is not only the first military exercise between Syria and Turkey, but it is also the first exercise between Syria and a NATO member.[706] However, this military maneuver resulted in discontent for Israel and Israel described this exercise as a cause of concern.[707] In that sense, while Israel began to turn into the "Other" at the end of the decade, Syria turned into a friend, who was an enemy for Turkey during the 1990s. During the same year, two states signed a technical military cooperation agreement.[708] Both states also accepted not to support activities at the end of the decade, which could harm the stability and the order in the region. In that sense, the Syrian and Turkish military officials also continued further cooperation, which could contribute to the regional stability.

Cooperation on economy, energy and security began after the October crisis and gained momentum in the Bashar Asad period. Cooperation over these areas could be institutionalized with the increasing trust between the Asad administration and the AKP rule. This trust helped increase the level of cooperation and interaction on other areas. In that sense, after the AKP rule, the level of cooperation between the parties increased over other issues, especially societal issues after 2003. As a result of the sixth Turkish-Syrian protocol, two countries signed a number of agreements on economic sphere, tourism, duty-free trade and educational exchange in 2003.[709] As a part of this protocol, Turkey and Syria also tried to improve tourism between the two

[702] Nuri Yeşilyurt and Atay Akdevelioğlu, "Turkey's Middle East Policy under the JDP Rule", **The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations**, Vol. 40, (2009), p. 45
[703] Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, p. 399
[704] Bishku, p. 47
[705] Miş, *Suriye 2009*, p. 213
[706] Oytun Orhan, "Türkiye-Suriye Askeri Tatbikatı ve İsrail'in Rahatsızlığı", *ORSAM*, http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/yazigoster.aspx?ID=243
[707] Özcan and Usul, p. 178
[708] Arı and Prinççi, p. 11
[709] Murinson, p. 956

countries. Therefore, two countries came together for the 3rd Tourism Summit in Adana to define problems, increase the number of activities of Turkish tourism agencies in Syria, educate Syrian tourism agencies and increase tourism income in April 2006.[710] After the visit of Bashar Asad in 2004, agreements on industry and agriculture were signed and confidence-building measures about the borders were taken.[711] As a result of the improving relations, Turkey and Syria signed a memorandum of understanding for their cooperation on political, security, economic, energy and water issues in 2007.[712] Organizational and societal interactions also began to increase after the mid-2000s. During the visit of Turkish commission in Syria on December 19, 2008, both parties agreed on cooperation between TIKA and Syrian planning organization and development of technical cooperation.[713] During this visit, two parties also discussed the demining of the border between Turkey and Syria. In legal realm, two countries agreed to sign an agreement to solve the problem of compensation between Turkey and Syria. While the compensation problem was not a core problem for the bilateral relations, it contributed to the bilateral problems during the previous decades. Turkish property in Syria is estimated to be around $40 billion, while Syrian property in Turkey is estimated to be around $10 billion.[714] With this agreement, Turkey and Syria wanted to solve one of the historical problems between the two states. As a part of the economic relations, Turkish İşbank declared the opening of an office in Syria. As a result of the increasing cultural interactions, Anadolujet began the first flights between Ankara and Damascus three times a week. The Turkish president Abdullah Gül, (the ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs), also went to Damascus for the opening ceremony of "2008 Arabian Cultural Capital Damascus" to improve cultural cooperation.[715] As a part of the increasing cooperation and interaction, Abdullah Gül defined Syria as the door of the Middle East for Turkey and defined Turkey as the door of Europe for Syria during his visit in Syria in 2009. As a result of the increasing cultural interactions, Syrians who visited Turkey increased from 155.000 in 2003 to 510.000 in 2009. Around 750.000-1 million Syrians visited Turkey while 1.35-1.5 million Turks visited Syria during 2010.[716] In 2010, the number of entries from the Arab states was around 1.9 million.[717] In

[710] Miş, *Suriye 2006*, p. 305
[711] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 47
[712] "Suriye ile Beş Konuda Mutabakat Zaptı", *Zaman*, 17 November 2007, http://www.zaman.com.tr/dunya_suriye-ile-bes-konuda-mutabakat-zapti_602235.html (11 August 2013)
[713] Miş, *Suriye 2008*, p. 256
[714] Bishku, p. 47
[715] Miş, *Suriye 2008*, p. 254
[716] Bishku, p. 48

that sense, Syrians composed the major number of entries in 2010. With these attempts, in addition to the increasing cooperation, interaction between the two societies increased which helped with the positive identification between the two societies. As a consequence of the increasing level of cooperation, the bilateral relations reached its peak with the establishment of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council, which was described as the model for the region for the solution of historical enmities.

The bilateral relations witnessed the most important improvement in 2009 with the signing of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council Agreement in İstanbul on October 13, 2009,[718] and the first meeting of the joint council of ministers was held in Aleppo and Gaziantep on November in 2009. During the joint cabinet meeting, two countries also signed agreements in the areas of education, irrigation, transportation and commerce. According to this agreement, two states agreed on the establishment of a joint council of ministers, which would include the ministries of foreign affairs, energy, trade, public, defense, internal affairs and transportation.[719] During this meeting, Davutoğlu defined the bilateral relations as "common destiny, common history and common future" and expressed their aim as the full integration of the two countries. Aiming for a full integration with a neighbor was the first example throughout the Turkish history.[720] Removal of the visa requirement in 2009 was an important step for the full integration, which was defined as "Şamgen" of the Middle East by the Prime Minister Erdoğan.[721] As a consequence of this meeting, Turkey and Syria signed more than 50 agreements, MoUs and cooperation protocols in 2009.[722] With this meeting, both countries also accepted to conduct other's formal and bureaucratic procedures in third countries if Syria or Turkey does not have a diplomatic mission in these countries. As a result of positive consequences of this initiative, both states wanted to expand this initiative to the neighboring states. In that sense, high-level quartet cooperation agreement, which aimed for free movement of people and goods and to increase the level of the cooperation in the political, economic and

[717] Kirişçi, *Turkey's Engagement with Its Neighborhood: A 'Synthetic' and Multidimensional Look at Turkey's Foreign Policy Transformation*, p. 322
[718] Birgül Demirtaş, p. 111
[719] Miş, *Suriye 2009*, p. 221
[720] Birgül Demirtaş, p. 116
[721] Kirişçi and Kaptanoğlu, p. 713
[722] Miş, *Suriye 2009*, p. 225

cultural areas, was signed among Syria, Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon on June 10, 2010.[723] With this agreement, the parties aimed to increase welfare and economic stability in the region and Turkey expected to double its trade with these countries.[724] The Foreign Minister of Syria Muallem said that the relationship between Syria and Turkey became a model for the region and this model became a source of inspiration for other countries, which took part in the cooperation among Syria, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.[725] With this attempt, both states aimed to expand free trade area to the East Mediterranean region and wanted to remove trade restrictions and visa requirements with Lebanon and Jordan. In this way, between Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, a free trade zone could be established, described as Middle Eastern Union,[726] which could contribute to the regional peace in the long run.[727] The second high-level strategic cooperation council meeting held on December 20-21, 2010 in Ankara with the participation of 13 ministers from each side.[728] During this meeting, 11 additional agreements were signed, which were related to the demining, security, energy and economic cooperation.[729] During these meetings, Davutoğlu showed this initiative as the model for the region. He argued that if this model were to be successful, other states of the region could follow the same path.[730] Negotiation process of Turkey with the EU since 2005 was seen as a good example for these initiatives by Syria. 70% of the Syrian society expressed that Turkey's EU membership process would increase the role of Turkey in the Middle East.[731] On the other hand, taking part in similar initiatives with the help of Turkey would help Syria to become a part of the international society. These kinds of steps also helped parties take common stances towards the regional developments. In addition to these, Turkey tried to motivate Syria for being a more responsible actor in the region. Syria also helped Turkey for Turkey's international problems like Cyprus issue. In that sense, besides improving

[723] Mazen Eyon, "Political declaration for high-level cooperation Council among Syria, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan… al-Moallem… the Council is nucleus, open to all friendly countries", *SANA*, 12 June 2010, http://sana.sy/eng/25/2010/06/12/292525.htm, (1 August 2013)
[724] Tür, p. 597
[725] **The Middle East Reporter**, "Syria-Turkey", 4 October 2010, p. 6
[726] "Türkiye'nin Hayali Ortadoğu Birliği" *Milliyet*, 16 March 2010, http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/-turkiye-nin-hayali-ortadogu-birligi-/dunya/dunyadetay/16.03.2010/1212184/default.htm (3 August 2013)
[727] Kirişçi, *Turkey's Engagement with Its Neighborhood: A 'Synthetic' and Multidimensional Look at Turkey's Foreign Policy Transformation*, p. 319
[728] Dinc and Yetim, p. 261
[729] Bishku, p. 48
[730] **"**Syria, Turkey, Deepening Cooperation and Coordination, Signing Number of Protocols, Executive Programs and Understanding Memos", *SANA*, 3 October 2010, http://sana.sy/eng/21/2010/10/03/311143.htm, (3 August 2013)
[731] Akgün, Senyücel Gündoğar and Perçinoğlu, *Orta Doğu'da Türkiye Algısı*, p.25

bilateral relations, the parties began to apply similar views towards the international developments and both of them wanted to ease other's problems.

4.2.2 Increasing Cooperation towards Regional Developments

The most important regional development during the 2000s was the US intervention in Iraq, which had catastrophic effects on the politics of region. With this intervention, both Turkey and Syria began to voice similar concerns about the new situation. Besides the ambiguity of US plans, the future of Iraq also raised similar questions for Turkey and Syria. Turkey wanted to prevent alienation in the region by taking part in the war. Turkey came up with the solution that the increasing level of cooperation with Middle Eastern states would end crisis without an armed struggle. In that sense, cooperation with the neighbors of Iraq became one of the main policies for Turkey and this new perception promoted an inevitable cooperation with Syria.

Reluctance of the USA for taking action against the PKK also widened the gap between Turkey and the USA. The USA wanted to use the cooperation against the PKK to get help from Turkey for the stability of Iraq and use military bases for Afghanistan and Iraqi operations.[732] The USA also asked for Turkey's cooperation against Syria and Iran in order to help Turkey with the PKK problem, but the isolation policy towards Syria and Iran clashed with the policy of zero-problem with neighbors of Turkey and this created deadlocks for the bilateral relations. During the 2000s, Turkey preferred engagement with the problematic actors of the USA and did not share the US goals to isolate Syria, Iran and Hamas.[733] On the other hand, the USA wanted to prevent risks, which could increase the level of instability in Iraq with struggles against the PKK.[734] Northern Iraq was the most stable region of Iraq, and because of this, any problems with the Kurdish population would also weaken the hands of the USA in Iraq. Iraqi and the US officials needed the contribution of the Kurdish population to sustain stability in Iraq whereas Turkey tried to put pressure on Iraq and the US to take actions against the PKK, which could harm relations between the USA and the Kurdish population of Iraq. In addition to these, Turkey paid attention to the territorial integrity of Iraq; otherwise, it could create a kind of Israeli-

[732] İnat, *Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikası 2005*, p. 14
[733] Özcan and Usul, p. 162
[734] Serkan Demirtaş ve Hilal Köylü, "Rice'a Söz Yok", *Radikal*, 26 April 2006, http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=185542 (3 August 2013)

Palestinian effect in the region.[735] Therefore, the territorial integrity of Iraq became one of the most important priorities of Turkey's Iraqi policy. In that sense, American desire to establish a looser federative structure in Iraq was not welcomed by Turkey. Shortly, the USA and Turkey shared limited common goals about the situation in Iraq and this forced Turkey to look for new allies in the region. As a result of the divergence between the USA and Turkey about Iraq, Syria and Iran became irresistible partners for Turkey for the future of Iraq. Besides this, new foreign policy line of Turkey also rejected isolation of the problematic actors in the region. Therefore, the engagement with the region also made Syria an important partner in the Middle East.

