

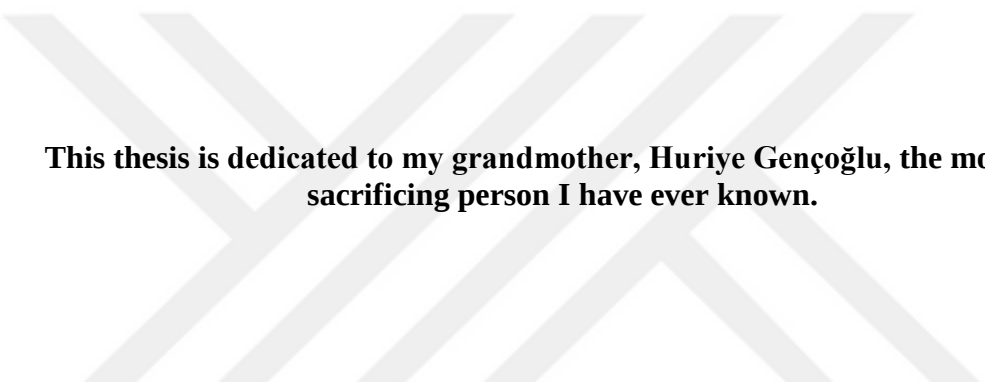
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MARMARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER (İNGİLİZCE) BİLİM DALI

**UNDERSTANDING TURKEY'S SYRIA POLICY DURING
THE AK PARTY ERA:
FROM DESECURITIZATION TO SECURITIZATION**

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

OKAN GÜLBAK

İstanbul, 2018



This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother, Huriye Gençoğlu, the most self-sacrificing person I have ever known.

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Danışman: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şükrü Yazğan

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TEZ ONAY BELGESİ

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ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER (İNGİLİZCE) Bilim Dalı TEZLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS öğrencisi
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Öğretim Üyesi Adı Soyadı

İmzası

1.	Tez Danışmanı	Dr. Öğr. Üyesi ŞÜKRÜ YAZGAN	
2.	Jüri Üyesi	Dr. Öğr. Üyesi HAKAN MEHMETCİK	
3.	Jüri Üyesi	Doç. Dr. İLKE CİVELEKOĞLU	

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Okan GÜLBAK

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Name and Surname	: Okan Gülbak
Field	: Political Science and International Relations
Programme	: International Relations (English)
Supervisor	: Assist. Prof. Şükrü Yazğan
Degree Awarded and Date	: Master – July 2018
Keywords	: Securitization, Desecuritization, Political Discourse, the AK Party, Syria

ABSTRACT

UNDERSTANDING TURKEY’S SYRIA POLICY DURING THE AK PARTY ERA: FROM DESECURITIZATION TO SECURITIZATION

This thesis applied the securitization theory to the case of Turkey’s Syrian Policy during the AK Party era. The main argument was, because Turkey’s foreign and security policies were interconnected and intertwined with each other; the securitization theory was most suited analytical tool to understand the dramatic transformation in Turkey’s Syria Policy. Hence, the dynamics behind this transformation could not be understood only by using traditional or social constructivist approaches to the security. Rather, thesis aimed to develop an inclusive approach that combined the traditional and social constructivist approaches to security with the desecuritization and the securitization theory and also reframed them in the light of coming critics and contributions.

GENEL BİLGİLER

İsim ve Soyadı	: Okan Gülbak
Anabilim Dalı	: Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler
Programı	: Uluslararası İlişkiler (İngilizce)
Tez Danışmanı	: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şükrü Yazğan
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ÖZ

AK PARTİ DÖNEMİNDE TÜRKİYE’NİN SURİYE POLİTİKASINI ANLAMAK: GÜVENLİKSİZLEŞTİRME DEN GÜVENLİKLEŞTİRMEYE

Bu tezin amacı, Güvenlikleştirme Teorisi çerçevesinde AK Parti Dönemindeki Türkiye’nin Suriye Politikasını incelemektir. Tezin temel argümanı, Türkiye’nin Güvenlik ve Dış Politika uygulamalarının birbirine sıkı sıkıya bağlı ve iç içe geçmiş olduğundan; güvenlikleştirme teorisinin, dramatik bir dönüşüm içinde olan Türkiye’nin Suriye Politikasını anlamakta en uygun analiz aracı olduğudur. Bu bağlamda çalışma, dönüşümün dinamiklerinin yalnızca geleneksel ve konstruktivist güvenlik yaklaşımlarının belli başlı temalarıyla anlaşılıp açıklanamayacağını tartışırken; aynı zamanda, bu yaklaşımları güvenliksizleştirme ve güvenlikleştirme teorisi ve bu teoriye gelen eleştiri ve katkılarla yeniden şekillendirilerek kapsayıcı bir yaklaşımla açıklamayı hedeflemektedir.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AK Party	AKP-Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/Justice and Development Party
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CS	Copenhagen Peace Research Institute
EU	European Union
FSA	Free Syrian Army (Özgür Suriye Ordusu)
HDP	Halkların Demokrasi Partisi (People's Democracy Party)
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NOM	National Outlook Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi)
PKK	Partiya Karkaran Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers Party)
PM	Prime Minister
PYD	Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat (Democratic Union Party)
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
TFP	Turkish Foreign Policy
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assemble
UN	United Nations
US	United States
YPG	Yekineyen Parastina Gel (People's Protection Unit)

INTRODUCTION

Syria had been perceived as an existential threat in Turkey's Foreign Policy (TFP) discourse until the end of 1990s. During this period, Turkey's Syrian Policy had mostly been limited with and lasted in reference to the dimension of Turkey's traditional security understanding.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, particularly when the Justice and Development Party (JDP – *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*/ AK Party) took up its position in the government, Turkey's Syrian Policy has begun to change dramatically. While the AK Party developed more friendly relations with Syria, it also changed the nature the security understanding behind the TFP discourse and tried to formulate a multidimensional foreign policy approach based on political, economic and social engagements.

On the other side, as a result of changing context in the Middle East region under the effect of Arab uprisings since 2010, Turkey's Syrian Policy transformed again and Syria once again started to be perceived as an existential threat and a source of insecurity. Consequently, TFP returned to the limits of Turkey's traditional security understanding as in the 1990s.

In that sense, the main objective of this study is to understand the dynamics of transformation of Turkey's Syria Policy during the AK Party era within the scope of the desecuritization approach and the securitization theory in social constructivism. To analyze the dynamics of this dramatic transformation, the theoretical framework established in the light of main questions and the units of the desecuritization approach as well as the securitization theory is used in the present study.

The aim of the study is to understand dramatic transformation of Turkey's Syria Policy during the AK Party era within the scope of the desecuritization approach and the securitization theory in social constructivism. It also analyzes the dynamics of AK Party's values on the basis of the security analysis of Copenhagen School (CS) with some critiques and contributions from other scholars by referring securitization that is something more than a discursive act.

The research questions of the study are as follows:

- ✓ How can we explain transformation of Turkey's Syria Policy during the AK Party period within the scope of the desecuritization approach and the securitization theory?
- ✓ What are the values of AK Party as security actors on the basis of the security analysis?
- ✓ How can the change of political discourse from "Brother Assad" until 2011 to "tyrant Assad" beginning from mid-2011, and the transformation of Turkey's Foreign policy from desecuritization to securitization be explained? What would be the limits of desecuritization and securitization?
- ✓ What are the changing values of AK Party elites towards the changing nature of domestic, regional and international contexts?

Dealing with those questions, this study will understand the intertwined relationship of security and foreign policy in the examination of values. Therefore, the study will try to find out the main logic behind the political behavior of an incumbent political party in foreign policy political discourse within changing domestic, regional and international contexts.

The main hypothesis of this study is that transformations in TFP towards Syria during the AK Party era can be explained through shifts in AK Party elites' interpretation of their values within the changing domestic, regional and international contexts and this is why Turkey's Syrian Policy has underwent a transformation from desecuritization to securitization.

In addition to the main hypothesis, this study argued that because there is an inherent relation with the security concept and the values, both of them could be changed and rearranged in terms of changes in the contexts within the scope of social constructivism. While Turkey's Syria Policy was desecuritized in reference to the AK Party values during the period of 2002-2011, it has transformed into securitization; because, changes in domestic, regional and international contexts that force a rearrangement of the AK Party values during the period of 2012-2018. Also, this study argued that while the AK Party's desecuritization of Turkey's Syria Policy could be seen as a part of consistent formulation

and implementation of foreign policy, the AK Party's securitization cannot be seen as systematic, rather it can be seen ad hoc conduct of foreign policy.

This study conducts process analysis as methodology. In the first chapter, the relevant literature is reviewed to construct a consistent theoretical framework for the study. In doing that, the main points of the study are defined in order to synchronize theory and practice. As this study argues that securitization refers more than just a discursive act and it is about construction of knowledge, the speech act analysis is not solely chosen for analyzing. Rather, the social construction of security is analyzed by regarding constructed processes in relation to textual as well as contextual factors. In the second and third chapters, some political discourses are selected from secondary sources. Also changing contexts are analyzed in reference to the main questions of securitization. In the second chapter, the values and the identity of the AK Party elites are described in order to analyze them as the units of desecuritization. In the third chapter, re-evolution of the AK Party's values is provided for the analysis of the units of securitization. Both chapters put forward the textual and contextual factors to provide insights into how and why Turkey's Syrian policy transformed into securitization after 2011.

This study is divided into three chapters in order to answer the research questions. The first chapter is allocated for the theoretical framework of the study. It starts with short a discussion on the assumption that there is an obvious relation with the security concept and the values inherently. This assumption has been used as the common notion among the security and foreign policy studies for decades without underlining its significance. In this study, it is attached necessary importance and used as the base. Then, the chapter continues with the explanation of how the security concept was used among realists and social constructivists by focusing on the traditional understanding of security and social constructivist approaches. Following that, the definition of central themes of CS and its security analysis are given as the main theoretical framework throughout the study. Within the scope of the security analysis, the theory of securitization and the desecuritization approach are considered; both are enriched by the critiques and contributions towards them.

The second chapter examines the desecuritization of Turkey's Syria Policy since 2002. Although the Turkey's Syria Policy had begun to 'normalize' with the signing of Adana Records in 1998 after a long period of securitization in TFP; the process of desecuritization started with the AK Party government. This chapter considers the values and the identity of the AK Party in comparison to the values of Turkey's traditional security actors. It also points out how the AK party differentiated itself from the traditional understanding of security. Therefore, it becomes easier to understand how a securitized nature of traditional TFP towards Syria evolved into desecuritization process during the AK Party period, and it also facilitates the analysis of how the AK Party achieved the preservation of its values. On this matter, the fundamental themes of Davutoğlu doctrine such as "active model state", "central state", "rhythmic diplomacy", "common destiny" and "common history" are evaluated with the political discourses of Davutoğlu and Erdoğan such as "Brother Assad". The chapter also applies rearticulation model as the most concrete model of desecuritization models for embodiment of political, military and cultural engagements in this period.

The final chapter explores the dynamics of transformation of Turkey's Syria Policy starting from mid-2011. Although, the historical breakthrough point of (re)securitization came in 2012 with the downing of Turkish military jet by Syria, the chapter starts to analyze the securitization process with Arab uprisings wind up Syria. Furthermore, this chapter reconsiders the description of the values of AK Party as the security actor within the changing domestic, regional and international contexts. It examines how the preservation of reconsidered values has been achieved. Furthermore, it helps us understand how the desecuritized Syria Policy transformed into securitization by the analysis of selected speeches given specifically by Erdoğan such as "we do not see Syria as an issue of foreign policy; it is our domestic problem", "Assad's days are numbered" and "finishing Assad's brutality". The chapter applies the securitization theory and enriches it with the critiques and contributions directed to it; and it aims to provide valuable insights into the transformation of Turkey's Syria Policy from desecuritization to securitization since mid-2011. Because, Turkey has 'officially' governed by emergency rule since mid-2016 after a failed military coup attempt to the AK Party government and securitization have become formalized in domestic and foreign policies,

this chapter is not investigating the events after 2016, rather this study examines social construction of security.



CHAPTER 1

SECURITIZATION AND FOREIGN POLICY: A THEORETICAL APPROACH

This chapter will define central themes of security concept. It will consider the relation between foreign policy and the concept of security in International Relations theory. The concept of security, the security analysis, theory of securitization and the desecuritization approach will be discussed in detail. These concepts will be highlighted by referring to the points at which they accord with and deviate from Turkey's Syrian Policy during the AK Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*/Justice and Development Party) era.

When the motives behind the concept of security in IR are analyzed, it can clearly be seen that realist versions of IR theory has formed their own 'tradition'.¹ Realists mainly try "to explain" security in an objective way, because world politics is a "concrete manner" according to them.² Accordingly, realists mostly explain international relations³ on the systemic level, realist IR theories' foundational assumptions on international system embody the security concept; likewise, objectivism, state centrism and survival, which lead the concept of security, pave the way to the foreign policy. All of them have been the main reasons of realist IR theory of explaining why security should be thought as "a matter of national security", which should be based on the "state-centric approach" and should also be formulated in "military terms".⁴ Traditional conceptualization of security not only has dominated the IR discipline, but it also influenced most of the nation-states' foreign policy practices during the 20th century.

However, social constructivists argue that rather than trying to *explain* world politics objectively with an emphasis on military aspects as the realists do, there is a need "to

¹ John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owen, **Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International World Politics**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.233

² John Baylis, "Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güvenlik Kavramı.", Mustafa Aydın, Hans Günter Brauch, Mitat Çelikpala ve Ursula Oswald Spring et al. (Ed.), **Uluslararası İlişkilerde Çatışmadan Güvenliğe** içinde (153-164), İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2012, p.154

³ Baylis, *Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güvenlik Kavramı*, p.155

⁴ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jack De Wilde, **Security: A New Framework for Analysis**, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998, p. 1.

understand it”⁵ by focusing on “the processes among the subjects”⁶. In other words, they claim that world politics can be understood by emphasizing the social construction of inter-subjectivity of units,⁷ because social constructivists see the world as “it is socially constituted through inter-subjective interactions.”⁸ In such a way, world politics is not concrete as realists assume; yet, it is a “social manner”.⁹ That’s why the traditional conceptualization of security should be reconsidered in terms of the main theme of social constructivism.¹⁰ Principally security is a social construction, it makes different senses within different contexts; due to this fact, universal and general definitions of security should be avoided;¹¹ more importantly, the priority of the international system on security studies should move on to the particular foreign policies of particular states and institutions.¹² In that sense, scholars in securitization theory focused on bridging the gap between realists’ systemic approach and social constructivists’ emphasis on particularity in security studies. Within this perspective, they suggested the securitization theory as an alternative framework to make security analysis for particular security issues.