For Syria, the US invasion in Iraq removed the constructive engagement policies of the US of the 1990s[736] and the US policy was reduced to demands and threats rather than negotiation and bargaining in the region. Threatening language was also adopted against Syria. For the USA, pacification of Syria, that has doubts in supporting terrorist organizations in the region, gained priority. In addition, the removal of anti-American regimes was also important for US Middle Eastern policies, and in that sense, besides Iraq and Iran, Syria was seen as the target of the USA in the new era.[737] During the 2000s, Syria as "state sponsors of terrorism" became an important target for the Bush administration. Increasing intolerance towards terrorism in the USA produced more hostile environment for Syria because of Syria's close relations with Palestinian groups and Hezbollah. The fall of Ba'athist regime in Iraq and the US presence in the Middle East also increased pressure on Syria. In that sense, Syria began to feel encirclement by the USA during the 2000s. The USA became one of the important threats for Syria. According to 2010 TESEV public poll, 25% of Syrian society defined the USA as the biggest threat in the region.[738] Under these circumstances, US intervention in Iraq forced Syria to close the gap with the western world, and because of this, Syria had to follow more pragmatic understanding in terms of relations with the West.[739] As a result, Turkey became an important partner for Syria to minimize negative effects of the US presence in the region. In addition, similar concerns and fears about the future of Iraq also pushed Syria to cooperate more with Turkey over Iraq issue.

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[735] Fikret Bila "Gül: Irak Bölünürse Büyük Kargaşa Çıkar", *Milliyet*, 9 January 2006, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2006/01/09/yazar/bila.html (9 July 2013)
[736] Oktav, pp. 102-103
[737] Giray Saynur Bozkurt, "11 Eylül Sonrası ABD'nin Yeni Güvenlik Politikasında Ortadoğu", in Kemal İnat and Ali Balcı (Ed.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2005**, (405-418), Ankara: Nobel Press, 2006, p. 410
[738] Akgün, Senyücel Gündoğar, Levack and Perçinoğlu, *Ortadoğu'da Türkiye Algısı 2010*, p.17
[739] Aras and Koni, p. 58

As a result of these developments, Iraqi problem became the main concern of both states during the 2000s. Although there had been similar concerns of Syria and Turkey about Iraq, mistrust between them prevented the long-lasting cooperation. With the increasing trust between Syria and Turkey after 1998, both of them could coordinate their actions against the situation in Iraq. Both countries came closer about the issue of Iraq. With the removal of obstacles, both states increased the level of cooperation. Because of this, Syria and Turkey were two of the states to send humanitarian aid to Iraq after the removal of embargo in 1999.[740] The US intervention in Iraq in 2003 created different dimensions for the issue. After the invasion, both states began to worry about the policies of the USA. In addition to these, Syria began to be seen as the next target of the region. Fears about the disintegration of Iraq and the potential Kurdish state helped with the rapprochement between two states, and Syria and Turkey continuously reemphasized the importance of the preservation of the territorial integrity of Iraq to show similar concerns of both states to Iraq. [741] Syria also expressed its impressions about the rejection of the USA by Turkey about the Iraq War. In that sense, finding an ally for the rejection of the intervention was important for Syria and this rejection totally removed doubts about Turkey being an ally with the USA in the war. Whereas the USA wanted to increase pressure over Syria, Turkey's approach was aligned with the EU's engagement approach towards Syria during the 2000s resulting in more cooperation. Especially during and after the Iraqi crisis in 2003, communication between two states increased and the increasing level of interaction helped with the inter-communal and economic interactions.

Problem of Iraq continued to be the central issue for the cooperation between two countries after mid-2000s and both of them began to make more emphasis on the situation in Iraq. In 2004, during the visit of Farouk Al-Sharaa- former minister of foreign affairs of Syria, he expressed that Turkey and Syria had similar views and common concerns about the situation of Iraq.[742] Especially after 2007, Syria's help over Iraq became more important for Turkey because of the deadlock with the EU after 2006 and tense relations with the USA over Iraq.[743] Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem visited Turkey in order to exchange views about the situation in Iraq and expressed the sharing common concerns with Turkey about the future of Iraq in 2007.

[740] Uçarol, p. 1027
[741] Murinson, p. 956
[742] "Suriyeli Bakan Irak için Geldi", *Milliyet*, 9 November 2004, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/suriyeli-bakan-irak-icin-geldi/siyaset/haberdetayarsiv/09.11.2004/94266/default.htm (5 August 2013)
[743] Parlar Dal, p. 250

During the visit of Babacan as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Walid Muallem reemphasized the importance of having similar views about the regional developments and pointed out the increasing cooperation on Iraq issue.[744] As a consequence of Turkey's attitude, Bashar Asad praised the role of Turkey in the region and attempts of Turkey to solve crisis in Iraq in 2005.

However, at the end of the decade, the issue of Iraq gained another dimension with the deterioration of the relations between Syria and Iraq, which began to improve with the Bashar Asad period. Iraqi government accused Syria of playing a role in bomb attacks in Iraq in 2009 and this accusation increased the tension between Syria and Iraq. However, Turkey wanted to prevent any crisis between the neighbors, which could harm Turkey's position in the region. For Turkey, developing relations between all parties should continue and this crisis should not harm the developing relations. In that sense, Turkey performed a conciliatory role to solve the problems between two states. With the start of crisis, Turkey applied phone diplomacy between two states and requested from both states not to increase tension. As a part of proactive diplomacy understanding, Davutoğlu paid visits to Iraq and Syria and discussed with the high level officials from both countries.[745] While Iraqi and Syrians discussed the problem two times in September 2009, the parties could not reach an agreement about the solution of the problem. However, Turkey's efforts prevented the escalation of problems, which could harm the improving relations between three states.

In addition to Iraq issue, Turkey also played a facilitator role between Syria and Saudi Arabia, which could contribute to the solution of problems of Syria and increase the effectiveness of Turkey in the region. On the other hand, one of the most ambitious mediator roles of Turkey was between Syria and Israel who had long-lasting enmity. In that sense, Turkey also tried to take part in the solution of Syria's problem with other countries. Turkey offered its good offices for the mediation between Israel and Syria after the Bashar Asad's visit to Turkey.[746] Turkey could start indirect talks between Syria and Israel after eight years with the demand of both states in 2008.[747] Restart of the peace talks with Israel was the most important regional development for Syria to break the international isolation. In that sense, restart of the talk by Syria's initiative, in addition to the will to meet traditional conditions of Syria, it also

[744] Miş, *Suriye 2007*, p. 257
[745] Miş, *Suriye 2009*, p. 236
[746] Perthes, *Syria under Bashar Al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*, p. 47
[747] Zengin, p. 225

aimed to break isolation, which began after Hariri assassination, and decrease the pressure of the USA. By means of the peace with Israel, Syrian administration was able to concentrate on domestic reform process and economic recovery. Therefore, besides the international considerations, the domestic considerations also made the peace talks rational for the Syrian rule.

Peace with Israel was one of the top priorities of the Syrian regime. With the improvement of relations between Turkey and Syria, Turkey became an important actor for Syria for the restart of the peace talks. In that sense, Haddam expressed that Syria sent a message to Israel via Turkey in 2004 for the restart of the peace talks.[748] Turkey's role for the start of talks was praised by two states and indirect talks between Israel and Syria began in İstanbul under the oversight of Turkey with the chairmanship of Ahmet Davutoğlu on May 21, 2008. The mediation role of Turkey between two states was interpreted as increasing effectiveness and reliability of Turkey in the Middle East. The second round of indirect talks was held in İstanbul on June 15-16 and third round of talks continued on July 1-3, 2008. After the third talk, Turkey declared that the negotiations would continue about the issues of borders, water rights, security and the normalization of relations. The fourth round of talks was held on July 28-30, 2008. After the fourth round, Asad praised Turkey for its effort for the construction of peace and declared his faith in Turkey's credibility with these talks. Syrian and Israeli leaders also talked with the mediation of Erdoğan during the Unity for Mediterranean, which was led by Sarkozy in 2008.[749] However, indirect talks were interrupted at the same year after Israel's attacks on Gaza with the beginning of the Operation Cast Lead.[750] While Erdoğan highly criticized the attitude of Israel during these operations, these critiques created a kind of mistrust between Israel and Turkey, which would result in decreasing credibility for Syrian-Israeli peace talks in the following years. On the other hand, Israeli attacks on Gaza increased further cooperation between two Turkey and Syria on regional developments. Erdoğan went to Damascus to talk and cooperate with Syria in order to stop Israel's attacks on Gaza on December 31, 2008.[751] Syria expressed its desire to restart peace talks with Israel in 2009, which was corrupted by the attacks of Israel on Gaza in 2008. Syria rejected the proposal of France for mediation in 2009 and wanted Turkey to continue

[748] "İsraile Gül Aracılığıyla Barış Mesajı Gönderdik", *Milliyet,* 19 February 2004, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/israile-gul-araciligiyla-baris-mesaji-gonderdik/siyaset/haberdetayarsiv/19.02.2004/27028/default.htm (4 August 2013)
[749] Miş, *Suriye 2008*, p. 241
[750] Salem, p. 2
[751] **"**President al-Assad and Erdogan Discuss the Dangerous Situation in Gaza Strip", *SANA*, 31 December 2008**,** http://sana.sy/eng/21/2008/12/31/pr-206861.htm, (1 August 2013)

its mediation role. Bashar Asad said that Syrian society trusts Turkey and any agreement with Israel with the help of Turkey could be explained easier to Syrian society.[752] For Bashar Asad, "there is unconditional trust between Turkey and Syria both at political level and between two societies"[753]. While Syria wanted Turkey for the mediation role, Israel described Turkey as not being objective towards the issue. However, Bashar Asad rejected these claims of Israel about Turkey's objectiveness towards the problem and said that Israel is afraid of Turkey's objective language and viewpoint.[754] On the other hand, Asad also accepted the difficulty of the mediation of Turkey after the deterioration of relations between Turkey and Israel.[755] Loss of neutrality between the parties or being a direct part of conflicts injured the mediation role of Turkey. However, in 2010, Muallem also expressed Syria's desire for the mediation of Turkey for indirect talks and described Turkey as the honest broker.[756] At the end, the deteriorated relations between Israel and Turkey prevented this role for Turkey. As related to Israel, both states also increased their level of cooperation towards the Palestinian issue. Although Syria historically claimed to be the protector of Palestinians and their rights, Turkey's sensibility towards the Palestinian issue increased during the 2000s. This rising sensibility towards the issue within the AKP government and Turkish society created obstacles for the relations with Israel, on one hand, but on the other hand, it became one of the cooperation areas between Syria and Turkey.

Both states especially increased their efforts for the solution of the Gaza problem in 2009 right after the crisis between Palestinians and Israel. Prime Minister Erdoğan paid a visit to Syria after the Israeli attacks on Gaza in order to take joint measures against these attacks. After the visit of Walid Muallem to Turkey in 2009, he expressed Syria's desire to combine the efforts for the Gaza problem. In that sense, the Gaza problem increased the level of cooperation on the regional developments. Erdoğan's attitude towards Israeli President Peres in Davos was shown as an example for the Arab leaders and increased the popularity of Turkey in the eyes of Syrian society.[757] This reaction was seen as a reaction of a trusted ally by Syria. Therefore, during Sarkozy's visit to Syria for Gaza problem, Sarkozy wanted a Turkish official to be a part of the

[752] Zengin, p. 281
[753] Arı and Prinççi, p. 10
[754] "Türkiye Objektif, İsrail'in İstemediği Bu", *Yeni Şafak*, 23 December 2009, http://yenisafak.com.tr/dunya-haber/turkiye-objektif-israilin-istemedigi-bu-24.12.2009-230683 (10 August 2013)
[755] **"**Suriye-İspanya İlişkileri Sağlamdır... Başta Golan Olmak Üzere Haklar Alınmadan Barış Sağlanamaz", *SANA*, 7 July 2010, http://sana.sy/tur/283/2010/07/05/296838.htm, (5 August 2013)
[756] **The Middle East Reporter**, "Syria-Turkey", 4 October 2010, p. 7
[757] Zengin, p. 234

meetings and Turkey sent Ahmet Davutoğlu to these negotiations.[758] With joint efforts of Turkey and Syria, Hamas was convinced of a ceasefire after Israel.[759] In that sense, Turkey and Syria moved together towards Hamas-Israeli dispute. This joint action towards this problem increased the prestige of Turkey within Syrian society. According to 2009 public opinion poll, 77% of Syrian society gave a support to Turkey for talking about the problems of Muslim World. This support was the highest support among Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Syria. The same research also concluded that 86% of Syrian society supported Turkey's mediation role between Israel and Palestine. 82% of Syrian society emphasized the Turkey's positive role for the regional peace and 82% of Syrian society, supported Turkey to play a greater role in the Arab World.[760] Bashar Asad also emphasized the potential role of Turkey for the fair and inclusive peace in the Middle East. In that sense, Syrian administration emphasized Turkey's role for the solution of the Palestinian problem, which was also supported by the Syrian society. Shortly, Turkey's growing influence in the region was not only supported in governmental level in Syria. It was also supported in societal level, which made cooperation much easier for the parties. Besides the common stances towards the regional developments, both states tried to ease pressure on the other state in times of crises. Especially, Turkish attitude towards Syria after the Rafic Hariri assassination relaxed the hands of Syria within the international politics and provided lifeline to Syria. On the other hand, Syria's attitude towards Northern Cyprus relaxed Turkey, which became unsolvable after the interruption of talks.

Hariri assassination in 2005 negatively affected the Syrian administration and increased the international pressure on Syria. After this assassination, western powers increased their discontent about Syria and wanted isolation of Syria from the international society. Turkey's attitude towards Syria became the subject of wonder among the international society. After the increasing isolation of Syria, Syria needed help from the actor of the western camp. With the increasing cooperation with Turkey, which is the part of the western camp, Syria wanted to break isolation in the region. Turkey continued to warm bilateral relations after the assassination of Rafic Hariri in 2005. Although the US declared their concerns about the attitude of Turkey towards Syria after Hariri issue, the Turkish President of that time, Ahmet Necdet Sezer did not

[758] Miş, *Suriye 2009*, p. 211
[759] Zengin, p. 279
[760] Akgün, Senyücel Gündoğar and Perçinoğlu, *Orta Doğu'da Türkiye Algısı*, p.18

cancel his visit to Syria.[761] Ignoring the US' suggestions resulted in diplomatic crisis between the USA and Turkey,[762] but Sezer's visit, which was supported by the AKP government, was welcomed by the Syrian administration, media and society,[763] and was seen as a crucial development to break isolation of Syria by the Syrian officials.[764] While Turkey was criticized because of this act, government defended itself like that Turkey could not be passive towards the regional developments. Turkey should play a crucial role for the regional peace for the AKP government.[765] For Turkey, the isolation or polarization would contribute to increase the level of tension. In that sense, political dialogue was accepted as the solution of the crisis. In this way, Turkey tried to increase its influence in the region. Turkey did not totally share the concerns of the USA about Syria for Lebanon issue. Turkey saw Syria as crucial to decrease the tension in the region because of Syria's special relations with Iran, non-state actors of region, effectiveness in Lebanon and position within the Arab-Israeli conflict. Turkey's rejection about the isolation of Syria was also welcomed by the Syrian side. Turkey's this positive attitude towards Syria also helped with the transformation of Turkey's image in the eyes of Syrians from being collaborator of the West to a friendly country that takes Syria's concerns seriously. Syria began to see Turkey as the key for the integration in international system and Turkey's attitude resulted in greater cooperation.

Turkey suggested Syria to recognize the results of the election in Lebanon, which resulted in an anti-Syrian government and suggested Syria to withdraw its forces from Lebanon.[766] Moreover, in October 2005, the Turkish foreign minister paid a visit to Syria in order to suggest Syria to help the UN with the solution of the Hariri assassination.[767] Therefore, Turkey tried to materialize its soft power and friendship with Syria by convincing them on the Lebanon crisis. As a part of Lebanon issue, Syria also allowed the deployment of Turkish troops to Lebanon as a part of the UN forces in 2006.[768] Presence of the UN forces was not welcomed by the Syrian

[761] "Suriye'ye Elbette Gideceğim", *Hürriyet*, 17 March 2005, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=304519 , (4 August 2013)
[762] Robins, *Turkish Foreign Policy since 2002: between a 'post-Islamist' Government and a Kemalist State*, p. 296
[763] Murinson, p. 956
[764] Arı and Prinççi, p. 9
[765] Serkan Demirtaş, "Şam'a Acil Mesaj Var", *Radikal*, 17 November 2005, http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=170263 (6 August 2013)
[766] Oğuzlu, *Soft-Power in Turkish Foreign Policy*, p. 93
[767] Utku Çakırözer, "Sonunuz Irak gibi Olmasın", *Milliyet*, 17 November 2005, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/11/17/siyaset/siy03.html (1 August 2013)
[768] "Gül: Bölgeye Dışarıdan Müdahale Fayda Etmez", *Hürriyet*, 22 August, 2006, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=4962138 (4 August 2013)

administration. Therefore, moderate attitude of Syria towards Turkish troops can be seen as a result of the increasing trust between the parties. Syria also wanted Turkey's help to stop conflict in the region in August 2006 between Hezbollah and Israel.[769] In that sense, Syria's positive attitude towards Turkey was described as the result of the positive relations between two states. During Erdoğan's visit, Asad expressed that both states have common views on the regional issues about the support for Turkey's efforts to restore the peace in the region in 2006.[770] On the other side, Turkey emphasized the positive role of Syria to solve Lebanon crisis between Israel and Palestinian militants in Lebanon in 2006. As a response to this expression, Asad expressed that both states besides the bilateral relations also cooperate on regional problems.[771] Shortly, these developments began to be shown as a model for the region in general and Syria in particular.

Attempts for solving the problems with peaceful means between two adversaries were seen as the positive developments for the actors in the region. While Turkey helped Syria break the international pressure after Hariri assassination, the rapprochement between Syria and Turkey also helped with the breakdown of isolation on Northern Cyprus. Syrian business people visited Northern Cyprus in 2007, which was the first visit of an Arab state to Northern Cyprus.[772] The same year, ferries between Latakia in Syria and Mogasa in Northern Cyprus began, which caused Southern Cyprus' diplomatic reaction by giving nota. [773] With these developments, Turkey could find an ally in Cyprus issue, which became one of the most important problems of Turkish foreign policy. On the other hand, the Turkish model began to be seen effective for Syria's transformation. In that sense, the bilateral relations began to be shown as an example for the region and Turkey's political and economic transformation process during the 2000s began to be seen as a model for Syria, which also aimed transformation with the Bashar Asad rule. With the increasing positive identification, Syrian intellectuals and in some cases, Syrian administration expressed their admiration about the transformation of Turkey. In that sense, the distinction between Syria and Turkey blurred, Syrians began to follow Turkey's transformation and as a

[769] Miş, *Suriye 2007*, p. 292
[770] Aras and Polat, p. 510
[771] Aras and Polat, p. 511
[772] "Suriye Heyetinin Ziyareti Büyük Önem Taşıyor", *Zaman*, 23 March 2007, http://www.zaman.com.tr/ekonomi_suriye-heyetinin-kktc-ziyareti-buyuk-onem-tasiyor_517807.html (3 August 2013)
[773] Zengin, p. 376

result of the increasing interdependence, the common fate between two societies began to be discussed.

4.2.3 Positive Identification and Belief about Common Fate

During the 2000s, Syria closely followed the reform process in Turkey and Turkey began to be shown as a model in Syria.[774] In that sense, the reform process in Turkey also became a part of the soft power of Turkey[775], which had indirect effects on the Syrian politics. In Turkey, the conservative Islamic party came to power in democratic ways and secular character of the state continued. In addition to this, as a consequence of EU membership process, Turkey could initiate reform process and this yielded to democratization in the country. These political developments in Turkey began to be shown as a model for Middle Eastern countries by intellectual circles.[776] Therefore, political transformation in Turkey indirectly affected and motivated Syria during the 2000s and this helped with the positive identification. Turkey began to be seen as a role model for Syria not only for the ruling power but also for different political and social groups. Especially, the integration of the Islamist groups into the political life set an example for Syrian rule in Syria. Arab Islamism reacted against the long-term erosion of Islam's primacy over the social, economic and political life in Syria and this reaction created the most important obstacle for the domestic stability in Syria.[777] In that sense, integration of the Islamist groups was very crucial for the Syrian administration. On the other hand, for the Islamists of Syria, Turkey could be an example to increase the political power by peaceful means. In addition to these, the leftists, who traditionally hate Turkey because of its pro-western stance, could take the democratization process as an example. According to 2009 TESEV opinion poll, 72% of the Syrian society defined Turkey as the potential model for the region. The average of the region was 62%. In that sense, the belief about the Turkish model in Syria was higher in the region. Moreover, the same opinion poll concluded that 72% of the Syrian society saw Turkey as a successful combination of Islam and democracy.[778] In that sense, the conservative democracy or in other words, post-Islamist understanding which combines secularism and Islam[779] was began

[774] Aras and Polat, p. 510
[775] Perthes, *Turkey's Role in the Middle East: An Outsider Perspective,* p.7
[776] Öniş, *Turkey and the Arab Spring: Between Ethics and Self-Interest,* p. 55
[777] Al-Azm, p. 634
[778] Akgün, Senyücel Gündoğar and Perçinoğlu, *Orta Doğu'da Türkiye Algısı*, p.22
[779] Kalın, *Debating Turkey in the Middle East: The Dawn of a New Geo-Political Imagination?,* p. 92

to be described as the ideal structure for all the big groups in Syria by the Syrian intellectuals.[780] The success of Turkish model was also emphasized by the Syrian rule. Asma Asad came to Turkey as a guest of Emine Erdoğan for the summit of Turkish Business Women Association to increase the inter-communal interactions and economic relations.[781] Asma Asad during the visit said that the Syrians have been taking Turkey as an example for reforms and women's rights.[782] Bashar Asad also expressed that Turkey is a model of investment for economic development because of the similarities between societies and traditions.[783] In that sense, Asad reemphasized the importance of Turkey as a model for the development of Syria. While some of these declarations are symbolic, these movements are important to show the changing discourse. With the help of these developments, negative image of Turkey in the eyes of the Syrians totally changed at the end of the decade. According to 2009 TESEV public opinion poll, 87% of the Syrian society had positive thoughts about Turkey, which was the highest rate in the region together with the Palestinian society.[784] The same opinion poll concluded that 86% of the Syrian society described the attitude of Turkey towards Syria as friendly. This rate was also above the average of the region. In that sense, while Turkey's relations with the Arab states were positive during the 2000s, relations with Syria were much more positive. As a result of Turkey's increasing influence in the region, according to 2009 TESEV research, 81% of Syrian participants had positive thoughts about the rising influence of Turkey within the Arab politics.

As a consequence of these developments, the distinction between the "Self" and the "Other" blurred and the beliefs about the common future for both parties increased. In that sense, the cooperation between the parties was not merely on the material gains. Increasing cooperation and interdependence resulted in a kind of collective identity. In that sense, the narrowing gap between Syria and Turkey began to be addressed by both parties, which had been impossible during the previous decades. In that sense, the belief about the common future, which is the central tenet of constructivism for the establishment of the collective identity, provides us important clues about the identity dimension of the relations.