1.1 The Concept of Security and Foreign Policy

Security is one of the most important concepts as a sub-discipline in IR studies; because it is not only used for explanations of other concepts such as survival, and foreign policy; but, it is also used for better explanations of international relations from different approaches and discourses.¹³ Although the concept is widely utilized among different scholars from different perspectives, it is commonly accepted that there is not a very clear

⁵ Baylis, *Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güvenlik Kavramı*, p.160

⁶ Alexander Wendt, **Social Theory of International Politics**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 9

⁷ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, **International Organization**, Vol.46, No.2, (Spring, 1992), p. 393

⁸ Matt McDonald, “Securitization and the Construction of Security”, **European Journal of International Relations**, Vol. 14, No. 4, (December, 2008), pp. 59-60

⁹ Baylis, *Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güvenlik Kavramı*, p.160

¹⁰ Jef Huymans, “Defining Social Constructivism in Security Studies: The Normative Dilemma of Writing Security”, **Alternatives**, Vol. 27, (February, 2002), pp. 41-62

¹¹ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p. 31

¹² Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, **The Evolution of International Security Studies**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp.195-196

¹³ Oktay F. Tanrısever, “Güvenlik”, Atila Eralp (Ed.), **Devlet ve Ötesi: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Temel Kavramlar** içinde (107-125), İstanbul: İletişim, 2011, s.107, David Baldwin, “The Concept of Security”, **Review of International Studies**, Vol. 23, No. 1, (1997), pp. 5-26

and generalizable definition for it.¹⁴ As a conventional wisdom, “security is seen as an essentially contested concept”.¹⁵ More importantly, there is no single answer to “what is security” question that can apply all time and space.¹⁶ In those lights, this section starts with the initial and traditional usages of the concept of security; then, it focuses on the main contributions of traditional understanding of security and critics towards it.

1.1.1 Traditional Understanding of Security

First of all, it is obvious that there has been a direct relation between the concept of security and the threat feeling towards people’s values during the history. In short, “security means freedom from threats in its basic sense.”¹⁷ Looking at the historiography of the concept of security and reviewing literature on its traditional usages can embody this assumption. The first use of the concept of security can be traced back to the Roman Political thought as Emma Rothschild proposed.¹⁸ Cicero and Seneca were the first ones who used the Latin word ‘*Securitas*’ in their writings in the meaning of individual senses, which were related to the values such as happiness and inner sort of the human being.¹⁹ In addition, Rothschild proposed that the concept of security was seen as something that could be achievable by ‘collective and contractual enterprise’ in the Enlightenment Age by French phrase ‘*la securiete commune*’, which were related to the ‘acquired values’ of society.²⁰ Centuries after Roman times and approaching the so called modern times, emergence of nation states along the Europe did not only make the states as providers of security for their people; but also made them think about nation states’ own security for survival among a self-help world system.²¹ As a consequence, the connection between

¹⁴ Barry Buzan, **People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era**, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Pub, 1991, p.7, Pınar Bilgin, “Güvenlik Çalışmalarında Yeni Açılımlar: Yeni Güvenlik Çalışmaları”, **Stratejik Araştırmalar**, Vol. 8, No.14, (January, 2010), p.76

¹⁵ Baldwin, *The Concept of Security*, p.5

¹⁶ Bilgin, *Güvenlik Çalışmalarında Yeni Açılımlar: Yeni Güvenlik Çalışmaları*, p.76

¹⁷ Emma Rothschild, “What is Security?”, **Daedalus**, Vol. 124, No. 3, (Summer, 1998), pp. 53-98, Richard Ullman, “Redefining Security”, **International Security**, Vol. 8, No. 1, (Summer, 1983), p. 133

¹⁸ Rothschild, *What is Security?*, pp. 61-62

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 61

²⁰ Ibid, p. 62

²¹ Rothschild, *What is Security?*, pp. 60-65

the concept of security and the foreign policy was established due to the states' survival attitude in a self-help world.²²

Secondly, two traditional theories of IR, liberalism and realism, both conceptualized security as "freedom of nation-states from external threats" similar to the original usages.²³ This point of view became a tradition among academics and practitioners of the security from the both sides till to the end of 20th century. Liberals and realists approached security as a survival attitude in first half of the 20th century; both of them identified threats as external that came from outside of a nation to its borders that something related with the possibility of war or enhancement of the peace.²⁴ For this reason, they approached security as "the concept through which national security problem can be approached".²⁵ Barry Buzan summarized the two traditional theories of IR as follows:

While the realist IR argue that their (security) concept leads them not only to the basic capabilities in the international system, but also a prime motive for the behavior of actors; on the other hand, the liberal IR argued that their (security) concept leads them not only to see the problem in holistic terms, but also it directly focuses on the essential matter of war.²⁶

In other words, the concept of security was thought as the national security of states as a matter of power and peace in war situation in the studies of the two traditional theories of IR. Walter Lippmann defined national security in 1944: "a nation is secure if it is not in danger of having to sacrifice its core values; if it wishes to avoid war it can, and if challenged it can take victory".²⁷

Finally, the traditional understanding of security started to be conceptualized in the name of strategic studies by realists after the end of the Second World War (WWII).²⁸ The strategic studies were born and dominated the IR field until the end of the Cold War from

²² Kenneth Waltz, **Theory of International Politics**, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979, p. 91

²³ John Baylis, "International and Global Security", John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens (Ed.), in **Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations** (14-33), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 235

²⁴ William C. Wohlforth, "Realism and Security Studies", Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Thierry Balzacq (Ed.), in **The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies** (9-20), 2010, pp. 9-20

²⁵ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, p. 1

²⁶ Ibid, p.2

²⁷ Walter Lippman, **US Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic**, Boston: Little, Brown, 1943, p. 51

²⁸ Paul Williams, **Security Studies: An Introduction**, London: Routledge, 2008, p.3

1947 to 1991 and they specifically lived their ‘golden age’ through 1950s and 1960s.²⁹ Civilian strategists from the academia guided foreign and security policies of the Western government.³⁰ They particularly studied security in military terms; because, for them, the enhancement of security in military terms was the best means of conducting foreign policies for nation states in the anarchical system,³¹ and it was also the best means of protecting and promoting their values indirectly. Therefore, they developed theories and strategies on war fighting, nuclear deployment, deterrence, armed forces, and so on.³² As a matter of fact, their intellectual and practical concerns were about the best means use of military force.³³

Until the end of Cold War era, realists used the concept of security in order to explain foreign policy behavior of states without presenting its analytical limits, and that was also used in the meaning of national security without examining its connection to the values of the states as their of security. Although, there were some attempts to define what the security is such as Lippmann’s 1944 study and Arnold Wolfers’ definition in 1957, “security is freedom from threats to core values”;³⁴ there were more empirical work and less theoretical writing, as they generally dealt with security problems and issues in military sense in strategy studies.³⁵ Since the 1970s, traditional understanding of security started to be criticized as being locked in military field. As Buzan argued in 1983: “... a large volume of empirical studies is not the serve mission for the base of security’s more conceptual side...strategic studies spend their energy on weapons technology and weapons development... ”³⁶. On the other hand, the supporters contributed to the traditional understanding of security with the main themes of realist IR theory at the same

²⁹ Stephen M. Walt, “The Renaissance of Security Studies”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 5, (June, 1991), pp.212-215

³⁰ Williams, *Security Studies: An Introduction*, p.3

³¹ Buzan and Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies*, p.11

³² Ibid, p.11

³³ Williams, *Security Studies: An Introduction*, p.3

³⁴ Lippman, *US Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*, p.51

³⁵ Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* *People, States and Fear*, p.3

³⁶ Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, p.8

time. In order to understand the shortages and the excesses of the traditional understanding of security, there is a need to look at main themes of realist IR.

1.1.2 Contributions and Critics to the Traditional Understanding of Security

Traditional understanding of security was addressed around the main themes of realist IR theory, which can be summarized, by objectivism, state centrism and survival. Realists primarily explain world politics in a concrete manner. As John Mearsheimer argued that realists maintain that “there is an objective and knowable world.”³⁷ Therefore, their security understanding has an objectivist sense. Their presumption, taking the world politics as given in a static structure, accommodates their security understanding. Stephen Walt also supported this perspective by posing that the security field has gradually evolved into an objective, scientific discipline in which the “laws” governing the realm of security were discovered and this led to the formation of the correct method for the field.³⁸ According to Walt, locking of security field in military sense indicates, “security studies’ seeking cumulative knowledge about the role of military force”³⁹ and that should be seen as “following the standard canons of scientific research”.⁴⁰

Furthermore, the claim of objectivism and scientific knowledge of traditional security understanding is also associated with the state centrism by realists. According to them, the states give priority to the subject of security;⁴¹ because, “there can be no security in the absence of authority, the state accordingly becomes the primary locus of security, authority and obligation”.⁴² Realists strengthened this point of view with the ‘fact’ that world is structured by anarchy and there is no automatic harmony in anarchy.⁴³ In Kenneth Waltz’s words,

³⁷ John Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions”, **International Security**, Vol. 19, (Winter, 1994/95), pp. 5-49; pp. 37-39, 41.

³⁸ Walt, *The Renaissance of Security Studies*, p.222

³⁹ Ibid, p. 222

⁴⁰ Keith Krause and Michael Williams, “Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods”, **Mershon International Studies Review**, Vol. 40, No. 2, (October, 1996), p. 230

⁴¹ Ibid, p.232

⁴² Krause and Williams, *Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods*, p.232

⁴³ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p.160

A state will use force to attain its goals if, after assessing the prospects for success, it values those goals more than it value the pleasures of peace. Because each state is the final judge of its own cause, any state may at any time use force to implement is policies. Because any state may any time use force, all states must constantly be ready either to counter force with force or pay the cost of weakness. The requirements of state action are, in this view, imposed by the circumstances in which all exist.⁴⁴

‘The circumstances of which all states exist’ in Waltz description dictates states to be the main referent objects of security. Thus, if there is no higher authority other than states to regulate world politics; security should have been as the prominent liability of governments of the states for their survival.⁴⁵ As a matter of fact, states are the primary actors for eliminating insecurities to survive in the anarchical system.

The last but not least important theme of realist IR theory, survival, is being used as an indispensable contribution of traditional understanding of security. Using the analogies of ‘state of nature’ from Hobbes and Rousseau to Waltz, survival is thought as the main reason of state’s security; hence, it is contributed to the values, wishes and objects of the state.⁴⁶ Waltz states clearly: “States have many objects. Some states may aim at the conquest of the world, other states may aim at a local hegemony, and other states may aim at no hegemony at all but desire simply to be left alone. Common to the desires of all states is the wish for survival”.⁴⁷

As a consequence, on the one hand, those main themes of realist IR gave way to the foreign policy formulation of states, state actors saw security as a matter of foreign policy implementation and enhancement of national security was seen as the enhancement of ultimate national goals until the 1990s.⁴⁸ On the other hand, they formed the base of contributions towards the critics coming to the traditional understanding of security.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.160

⁴⁵ Mustafa Aydın, “Uluslararası İlişkilerin “Gerçekçi” Teorisi: Kökeni, Kapsamı, Kritiği”, **Uluslararası İlişkiler**, Vol. 1, No. 1, (Bahar, 2014), pp. 33-60

⁴⁶ Krause and Williams, *Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods*, p.232

⁴⁷ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p.203

⁴⁸ Mustafa Aydın, “Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy”, **Middle Eastern Studies**, Vol. 36, No.1, (January, 2000), pp.103-139

Even all those contributions have not been adequate to explain changes in world politics such as the unforeseen end of the Cold War,⁴⁹ critics against traditional understanding of security has increased by the supporters of alternative approaches in the meantime.⁵⁰ Traditional understanding of security is ‘no longer adequate’ for critics.⁵¹ For instance, there has been existing questions on “whether the concepts and practices of security, as they emerged in academia and policymaking, could still be analyzed and applied as they had between 1947 and 1991”.⁵² For that reason, broadening the agenda of security studies began to be discussed.⁵³ On the one hand, there were some suggestions for the source of threat by widening the nature of the concept of security beyond military terms including environment and economic problems such as Lester Brown’s⁵⁴ and Jessica Tuchman Matthews’s articles⁵⁵; on the other hand, there were some suggestions for the level of security beyond the state level from the individual to the global level such as Ken Booth’s 1991 article⁵⁶ and Richard Ullman’s 1983 article⁵⁷.

To sum up, realist IR scholars’ ideas dominated the security studies area during the Cold War era; however, realist understanding of security was criticized as “weakly conceptualized and ambiguity defined concept” by alternative approaches.⁵⁸ Realists positioned themselves against the alternative approaches as Mearsheimer claimed:

⁴⁹ Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, “Is Anybody Still a Realist?”, *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 2, (Fall 1999), pp. 5-55

⁵⁰ Brandt Commission, *Common Crisis: North-South Cooperation for World Recovery*, London, 1983.

⁵¹ Krause and Williams, *Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods*, p.230

⁵² Ronnie D. Lipschultz, *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p.1

⁵³ Krause and Williams, *Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods*, p.230, Buzan and Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies*, p.191.

⁵⁴ Lester Brown, “Redefining National Security”, *Worldwatch Paper*, Vol. 14, (October, 1977), p.6-7 In his words, “threats to security do not come from nation to other nation any more, yet they come from *man* to nature”. Due to the human beings’ negative effects on climate, biological system began to deteriorate. Besides, increasing human population would lead to increase of demand over scarce resources and the humanity could face with shortages of raw materials.