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[780] Al-Azm, p. 640
[781] Miş, *Suriye 2006*, p. 304
[782] Ferai Tunç, "Baskıya Meydan Okuyor", *Hürriyet*, 29 April 2006, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=4334693 (3 August 2013)
[783] Bishku, p. 48
[784] Akgün, Senyücel Gündoğar and Perçinoğlu, *Orta Doğu'da Türkiye Algısı*, p.11

During the 2000s, both parties began to remove the distinction between the "Self" and the "Other" as a result of the increasing cooperation and trust. Discourses of both parties towards the "Other" radically changed during the first decade of 2000s in comparison to 1990s. Increasing trust between Turkey and Syria also positively contributed to the relations. After the establishment of the Syrian state in 1948, none of the Syrian presidents visited Turkey until 2004.[785] In that sense, the visit of Bashar Asad to Turkey in 2004 was a symbolic development for the bilateral relations. Asad defined the bilateral relations during his visit as a shift from an atmosphere of distrust to trust.[786] Bashar Asad realized that Turkish-Syrian relations were better than Syrian-Arab relations.[787] This kind of expression by the Syrian President, one of the important actors of Arab nationalism, was very crucial to realize the positive identification between two states. Syrian President Bashar Asad also went for a holiday for the first time in 2008 in Turkey. While this holiday was a symbolic act, it had two important dimensions. The first one was that the holiday outside Syria showed the changing mentality of the Syrian rule and Bashar Asad. The second one was that Asad's holiday in Turkey showed the trust of the Syrian leader to Turkey. This kind of an act was impossible during the 1990s. In addition to these, the violation of Turkey's airspace by Israel in 2007 created discontent within Syrian rule, but Muallem expressed that Syria would not let bilateral relations be harmed and they also expressed their trust in the information given by Turkish officials related to the use of air space by Israel.[788] This kind of attitude by Syria was almost impossible during the 1990s. Muallem also described that after this crisis Turkey and Syria were the only ones who showed their trust to each other. Bashar Asad's declarations about the cooperation against the PKK also showed us the increasing belief about the common future. Bashar Asad declared his support for Turkey's decision of war against the PKK during his visit in Turkey in 2007 and defined his support as the decision of Syrian society.[789] More importantly, Bashar Asad defined that loss of one side would also be the loss of the other side in this war. In that sense, Bashar Asad like Walid Muallem in his discourse removed the differentiation between the "Self" and the "Other". Bashar Asad for the first time in 2009 also defined bilateral relations as strategic partnership,[790] which was also seen as an

[785] Zengin, p. 220
[786] Aras and Polat, p. 509
[787] Zengin, p. 220
[788] "Babacan: Türkiye Suriye'ye Yönelik Saldırıya İzin Vermez", *Radikal*, 8 October 2007, http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=235125 (27 July 2013)
[789] Miş, *Suriye 2007*, p. 257
[790] Miş, *Suriye 2009*, p. 215

important variable for the construction of the collective identity by the constructivist approach. Turkish discourse towards Syria also dramatically changed during the 2000s. During the first High Level Strategic Cooperation Council, Davutoğlu defined bilateral relations as "common destiny, common history and common future" and expressed the aim as the full integration of two countries. Davutoğlu as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs also described developments between Syria and Turkey as the "two states, one government" and defined this period as the golden age for the bilateral relations.[791] The motto "two peoples, one state" became important to describe the high level cooperation between two countries.[792] Davutoğlu also defined bilateral cooperation as beyond the existing cooperation models during the Second High Level Strategic Cooperation Council.[793] He defined the bilateral relations as "a model of progress for the rest of the region"[794]. In 2010, Syria's deputy vice president Hassan Turkmani described the relations as exemplary and Davutoğlu defined two societies as brotherly peoples.[795] Under these circumstances, the bilateral relations were described as the ideal partnership, which could remove the artificial borders between two communities.[796] With the removal of the artificial border, the "othering" would lose its meaning for the parties.[797] These developments were identified with French-German relations in post-World War II and were seen as the important steps for the economic, cultural and social integrations.[798]

To sum up, after the expulsion of Abdullah Öcalan from Syria, Syria and Turkey cooperated on the wide range of issues from tourism to trade, from investment to security. As a peak point of relations, both states abolished visa requirement, established free trade zones and made joint military maneuvers during the 2000s. Similar attitudes towards the regional developments like US intervention in Iraq, perceptions about the Palestinian groups, reactions against Israel's operations in the region showed the closing gap between two countries and the occurrence of the positive identification, which was seen as impossible during the 1990s. However, this positive identification came to an end with the start of the Arab Spring, which had a huge effect on the region. Arab Spring, which can be defined as critical juncture for the actors

[791] Zengin, p. 220
[792] Barkey, *Turkish Foreign Policy and the Middle East*, p. 11
[793] Arı and Prinççi, p. 11
[794] Tür, p. 595
[795] **The Middle East Reporter**, "Syria-Turkey", 4 October 2010, p. 7
[796] Özcan and Usul, p. 174
[797] Warning and Kardaş, p. 127
[798] Zengin, pp. 220-221

of the region, created a kind of identity crisis for the Syrian identity. On the other hand, Turkey began to apply more assertive policies in the region after the Arab Spring, which resulted in the widening gap between the two states. However, we also should mention that the AKP government as a result of good relations with the Syrian rule during the first decade of the 2000s did not break the relations at the beginning of process. In that sense, the trust of the previous years between the parties helped with the continuation of contacts. However, on one hand, Turkey continuously increased the level of criticism against the Syrian rule in 2011. On the other hand, Syrian regime preferred to protect status quo, which resulted in intensification of the armed conflicts in Syria. Therefore, 2011 was the year of the transformation of the relations from positive to negative.

4.3 **THE ARAB SPRING AND THE DETERIORATION OF THE RELATIONS**

The Arab Spring started in Tunisia at the end of 2010, and spread into Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Bahrain, Oman, Jordan and Syria during 2011.[799] While some of them could suppress these uprisings, regimes in some countries changed after the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring in Syria began on March 18, 2011 with the demands for the democratic reforms and release of political prisoners from the Syrian prisons.[800] While Bashar Asad continuously promised for reform, postponing the reform process broke the hopes of the society. Syrian society began to see Bashar Asad as Hafez Asad about the sincerity for the transformation. Under these circumstances, the Arab Spring deeply affected Syria. However, Syrian rule at the beginning did not take the uprising seriously because of the Sunni-centric character of the uprising. With the increasing number and intensity of protests, Syrian administration tried to end protests with limited reforms. In that sense, regime saw small steps for the reforms as enough to end uprising in the country. However, the most of the promises of the regime were old promises of the 2000s, which could not be realized during the 2000s and these promises were not seen enough for the opposition in Syria. On April 19, 2011, state of emergency was lifted, which was in force since

[799] Moshe Ma'oz, "The 'Arab Spring' and New Geo-Strategic Environment in the Middle East", **Insight Turkey,** Vol. 14, No. 4 (2012), p. 14

[800] Nebi Miş, "Suriye 2011", in Kemal İnat, Muhittin Ataman, Fuat Aydın and Bilal Yıldırım (Ed.), **Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2011**, (257-300), İstanbul: Açılım Kitap Press, 2013, p. 263

48 years.[801] However, the killing of more than 60 protestors on April 29, 2011 increased the gap between the regime and opposition.

As a result of the increasing number of the conflicts, the Arab Spring had a devastating effect on Syria and this effect harmed the corporate identity of Syria. According to 2011 TESEV public opinion poll, only 22% of the Syrian society had positive thoughts about Arab Spring, while 60% of Syrian society had negative thoughts about the process.[802] These rates showed negative trends during 2012. Positive thoughts about the process decreased to 14%. However, the understanding of the process in the region was the opposite. 60% of Middle Eastern Arab societies had positive thoughts about the effects of the process, while only 21% of these societies had negative thoughts in 2011.[803] Therefore, the injured corporate identity of Syria had negative effects on the social identity, which negatively affected the relations with Turkey. However, the Arab Spring did not only affect the Syrian corporate identity. The Arab Spring as a critical juncture also forced Turkey to redefine the interests. As a result of the new redefinition process, Turkey began to change its attitude towards Syria and Asad regime, which negatively affected the bilateral relations. After the beginning of the Arab Spring, Turkey could not produce a comprehensive foreign policy stance towards the region, which resulted in criticisms towards Turkey. On the other hand, Turkey tried to apply two-stage strategy towards Syria. In the first stage, which began in March 2011 and ended in September 2011, Turkey tried to be in good relations with the Syrian regime for further reform process in order to end violent conflicts. Turkey preferred engagement with the Syrian regime and pushed for the peaceful solution. In the second stage, which began in September 2011, Turkey cut off relations with the Syrian administration and tried to activate international and regional societies against Syrian rule, which also implied the end of the friendship.

Turkey at the beginning of the events tried to act cautiously towards the Syrian rule. The aim of Turkey was to encourage reform through the existing regime,[804] which could prevent the negative consequences of the process for Turkey. Turkey hoped for a reform agenda initiated by Asad because of his liberal instincts to help peaceful transformation of Syria. Turkey had

[801] "Syria to Lift Decades-old Emergency Law", *Al Jazeera*, 19 April 2011, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/04/201141913503646380 4.html (10 August 2013)
[802] Mensur Akgün and Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar, **Ortadoğu'da Türkiye Algısı 2011,** İstanbul: TESEV Press, 2012, p.14
[803] Akgün and Senyücel Gündoğar, *Ortadoğu'da Türkiye Algısı 2011***,** p.14
[804] Öniş, *Turkey and the Arab Spring: Between Ethics and Self-Interest*, p. 53

believed Asad for the transformation of Syria since the beginning of Bashar Asad rule in 2000.[805] In that sense, Turkey at the beginning tried to use good relations with Asad to stop violence and wanted him to restart the reform process. During this process, Turkey wanted to differentiate Asad and old guards,[806] which was regarded as the sources of the problems. In that sense, Erdoğan saw Asad as the potential solution to the conflicts.[807] In addition to Erdoğan, Davutoğlu also saw Bashar Asad to be capable for the peaceful transformation of Syria. Davutoğlu expressed that on May 27, 2011, Asad was different from Mubarak, Kaddafi and Bin Ali and he was the representative of the younger generation, which was respected by the Syrian nation.[808] In that sense, Davutoğlu saw Asad as a more legitimate leader than the leaders of other countries that witnessed the Arab Spring. In addition, Turkey's strategy was cooperation with the existing regimes in the region during the 2000s. Mutual gains via economic interdependence and close political ties were the main principles of the AKP which were based on "the Westphalian logic of respecting the independence of nation state and principles of non-intervention in the domestic politics of states"[809] during the 2000s. Therefore, Turkey expected not to harm bilateral relations with Syria after the Arab Spring.

After the conflicts on April 23, 2011 in Syria, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a declaration and criticized the use of excessive violence against the opposition groups. However, in the same declaration, Turkey expressed its trust towards the promises of Asad for further reforms and for the end of violence. Moreover, Erdoğan accepted the special delegation of Bashar Asad in Turkey and he expressed his desire to continue the dialogue with Asad.[810] Davutoğlu went to Syria on July 9, 2011 and gave President Gül's suggestion letter to Asad in order to end chaos in Syria.[811] The Turkish President Gül suggested Asad not to increase violence against the protestors and use peaceful means to find a solution.[812] Davutoğlu also paid

[805] Oğuzlu, *Turning 'Risk' into 'Opportunity': Turkey's Approach towards Syria, A Western/European Actor in the Middle East*, p. 35
[806] "Türkiye'den Esad'a: Mahir'i Bize Ver", *Vatan*, 19 June 2011, http://haber.gazetevatan.com/turkiyeden-esada-mahiri-bize-ver/384427/30/dunya (3 August 2013)
[807] Miş, *Suriye 2011*, p. 274
[808] "Davutoğlu: Suriye'de Esad Öncülüğünde Reform Görmek İstiyoruz", *Hürriyet*, 27 May 2011, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=17896662 (11 August 2013)
[809] Öniş, *Turkey and the Arab Spring: Between Ethics and Self-Interest*, p. 46
[810] Miş, *Suriye 2011*, p. 275
[811] "Gül'den Esad'a Zamanın Tükeniyor", Milliyet, 12 August 2011, http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/gul-den-esad-a-zamanin-tukeniyor/siyaset/siyasetdetay/13.08.2011/1426133/default.htm (11 August 2013)
[812] Bayhan, p. 172

a visit in August 2011 to urge Asad for a long-term democratization process without delay.[813] Erdoğan also tried to use personal relations for the start of reform process.[814] With the help of the personal ties, Turkey tried to push Asad for the reform process in order to meet the demands of the opposition.[815] Under these circumstances, Turkey at first aimed for the transformation of the Syrian regime rather than the removal of the regime. Although Turkey's desire for the continuation of high-level cooperation with Syria is important for this attitude at the beginning, understanding of the "Self" about the "Other" is also crucial for this attitude. In that sense, the belief about the Syrian rule for the transformation or positive perception is also important for the first stage. In that sense, with Davutoğlu's words, Turkey preferred the bilateral engagement with the Syrian rule until September 2011.[816]

On the other hand, for the Syrian administration, the Syrian system was a special democracy, which inspired from its history and society.[817] In that sense, Turkey defined its attempts as liberal, assertive, normative and humanitarian, but Syria saw these attempts as an intervention in sovereignty rights of Syria. Neither Asad's liberal and soft rhetoric nor the personal relations with the Turkish elite helped with the implementation of the reform agenda. Security-based understanding gained primacy among the Syrian elite and approached the situation as a security problem. As a result of Asad's attitude, Turkey lost all of its confidence towards Asad. Turkey thought that the Syrian regime was coming to an end, so they aimed to formulate a new structure in Syria, which would be friendlier for Turkey in the region.[818] In that sense, Turkey began to adopt a more rigid position against the Syrian regime. Especially, after the meeting between US President Obama and Erdoğan on September 21, 2011, Turkey clearly showed its stance against Syria.[819] After this meeting, Erdoğan declared the deteriorating relations with Syrian regime and the disappearance of trust against Bashar Asad.[820] He also declared to take common actions with the USA in terms of the sanctions against the Syrian

[813] Oğuzlu, *The Arab Spring and the Rise of the 2.0 Version of Turkey's 'Zero Problems with Neighbors' Policy,* p. 7
[814] Barkey, *The Evolution of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 6
[815] Oğuzlu, *Turning 'Risk' into 'Opportunity': Turkey's Approach towards Syria, A Western/European Actor in the Middle East*, p. 36
[816] Davutoğlu, *Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring*, p. 7
[817] Lesch, p. 82
[818] Ma'oz, p. 19
[819] "Esed'le Görüşmeler Kesildi Şam'a Yaptırımlar Yolda", *Zaman*, 22 September 2011, http://www.zaman.com.tr/dunya_esedle-gorusmeler-kesildi-sama-yaptirimlar-yolda_1182387.html (11 August 2013)
[820] "Erdoğan: Suriye ile Görüşmelerimizi Bitirdik", *Milliyet*, 21 September 2011, http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/erdogan-suriye-ile-gorusmelerimizi-bitirdik/siyaset/siyasetdetay/21.09.2011/1441276/default.htm (13 August 2013)

regime. After this declaration, Turkey began to apply the second stage against the Syrian regime, which was also the end of the friendly relations.

As a part of the second stage, Davutoğlu declared the sanctions packet against Syria on October 30, 2011. According to this packet, firstly, the high level strategic cooperation was suspended until the establishment of the legitimate government in Syria. Secondly, the high level officials who were responsible for the high degree of violence against the civilians were banned from travelling to Turkey and their assets in Turkey would be frozen.[821] Thirdly, business people who were close to the Syrian administration were also banned from travelling to Turkey and their assets in Turkey would be frozen. Fourthly, Turkey stopped the sales of weapons and military equipment to the Syrian army and all shipments of military equipment and arms through Turkey's land, airspace and seas would be prevented. Fifthly, all financial relations with the Syrian Central Bank were suspended. Sixth was the freezing of all-Syrian government assets in Turkey.[822] Seventh was the ban of the credit relations with Syria. Eight was the suspension of the future dealings with Syrian Trade Bank and the last one was the suspension of the Eximbank Credit Agreement, which aimed for the financing infrastructure projects in Syria.[823] These sanctions clearly showed that Turkey changed its stance towards Syria. While Turkey rejected sanctions towards the states of region during the 2000s, Turkey's this attitude was clearly a sign of the changing attitude and the end of the dialogue with Syria.

Turkey also tried to active regional and international society in the second stage and called for the applying sanctions for the Syrian regime[824] to stop violence. Turkey began to take an active role within the international society for the isolation of the Syrian rule and defended this attitude as the value-based foreign policy and responsibility of the global actor.[825] Turkey with this attitude came closer to the line of the EU and the USA. Turkey and European countries expelled Syrian ambassadors from their countries as a result of the increasing number of killings in Hama and Humus by the regime forces on May 2012, which can be described as the end of

[821] Jonathan Head, "Turkey Imposes Economic Sanctions on Syria",*BBC*, 15 December 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-15959770 (10 August 2013)
[822] "Syria Hit by Turkish Sanctions", *CBC News*, 15 December 2011, http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2011/11/30/syria-turkey-sanctions.html (10 August 2013)
[823] Hacer Boyacıoğlu, "Türkiye'den 9 Maddelik Yaptırım", *Radikal*, 1 December 2011, http://www.radikal.com.tr/yorum/turkiyeden_9_maddelik_yaptirim-1071129 (13 August 2013)
[824] Doğan Ertuğrul, "Türkiye Dış Politikası için Bir Test: Suriye Krizi" **TESEV,** (June, 2012), p. 1
[825] Davutoğlu, *Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring*, p. 3

relations for the AKP government.[826] On the other hand, the USA continued to enlarge sanctions; support the opposition in Syria; support the international societies and allies for the change of the regime in Syria and the isolation of the Syrian regime from the international politics. In August, Obama asked Bashar Asad for his withdrawal from the government.[827] Both the USA and the EU applied economic sanctions to the Syrian regime and declared Syrian government as illegitimate. Both European countries and the USA accepted to apply economic sanctions not only to the regime, but also to individuals like Maher Asad and Bashar Asad. The EU also in 2011 began to apply weapon embargo and suspended the trade of oil and oil products with Syria.[828] France and England also spent efforts in the UN to activate the international society against Syria. While the Arab Union had been silent until October 2011, as the consequence of the continuation of the violence in Syria, Union suspended the membership of Syria and began to accuse the Syrian regime for the violence in the country.[829] On November 27, 2011, the Arab Union also accepted to apply sanctions to Syria.[830] With the increasing number of killings by the regime forces, the UN Human rights council condemned the Syrian regime. According to the UN report, the number of dead reached around 5000 until December 2011[831] and more than 15.000 in June 2012.[832]

As a result of the deterioration of the situation in Syria, Turkey began to redefine its interests in the region. The Arab Spring forced Turkey to make a choice between the Arab governments and the Arab societies. Turkey after a while accepted to support the Arab societies, which want liberalization and democracy, because for Turkey, the Arab Spring gained unstoppable momentum.[833] Turkey decided to support popular demands and expectations instead of existing regimes.[834] Turkey decided to be on the side of the democratic change in the region,[835] which would bring an end to the Cold War structure in the Middle East. In other words, Turkey took a position on the right side of history, according to the AKP government. If

[826] Hasan Duran, p. 513
[827] Salik, p. 26
[828] Miş, *Suriye 2011*, p. 284
[829] "Suriye'nin Üyeliği Askıya Alındı", *Milliyet*, 12 November 2011, http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/suriye-nin-uyeligi-askiya-alindi/dunya/dunyadetay/12.11.2011/1462045/default.htm (12 August 2013)
[830] Miş, *Suriye 2011*, p. 289
[831] "BM: Suriye'de Ölü Sayısı 5 binin Üzerinde", *BBC Türkçe*, 13 December 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2011/12/111213_syria_un.shtml (12 August 2013)
[832] Öniş, *Turkey and the Arab Spring: Between Ethics and Self-Interest*, p. 53
[833] Barkey, *The Evolution of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 6
[834] Kahraman, p. 712
[835] Davutoğlu, *The Three Major Earthquakes in the International System and Turkey*, p. 5

Turkey ignores the wave of democracy in the region, it would lose the balance between the security and freedom, which in the following years would create a threat against the security of Turkey. For the AKP government, Turkey supported the political freedom in the region. Turkey began to see itself as a role model in the region after the start of the Arab Spring and increased its activities, but the aim for being a leading power of the democratization wave[836] in the region widened the gap between two parties. Within a short time, Turkey changed its attitude towards Syria and increased its activities. Turkey had expected to integrate Syria into the international system as the responsible stakeholder with the help of improving relations, which could help the internal transformation process in Syria during the 2000s. However, after the Arab Spring, Turkey considered this process as an opportunity to adopt pro-democracy approach towards Syria and other problematic countries.[837] Turkey began to formulate its interests in the region around the consequences of the Arab Spring. Supporting pro-democracy movements in the region would help Turkey increase its effectiveness like the signing of 28 agreements with Egypt during the post-Mubarak era.[838] Turkey described this cooperation as the establishment of the democratic-axis in the region.[839] In that sense, Turkey made a new interest formulation after the Arab Spring, which brought changes to Turkish foreign policy in the region. In other terms, Turkey's regional aspirations decided to keep some distance from Syrian regime and called for Asad's removal. As a result of the new stance, Erdoğan began to criticize Asad for being reluctant to keep his promises for further reforms and declared the cutting of the personal relations with Asad to show Turkey's changing attitude towards the Syrian administration. Davutoğlu also expressed that the peace and stability could not be restored with the Ba'ath regime in Syria in 2012. [840] For Davutoğlu, they could only be restored by the legitimacy of the Syrian society. Shortly, within a year, the image of Asad and Syrian administration turned from positive to negative, which deeply injured the social interaction and social identities that prevented the establishment of the collective identity between the parties. Although the changing perception in Turkey about Asad was important for this policy change, new interest formulation after the Arab Spring also occupied a central place.

[836] Barkey, *The Evolution of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 5
[837] Oğuzlu, *The Arab Spring and the Rise of the 2.0 Version of Turkey's 'Zero Problems with Neighbors' Policy,* p. 5
[838] Davutoğlu, *The Three Major Earthquakes in the International System and Turkey*, p. 7
[839] Ma'oz, p. 17
[840] Bishku, p. 50

However, the main problem was not the changing discourse of Turkey. In theory, the legitimacy of the leaders in the region was always problematic for the AKP government. In that sense, after the start of the conflicts, the decline of the relations can be normal. However, the main source of the critiques for Turkish foreign policy was derived from two points. The first one is the applicability of foreign policy approaches of the 2000s in 2010s, which created limited success during the 2000s in the region and the second one is the increasing engagement of Turkey in the conflicts. Foreign policy principles of the 2000s became questionable after the Arab Spring and the changing attitude and discourse towards the region after the Arab Spring prevented comprehensive foreign policy approach.