⁵⁵ Jessica Tuchman Mathews, “Redefining Security”, *Foreign Affairs*, (1989), p.162. According to her argument, traditional security understanding was incapable of dealing with the *new* realities; for the reason that it lacks of defining source of threats, and its institutions and assumptions could not give adequate solutions. For instance, processes of agreements almost took 15 years to enter into force with the existing conditions; in this manner, finding solutions for urgent issues was impossible according to Mathews.

⁵⁶ Ken Booth, “Security and Emancipation”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Oct., 1991), pp. 313-326

⁵⁷ Ullman, *Redefining Security*, pp. 129-131 Consequently, scholars started to discuss the defiance of realist security definition by stressing that maximization of military means is not enough for security.

⁵⁸ Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, p.3

“alternative approaches to the security provided neither a clear explanatory framework nor analyzing security nor demonstrated their value in concrete research.”⁵⁹ More than that, realists argued “alternative conceptions to the security not only analytically mistaken, but also politically irresponsible”.⁶⁰ Although, realists’ voices have increased that much toward the alternative approaches, these discussions on alternative views of security have raised their popularity among the security scholars. The increasing number of alternative security studies were followed by the emergence of social constructivism, which aimed to answer ‘what is security’ question within the scope of broadening the security as a political or rather as an analytical concept,⁶¹ and they have also proposed understanding the change in world politics and dealing with new questions.

1.2 The Concept of Security and the Security Analysis

It is more difficult when the concept of security is moved out of military for understanding, analyzing and solving security issues”⁶²; because, security as an academic inquiry in IR field has a long literature that is ‘traditionally’ within the military terms and in realist understanding. To overcome the difficulties on the security analysis for dividing military and non-military issues and also to make appropriate security analysis for each security practices, scholars in Copenhagen School developed a framework within the social constructivist way.⁶³ This part gives general discussion of the concept of security within social constructivism; then it follows the emergence of Copenhagen School and gives shared assumptions of it within the social constructivism in IR. Also, it highlights its methodology and finally points out general critics and shortages of the Copenhagen School’s security analysis.

1.2.1 Social Constructivism and the Concept of Security

⁵⁹ Mearsheimer, *The False Promise of International Institutions*, pp. 5-49

⁶⁰ Krause & Williams, *Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods*, p.230

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Buzan, et. al, *Security: A new Framework Analysis* p.1

⁶³ Ibid

With the end of the Cold War era, social constructivism emerged ‘as a self-identified perspective.’⁶⁴ Different from the realist domination over the traditional understanding of security by objectivism on world politics, social constructivists see the world as “it is socially constituted through inter-subjective interactions: where agents, structures, cultures, norms, values, historical and ideational factors, identities and ideas, are central to the world politics’ dynamics.”⁶⁵ In other words, social constructivists argue that rather than trying to explain world politics in an objective way, as taking granted the idea of international system which is structured by anarchy; there is need “to understand” it in an inter-subjective way by understanding the “common knowledge” and “interlocked beliefs” among different units.⁶⁶ According to Alexander Wendt, analyses in IR scholarship needs to cooperate ‘dynamically’; so “common knowledge is nothing but beliefs in heads, nothing but shared mental models”⁶⁷, which meant that “...with each change in belief, or each change in membership, the cultural forms constituted by common knowledge become literally different...”⁶⁸

Also, the relation of knowledge and belief should not be reduced only to the level of states or the level of individuals, but it should be interpreted in an inter-subjective way, considering among the subjects. Likewise, rather than taking static self-help structure of international system by saying that “Turkey must be powerful and stabile in its region, due to the historical position of Turkey, it is surrounded by the unfriendly countries...”⁶⁹; the explanation should consider how common knowledge of Turkey’s being powerful goal has been formed by individuals and how this knowledge evolved and interpreted dynamically by different levels such as society and other countries. As a matter of fact, the traditional understanding of security should be reconsidered in terms of the social constructivism’s main themes: rejection of objectivism and replacing it by inter-

⁶⁴ Buzan and Hansen, *Widening and Deepening of Security*, p.191. After this debate, traditionalists’ rationalist epistemologies had never had the same privileged position.

⁶⁵ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p.224; McDonald, *Securitization and the Construction of Security*, pp. 59-60

⁶⁶ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p.160, Baylis, *Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güvenlik Kavramı*, p.160

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.161

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Mustafa Aydın and Fulya Ereker, **Türkiye’de Güvenlik: Algı, Politika, Yapı**, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2013, p. 8

subjectivity, giving importance on the interaction between the units rather than embracing state centrism, analyzing survival among the units' dynamic interaction rather than accepting it's a given and static structure of world politics.

To begin with the concept of security in social constructivism, there is a need to observe its main themes. Avoiding universal and general definitions of security has been the most prominent characteristics of social constructivist thinking. Despite the dynamic and social nature of the world politics, the concept of security cannot be reduced to the objectivism. In other words, "Security is not an objective condition, that threats to it are not simply matter of correct perceiving a constellation of material forces, and that the object of security is not stable or unchanging."⁷⁰

Accordingly, it is not possible to have universal definitions of security in the social constructivist security studies; yet there is a need to have some sort of common security definitions that can shape security practices by accepting the presumption that security is a specific field of practice.⁷¹ If security is a specific field of practice, each security issue can be dealt with more easily in each level by appropriate unique security adoption. Social constructivists argued that any questions related to the security might be answered in reference to the different contexts and to the different actors. Accordingly, subjects develop their relations with other subjects through interactions and practices in a social context;⁷² thus inter-subjective meanings among those units constitute the unique social context of security.

Secondly, social constructivists' fundamental understanding of security is based on the idea that "security is a social construction".⁷³ For this reason, social constructivism does not take any idea as a pre-given; security or insecurity is not a static or stable 'situation', which states have to deal with it.⁷⁴ Furthermore, "designation of threats, enemies and

⁷⁰ Krause and Williams, *Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods*, p.242

⁷¹ Bilgin, *Güvenlik Çalışmalarında Yeni Yaklaşımlar ve Yeni Güvenlik Çalışmaları*, pp.76-77

⁷² Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory", **International Security**, Vol. 23, No.1 (Summer, 1998), p.173

⁷³ McDonald, *Securitization and the Construction of Security*, p.86

⁷⁴ Pınar Bilgin, "Making Turkey's Transformation Possible: Claiming 'Security-speak!-not Desecuritization!'", **Southeast European and Black Sea Studies**, Vol.7, No.4, (December, 2007), pp.555-571

friends” is being made on the basis of identity conceptions in social constructivists’ security understanding.⁷⁵ In social constructivism in Ted Hopf’s words, identity has a performative character in society: “They tell you and others who you are and they tell you who others are; in telling who you are, identities strongly imply a particular set of interests and preferences with respect to choices of action in particular domains and with respect to particular actions.”⁷⁶

As it can be inferred from the passage, a behavior of a subject can be seen as the implications of the identity that attributed to him/her; and at the same time, it can also be seen as reproduction of his/her own identity through social practices.⁷⁷ Moreover, the security analysis should be included to the interaction among the subjects on the base of identity and the state should not be reduced as a unique body that seeks security in world politics.

Thirdly, social constructivism maintains that world politics is not all about survival of states as Waltz described. Dynamic interaction among the subjects forms and reforms their expectations and this follows dynamic transformation of their culture in world politics. As Wendt argued:

The culture is a self-fulfilling prophecy, i.e., actors act on the basis of shared expectations, and this tends to reproduce those expectations. Still, it is in these processes of reproduction that we also find transformative potential. Under certain conditions the processes underlying cultural reproduction can generate structural change. This argument is the basis for the claim that “anarchy is what states make of it.”⁷⁸

The main themes of social constructivism give us a general framework understanding the concept of security. However, it is important to know how an appropriate security analysis should be formulated. At this point, within the scope of social constructivism, the review of the Copenhagen School’s view on security analysis and their theory of securitization and the desecuritization approach will be more useful. By doing that, we can see how the

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Hopf, *The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory*, p.175

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p.90

concept of security reevaluated by the contribution of Copenhagen School; also, we can see how more specific means can be formulated on security analysis.

1.2.2 The Copenhagen School and the Security Analysis

In early 1990s, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI, CoS or CS) in Denmark with the collaborative works of Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jeep de Wilde began their attempts to develop an 'analytical framework' with the aim of "exploring the logic of security for the solution of different security debates and conceptualizations within the social constructivism"⁷⁹.⁸⁰ However, it is also important to note, CS has a claim that their security analysis can also incorporate within traditional understanding of security at the same time. As Buzan prompted that their book⁸¹ aims to present a framework based on the broadening the agenda of security studies, which emerged within the social constructivism that could also incorporate into the traditionalist position.⁸² Therefore, their security analysis brings the claim of finding appropriate framework both traditional understanding of security and also for social constructivists.

As a first step, the CS positions itself towards the social constructivism in the methodology whether objectivism or inter-subjectivism should be taken in the formulation of security analysis. Krause and Williams summarized the methodological perspective of the CS with three propositions:

- 1- Knowledge about subjects, structures, and practices of world politics is not 'objective' in the materialist sense; because, there is no straightforwardly objective world exists separate from its collective construction by observers and actors.
- 2- Interpretative methods that examine actors' practical understandings of the organization of and possibilities for changing their social world are central for doing research
- 3- The purpose of theory is not to search for prediction within the context of determinate, trans-historical, and generalizable causal claims but rather contextual understanding and practical knowledge.⁸³

⁷⁹ McDonald, *Securitization and the Construction of Security*, p.68

⁸⁰ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p.4

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Ibid, p.4

⁸³ Krasue and Williams, *Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies*, p.243

Thus, constructions of inter-subjective knowledge, interpretative methods and practical knowledge can be seen as the main elements of the CS scholars' purpose of security theorizing. Regarding this, the issues can be addressed in different ways within these emerging bodies of research.⁸⁴

In the second proposition, the CS positions itself more closer to the traditionalists understanding whether states should be directly taken as a referent object of security; because of the wideners vs. deepeners debate within the social constructivism.⁸⁵ On the one hand, there was ongoing debate among the social constructivists; the conventional and critical constructivists debated on whether the definition of security should be widened, pushing the limits to broaden its agenda; on the other hand, there were reactions of traditionalists as the security should have had a 'narrow' meaning.⁸⁶ For the deepening debate between wideners and deepeners on whether security should have started from the level of individual, the CS positioned itself clearly towards the traditionalist understanding of security as it mentioned before: if security was a matter of all levels, then it could not prevent everything from being a part of security discourse, as Waeber criticized deepeners' views:

The security of individuals can be affected in numerous ways; economic, welfare; environmental concerns, cultural identity and political rights are germane more than military issues in this respect. The major problem with such approach is deciding where to stop, since the concept of security otherwise becomes a synonym for everything that is politically good or desirable.⁸⁷

As it can be understood from the passage, the states should be taken into consideration as the referent object of security. However, for the latter debate, the advocates of the widening was 'putting different issues at the high politics agenda', whereas the advocates of narrowing was concerning about 'everything becomes security'. All of those

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ Buzan and Hansen, *Widening and Deepening of Security*, p.161

⁸⁶ Barry Buzan and Ole Waeber, "Slippery? Contradictory? Sociologically Untenable? The Copenhagen School Replies", **Review of International Studies**, Vol.23, No.2, (April, 1997), pp.241-250

⁸⁷ Ole Waeber, "Securitization and Desecuritization", in **On Security**, Ronnie D. Lipschultz (Ed.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, p.2

discussions increased the interests of Copenhagen scholars; thence, the scholars studied on ability to separate security issues from non-security ones and placing analytical limits of security.⁸⁸ In order to make security analysis easily, the first thing to do is searching “the logic and the indicators of security”, and then it will be easier to formulate how issues come to be on the security agenda.⁸⁹ According to CS scholars, the word security has a political function; furthermore, giving something to that function makes a call to the state for mobilization.⁹⁰ As a matter of fact, the security analysis is based on the logic between the referent object and the existential threat.⁹¹

The last but not least important step behind the CS’s formulation of the security analysis is its tendency to be in the middle of traditional understanding of security and the social constructivism. On the one hand, Buzan argued:

The answer to what makes something an international security issue can be found in traditional military-political understanding of security. In this context, security is about survival. It is when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to the designated referent object.⁹²

On the other hand, the CS promotes as it mentioned above, “the purpose of theory is to search for contextual understanding and practical knowledge”⁹³, rather than taking survival as an indispensable principle of traditionalists. Therefore, it is important to remember that if conceptualizations of security are made in the level of national security level, the security analysis should be made in terms of its particular and historical contexts for understanding social interactions between actors.⁹⁴

All of the similar and different assumptions of the CS shared with the traditional understanding of security and social constructivism seems complicated at a glance, yet the CS’s view to security as a political implantation can minimize the complications and make a room for the security analysis. To accept that security as a political mean, instead of an ultimate end, is helpful to formulate security practices according to the CS within

⁸⁸ Buzan and Hansen, *Widening and Deepening of Security*, p.161

⁸⁹ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p.41

⁹⁰ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p.4

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Ibid, p.21

⁹³ Krasue and Williams, *Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies*, p.243

⁹⁴ McDonald, *Securitization and the Construction of Security*, p.61

social constructivism.⁹⁵ Additionally, political implementation of security does not make national security less important for traditionalists, because it poses adaptation of national security with political decisions. According to Buzan:

The need is to construct a conceptualization of security that means something much more specific than just any threat or problem. Threats and vulnerabilities can arise in many areas, military and non-military, but to count as security issues they have to meet strictly defined criteria that distinguish them from the normal run of the merely political. They have to stage as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind.⁹⁶

The referent object, the securitizing actor and the existential threat that legitimize taking extraordinary measure are main units of the CS's in their security analysis, which it brought us to an important question: After designating the referent object and the existential threat, who will authorize the security?⁹⁷ Regarding this, the CS answers by referring to a subject or an object becomes in action with the only security acts.⁹⁸ The main goal of security acts is to create existential threats whereas it does not exist previously. Therefore, in order to understand the main referent points, there is a need to analyze the units of securitization theory in the CS.