The main problem for Turkey after the Arab Spring was the foreign policy principles of the AKP government. While the policy of zero-problem with the neighbors became one of the central tenets for the foreign policy principles during the 2000s and created short-term success, the sustainability of this policy within the instable surrounding environment became questionable.[841] Good intentions would not be enough for the zero-problem policy.[842] Zero problem policy witnessed important challenges with the developments after the start of the Arab Spring whereas Davutoğlu did not describe the support of democratization as the contradiction to zero-problem policy.[843] However, the new stance of Turkey was defined as the collapse of the zero-problem policy with the neighbors and raised questions towards the trustworthiness of foreign policy perception of the AKP government.[844] The soft power potential of Turkey, which was emphasized during the 2000s by the AKP government, also raised questions. The success of the soft power is much more related to the other's intention to cooperate,[845] but being an obvious part of the conflicts harmed the soft power understanding. Losing the balance between the parties harmed the ideas in terms of being the mediator between different groups. Turkey during the 2000s tried to contact with all different groups and factions, which positively contributed to the soft power of Turkey. However, after the Arab Spring, Turkey began to give up dialogue with some groups, and this resulted in criticism.[846] In addition, Turkey's power was not enough to be

[841] Özcan and Usul, p. 164
[842] Kirişçi and Kaptanoğlu, p. 720
[843] Davutoğlu, *Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring*, p. 5
[844] Miş, *Suriye 2011*, p. 279
[845] Beng, p. 32
[846] Perthes, *Turkey's Role in the Middle East: An Outsider Perspective*, p.5

security and stability provider in the region unlike the USA.[847] In order to act as a soft power, the concrete achievements should be done. Without the concrete achievements, acting as a soft power becomes impossible. Turkey's attempts to solve the problems of the region like the long-lasting hostility between Israel and Syria or the political instability within Iraq could not bring successful results and injured soft power potential of Turkey and this caused a "capability-expectations gap"[848] for Turkey. The political instability in the Middle East also harmed the soft power understanding of Turkey and the politicization process returned securitization process like the case of Syria. While the AKP government advocated the continuation of talks with all actors of the region during the 2000s, after the Arab Spring, the AKP government began to define some developments within the framework of the national security. Therefore, the limits of Turkey's soft power to put pressure over the Syrian rule raised some questions about the potential of Turkey as a problem solver in the region. Shortly, on one hand, the success of some of the foreign policy principles became problematic, and on the other, some of the foreign policy principles began to be evaluated after the Arab Spring, which resulted in criticisms in national and international society.

Another important problem was the high level of engagement of Turkey with the Syrian opposition groups. This level of engagement raised questions about the constructive "stabilizing and reformist role"[849] in the region for Turkey. On the other hand, allowing the opposition groups for the organization in Turkey caused some reactions by the Syrian regime and pro-regime Syrian society, which can be described as the end of relations for the Syrian rule. The opposition groups held their first meetings in İstanbul on August 20, 2011 and decided to form Syrian National Council in order to unify different groups. During the crisis, the Syrian National Council wanted Asad to resign and decided the establishment of democratic, civil and fair political system and support for the revolution in Syria.[850] While the council held most of the meetings in Turkey, Turkey stayed away from establishing diplomatic relations with the council until October 2011. However, even before the start of the contacts, Turkey tried to help the Syrian opposition groups with the organization. Turkey hosted several meetings in Turkey to

[847] Meral and Paris, p. 84
[848] Birgül Demirtaş, p. 117
[849] Öniş, *Turkey and the Arab Spring: Between Ethics and Self-Interest,* p. 57
[850] Miş, *Suriye 2011,* p. 269

organize Syrian opposition like the "İstanbul Meeting for Syria" on July 16-17, 2011.[851] Turkey began to support the Syrian National Council (SNC) at the end of 2011 and became the first country, which contacted with the Syrian National Council.[852] Therefore, Turkey tried to orchestrate the unification of the Syrian opposition during this process. In addition, Turkey began to help with the leadership of the rebel army and hosted the leaders of Free Syrian Army (FSA) in Turkey. As a result of the increasing material support of Turkey, Syria accused Turkey of giving support to the terrorists within Turkey, which symbolized one of the breaking points for the relations. Erdoğan's declaration about seeing Syria as the domestic affairs of Turkey also increased the level of criticism.[853] This kind of declaration resulted in reactions by the Syrian administration for the interfering domestic affairs of Syria.[854] This declaration was shown as the evidence of the imperialist aims of Turkey in the region[855] and Asad warned Turkey to have similar societal, economic and sectarian structure, which could also negatively affect Turkey.[856]

Too much engagement with the opposition groups in the region could cause the establishment of counter-alliances in order to balance Turkey in the region,[857] which would harm the foreign policy understanding of the 2000s. The high level engagement could alienate not only Syria but also Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon which could harm the prestige of Turkey in the neighboring regions. As a result of the increasing engagement, the positive thoughts about Turkey in the region decreased from 78% in 2011 to 69% in 2012.[858] Positive thoughts about Turkey being a potential model for the region also decreased from 61% in 2011 to 53% to 2012.[859] The positive thoughts about Turkey's potential mediation role between Palestine and Israel decreased from 75% in 2011 to 66% in 2012. In that sense, aggressive and proactive attitude of Turkey harmed its soft power potential in the region.

In addition, the conservative monarchies have had concerns about the deepening relations between Iran and Syria and the influence of Syria in Lebanese and Palestinian politics in the

[851] Salik, p. 28
[852] Salik, p. 29
[853] Miş, *Suriye 2011*, p. 277
[854] Bülend Aydın Ertekin, "Could Turkey be a Dominant Regional Power?: The Rise of Turkey as a Country of Middle East and Europe" **Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations,** Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring, 2012), p. 21
[855] "Türkiye Osmanlı Hayali Kuruyor", *Hürriyet*, 27 November 2011, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/planet/19337940.asp, (18 August 2013)
[856] Salik, p. 29
[857] Oğuzlu, *The Arab Spring and the Rise of the 2.0 Version of Turkey's 'Zero Problems with Neighbors' Policy*, p. 12
[858] Mensur Akgün and Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar, **Ortadoğu'da Türkiye Algısı 2012**, İstanbul: TESEV Press, 2013, p.17
[859] Akgün and Senyücel Gündoğar, *Ortadoğu'da Türkiye Algısı 2012*, p.20

previous years.[860] Therefore, the fall of Asad is presenting an opportunity for the conservative Sunni regimes to fall of the hostile regime and to balance Iran's influence in the region.[861] In that sense, the conservative Arab regimes provided important media and political support to the Syrian opposition. However, the support of these regimes to radical militants raised questions about the future of Syria and harmed the legitimacy of the opposition groups. Under these circumstances, too much engagement would automatically make Turkey on the side of the conflicts, which could result in the deterioration of prestige of Turkey in the region.[862] As a result, the increasing interaction with the Syrian opposition groups limited the options of Turkey. In addition, Turkey showed that its policies were value-based foreign policies, but the continuation of the relations with the monarchies raised questions. Turkey in the region began to show itself as the source of inspiration for the Arab Spring states and suggested that the states of the region would be transformed in the basis of social demands.[863] However, Turkey's current economic and political relations with Saudi Arabia or Jordan as a part of the Realpolitik created criticism towards Turkey for applying double standard towards the region. Improving relations with the authoritarian conservative regimes like Sudan created dilemma between the ethics and self-interest for Turkey and this kind of dilemma resulted in the increasing critics against Turkey's attitude in the region.[864]

As a result of the international circumstances, the domestic concerns of countries and the legitimacy problem of the opposition groups, common stance against the Syrian crisis could not be established. Both the US government and US society are reluctant for a new war in the region. The US spent between $ 3.2-$4 trillion dollar during Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan for the war against terrorism and 72% of society sees this kind of military operation as unnecessary.[865] In that sense, as the most powerful actor of the international society, the USA was against the direct military action during 2011 and 2012. The increasing effectiveness of the Al-Qaeda related groups also created doubts about the post-Asad period, which prevented direct action for the western world. In that sense, the western societies have doubts about the aim and success of the direct military action. The support from the actors of the region like Iran and Hezbollah and from

[860] Emile Hokayem, "Syria and its Neighbors", **Survival**, Vol. 54, No. 2 (April-May, 2012), p. 12
[861] Hokayem, p. 12
[862] Abdulgani Bozkurt, p. 43
[863] Oğuzlu, *The Arab Spring and the Rise of the 2.0 Version of Turkey's 'Zero Problems with Neighbors' Policy,* p. 10
[864] Öniş, *Turkey and the Arab Spring: Between Ethics and Self-Interest,* p. 46
[865] Sibel Kalemdaroğlu, "Büyük Ortadoğu Projesi: 'Değişim' Politikasının 'Değişmez' Hedefi" **21. Yüzyıl**, No. 33, (September, 2011), p.9

the outside like Russia and China to Syria also shows different concerns and views about the situation. While the western alliance shares similar concerns of Turkey against Syria, Russia aims to prevent any UN decision. For Russia, developments in Syria are not a threat against the international security. In that sense, Russia would not let any attempts for the UN decision and sanction. Syria's strategic importance for Russia in the region is also another important reason to support Syria. Iran also supported Syria and declared the activities of the opposition as the game of the USA.[866] After the start of the Arab Spring in Syria, Iran began to mobilize its resources to prevent Asad's fall including acquiring weaponry and mobilizing the common allies.[867] For Iran, removal of the Syrian regime could decrease Shia effectiveness in the region. Iran began to see itself as the next target of the USA. During this process, Iran's relations with Turkey also began to deteriorate because of the different attitudes towards the developments in Syria. Iran described Turkey as the provocative in Syria.[868] Under these circumstances, Turkey lost an important prestige in the region. Shortly, on one hand, western actors are reluctant for an action against Syria, on the other; allies of Syria unconditionally support the Syrian regime. As a result, Turkey's expectations could not be met in the region and this contributes to the negative identification. The prolongation of the crisis in Syria began to bring relations to the irreversible path.

Injured relations were clearly seen in the public opinion polls. 2011 TESEV public opinion poll concluded that only 44% of the Syrian society had positive thoughts about Turkey. This rate decreased to 28% in 2012. The result was 87% in 2009 and 93% in 2010. In addition, 30% of Syrian society had positive thoughts about the attitudes of Turkey towards the regional developments. Moreover, only 16% of Syrian society described Turkey's attitude as friendly, whereas 65% of Syrians described Turkey's attitude as hostile in 2012, according to TESEV 2012 opinion poll.[869] These changing trends clearly show the changing nature of the relations.

While the bilateral relations sharply deteriorated, the level of the relations could change with the changing dynamics. During this process, both parties accused each other in the name of the leadership instead of in the name of society. While Turkey expressed that real Syrian society is under the tyranny of Asad, Asad blamed the AKP leadership for the wrong attitude of

[866] Miş, *Suriye 2011*, p. 287
[867] Hokayem, p. 7
[868] Miş, *Suriye 2011*, p. 288
[869] Akgün and Senyücel Gündoğar, *Ortadoğu'da Türkiye Algısı 2012*, p.18

Turkey.[870] For Asad, the brotherhood between Turkey and Syria's societies would continue forever and the AKP government could not destroy this brotherhood. Similar attitude was applied by the AKP government. In that sense, both parties accused the leadership. Both of them did not accuse other societies. Therefore, the changing leadership in these countries would help with the normalization of relations. This seems the only hope for the future of the bilateral relations.

To sum up, Turkey-Syria relations witnessed its golden era from 1998 to 2011. During this period, both of them redefined their interests as a result of new governing powers and their new identities. Ideational factors played an important role for these redefinition processes which changed the viewpoints of the parties towards the core issues. Core issues, Hatay, water and PKK issues brought two states into the edge of war in 1998. However, with the changed perceptions about the "Other" in Syria and Turkey after 1998, both of them became more tolerable towards these issues. Hence, although these issues were intractable and they were interlinked with each other during the 1990s, Turkey and Syria did not define these issues as obstacles for the bilateral relations during the first decade of the 2000s. On the other hand, these issues remained unsolved between Turkey and Syria in this period. In addition, level of cooperation between Turkey and Syria towards these issues was different. The most successful cooperation was against the PKK issue. After 2002, level of cooperation gradually increased for this issue and at the end of the decade, level of cooperation reached its peak. On the other hand, level of cooperation on water issue was more limited. During the first decade of the 2000s, both countries could not find a solution for this issue but both of them tried to initiate common projects in order to overcome dispute. Both of them also showed their goodwill about the issue and helped the "Other" in times of shortages. However, both of them did not change their positions towards the issue and continued to support their theses from the 1990s. On the other hand, most limited cooperation was about the status of Hatay. Both of them continued to see Hatay as the part of their national homeland and this viewpoint prevented any solution about the issue. However, in order not to harm bilateral relations, the parties preferred to remain silent about the status of Hatay. Tolerable positions of the parties prevented the occurrence of any crisis between Turkey and Syria.