In order to find those units, the CS suggests bringing of the application of the theory of securitization and the de-securitization approach. While both of them seem similar by accepting that security analysis is "specific field of practice of political implementations of security"⁹⁹, they are different, because both of them address security and politics differently. While the theory of securitization can help us specify which issues should be taken as security issue that justifies actions outside the normal bounds of political processes; the de-securitization approach suggests dealing with the issues within the normal bounds of political processes.¹⁰⁰ Those are crucial steps to understand the CS's security analysis; thus, the steps will guide us along the second and the third chapters.

⁹⁵ Bilgin, *Güvenlik Çalışmalarında Yeni Açılımlar: Yeni Güvenlik Çalışmaları*, p.77

⁹⁶ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p.5

⁹⁷ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p.41

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p.41

1.3 Theory of Securitization and Desecuritization Approach

The theory of securitization and the desecuritization approach is being used as the main theoretical framework throughout this thesis. This part is given to both of them in detail. Finally, the securitization theory is re-evaluated with the critics and contributions for the consolidation of the main theoretical framework.

1.3.1 Theory of Securitization

Theory of securitization starts with the presumption; security is a kind of political implementation. In Buzan's words:

Security is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as the above politics. Securitization can thus be seen as more extreme version of politics.¹⁰¹

Therefore, the theory of securitization deals with not merely to differentiate politics and security; rather, it deals with normal bounds of political procedure and extreme version of politics. According to CS:

In theory any public issue can be located on the spectrum ranging from non-politicized (meaning the state does not deal with it and it is not any other way made an issue of public debate and decision) through politicized (meaning the issue is part of public policy, requiring government decision and resource allocation or more rarely, some other form of communal governance) to securitized (meaning the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure).¹⁰²

Securitization focuses on why and how issues securitized through discursive politics.¹⁰³ Hence, "securitization can be studied directly; it does not need indicators. The way to study securitization is to study discourse and political constellations" Buzan says.¹⁰⁴ In basic sense, security is a philosophical act. It is an act of presenting issues in speeches by

¹⁰¹ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p.2

¹⁰² Ibid, pp.23-24

¹⁰³ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p.42

¹⁰⁴ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p.25

power-holders; issues become security problems by presenting it. This presentation comes with speech acts in a process, thus this process is called as securitization:

In practices, placement varies substantially from state to state (and also across time). Some states will politicize religion... and some will not... some will securitize culture... some will not... In the case of issues... that have moved dramatically out of non-politicized category, we face the double question of whether they have merely been politicized or have also been securitized.¹⁰⁵

In order to determine whether the securitization should be applicable in our study or not, the three units of the security analysis should be taken into consideration: the referent object of security, the securitizing actor and the existential threat.¹⁰⁶

1.3.1.1 The Units of Securitization

In theory, the referent object of security is states. As Buzan posed “that security, by definition, is and should be about the state, and the state should be about the security”.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, the state is not an individual actor in the CS meaning. The state as the referent object of security can also be a nation, as an indispensable entity of a state. In this matter, it is important to emphasize that for a state, survival is about sovereignty, for a nation, it is about the identity.¹⁰⁸ In a basic sense, identity is a self-perception about who we are; thus, perception of threat can be decided in terms of politics of identity.¹⁰⁹ In other words, the core notion of security “Security is freedom from threats to core values”¹¹⁰ can be understand not only from the designation of threat, but also it can define who we are and what our values are.

In this regard, it can be argued that the referent object can be a state or collectivities such as masses that government addresses and represents. In our case, the AK Party, and the values and the identity that it created, is the main referent object of security. Therefore, as an incumbent government of Turkish state, survival is about sovereignty in foreign

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p.24

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, pp.35-36 The units of Security Analysis are referent objects, securitizing actors, functional actors.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

¹⁰⁹ McDonald, *Securitization and the Construction of Security*, p.63

¹¹⁰ Baylis, et. al, *Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, p.229

policy; and, as a political party in Turkish Politics, survival is related to the identity in domestic politics; and also, as the representation of the leading figure of political Islam in regional politics, survival is about the identity as well as sovereignty at the same time.

The other unit of the securitization is the securitizing actor. It can be explained by saying that “securitizing actors are who securitize issues by declaring something – a referent object – existentially threatened”.¹¹¹ Most of the time, security actors take the role of referent objects, speak on behalf of them and they claim that it is necessary to take extraordinary measures for survival. By doing this, securitizing actors engage in an interaction with the referent objects and form interactions among units as social constructivism promote and this integration leads to consolidate ‘we’ feeling.¹¹² As a result, this interaction forms an interpretative community with the audiences and leads them to believe in taking extraordinary measures towards the threat by creating it as the ‘other’.¹¹³ Thus, in our case, the AK Party elites can be seen as the securitizers of Syria by forming interpretative community within the region and Turkey.

The last unit of the securitization is the existential threat. According to the CS, the existential threat can be summed up: “...Existential threats are traditionally defined in terms of sovereignty, but sometimes also ideology of the state. Sovereignty can be existentially threatened by anything that questions recognition, legitimacy, or governing authority...”¹¹⁴

The securitizers should present the existential threat to audiences by speech acts. Therefore, the analysis of speech acts will give as how the threat designated to the referent object, this is how the security works in securitization theory. In other words:

..When a securitizing actor uses a rhetoric of existential threat and thereby takes an issue out of what under conditions those conditions is ‘normal politics’, we have a case of securitization. Thus, the exact definition and criteria of securitization is constituted by the intersubjective

¹¹¹ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p.36

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Hopf, *The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory*, p.173

¹¹⁴ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p.22

establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects.¹¹⁵

The securitizers claim special rights to handle the issue using extraordinary measures, if the actor utters security successfully, then the issue will be securitized”;¹¹⁶ on the other hand, “if the actors did not utter successfully and the utterances were not accepted by the audiences, then securitization would not be successful and the act would be called as securitizing moves.” As a consequence, successful securitization is demonstrating itself on the intersubjective construction of an existential threat. Therefore it can be argued that securitization is a kind of ‘call and response’ process,¹¹⁷ “an actor calls something that is a matter of security, the audience must then respond with their acceptance, securitization process would be failed if the audience reject the acceptance”.¹¹⁸

The units of the securitization will be enhanced by the main questions of the securitization “security may be understood, for example, as the preservation of a group’s core values”, that is, why it is important to know “who the group is”, “what the core values are”, “where threats to those vales may come from” and “how the preservation of values might be achieved.”¹¹⁹ This step will be helpful to formulate security analysis and it will serve as a guide in the general frame of this thesis, specifically in understanding the differences of values in Turkey’s Syria Policy before and during the AK Party era.

1.3.1.2 The Main Questions of Securitization

Securitization theory has a distinctive methodology, because it deals with dynamics and leading questions of both traditional and social constructivist security studies as it mentioned before. Likewise, “what makes issues as security issues”, “how does security take place”, “which means can be used to deal with security issues” and “to what end can security be formed” are the main questions that the CS’s methodology deals

¹¹⁵ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, pp.24-25

¹¹⁶ Paul Roe, “The Interstate Security Dilemma: Ethnic Conflict as a ‘Tragedy’?”, **Journal of Peace Research**, Vol. 36, No. 2 (March, 1999), p.281

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ Ibid

¹¹⁹ Krasue and Williams, *Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies*, p.244

with. Furthermore, the main argument of the CS is “to determinate that old (traditional) elements can operate in new ways and new places”.¹²⁰

To begin with the first question, Waever claimed in 1995, “Security has to be read through the lens of national security”¹²¹, because it has always been the threat problem of the state through history, as he posed:

Security problems are developments that threaten the sovereignty or independence of a state in particularly rapid and dramatic fashion, and deprive it of the capacity to manage by it. This, in turn, undercuts the political order. Such a threat must therefore be met with mobilization of the maximum effort.¹²²

As it is clearly shown in the passage, Waever conceptualized security problems firstly in the meaning of national security and at the state level. Because, even though security is defined as being not threatened, being safe and secure as an individual good, the concept evolved and derived its meaning from -international discussions- as national security and security policy. However, his state centric conceptualization expanded in his collaborative work with Buzan in 1998, as the following: “Security ultimately rests neither with the objects nor with the subjects, but among the subjects.”¹²³

Thence, in this latter form, securitization evolved to include other subjects and units similar to the state level, this brings us to the explanation of the second question, how security takes place. According to Waever, in order to understand “how security takes place”, there is a need to problematize security by stressing on interaction of all dynamics.¹²⁴ Due to this fact, the concept of security should be defined as inter-subjective process between these units. By making this, social interactions can become specified, and the specification can lead to more efficient ways to solve security issues.¹²⁵

Related to the third question, the means of security should be formed with the securitization methodology. The methodology of securitization is speech acts. Moreover,

¹²⁰ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p. 42

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 41

¹²² Ibid, p. 44

¹²³ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p. 31.

¹²⁴ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p. 41

¹²⁵ Ibid

security is discursive construction of threat according to Waever's first outline in 1995.¹²⁶ More clearly, the security is dependent on its successful construction of threat discourse with speech acts; the roots behind the methodology come from the logic of existential threat and emergency measure.¹²⁷ Firstly, as Roe posed that security posits an issue as an existential threat and takes the moves beyond the normal rules of the game;¹²⁸ after then, it requires 'emergency measures'.¹²⁹ The 'security' issue necessities priority over all others¹³⁰, due to its sense that if we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant.¹³¹ With the combination of those, security draws from its place in national security discourse that implies a stress on authority, construction of threat and making decisions by giving ability for taking emergency measures.¹³²

... While security itself has no special meaning, but rather is socially constructed, it has been socially constructed through speech acts in a particular way and within a particular community, that is, a community that revolves around discussions in a classical sense consistent with the national security mode of securitization¹³³

In other words, power holders or the elites of the state prioritizes something that could be source of threat, and if the audiences convinced that prioritization and accepting to take exceptional measure to overcome the threatening, that led to a process of securitization to become. As a matter of fact, state elites become securitizers and make political decisions to put issues at the security agenda. Even though state elites may use some facilitating conditions to pursue audiences like heuristic acts by framing storylines and giving some analogies to describe the security-ness of an issue, that is not an indispensable for a successful securitization according to Waever's original securitization theory.¹³⁴ In addition, Waever in 1998 posed that "the process of securitization is a speech act, not an interesting sign a referring to something more real: the utterance of an

¹²⁶ McDonald, *Securitization and the Construction of Security*, p.69

¹²⁷ Buzan and Hansen, *Widening and Deepening of Security*, p.213

¹²⁸ Roe, *The Interstate Security Dilemma: Ethnic Conflict as a 'Tragedy'?*, p.281

¹²⁹ Ibid

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² Ibid

¹³³ Lynne Doty, "Immigration and the Politics of security", *Security Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (December, 2007), p.79

¹³⁴ Waever, *Security and Securitization*, p.41

existential threat is the act". Generally securitization can be studied directly; it does not need any indicators other than political constellations and discourses.¹³⁵ In other words:

The way to study securitization is to study discourse and political constellations: When does an argument with this particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effect to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have to obey? If by means of an argument about the priority and urgency of an existential threat the securitizing actor has managed to break free of procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by, we are witnessing a case of securitization.¹³⁶

As it was mentioned, the security is the act; it is a kind of practice of state elites. Therefore, the logic behind the securitization is to make security practices; and existential threats and extraordinary measures, which are the two major key terms for security practices.¹³⁷ Existential threat can be understood in relation to the particular characteristic of the referent object -one need to answer whose security is or whom to be secured- whereas taking emergency measures referred justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure.¹³⁸ More clearly, security is about a threatening development; if there is a threatening development, it must be dealt with whatever it costs,¹³⁹ which brings the answer of the fourth question; security to what end.

Giving the concrete answer to this question has been the weakest part of the securitization theory, because there has not been any clear idea where to stop securitization. For this reason, scholars within the school suggested de-securitization.

1.3.2 Desecuritization Approach

¹³⁵ Waever, *Security Analysis: Conceptual Apparatus*, pp.24-25

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p.21

¹³⁸ Ibid

¹³⁹ Ibid, p.24

In its base, the concept of desecuritization was formed by the assumption that more security is not always better,¹⁴⁰ in Waever's original article.¹⁴¹ According to Waever, the securitization theory could bring the idea of 'more security is better' in the minds of states' elites. By doing that, securitization could extend its influence more areas than it was desired and the securitization might be "excessive and irrational".¹⁴² As Waever argues, for the sake of political and normative reasons, "If security is thought as a goal that should be maximized, there is a need to minimize security."¹⁴³

The concept of desecuritization turned out to be an approach by the studies of scholars within and outside of the CS.¹⁴⁴ Although each of them differentiated their own perspectives, all of them shared the same understanding with Waever, that security is not always a positive value politically; that is why applying the securitization theory on many issues would be problematic.¹⁴⁵ In order to prevent this, security should be avoided in most cases.¹⁴⁶ The desecuritization approach pre-supposes changing of direction of the securitized issues from emergency mode to normal mode. Therefore, the main objective of desecuritization approach is "turning threats into challenges and security into politics"¹⁴⁷; in other words, it is mainly about "the removal of issues from the realm of security".¹⁴⁸

As a first step, it is important to note that removing issues from the realm of security and putting them in the agenda of normal politics is also a process lead by the choices of state elites similar to the securitization theory's method. In the process of desecuritization, as the CS argued: "The task is turning threats into challenges; to move developments from

¹⁴⁰ Roe, *The Interstate Security Dilemma: Ethnic Conflict as a 'Tragedy'?*, p.279.

¹⁴¹ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p.41

¹⁴² Bill McSweeney, "Identity and Security: Buzan and the Copenhagen School", **Review of International Studies**, Vol. 22, (1996), pp.81-93

¹⁴³ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p.41

¹⁴⁴ Paul Roe, "Securitization and Minority Rights: Conditions of Deecuritization Securitization" **Security Dialogue**, Vol. 35, No.3, (2004), pp.279-294

¹⁴⁵ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p.41

¹⁴⁶ Williams, *Security Studies: An Introduction*, p. 523

¹⁴⁷ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p.41

¹⁴⁸ McDonald, *Securitization and the Construction of Security*, p.71

the sphere of existential fear to one where they could be handled by ordinary means as politics, economics, diplomacy, culture and so on.”¹⁴⁹

In this manner, in comparison to the theory of securitization; the desecuritization approach follows ‘the normal path’ on dealing with the issues instead of using extraordinary and emergency measures. Because, enabling emergency measures can lead “suspension of normal politics” and make “the mobilization of maximum effort toward threats”. As a matter of fact, securitization can apply panic politics and that could be timeless. To overcome this, “it is better to aim desecuritization which requires shifting issues from emergency mode to normal bargaining process in political sphere.”¹⁵⁰ Since its establishment, the choices of Turkey’s state elites toward the Middle East region had a tendency to securitize issues; relations with neighbor countries were frozen and the issues became unsolved, yet this tradition lasted even after decades with changing the thinking of “security is not an easily a good thing” and choosing the optimal long-range option.

On the other hand, it is important to note that the threat-oriented speeches given by the state elites’ affects public in a threat-oriented psychology during the process of securitization. Applying panic politics timelessly become more meaningful while thinking why security should not be thought as a positive phenomenon. In these lights, securitization should be avoided and desecuritization should be preferred in many cases; due to the fact that “Desecuritization is the optimal long-range option, since it means to not to have issues phrased as ‘threats against which we have countermeasures’ but to move them out of this threat-defense sequence and into the ordinary public sphere.”¹⁵¹

According to Lene Hansen, the concept of desecuritization launched by Waever and the CS more than two decades ago; however, scholars in the CS have not shown how to desecuritize issues clearly. More importantly, they did not do anything more than saying political and normative importance of the desecuritization concept.¹⁵² In this shadow,

¹⁴⁹ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p.41

¹⁵⁰ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p. 29

¹⁵¹ Ibid

¹⁵² Lene Hansen, “Reconstructing Desecuritization: The Normative-Political in The Copenhagen School and Directions for How to Apply It”, **Review of International Studies**, Vol. 38, (July, 2012) pp. 525-546

most of the scholars suggest that the concept of desecuritization is better for political, ethical and normative reasons. On the other hand, some suggests, “desecuritization should be preferable for its technical, managerial and instrumental reasons”¹⁵³ as Jef Huysmans, claimed.¹⁵⁴ Rita Floyd and Claudia Aradau also support Huysmans’ direction, and they argued that the concept of desecuritization under-theorized and open to interpretation;¹⁵⁵ because, as security theorists, we lacked in paying necessary attention and also undermined it analytically. In order to raise the awareness towards the desecuritization approach to indicate analytical power and to show the technical and instrumental reasons, Hansen brought codification of the desecuritization concept models in her study,¹⁵⁶ which is discussed in the following part below.

1.3.2.1 Models of Desecuritization

There are four models in the desecuritization approach: “change through stabilization”, “replacement”, “rearticulation” and “silencing” as Hansen suggested.¹⁵⁷ All of the models not only take politics rather than security to deal with the issues in different ways, but also give examples for how those models are applied analytically for instrumental reasons.

First model of the desecuritization approach is change through stabilization. It is a less militaristic, less violent version and proposes more political form of engagement to desecuritize.¹⁵⁸ Waever argues that the example of the period between 1960s and 1990s cold war détente in Europe embodied this model.¹⁵⁹ According to him, the détente concept was used in political discourse as a counter concept to deterrence by German

¹⁵³ Jef Huysmans, “The Question of the Limit: Desecuritization and the Aesthetics of Horror in Political Realism”, **Millennium: Journal of International Studies**, Vol. 27, No.3, (1998), pp. 569-589

¹⁵⁴ Hansen, *Reconstructing Desecuritization: The Normative-Political in The Copenhagen School and Directions for How to Apply It*, p.527

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, Rita Floyd, “Towards a Consequentialist Evaluation of Security: Bringing Together the Copenhagen School of Security Studies and the Welsh School of Security Studies”, **Review of International Studies**, Vol. 33, No.2 (2007), Claudia Aradau, “Limits of Security, Limits of Politics? A Response”, **Journal of International Relations and Development**, Vol. 9, No.1, (2006), 81-90

¹⁵⁶ Hansen, *Reconstructing Desecuritization: The Normative-Political in The Copenhagen School and Directions for How to Apply It*, pp. 538-545

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

¹⁵⁸ Ibid

¹⁵⁹ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p.42

social democrats; therefore, post-1960s was less violent in comparison to pre-1960s, which proves that a possible stabilization was formed through the détente change.¹⁶⁰

The second model is replacement. In this model, the desecuritization is thought, “as the combination of while moving one issue out of the realm of security, the other is securitized at the same time”.¹⁶¹ For instance, Turkey’s transformation post-1999 towards European Union (EU) can be seen as matter of desecuritization, yet it is not a kind of universal desecuritization as Pinar Bilgin argues.¹⁶² Rather than that, Bilgin posed that it was possible claiming ‘security-speak’ by certain societal actors who framed other issues in security terms, such as Turkey’s EU accession as a solution to its security problems.¹⁶³ Also, Bülent Aras and Rabia K. Polat’s study¹⁶⁴ on Turkish Foreign Policy (TFP) can be seen as a replacement model; while they argued as Turkey securitized its relations with Northern Iraq it desecuritized its relations with Iran and Syria at the same time.¹⁶⁵

The third model of the desecuritization approach to apply is rearticulation. It is the most concrete model to understand taking politics rather than security to deal with the issues; additionally, it suggests a more decent and radical form of ‘political engagement’.¹⁶⁶ First of all, rearticulation refers to desecuritization that “remove an issue from the securitized ‘by actively offering a political solution to the threats’, dangers and grievances in question”.¹⁶⁷ Secondly, it indicates fundamental transformation of the public sphere including a move out of the friend-enemy distinction.¹⁶⁸ Finally, it promotes that “a basic political ontology makes a claim about the ability of the system-wide securitization to be resolved”.¹⁶⁹ While Turkey’s relations with the Middle East region until the AK Party

¹⁶⁰ Hansen, *Reconstructing Desecuritization: The Normative-Political in The Copenhagen School and Directions for How to Apply It*, p.527

¹⁶¹ Ibid

¹⁶² Bilgin, *Making Turkey’s Transformation Possible: Claiming ‘Security-speak’-not Desecuritization!*, pp.555-571.

¹⁶³ Hansen, *Reconstructing Desecuritization: The Normative-Political in The Copenhagen School and Directions for How to Apply It*, p.527

¹⁶⁴ Bülent Aras and Rabia Polat Karakaya, “From Conflict to Cooperation”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol.39, No.495, (2008), pp. 495-515

¹⁶⁵ Hansen, *Reconstructing Desecuritization: The Normative-Political in The Copenhagen School and Directions for How to Apply It*, p.527

¹⁶⁶ Ibid

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸ Ibid

¹⁶⁹ Hansen, *Reconstructing Desecuritization: The Normative-Political in The Copenhagen School and Directions for How to Apply It*, p.527

period can be seen as a system-wide securitization through the concepts of ‘securitized geography and history’¹⁷⁰; on the other hand, its relations during the AK Party with the region, specifically with the Syria, can be seen as an example of the articulation model of desecuritization over the foreign policy activism concept.¹⁷¹

The last model is silencing. It is a model that proposes securitization would be better in some cases; because, security actors depoliticize some issues so as not to deal with.¹⁷² In other words, silencing is about when an issue disappears or fails to register in security discourse even though it matters, as Megan Mackenzie claims in her study.¹⁷³ Mackenzie uses the silencing model of desecuritization approach in order to criticize international and local security actors’ silence towards not funding and not supplying basic requirements of female soldiers in Sierra Leone.¹⁷⁴

1.3.3 Critics and Contributions towards the Securitization Theory

Despite of the fact that it has been almost more than just twenty years old, the theory of securitization has been widely studied theoretically. Similar to the fate of the security concept as being contested, the use of theory of securitization has also raised some critics among social constructivists and between the schools.¹⁷⁵ Some argued that the theory of securitization can be studied through only discursive politics whose origin was founded by Waever; on the other hand, some others argued the theory of securitization should have been studied with inclusion of other constituents. McDonald claimed that representation of security by focusing on *only* speech acts directs exclusion of other practices, such as heuristic artifacts and televisual images of given by the securitizers.¹⁷⁶ Thierry Balzacq also supports McDonald’s claim and suggests that

¹⁷⁰ Mustafa Aydın, “Securitization of History and Geography: Understanding of Security in Turkey”, **Southeast European Blacksea Studies**, Vol. 3, No.2, (2003), pp.163-184

¹⁷¹ This will be given in the second chapter in detail.

¹⁷² Hansen, *Reconstructing Desecuritization: The Normative-Political in The Copenhagen School and Directions for How to Apply It*, p.527

¹⁷³ Megan MacKenzie, “Securitization and Desecuritization: Female Soldiers and the Reconstruction of Women in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone”, **Security Studies**, Vol. 18, No.2, (2009), pp. 241–261

¹⁷⁴ Hansen, *Reconstructing Desecuritization: The Normative-Political in The Copenhagen School and Directions for How to Apply It*, p.527

¹⁷⁵ Buzan and Waever, *Slippery? Contradictory? Sociologically Untenable? The Copenhagen School Replies*, p. 245

¹⁷⁶ Matt McDonald, “Securitization and the Construction of Security”, **European Journal of International Relations**, Vol. 14, No.4,(December, 2008), pp.563-587

securitization process should include the context where the security take place.¹⁷⁷ This part talks about how the theory of securitization was re-formulated in the light of critics and how it can be more adequate for the understanding of the AK Party's Syrian Policy and the examination of AK Party's values.

According to Waeber security is 'the utterance of the act'; hence, something become a security problem through discursive politics, it can be understood whether an issue become at the security agenda and securitized from the speech acts of the elites. On the other hand, according to Balzacq, Waeber's view on securitization process can be termed just as 'pragmatic act', by formulating the speeches as an analytical tool and he urges more attention to the context where securitization takes place, which should be taken into consideration.¹⁷⁸ For instance:

Securitization process can be implemented by patterns of heuristic artifacts, contextually mobilized by a recognized agent, works persuasively to prompt a target audience to build a coherent network of implications, investing a referent subjects with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion and a customized political act must be undertaken immediately to block its development.¹⁷⁹

Balzacq argues that securitization does not necessarily lead to adoption of extraordinary measures; because, the origin of the theory based on the examination of how security problems emerge, evolve and dissolve.¹⁸⁰ Whereas Waeber argued:

With the help of language theory, we can regard 'security' as a speech act. In this light, security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance itself is the act. By saying it something is done (as in betting, a promise, naming a ship) The word 'security' is the act In this instance, security is an illocutionary act, a 'self-referential' practice; its conditions of possibility are constitutive of the speech act of saying 'security'.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Thierry Balzacq, "Constructivism and Securitization Studies", in Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Victor Mauer (Eds.), **Handbook of Security Studies**, London: Routledge, 2011, pp.64-65

¹⁷⁸ Thierry Balzacq, **Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve**, London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 1-30

¹⁷⁹ Balzacq, *Constructivism and Securitization Studies*, pp. 63-64

¹⁸⁰ Ibid

¹⁸¹ Balzacq, *Constructivism and Securitization Studies*, p.59

Waever's formulation has some difficulties for an appropriate security analysis according to Balzacq, even though Waever's assumption coming from social constructivism, it lacks a social theory of influence depending on only discourses and speech acts of the state elites. Furthermore, Balzacq criticizes the original securitization theory as "while discursive practices are important in explaining how security problems originate", it is more important including those with a social theory of influence; likewise, the theory of securitization initially should have been based on "practices, context and power relations that characterize the construction of threat images".¹⁸² Balzacq posits:

There is ample evidence that securitization theory do not necessarily reflect the objective, material circumstances of the World. Often, security issues are the results of leaders' efforts to understand and shape the World, which depend on the ability of a community to reconfigure 'its just and good way of life'.¹⁸³

Additionally, Balzacq posits that securitization theory argues that language is not only concerned with what is out there as realists and neorealist assume, but it is also constitutive of that very social reality.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, "Securitization theory is based on the premise that the word 'security' has a performative character-that is, it does not only describe the World but can also transform social reality."¹⁸⁵ The transformation of social reality cannot be analyzed by only looking at the discourses of the state elites, it is more important to have the securitization analysis in its constituents as practices, context and power relations. All of the critics require significance for units of securitization theory; however, there is a need to remind that giving importance by answering the main questions of securitization will eliminate the critics and contribute to the understandability of the theory.

First of all, with the practices constituent that Balzacq suggests, it becomes easier to analyze who is the agent. It makes sense; however, remembering the definition of the security concept in Wolfers' article, security is freedom from threats to core values, under who securitizes on what issues of the securitization theory will already examine what

¹⁸² Balzacq, *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, p.1

¹⁸³ Ibid, p.3

¹⁸⁴ Balzacq, *Constructivism and Securitization Studies*, p.60

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p.4

values the agent has. The definition of the securitizers in this view could not only bring an explanation of the values but also would give the details on what kind of power position the agent has and what makes issues as security for the agent.

Secondly, the act is another important constituent for Balzacq. Yet, the main question of under what conditions could explain not only what kind of policy tools can be used would not only help us understand social identity of the agent, but also give means what kind of behaviors enables and disables the actor for the enhancement of securitization. Also, the act would give us a coherent logic for the enhancement of how security takes place.