[870] "Türkiye Halkını AKP Hükümetinden Ayırt Etmek Gerekiyor", *SANA*, 4 October 2013, http://sana.sy/tur/236/2013/10/04/505821.htm, (19 October, 2013)

Turkey-Syria relations during the first decade of the 2000s reached their full potential and provided suitable grounds for the construction of the collective identity. During this period, bilateral relations reached their peak. Economic, energy, security and military cooperation gradually increased and a kind of interdependence between Turkey and Syria occurred. In addition, regional developments reinforced the cooperative attitudes of the parties. Common concerns about the regional developments and similar opinions about the long-lasting problems of the region like Israeli-Palestinian question pushed both parties to each other. During the 2000s, both Turkey and Syria began to describe the "Other" as the strategic partner which was the result of the regional developments. Under these circumstances, a belief about the common fate between Turkey and Syria occurred. Declarations about the occurrence of the common fate from both countries resulted in the collective identity formation process and this process positively affected the bilateral relations. However, this process was interrupted with the beginning of the Arab Spring in the region. The Arab Spring as the critical juncture made huge impact over Turkey and Syria. Syria with the Arab Spring witnessed a kind of identity crisis. Injured corporate identity of Syria harmed the social identity of Syria which made negative effects on the relations with Turkey. On the other hand, Turkey as a result of the critical juncture redefined its interests and planned to put some distance with the Bashar Asad administration in order to get a valuable place in the post-Arab Spring structure. Under these circumstances, the collective identity formation process was interrupted and positive identification between the parties came to the end. Hence, the definition of the "Other" re-transformed from friendship to the enmity.

CONCLUSION

Turkish-Syrian relations since 1946 were shaped by the mutual negative images, historical enmity, different ideologies, attempts of elite to externalize the sources of some of their major domestic problems, and identity played a central role for the negative identification. In historical terms, putting some distance between the "Self" and the "Other" goes back to the last period of the Ottoman Empire. While Turkification attempts created hatred among the Arabs, Arabs' attitude during the World War I caused the negative images among the Turks. In that sense, the Arabs saw the disintegration of the empire as the emancipation from the empire whereas the Turks saw the disintegrated empire as the predecessor of Turkey. The negative identification during the nation-building process resulted in obstacles for the bilateral relations. This kind of understanding between the Turks and Arabs had negative effects on Turkey-Syria relations. Historical misperceptions negatively affected the image of the "Other" and this injured the social identities of the parties. Both parties' new identities defined new interests and these interests put some distance with the "Other". In that sense, the definition of the corporate identity in different directions prevented the establishment of the collective identity. As a result, different corporate identities damaged the social identities, which take part in systemic interaction.

Middle Eastern region began to be considered as negative in Turkish mental map after the establishment of the republic. Turkey began to look at region from the window of security and described the region as the source of the problems. In that sense, Turkey mostly tried to put some distance with the region. In addition, the close relationship with NATO lowered the credibility of Turkey among the secular Arab regimes in the region. As Turkey drew closer to the West, alienation towards the societies of the region increased. Turkey and Syria also chose opposite camps during the Cold War and this reinforced existing antagonism and enemy images. Therefore, the ideological opposition contributed to the negative image of the "Other". Opposite perceptions about the Baghdad Pact, role of the USA and USSR in the region, and reality of Israel are also related to the identity of both parties. In that sense, besides the historical misperceptions, the understandings about the developments in the region during the Cold War also widened the gap between Turkey and Syria. Both of them saw the "Other" as the satellite of the Other's superpower. Pro-western attitude of the Turkish elite and anti-western attitude of the Syrian elite are important to show different identities and interests of both parties. In addition to

the negative effects of the international developments during the Cold War, smuggling, supporting opposition groups in other's territory, lost properties of nationals in others' territories became important problems during the Cold War. Especially, in 1980s, water dispute, the PKK issue and Hatay's status gained upper hand and these problems created a risk of war in 1990s.

Syria declared Hatay issue as the issue of all Arab nations like the Palestinian issue. Hatay dispute still could not be solved by the parties, but during the good relations, Turkey and Syria preferred to remain silent about the issue. When the tension is high between two countries, the status of Hatay became visible for the bilateral problems. In addition to Hatay dispute, Turkey accused Syria of undermining Turkish territorial integrity by giving support to the PKK and placed Syria as the number one on the PKK supporters list. Turkey accused Syria of having a secret plan to take Hatay back, and the PKK was supported for this aim according to Turkey. In that sense, Turkey linked Hatay dispute with the PKK issue and this link made the problems more intractable. In 1980s, the water dispute also began to be linked with the PKK issue, and because of this, the water issue became a core security issue in 1980s rather than a technical one. The waters of Orontes River were also linked with the status of Hatay. Therefore, the water dispute, the PKK issue and the status of Hatay were interlinked by Syria and Turkey during the 1980s and this understanding dominated the 1990s.

With the end of the Cold War and the start of the Gulf War, the Middle East entered a new era. Under these circumstances, as a result of the new international structure, actors of the region had to redefine themselves. In that sense, Turkey's active and aggressive attitude was the clue to exploit the opportunities of the new era as a part of the winner camp. On the other hand, Syria's updated and more cautious attitude was an important indicator of the defensive foreign policy understanding. However, structural weaknesses and being slow to update themselves to the new order led both of them to have inconsistent policies. Under these circumstances, both states sometimes used the other for the externalization of the problems. Turkey's security-oriented foreign policy became clearer in this period. Both internal and international developments increased paranoia about the security and the survival of the state for Turkey. Suspicions about the cooperation of some neighbors with the PKK-led insurgency and Islamist movements helped security-oriented views dominate Turkish politics. Intersection of the domestic problems with the problems of the region resulted in perceiving the region from the window of security. Identity

crises within Turkey and the interconnected nature of the domestic and international problems made Syria as the main target not only for material security but also for the security of the state identity.

On the other hand, the collapse of Soviet models contributed to the internal and ideological crises in Syrian society. Rising US pressure over Syria also limited Syria in the region. Islamic fundamentalism and economic problems also became the main problems of Syria at the beginning of 1990s. Beside the decline of economy, the legitimacy of Asad began to be questioned by the Syrians. Domestic opposition increased the concerns about the security of identity. Until the mid-1990s, with the effects of the internal and international forces, Syria remained at defense and tried to move with the international and regional communities. In that sense, Syria also faced with important threats for the state identity in 1990s. Both Turkey and Syria witnessed important identity conflicts within the country and this resulted in the rise of security concerns in the region. Insecure corporate identities of the actors increased the level of the aggressiveness towards the "Others". All of these developments for both parties contributed to the mutual suspicion, which resulted in regarding the other's attempts as dishonest initiatives.

As a result, the "Other" state became an important source of legitimacy. The psychology of being surrounded by the enemies in both states caused the externalization of the problems. In that sense, the definition of the "Other" as the enemy was clear during the 1990s, and this definition created a risk of war between two states. With the widening psychological gap between the two states, the problems of 1980s became unbearable in 1990s and this created a risk of war between Syria and Turkey in 1998. All problems tried to be used as leverage against the other and this understanding continued until the sign of the Adana Accords in 1998. With this agreement, Turkey could realize its main objective. In that sense, this protocol implied the end of old tensions and beginning of the new era between Turkey and Syria. Therefore, the Adana Accords can be accepted as the symbolic turning point for bilateral relations.

After the signing of the Adana Accords, relations began to normalize and helped define the "Other" as the sincere friendly state in the following years. Turkish President Sezer's first official visit was to Syria and this was an important step for Turkey's changing perception towards Syria. With the Adana Accords, security-dominated views in Turkish foreign policy began to decrease and this decrease provided an important ground for İsmail Cem to implement

regionally based foreign policy understanding, which also aimed to normalize relations with Armenia and Syria besides Greece. The changing ruling powers in both countries also reinforced this process. Turkey entered a new era with the AKP government in 2002, which was important for the redefinition of the "Self" for Turkey. For Turkey, the AKP government implies a breaking point for the relations with the Middle East. For the AKP, like İsmail Cem period, despite Turkey's historical and cultural ties with the region, the Republican elite throughout the history has ignored the potential cooperation with the Middle East. In that sense, the AKP's leadership unlike its predecessors glorifies the Ottoman past and emphasizes the historical and cultural ties with the region. This kind of approach is also suitable for the background of the leadership. The image of the Middle East region and Middle Eastern societies in the minds of new ruling power is different from the previous governments and this helps with the new activism in the Middle East. In that sense, the identity of the ruling power had a huge impact on the re-definition of new interest and helped with the new approaches towards the region.

The Middle Eastern region came into prominence during the AKP era. Turkey's foreign policy during the 2000s towards the Middle East was described as the conservative constructivism as a consequence of emphasis on history, geography, civilization and cultural links. New discourse on the concept of civilization also had an impact on the transformation of interests and new identity of Turkey in the region. In that sense, the reinterpretation of interests changed the type of relations with the actors in the Middle East. Turkey's stability and peace discourses, positive constructive approaches, rising economic power and democratic system were used towards the neighboring regions as the tools of soft power during the 2000s. Although all of these means and tools began to be applied in 1980s and 1990s, the comprehensive foreign policy understanding could not be established because of the crucial problems with the immediate neighbors at least until 1998. In that sense, with the sign of the Adana Accords, Turkey could materialize these means towards the southern neighbors.

In addition to the identity of the AKP government, new understandings for foreign policy formulations also had an important effect for the redefinition of the interests. For new foreign policy identity, İsmail Cem and Ahmet Davutoğlu played an important role. Davutoğlu doctrine emphasized the re-definition of interests and gave crucial role for the actor within the international politics. According to him, like Cem, in order to become a central state in the world

politics, Turkey should give up acting as a mere bridge between the Muslim world and West and instead act as a problem solver to contribute to the regional and global peace. Applying more pro-active policy would increase the effectiveness of Turkey, which could transform Turkey into a central state in the international politics. For him, the contradictions between the social identity and corporate identity resulted in the alienation towards the corporate identity. The instable corporate identity caused the widening of gap with the others and this resulted in the negative identification with the "Other" during the 1990s. Therefore, the social identity became problematic. In order to solve this problem, actor should redefine its historical memory. Davutoğlu doctrine aimed to create a new psychology in Turkey to develop positive neighborhood policy and minimize spillover effects of negative regional developments for Turkey. Changing perception towards the region helped Turkey in establishing positive links with the actors of the Middle East during the first decade of the 2000s and helped realize the zero-problem policy although these principles became questionable after the Arab Spring.

Turkey's changing perception about the nature of the PKK issue also helped Turkish foreign policy elite break the link between the threat perception and relations with the neighbors. Turkey began to see solving the Kurdish issue as a key to improve the relations with the neighboring regions. On the other side, the improving relations with the neighboring regions were described as the transformative effect on the Kurdish issue. Therefore, Turkey could break the link between the domestic Kurdish issue and Syria. This was very important because the PKK issue was lying at the very heart of Turkey-Syria relations during the 1980s and 1990s. Hence, Turkey could look at Syria with the new leadership under the changing social realities of Syria and began to see Bashar Asad as the representative of the new generation as the chance for the better relations. In that sense, the AKP government also emphasized the changing identity of Syria and its potential transformative and constructive effects. For the AKP government, Turkish-Syrian relations throughout the history have been irrational and both parties have ignored the extraordinary potential for bilateral relations.