Last but not least important critic is the context of the securitization. Even though “securitization theory specifies how and under what conditions, the security-ness of an issue is fixed”¹⁸⁶; it does not answer clearly the question of why issues can be securitized according to Balzacq. However, examination of the main questions is being evaluated in reference to changing domestic and international context throughout this thesis. Therefore, with the help of the context constituent, it will be more meaningful to find an answer to the why question and also to capture the attribution of foreign policy behavior and securitization theory. On this shadow, we will comprehend the environment of the foreign policy and which means can be used to deal with security issues at the same time.

In conclusion, the concept of security went hand in hand with the foreign policy in traditional understanding of security. Due to lack of empirical work other than military terms, the concept of security was needed to be contributed by social constructivism, yet social constructivist scholars were criticized by traditionalists as bringing politically irresponsible analysis into the security field and this resulted in the CS’s formulation of a new framework for security. This framework benefited both from the traditional understanding of security and social constructivism. While it is promoted as a proper understanding of national security problem, it also does inter-subjective manner of the security. Within the scope of the securitization theory it brings the security analysis as the following:

¹⁸⁶ Balzacq, *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, p.8

Security may be understood, for example, as the preservation of a group's core values", that is why it is important to know "who the group is", "what the core values are", "where threats to those values may come from" and "how the preservation of values might be achieved."¹⁸⁷

This approach accompanies us in formulating security analysis and it guides the general frame of this thesis, specifically in understanding the transformation of Turkey's Syria Policy during the AK Party era and also in examining the values of AK Party elites towards the changing nature of domestic, regional and international contexts.



CHAPTER 2

THE DECESURITIZATION OF TURKEY'S SYRIA POLICY DURING THE AK PARTY PERIOD: 2002-2011

¹⁸⁷ Krause and Williams, *Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies*, p.230

This chapter explains the process of desecuritization of Turkey's Syrian Policy during the AK Party period starting from its establishment in 2002 to the year 2011. The process is explained in the light of the observation of gradual transition from the category of securitization in pre-AK Party times through the examination and comparison of values. The chapter discusses that the politics applied towards Syria during this era framed Syria as a matter of 'normal politics' by the AK Party elites and that can be explained by changing values of Turkey's 'new' state elites. In order to understand that, firstly the main questions of desecuritization will be applied to the AK Party for examining its identity, values, threat and (non)threat perception and their reflection on Turkish Foreign Policy formulation in detail with comparisons of the traditional security actors of Turkey. Following this, the unit of the desecuritization approach will be used to find out the political discourse behind the desecuritization of the Turkey's Syria Policy during the AK Party era.

Foreign and security policies of states are always in close relationship; they are intertwined and associated with each other,¹⁸⁸ and this argument proves itself obviously in Turkey case. It should be noted that Turkey's foreign and security policies are closely interrelated as the argument claims; but, Turkey has its own security understanding, conceptualization and interpretations as it has a distinct security definition.¹⁸⁹ Although, Turkey has been the study of area by many researchers from different disciplines; it has not been defined conceptually easily and also not recognized precisely in conventional identical categorizations as East or West.¹⁹⁰ Additionally, Turkey cannot be easily grasped without the significance of space and time,¹⁹¹ because the emphasis on Turkey's security has not only been related with the country's foreign policy in international context, but also it has been related with social factors within its domestic context and regional contexts.¹⁹² In this shadow, this chapter starts with the definition of AK Party's values and identity since its establishment in 2002 and continues with its consolidation in

¹⁸⁸ Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu, "The Evolution of the National Security Culture and The Military in Turkey", **Journal of International Affairs**, Vol. 54, No.1, (Fall, 2000), pp. 200-216

¹⁸⁹ Aydın and Ereker, *Türkiye'de Güvenlik: Algı, Politika, Yapı*, p. 8

¹⁹⁰ Marcel Bazin and Stephanie De Tapia, **Türkiye Coğrafyası**, İstanbul: İletişim, 2015, p.15

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p. 14

¹⁹² Aydın, *Uluslararası İlişkilerin "Gerçekçi" Teorisi: Kökeni, Kapsamı, Kritiği*, p. 35

its foreign and domestic politics until 2011 by stressing on its differences from the traditional security elites of Turkey.

2.1 The Main Questions of Desecuritization

By applying the main question of desecuritization, the units of desecuritization can be better understood. The state as the main referent object of security would be more meaningful with the examination of its identity; because, social identities of the groups give definition of values that should be secured towards threats and it also suggests preferences and choices of state elites on foreign policy formulation.

2.1.1 Who the group is

Before the AK Party came to the government, the main logic behind the Turkey's security conceptualization can be summed up by two identification: one of them is the identity of traditional state elites of Turkey who were embraced with Kemalism and the Westernist norms, which also constructed the state identity of Turkey's Republic in reflection; and the other is their perception of understanding history and geography of Turkey as a matter of national security and as a source of security. These two identifications paved the way for formulation of TFP as a neutral, status quo position and in military terms.¹⁹³ That is why the traditional state elites can be seen as the traditional security actors of Turkey with their foreign policy implementation in terms of traditional understanding of security. Within this scope, traditional security actors behind the TFP was neglected to form friendlier relations with the regions other than the West,¹⁹⁴ and Turkey's relations in international and regional contexts were formulated on the basis of 'securitization of history and geography',¹⁹⁵ specifically with the countries in the Middle East region.

¹⁹³ 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), Vol.1, İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2011, p. 19

¹⁹⁴ Bülent Aras ve Hasan Köni, "Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited", **Arab Studies Quarterly**, Vol. 24, No.4, (Fall, 2002), pp. 47-60

¹⁹⁵ Mustafa Aydın, "Securitization of History and Geography: Understanding of Security in Turkey", **Southeast, European and Black Sea Studies**, Vol. 3, No.2, May, 2003, pp. 163-184

When the AK Party came to power at the end of 2002, it started to redefine the identity of the state with the identity and the values of the AK Party in the name of conservative democracy.¹⁹⁶ This new definition of the new elites began to resonate the identity of Turkey in domestic, regional and international contexts; because, the value of conservative democracy started to be followed by re-interpretation of geography and history of Turkey, in the meaning of dynamic interaction theme from social constructivism, specifically from the studies of IR professor Ahmet Davutoğlu.¹⁹⁷ Though those interpretations came from several studies that came to the public knowledge with mainly by the “Strategic Depth Doctrine”, it paved the way for Davutoğlu from the advisor of Turkey’s Minister of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to the Prime Minister (PM) of Turkey. In its base logic, Turkey had to be ‘the main subject of regional politics’ whose main objective to be a regional power in the Middle East that can be one of ‘the leading subjects of international politics’.¹⁹⁸ Regarding this, Turkey needed to reconsider its representation as a pro-active state in foreign policy that could be a model state to the neighboring regions specifically to the Middle East region with its positive relations with the West, its improving democracy and economy in harmony of its roots in political Islam.¹⁹⁹

Until the AK Party came to power, TFP had been implemented regarding the traditional understanding of security. Foreign and security policies of Turkey were going hand in hand and survival attitude in traditional understanding of security was the best concept that could explain the logic of traditional security elites of Turkey. They maintained that it is possible to describe ‘Kemalism’ as a ‘homeland ideology’ based on the Turkish historical experience and it is limited with Turkey’s perceived national interests;²⁰⁰ so,

¹⁹⁶ Yalçın Akdoğan, **AK Parti ve Muhafazakar Demokrasi**, İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2004, pp. 3-148

¹⁹⁷ Ahmet Davutoğlu, **Alternative Paradigms: The Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory**, Lanham, NY: University of America Press, 1994, **Civilizational Transformation and the Muslim World**, Kuala Lumpur: Mahir Publications, 1994.

¹⁹⁸ M. Sinan Birdal, “Davutoğlu Doktrini: Stratejik Öznenin Populist İnşaası”, İsmet Akça, Ahmet Bekmen ve Barış Alp Özden (Ed.) **Yeni Türkiye’ye Varan Yol: Neoliberal Hegemonyanın İnşaası** içinde (127-146), İstanbul: İletişim, 2018

¹⁹⁹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Türkiye Merkez Ülke Olmalı”, *Radikal*, 26 Şubat 2004, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yorum/turkiye-merkez-ulke-olmali-702116/> (10 Haziran 2018)

²⁰⁰ Yücel Bozdağhoğlu, “Modernization and The Construction of Turkey’s Official Identity”, Yücel Bozdağhoğlu (Ed.) in **Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach** (pp.35-56), London: Routledge, 2003

their goal was survival of the country in the ‘unfriendly international environment’ in foreign policy implementation.²⁰¹ This perspective was followed to be a part of the West on the one hand,²⁰² and to ignore the relations with the countries in the Middle East region on the other hand.²⁰³ However, embracing Kemalism and Westernist norms was not only the reason for survival of Turkish state in the unfriendly environment in international and regional contexts, but also it was the preferences and priorities of the traditional security actors for constructing and controlling Turkish society in domestic context.²⁰⁴ Therefore, embracing Kemalism and Westernist norms also meant ‘the abandonment of Ottoman past’²⁰⁵ and anything related to the political Islam in the public sphere and also in the minds of Turkish society.²⁰⁶ As Menderes Çınar argued that “Kemalist modernization can be defined as a ‘continuous attempt’ on the part of the state elite to control, limit and even instruct the political sphere while ‘modernizing’...”²⁰⁷ In this regard, the main logic behind the traditional security elites can be summed up over the ‘interwoven relation’²⁰⁸ among the identification of Kemalism and Westernization,²⁰⁹ and their reflection on securitization of history and geography.

On the other hand, coming from political Islamist tradition Nationalist Outlook Movement (*Milli Görüş Hareketi* – NOM), the AK Party that was established in 2001 and came to power at the end of 2002 presented a different identity in the name of conservative democracy and preferred a different set of values with a political discourse based on the civilization.²¹⁰ Thus, the AK Party elites defined themselves as conservative

²⁰¹ Ibid

²⁰² For instance, political involvements of the country have mostly been towards the Western tendency: membership of NATO and candidacy of EU have been the indicators of them. Aydın, *Securitization of History and Geography: Understanding of Security in Turkey*, p. 163 and Karaosmanoğlu, *The Evolution of the National Security Culture and The Military in Turkey*, pp. 204-207

²⁰³ Meliha B. Altunışık, “Turkey’s Security Culture and Policy Towards Iraq”, *Perceptions*, (Spring, 2007), p. 70

²⁰⁴ Menderes Çınar, “The Justice and Development Party and the Kemalist Establishment”, Ümit Cizre (Ed.) in ***Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice an Development Party***, (109-131), London: Routledge, 2008, p. 109

²⁰⁵ Karaosmanoğlu, *The Evolution of the National Security Culture and The Military in Turkey*, pp. 201-202

²⁰⁶ Aras and Köni, *Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited*, p.48

²⁰⁷ Menderes Çınar, *The Justice and Development Party and the Kemalist Establishment*, p. 109

²⁰⁸ Aydın, *Securitization of History and Geography: Understanding Security in Turkey*, p. 163

²⁰⁹ For more: Erik Zürcher, ***Modernleşen Türkiye’nin Tarihi***, İstanbul: İletişim, 1995.

²¹⁰ Menderes Çınar, “Turkey’s ‘Western’ or ‘Muslim’ identity and the AKP’s civilizational discourse”, ***Turkish Studies***, (October, 2017), pp. 1-23

democrats by accepting the roots of the political Islam with conservative identity, yet reformulating it by accepting the universal norms of the West such as promotion of human rights, civilian control of the military, free-market economy and the rule of law and democracy with democrat identity.²¹¹ By doing that, the AK Party did not prefer to reject the traditional security elites' Westernist identity, but suggested the reinterpretation of it in their own way;²¹² because using the political discourses of democracy 'raised the ante'²¹³ towards suspicious of the traditional security actors of Turkey. In that sense, the conservative democratic identity of the AK Party created 'a distinctiveness'²¹⁴ for Turkey's domestic, regional and international contexts.

The AK Party used similar norms with the predecessor of political Islam Necmettin Erbakan such as promotion of headscarf in public sphere and having friendlier relations with the countries in the Middle East region, but the AK Party elites interpreted Erbakan's outlook with a different, more effective and more credible way.²¹⁵ While, the AK Party elites demonstrated their willingness of democratic identity with negotiation processes by fulfilling the EU criteria shortly after from being elected and coming to the government in international contexts;²¹⁶ also, "they represented the hope for possible and final of the crisis Turkey's Western identity"²¹⁷ in domestic context. Because traditional security actors' Kemalist/Westernist norms and their understanding of the history and geography of Turkey on the basis of securitization with the political discourse such as "only strong states can survive on Turkey's geography"²¹⁸ created 'uncertain self-identity'²¹⁹ in the minds of Turkish society, and that was "widely reflected as a 'securitized society' and gives the people general feeling of insecurity",²²⁰ that also made Turkey's regional identity perception of 'neglected having relations'²²¹ with peoples of the Middle East

²¹¹ Akdoğan, *AK Parti ve Muhafazakar Demokrasi*, s. 62

²¹² Menderes Çınar, **Vesayetçi Demokrasiden Milli Demokrasiye**, İstanbul: Birikim, 2015, p. 26-27

²¹³ Tanıl Bora, **Cereyanlar: Türkiye'de Siyasi İdeolojiler**, İstanbul: İletişim, 2017, p.478

²¹⁴ Çınar, *Turkey's 'Western' or 'Muslim' identity and the AKP's civilizational discourse*, p.8

²¹⁵ Ibid

²¹⁶ Ibid

²¹⁷ Çınar, *The Justice and Development Party and the Kemalist Establishment*, p. 109

²¹⁸ Pınar Bilgin, "Only Strong States Can Survive in Turkey's Geography: The Uses of 'Geopolitical Truths' in Turkey", **Political Geography**, Vol. 26, (2007), p. 740.

²¹⁹ Aydın and Ereker, *Türkiye'de Güvenlik: Algı, Politika, Yapı*, p. 6

²²⁰ Aydın, *Securitization of History and Geography: Understanding of Security in Turkey*, p. 164

²²¹ Bilgin Ayata, "Turkish Foreign Policy in a Changing Arab World: Rise and Fall of a Regional Actor?" , **Journal of European Integration**, Vol. 37, No. 1, (December, 2014), pp. 95-112

region in the regional context. The AK Party's conservative democrats suggested construction of a political discourse based on civilization that aimed to help overcome identity crisis of the Turkish society in the domestic context by elimination of differences among the state and Turkey's society,²²² and also help re-interpret its geography and history by creating strategic values to the TFP in international context and to create re-perception of a credible regional identity on the perception of people in the Middle East region in regional context.

2.1.2 What the values are

As mentioned earlier, the AK Party presented a new value system that is based on conservative democracy and a discourse about civilization.²²³ This means that the new value system has little affinity with Kemalist and Westernist norms in comparison to the traditional security elites', yet it has more affinity with a civilizational discourse based on Islam identity.²²⁴ Traditional security elites' perception towards political Islam was "one of the gravest threat to Turkish national security" which is followed by "political irredentism".²²⁵ Thus, the AK Party followed a slightly pro-Western foreign policy by 'conciliating' Turkey's alignment with the political norms of EU and promoting non-authoritarian secularism on the one hand;²²⁶ and, it also processed a political discourse of civilization with the self-definition of Turkey's geography and history on the other hand.²²⁷ Thus, this part gives a detailed discussion of the main values behind the AK Party's civilizational discourse in reference to its differences from the logic of traditional security elites'.

First of all, the AK Party started to reinterpret Turkey's geography by protecting its conservative-democratic identity and promoting its political Islamist value. According to Davutoğlu, Turkey should have a "distinctive position in the world geography" with its

²²² Çınar, *Turkey's 'Western' or 'Muslim' identity and the AKP's civilizational discourse*, p.3

²²³ Ibid

²²⁴ Çınar, *Vesayetçi Demokrasiden Milli Demokrasiye*, p.23

²²⁵ 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

²²⁶ TESEV, *The Evolution of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, 2012, <https://www.scpss.org/libs/spaw/uploads/files/Policy>, (10 Haziran 2018), p.1-8

²²⁷ Çınar, *Vesayetçi Demokrasiden Milli Demokrasiye*, pp.21-27

historical experiments for centuries. The reason is that changing conditions of regional and international contexts required Turkey to make ‘self-cognition’²²⁸ of its geography. In this light, Turkey should have realized its ‘Strategic Depth’ and re-interpreted its geography that was understood before the 2000s.²²⁹ This discourse basically talks about reinterpretation of history and geography vis-à-vis foreign policy, but it also naturally serves the ‘normalization’ of a ‘new Turkish identity’ and Turkish politics under the AK Party government.²³⁰ As social constructivism discusses, Davutoğlu promoted reinterpretation of geography and history in terms of changing contexts: both concepts were not static structures in TFP and they should have been reinterpreted dynamically. In other words, there was a requirement of changing the beliefs;²³¹ and the common knowledge of Turkey’s geography among the units of domestic context as the Turkish society and the regional context people of the Middle East countries should be re-established.

Until the AK Party came to power, traditional security elites defined Turkey as a country that geographically locates where Africa, Asia and Europe cross each other. As Aydın discusses, its geography has frequently functioned for describing country’s identity, explaining its place in the international context, understanding of regional orders and its domestic context to construct and control the identity of Turkish society. As a matter of fact, regional borders such as the Balkans, the Caucasus, Europe and the Middle East not only give Turkey a ‘significant geostrategic location’ on regional and international contexts, but also play a crucial role in imagining the Turkey’s identity on the minds of Turkish society as a country of these regions.²³² On the one hand, traditional security actors discursively used Turkey’s geography as an advantage in order to define it as ‘strategically positioned’.²³³ For instance,

²²⁸ For more about the discussion of this concept: Çınar, *Vesayetçi Demokrasiden Milli Demokrasiye*, pp. 22-23

²²⁹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, **Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye’nin Uluslararası Konumu**, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2011, p. 440

²³⁰ Birdal, *Davutoğlu Doktrini: Stratejik Özenin Populist İnşası*, p. 130.

²³¹ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p.161

²³² Aydın, *Securitization of History and Geography: Understanding of Security in Turkey*, p. 5

²³³ For more discussion, see Bilgin, *Only Strong States Can Survive in Turkey's Geography: The uses of "geopolitical truths" in Turkey*.

Due to its geo-strategic location with borders in Europe, the Middle East and the Caucasus, Turkey could play a role in world politics far beyond its size, population and economic growth. It is located on one of the most strategic and traditionally covered pieces of territory in the world.²³⁴

On the other hand, traditional security actors thought that Turkey's geography was a disadvantage and used Turkey's geography to understand it as a source of insecurity'.²³⁵ Likewise, while other countries interpreted Turkey's strategic positioning as advantageous because of its location on the crossroads of the continents and civilizations, those features turned out to be disadvantages while the geography is thought as a place, "where the invasions and migrations from and among the East and West countries take place and which was surrounded by different regimes and different ideological aims".²³⁶ In sum, on the one hand, geography was seen as an advantage due to its strategic position, and used in order to explain that Turkey was an important country for the Western Bloc during the Cold War; on the other hand, it was used as a disadvantage turned to be a source of threat, fear, suspicion and distrust, which was seen as 'geopolitical insecurity'.²³⁷

The AK Party differentiated itself by interpreting it in a positive way and adding more advantages that were previously constructed rather than taking geography as granted and concrete manner that makes it disadvantageous. In other words, the AK Party elites did not reject traditional security elites' perception on geography directly; rather, they chose promoting their values by creating new sub-values about geography. One of them was the concept of 'central state'.²³⁸ According to Davutoğlu, Turkey had to play a periphery role and placed itself within the Western camp due to the Soviet threat, and this choice of foreign policy could be understandable for Davutoğlu. However, after the Cold War, Turkey should have played more important role in world politics.²³⁹ In this light, he

²³⁴ Aydın, *Securitization of History and Geography: Understanding of Security in Turkey*, p. 170

²³⁵ Bilgin, *Only Strong States Can Survive in Turkey's Geography": The uses of "geopolitical truths" in Turkey*, p. 741

²³⁶ Aydın and Ereker, *Türkiye'de Güvenlik: Algı, Politika, Yapı*, p. 5

²³⁷ Bilgin, *Only Strong States Can Survive in Turkey's Geography": The uses of "geopolitical truths" in Turkey*, p. 741

²³⁸ Davutoğlu, *Türkiye Merkez Ülke olmalıdır*

²³⁹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, **Teoriden Pratiğe: Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar**, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2011, pp.317-346

emphasized the need for a ‘dynamic interaction’. The end of Cold War influenced the neighbor geographies of Turkey: dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, emergence of new states after these countries in the Balkans and the Caucasus, and also the Gulf War and other events in the Middle East necessitate Turkey to reinterpret its role beyond its territory and population.²⁴⁰ Therefore, according to Davutoğlu, “Turkey’s geography gives it a specific central country status”.²⁴¹ Especially, the international conjuncture that was formed after the al-Qaeda linked terror events of 9/11 in the United States (US), required a new concept like ‘central state’ in the conduct of TFP and replacement of Turkey in regional and international contexts. This means that the thinking that Turkey could not be reduced only to the categorization of periphery of the West in foreign policy with its Western identity should have been abandoned. According to Davutoğlu, “Turkey’s diverse regional composition lends to it the capability of maneuvering in several regions simultaneously”.²⁴² As he posed,

Turkey’s foreign policy needs a new orientation in the light of the new regional and global developments. As a major country in the midst of the Afro-Eurasia landmass, Turkey is a central country with multiple regional identities that cannot be reduced to one, unified category. In terms of its sphere of influence, Turkey is a Middle Eastern, Balkan, Caucasian, Central Asian, Caspian, Mediterranean, Gulf, and Black Sea country all at the same time.²⁴³

Secondly, the AK Party also began to re-interpret Turkey’s history from a point where it could promote its political Islamist value, because the history was obviously seen by the traditional security elites of Turkey as burden of the Ottoman Empire that connates as source of threats, fear and distrust to the countries in the Middle East.²⁴⁴ In other words, the traditional security elites hesitated to have close relationship with the Arab countries because of the negative interpretation of the empirical heritage, and thus the imagination about the Ottoman past shaped the engagement of TFP towards the Middle East countries.

²⁴⁰ Ibid

²⁴¹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Turkey’s Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007”, **Insight Turkey** Vol.10, No.1, 2008, pp.77-96.

²⁴² Ibid, p.78

²⁴³ Ibid, pp.77-96

²⁴⁴ Aras and Köni, *Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited*, p. 50

First of all, they considered states and people in the Middle East through some negative notions about the Arabic people such as ‘backwardness’ which was borrowed from the Ottoman past. In addition to that, the alliance between the Arabic people and British forces during the First World War constituted a negative image about the Arabic people in ‘the cognitive map of Turkey’s state elites’. Besides, “Soviet threat toward Turkey made also the country give more effort to be part of Western Bloc” and led to marginalization of Turkey on the minds of people in the Middle East region.²⁴⁵

For those reasons, the traditional security elites ignored the Ottoman Past, separated geographical imagination of the Middle East from historical roots, and promoted a political discourse that “the country is surrounded by enemies and constantly faces the danger of break-up or partition”.²⁴⁶ Additionally, ‘the fear of loss of territory’ and ‘the fear of abandonment’ was evoked from time to time until the 2000s not only for the Turkish society, but also for the people of the Middle East.²⁴⁷ For instance, while the narratives that “Turkey has positioned within insecure environment” and “Turkey is a country that is surrounded by three seas and also it is surrounded by enemies from four sides” are produced for the former, the conventional wisdom that “There is not any friend of Turks other than a Turk” and “the country is surrounded by enemies and constantly faces the danger of break-up or partition” indirectly influenced the latter.²⁴⁸ As a matter of fact, these narratives constituted a kind of skepticism towards the Arab countries in the Middle East.²⁴⁹ Anything about the Ottoman past related to the political Islam was ignored and imagined as a source of fear and threat. Moreover, “Turkey’s historical legacy came from the Ottoman Empire where Turkey’s security conceptualizations and security culture started and evolved”.²⁵⁰ Similar to geography, the history of Turkey understood by traditional security actors includes mostly negative narratives about the relations with the people and states in the Middle East.

²⁴⁵ Aras and Köni, *Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited*, p.50

²⁴⁶ Ibid, p.48-50

²⁴⁷ Karaosmanoğlu, *The Evolution of the National Security Culture and The Military in Turkey*, pp. 201-202

²⁴⁸ Aydın and Ereker, *Türkiye’de Güvenlik, Algı, Politika, Yapı*, p. 8, also see Aras and Köni, *Turkish - Syrian Relations Revisited*, p. 48

²⁴⁹ Aras and Köni, *Turkish - Syrian Relations Revisited*, p. 48

²⁵⁰ Aydın, *Securitization of History and Geography: Understanding of Security in Turkey*, p. 165

The main difference that the AK Party brought in Turkey's history was emphasizing the Ottoman past as a legacy and reinterpreting it with the concept of 'central state'.²⁵¹ Accordingly, Davutoğlu also created the sub-value of 'historical responsibility' in this matter. He posed that we have been a society that has a long historical depth and anything that has been created throughout this long history might lose its importance in some intervals, but historical depth could raise the feeling of its importance later.²⁵² As it can be inferred, the traditional security elites chose the reading of the Ottoman past as a burden in order to promote a particular type of identity; however, Davutoğlu suggested reading the Ottoman past positively as a historical responsibility in order to formulate a foreign policy to influence neighboring regions emphasizing historical continuities from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic. Therefore, Davutoğlu brought the idea of formulating a different 'imagination of history along with the geography' from traditional security elites.²⁵³ In other words, Davutoğlu continued to promote notions of social constructivism, preferring to establish a common knowledge of shared mental models.²⁵⁴

According to Davutoğlu, Turkey cannot be a periphery of any camp because of its historical and geographical depth. On this matter, he highlighted that Turkey is a bit of Middle Eastern, Caucasian and Balkan.²⁵⁵ As a consequence, "Turkey's immediate neighborhood is now perceived as an area of opportunity" by the AK Party elites.²⁵⁶ However, the Middle East and improving relations with Arab countries came to forefront within this scope. Davutoğlu stated:

In the current period in which global and regional parameters are being redefined and the Middle Eastern countries in general and Turkey in particular are going through a major transformation, closer Turkish-Arab relations are essential, not just for the national interests of the countries but also peace for the region.²⁵⁷

²⁵¹ Ahmet K. Han, "Dünya Döndükçe Ahmet Davutoğlu ile Röportaj", **New Perspectives Quarterly**, Vol. 6, Özel Sayı, 2004, p.65

²⁵² Ibid

²⁵³ Bülent Aras and Rabia Polat Karakaya, "Turkey and the Middle East: Frontiers of the New Geographic Imagination", **Australian Journal of International Affairs**, Vol. 61, No.4, December, 2007, p.477

²⁵⁴ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p.161

²⁵⁵ Han, *Dünya Döndükçe Ahmet Davutoğlu ile Röportaj*, p.65

²⁵⁶ Aras and Polat Karakaya, *Turkey and the Middle East: Frontiers of the New Geographic Imagination*, p.477

²⁵⁷ Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, p.414

Hence, another value was added to the historical responsibility of ‘model state’, and this was the main value for transformation of TFP towards the Middle East and Syria.²⁵⁸ Davutoğlu highlighted that Turkey could influence the neighborhood regions according to its historical responsibilities. Nevertheless, he hesitated to claim that Turkey should establish hegemony in its region.²⁵⁹ Rather, he pointed out that Turkey could be a model to other states in the neighborhood regions suggesting the AK Party’s preference to adopt its democratic and economic reforms. He also interconnected this perspective with reference to the historical process of the foundation of the Turkish Republic:

Turkey historically has been one of such centers of attraction. It was for this reason that when Turkey embarked on a successful nation-building process in the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire, it gained population dynamism through immigration from neighboring regions.²⁶⁰

As a consequence, the AK Party suggested promoting its conservative-democratic identity by re-interpreting geography and history with the concepts of ‘central state’, ‘historical responsibility’ and ‘model state’. They suggested that geography and history of Turkey could not be thought as a source of insecurity, which limits TFP to being a status quo supporter and creates a securitized society that ignored its relations with its neighbors. In contrast, they preferred the rejection of history and geography as a leading referent subject of security, and implementation of other values in the conduct of foreign policy. Consequently, TFP towards Syria under the AK Party government is an example of this kind of foreign policy understanding.