According to the AKP government, the most important change in the foreign policy vision in the 2000s was the self-confidence when compared to the 1990s. Whereas the encirclement psychology began to be criticized, new principles were formulated during this period. The new principles can be listed as the multi-dimensionality, zero-problems with neighbors, a balance

between democracy and security, and the redefinition of Turkey as the central state and applying more active and pro-active diplomacy with the help of the rhythmic diplomacy and soft power rather than hard power. By the help of this list, Turkey wanted to remove the old problems of the conventional diplomacy and tried to reformulate its position in the new century. In that sense, Turkey diversified its tools and strategies towards the neighboring regions. By formulating new foreign policy principles, Turkey could partially remove the historical misperceptions and prejudices against Syria, which was one of the most important factors for the improving relations.

On Syrian side, with the beginning of the Bashar Asad period, Syria also entered into a new period. While the limits of this period are questionable, Bashar Asad as the representative of the new generation created hopes for changes. Bashar Asad became the new president of Syria after 30-year Hafez Al-Asad regime. In that sense, Bashar Asad's accession to power was described as the generational change, which could respond to the necessities of the globalization and the new world order. For Bashar Asad, in order to join the outside world, the new economy, new administration and new international relations required and these can only be achieved by the application of new mentality to the government and society. He continuously emphasized the importance of the modernization and improvement of economy, education and administration. He saw closed society as a handicap to the globalized world. With Damascus Spring, Syrian administration gave general amnesties to the political prisoners, licenses to the private newspapers, provision of political forums for the open criticism and discarded the personality cult of his father. In comparison to 1980s and 1990s, the 2000s witnessed more modern and moderate administration with the help of the domestic reform process. For the international politics, rising prestige of Syria in the region, establishment of good relations with the EU and the neighboring countries and the removal from the list of the state sponsoring terrorism were seen as the new targets of the new elite of Syria. During the 2000s, under the US pressure, relations with European states became vital for Syria. In addition to the links with the European countries, Syria also gave importance to the regional alliances and aimed to tighten inter-Arab, Russian, and Iranian links. Increasing US and Israeli pressure after the Iraqi War and Hariri assassination forced Syria to pursue more pragmatic foreign policy. However, Bashar Asad period was described as a change within stability and continuity, which describes the new path in preserving the status quo in Syria. In that sense, for Syria, redefinition of the "Self" in domestic

and international politics was not radical. However, limited change of the "Self" could be enough to establish good relations with Turkey. Under these circumstances both states increased the level of cooperation during this period and the cooperation helped with the establishment of the good relations between the two parties.

However, besides new governments in both countries, the international developments had important effects on the redefinition processes. After 9/11, the USA began to emphasize security, which specifically emphasized the freedom and human rights during the 1990s and the invasion of Iraq by the USA in 2003 had catastrophic effects on the region. With the Iraqi occupation, the concentration of the USA shifted from the peace process to terrorism in the Middle East. Turkey perceived the war as a source of risks, given the ambiguity of American plans about the post-war conditions in Iraq. The USA and Turkey shared limited common goals about the situation in Iraq and this forced Turkey to look for new allies in the region. In that sense, in order to minimize the risks of war, Turkey needed to cooperate with the countries of the region. Under these circumstances, Syria became very crucial for Turkey. On Syrian side, the presence of the USA in the region was a bigger threat for Syria. Removal of the anti-American regimes gained priority for the US Middle Eastern policies, and in that sense, besides Iraq, Syria was seen as the target of the USA in the new era. As a result of the rising US pressure, Syria began to feel encirclement by the USA during the 2000s. Interruption of the peace talks with Israel, Hariri assassination, relations with Hamas and Hezbollah also increased the pressure on Syria during the 2000s. Hence, good relations with the pro-western states became crucial for Syria in order to provide more space in international politics. In addition to these, for Syria and Turkey, the concerns about the territorial integrity of Iraq made the "Other" to be a more reliable partner for the cooperation. Therefore, in order to break the isolation and establish common stances towards regional developments, Turkey became a very crucial actor for Syria. In addition to these, both countries' similar responses towards Israel's military operations in the region, Turkey's support after the Hariri assassination and Syria's help for Cyprus issue reinforced and contributed to the cooperation between Turkey and Syria.

During the 2000s, Turkey declared its aim at being westerner in the West and being easterner in the East. Hence, Syria kept a very crucial place for Turkey in order to improve relations with the region. Increasing priority of Middle Eastern region during the AKP era made

Syria crucial for Turkey. On the other hand, Bashar Asad represented a change in Syria. Limiting the Cold War understanding and updating foreign policy attitude helped remove the negative identification with Turkey. Under these circumstances, Turkey began to be seen as an important partner for Syria with regards to the integration into the global order with the help of economic and cultural exchanges. Shortly, whereas Turkey tried to close the gap with the East, Syria tried the same thing with the West. Therefore, the psychological gap between the two sides closed. With the changing perceptions and interests of two countries, the most successful example of the zero-problem policy in the region for Turkey was seen in the relations with Syria during the 2000s. As a result of new interest formulations by new identities in Turkey and Syria, the gap between two identities narrowed and this resulted in a process for the establishment of the collective identity. As a result of this, both the level of cooperation continuously increased in different areas and mistrust between the parties was removed, which helped the cooperation on the core issues.

As a result of the changing perceptions about the "Other", both parties' attitudes towards the old problems also began to change. Both Turkey and Syria became more tolerable towards the "other" and tried to take more responsibility for the solution of the core issues, which had brought two states into the edge of war in 1998. Until 2002, the parties could not take much responsibility about the core problems. In that sense, period until 2002 could be described as a trust building process. However, right after 2002, parties began to increase the level of cooperation about these issues although problems remained unsolved. The brightest cooperation among these issues was against the PKK. During the 2000s, Syria and Turkey gradually increased the level of cooperation against the PKK issue. The changing perception of Turkey about its own Kurdish issue helped this cooperation. On Syrian side, the PKK had a potential in turning into a threat for Syria. In that sense, the cooperation over the PKK issue was easier for Syria than water and Hatay disputes. On the other hand, the cooperation about the water dispute was much more limited because of the sui generis nature of the issue. However, during the 2000s, the parties began to describe the water dispute as a technical issue and the water issue did not create an obstacle for the improvement of the relations. Moreover, the parties tried to help the "Other" in times of need and began to initiate joint projects like the construction of the friendship dam over Orontes River. On the other hand, the cooperation for Hatay dispute remained low

during the 2000s. Both states continued to define Hatay as a part of the nation-state. However, in order not to harm bilateral relations, sides preferred to remain silent about the status of Hatay.

In short, after the expulsion of Abdullah Öcalan from Syria, Syria and Turkey made cooperation about the wide range of issues from tourism and investment to trade and security. As a peak point of the relations, both states abolished visa requirements, established free trade zones and organized joint military maneuvers during the 2000s. Similar attitudes towards the regional developments like US intervention in Iraq, perceptions about Palestinian groups, reactions against Israel's operations in the region showed the closing gap between two countries and the occurrence of the positive identification, which was regarded as impossible in pre-1998 period. The normalization of the relations helped with the occurrence of a more tolerant atmosphere between two parties. Positive attitudes of the parties towards the "Other" helped remove the negative images in the eyes of other societies. While the core issues could not be resolved like the water dispute and the status of Hatay during the 2000s, the removal of the main security concerns and misperceptions prevented these disputes from turning into tension. In addition, the parties also increased the level of cooperation in order to prevent the occurrence of any crises.

Turkey signed the first Free Trade Agreement in the region with Syria in 2004. Turkey's export to Syria increased from $184 million in 1999 to $797 million in 2007 as a direct result of the Free Trade Agreement. Trade volume between Syria and Turkey increased from $729 million in 2000 to $2.754 million in 2008. Two states signed the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council agreement in İstanbul in 2009. At the end of the 2000s, besides the economic relations, political relations reached its peak. Davutoğlu defined the bilateral relations as "common destiny, common history and common future" and expressed their aim, the full integration of two countries. Davutoğlu also described the developments between Syria and Turkey as the "two states, one government" and defined this period as the golden age for the bilateral relations. Bashar Asad for the first time also defined bilateral relations as the strategic partnership in 2009. Bashar Asad also expressed that the loss of one side would also be the loss of the other side. Therefore, the distinction between the "Self" and the "Other" blurred during the 2000s. Under these circumstances, the bilateral relations were described as the ideal partnership that could remove artificial borders between two communities. These developments were identified with French-German relations in the post-World War II and seen as the important steps towards the

economic, cultural and social integrations. In that sense, the developments between Syria and Turkey during the first decade of the 2000s became an important example not only for the bilateral relations but also for the history of the region.

On the other hand, 2011 represents the breaking point for the bilateral relations. With the start of the Arab Spring in the region, tension between the two states increased, and in the end the relations broke down. After the start of conflicts, bilateral relations lost momentum and sharply deteriorated. On the one hand, Asad's attitude against the opposition groups and resistance against change destroyed his image within the international society. On the other hand, too much engagement of Turkey to the problem raised some questions about the real aim of Turkey, which harmed Turkey's prestige in the region. Therefore, with the start of Arab Spring, besides the bilateral relations, the reputations of the two states in the region were injured and positive atmosphere of 2000s totally got lost. Turkey thought the Syrian regime was coming to an end that they aimed to formulate a new structure in Syria, who would be a friendlier ally for Turkey in the region. High level of engagement of Turkey also created the most important obstacle for the bilateral relations and this engagement increased the level of mistrust. Another important problem for Turkey was the foreign policy principles of the AKP government. While policy of zero problems with neighbors became one of the central tenets for the foreign policy principles during the 2000s, sustainability of this policy within the instable surrounding environment became questionable. Zero problem policy witnessed important challenges by means of some crucial developments in the region after the start of Arab Spring. Political instability in the Middle East also harmed soft power understanding of Turkey, and as a result, politicization process returned into securitization process. While the AKP government advocated the continuation of talks with all the actors in the region during the 2000s, after Arab Spring, the government began to define some developments within the framework of national security.

To sum up, 2010s represented the deterioration of bilateral relations. Sincere friendly regime of the 2000s became an enemy for both parties in 2010s. In order to understand this revival, both structure and agents should be taken into consideration. Occurrence of the critical juncture, which refers to perceived crisis situations, prevented the establishment of collective identity between the two countries. In that sense, the critical juncture Arab Spring negatively affected bilateral relations. Secondly, for the Syrian side, corporate identity witnessed a crisis

with the start of rebels in Syria. Under this circumstance, suggestions of "Others" were perceived as an intervention in domestic affairs. In that sense, Syria's reactions against the same actions in different periods got different like in the example of Syria's responses to Turkey's suggestions. Therefore, problematic corporate identity created problems for social identity. For the Turkish side, tools and means began to change in 2010s. While Turkey had rejected any isolation policies against the actors in the region, with the crisis in Syria, Turkey became an obvious part of the conflict. Giving up the balance policy by Turkey in the region decreased the credibility of Turkey among some segments of Middle Eastern societies. Therefore, changing attitude of Turkey towards Syria negatively affected bilateral relations. Lastly, while two new governments represented the change, we cannot define radical change for both countries. New identities in Syria and Turkey did not transform overall interests because changes in corporate identities in Syria and Turkey were not radical, which did not bring totally different corporate identities. Turkish foreign policy witnessed adjustment and program changes, but it did not witness an international orientation change. The pro-western stance and hope for being a part of the western society continued during this period. Similar positions of Turkey and the West towards Syria after the Arab Spring can be seen as a clear example of this. On the other side, Syria also did not witness overall transformation. Strategic parity with Israel, suspicions towards the West and the centrality of Pan-Arabism continued to be a part of foreign policy principles. In that sense, we cannot argue that there was a complete transformation of the corporate identities, which had effects on social and collective identities. As a result, collective identity between two sides could not be established and identities easily became selfish after the Arab Spring.

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