2.1.3 Where the threats come from

According to desecuritization approach, it is mainly about “the removal of issues from the realm of security”.²⁶¹ In addition to that, there is not any existential threat coming

²⁵⁸ Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe: Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar*, pp.317-346

²⁵⁹ Aras and Polat Karakaya, *Turkey and the Middle East: Frontiers of the New Geographic Imagination*, p.478

²⁶⁰ Davutoğlu, *Turkey’s Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007*, pp.77-96

²⁶¹ McDonald, *Securitization and the Construction of Security*, p.71

to Turkey outside of its borders in terms of AK Party elites' understanding until the midst of 2011 year. This is why the AK Party formulated its foreign policy in terms of dealing with the issues under the necessities of normal politics. In other words, the AK Party's foreign policy in this period was basically based on solving the problems in the long range without using military means, and this approach was thought "as comprehensive and consistent plan of TFP that would also shape the regional context" by 'model state' and 'central state' values.²⁶²

On the other hand, the only threat for the AK Party elites' perception was coming from the traditional security actors. Similar to the Hopf's argument, state actors define themselves in exchange to 'the others' in domestic politics as much as they define themselves in international context.²⁶³ The reason behind this is that traditional security actors who were positioned in military, bureaucracy, media and academia were the main decision-makers in traditional security culture of Turkey, and all of them were critical of the AK Party's existence in Turkish politics and its foreign policy implementation. The most powerful criticism was coming from military in the year of 2007.²⁶⁴

Under these lights, it should be accepted that the AK Party started the process of desecuritization to increase the chance of survival of its identity by making conservative democracy real for Turkey's domestic context and formulating a civilizational discourse for the regional and international politics in foreign policy.²⁶⁵ Both of them should be taken into consideration for the protection and promotion of its values that the AK party prompted to vanguard by its conservative-democratic identity. Similarly, protection of parliamentary democracy and supporting free and fair elections in Turkey to the Middle East exemplified this way of thinking.²⁶⁶

2.1.4 How the preservation of values can be achieved

²⁶² Şükrü Yazğan, "Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinin Suriye Sonbaharı: Ayrışan Değerler, Uzlaşmaz Çıkarlar ve Çakışan Politikalar", *ORDAF*, 31 Ocak 2018, <http://ordaf.org/turk-amerikan-iliskilerinin-suriye-sonbahari-ayrisan-degerler-uzlasmaz-cikarlar-ve-catisan-politikalar/> (10 Haziran 2018)

²⁶³ Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics, Identities and Foreign Policies*, p.10

²⁶⁴ For more: İsmet Berkan, *Asker Bize İktidarı Verir mi?*, İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2011, pp. 32-64

²⁶⁵ Ibid and Çınar, *Vesayetçi Demokrasiden Milli Demokrasiye*, pp.21-27

²⁶⁶ Çınar, *The Justice and Development Party and the Kemalist Establishment*, pp. 109-127

Diplomacy tradition coming from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic brought long-term-experienced governing traditions and continuities of foreign policies to Turkey as advantages. Yet, despite of the advantages about traditions and continuities, the Ottoman past also brought some disadvantages regarding relations with neighboring states, the image of the country, identity of Turkey and the society, and (re)creation of the perception of fear toward threats.²⁶⁷ Regarding all of those, the traditional security actors used the diplomacy of Turkey in reference to the identity of the state and the society. Because there was a long-term diplomacy tradition inherited from the Ottoman political elites.

According to Bozdağlıoğlu, this tradition used the idea of the ‘West’ that is understood as the culture of Europe rather than a geographical term, as ‘the other’ in Ottoman self-definition until the 18th century. However, with the beginning of the decline of the Empire, some elites began to search for “the means of Western civilization”; thus, some bureaucrats were sent by the Empire elites in order to observe these means.²⁶⁸ Also, “different channels of communication with Europe had been established such as European instructors in military education, embassies, learning European languages and so on”.²⁶⁹ All of those steps taken by the elites had been the indications of taking Europe and its civilization “as a model”²⁷⁰. Moreover, the Ottoman society had not consolidated the Westernization as a model within itself. The traditional security actors of Turkey shared continuity of the diplomacy culture through decades of different governments; the diplomacy had one of the continuity figures along with the military behind the Turkey’s security culture from the Empire to the Republic.²⁷¹

According to the AK Party, the diplomacy culture of Turkey should be reinterpreted in terms of changing dynamics in international and regional contexts. As a matter of fact, rather than taking the West as a model; Turkey should be a model state to its neighboring regions. The main element of preservation of values was about foreign policy

²⁶⁷ Aydın and Ereker, *Türkiye’de Güvenlik: Algı, Politika, Yapı*, s. 5

²⁶⁸ Ibid, pp.36-40

²⁶⁹ Ibid

²⁷⁰ Ibid

²⁷¹ Karaosmanoğlu, *The Evolution of the National Security Culture and The Military in Turkey*, pp. 201-202

implementation process with the EU and combining it with rhythmic diplomacy. So, Turkey could easily promote democracy and that also help to form a proactive foreign policy. In this light, the AK Party elites, PM Erdoğan and MFA Gül attended different kinds of forums within and outside the region to highlight the necessity of reforms. Therefore, “Turkey became part of the Broader Middle East and North Africa initiative and together with Italy and Yemen, became a co-chair of its Democracy Assistance program.”²⁷² As a matter of fact, promotion of democracy by the means of stimulating political and economic reforms to the Middle East region formed a base for proactive foreign policy. Consequently, the interpretation of diplomacy by the AK Party elites aimed to promote democracy in the Middle East and to help endorsing Turkey’s strategic depth as a “vision of minimizing the problems in its neighboring regions while avoiding international confrontations.”²⁷³ Turkey’s Syria Policy could be seen as an example of that passage.

2.2 The Units of Desecuritization

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the state can be analyzed as the referent object of security but that can also be a nation, as an indispensable entity of a state. In this manner, it is important to emphasize that for a state, survival is about sovereignty, for a nation, it is about the identity.²⁷⁴ For the AK Party, both of the arguments were valid. In this light, Turkey’s Syrian Policy starting from the 2000s to end of 2010 was a matter of the state interest in some senses and it was also the matter of the AK Party in order to consolidate its identity in Turkish Politics. Therefore, it can be better understood by the units of desecuritization whether Turkey’s Syrian Policy was seen as a matter of interest or identity. As it is also discussed in the previous chapter, identity is a self-perception about who we are; thus, perception of threat can be decided in terms of politics of identity.²⁷⁵ In other words, the core notion of security points that “security is freedom from threats to core values”.²⁷⁶ Accordingly the security analysis has not only the

²⁷² Altunışık and Martin, *Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP*, p.574

²⁷³ Aras and Polat Karakaya, *Turkey and the Middle East: Frontiers of the New Geographic Imagination*, p.483

²⁷⁴ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p.36

²⁷⁵ McDonald, *Securitization and the Construction of Security*, p.63

²⁷⁶ Baylis, et. al, *Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, p.229

potential of clarifying the designation of threat, but it can also define who we are and what our values are. However, whether the same analysis would be applicable if the security analysis were based on the desecuritization is examined in the following parts.

In theory, the process of desecuritization takes place when there is a lack of securitizing speech acts. However, Turkey's Syrian Policy during the AK Party era can embody the theory of desecuritization more than this explanation in practice. Several issues between the two states started to transform, the securitized relations from the previous eras turned into normal politics and the threat perceptions that constructed before the AK Party was quitted. This part gives the details of the units behind the transformation of Turkey's Syrian Policy from securitization to desecuritization. The articulation model of the desecuritization approach suggests a more decent and radical form of political engagement.

Within this scope, this part follows the articulation model giving the details of Turkey's political engagements with Syria. It also aims to understand how formerly securitized issues of Turkey such as *Partiya Karkaran Kurdistan* (Kurdistan Workers Party - PKK) issue came into agenda of normal politics and how threat oriented perception that previously constructed over political Islam turned into lack of security speech acts during the AK Party government.

2.2.1 The Referent Object

The referent object of security has been mostly related with the history and geography of the Turkish state. As mentioned before, Turkey has been thought as geographically located where Africa, Asia and Europe continents intersects and its geography has frequently functioned for describing the country's identity;²⁷⁷ for explaining its place in the international system and also for understanding of regional orders. Regarding all of those, most of the time, it has been used as the leading referent subject of security in traditional security actors' understanding. The history of Turkey was also used as the other main source of fear and threats to securitize Turkey's Syrian Policy.²⁷⁸ Fears and threats were defined and redefined over the years, so securitization of Syria became 'normalized' for the Turkish state and the Turkish society and also for

²⁷⁷ Aydın and Ereker, *Türkiye'de Güvenlik: Algı, Politika, Yapı*, p.5

²⁷⁸ Ibid

the same units in Syria. The last example of securitization of Syria until the AK Party era came from over a securitized issue of PKK took place in 1998, as it can be clearly seen by speeches of the security actors. For instance the 9th President of Turkey Süleyman Demirel posed, “Despite all our warnings and peaceful initiatives, I declare to the world once again that we keep our right to respond Syria, which does not give up its hostile attitude, and our patience is about to overflow!”²⁷⁹ Also, the securitization was supported by the military elites. The commander of Turkish Land Forces, General Atilla Ateş said: “...By harboring the bandit called Apo²⁸⁰ in their country, and by supporting him, Syria infected Turkey with terror...”²⁸¹

In short, a system-wide securitization towards Syria took place until the AK Party elites came into power. Syria was always conceived in fearful terms by the discourses of traditional security actors. However, those fears about the geography and the history were not seen in as a source of insecurity during the AK Party’s period in Turkey’s Syrian Policy between 2003 and 2011. In contrast, geography and history of Turkey was promoted as self-confidence of the AK Party in the domestic context and as strategic depth in the regional contexts that led to change of regional threat perceptions and created more positive attitudes for providing peace and stability to the Middle East through Syria.²⁸² Also, the threat oriented speeches of traditional security actors towards Syria were replaced by the AK Party’s political discourse of civilization. Rather than the threat speeches, the discourses about Syria transformed into less fearful and more peaceful terms. Likewise, common views on the geography, the history and the brotherhood of two states were shared. Furthermore, the perception of the both sides as a source of security was left behind. As Hansen argued in the rearticulation model, a basic political

²⁷⁹ 140 journos, “Esad - Esed - Esad: 3 Dakikada Suriye ile İlişkilerin Son 20 Yılı”, 26 January 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAko4uY6WUE&ab_channel=140journos (10 June 2018)

²⁸⁰ Abdullah Öcalan the leader of PKK was called by the security actors most of time APO, *teröristbaşı bebek katili, bölücübaşı*

²⁸¹ 140 journos, *Esad - Esed - Esad: 3 Dakikada Suriye ile İlişkilerin Son 20 Yılı*

²⁸² Aras and Polat Karakaya, *From Conflict to Cooperation: Desecuritization of Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iran*, p.504

ontology established for desecuritization of Syria during this AK Party period and that made a possible claim about the ability of the system-wide securitization to be resolved.²⁸³

2.2.2 The (De)securitizing Actor

The AK Party elites, Davutoğlu and Erdoğan, are the main (de)securitizing actors towards Turkey's Syrian Policy. In other words, they were the agents whose task was transforming threats about Syria into challenges: to move issues from the sphere of existential fear to one where they could be handled by ordinary/normal means such as politics, economics, diplomacy, culture and so on, as Waever prompted.²⁸⁴ On the one hand, as members of a political party and as an incumbent government of Turkish state, survival is about sovereignty in foreign policy. On the other hand, as a political party in Turkish Politics, survival is related to the identity in regional and domestic politics. This means that the AK Party elites interpreted that survival of the AK Party could be formed on promotion and protection of their values in foreign policy as much as survival of them could be come from culminating and consolidating their place within the domestic context.

Their interpretations were obviously becoming successful for pursuing state interests in the foreign policy and for culminating their identity in Turkish Politics at the same time. According to Taşkın, it can be argued, "the AK Party is the first incumbent party in Turkish Politics that realized the gap between foreign and domestic politics closing that much in this era of world politics".²⁸⁵ Therefore, the AK Party's success can thoroughly be seen in Syria case where the identity and the interests of the AK Party in TFP formulation were best matched. So, the values and the identity of the AK Party elites as the (de)securitizing actors of Turkey's Syrian policy should be taken into consideration.

To begin with, the AK Party promoted its conservative democracy in its Syrian Policy by the value of model state. Thus, the socio-political structure of Turkey could be a model

²⁸³ Hansen, *Reconstructing Desecuritization: The Normative-Political in the Copenhagen School and Directions for How to Apply It*, p.527

²⁸⁴ Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p. 42

²⁸⁵ Yüksel Taşkın, **AKP Devri, Türkiye Siyaseti, İslamcılık, Arap Baharı**, İstanbul: Birikim Press, 2013, p.131.

to the other states in the region to promote peace and stability. This could also give the AK Party elites the priority in democratic legitimacy in its foreign policy implementation.²⁸⁶ According to Davutoğlu,

Turkey started to implement zero problems with its neighbors and Turkey's relations with Syria is exemplify of that, two states' signing of free trade agreements, almost integration of economics both states have qualification of a model state.²⁸⁷

Accordingly, it can be argued that the AK Party's desecuritization was not solely about transforming of previously securitized issues in normal politics, because it had already started before the AK Party. However, what the AK Party did was to bring desecuritization not only on the basis of lacking security speech acts, and 'avoiding panic mode of securitized politics',²⁸⁸ but also forming a new political discourse of 'brotherhood' that conceived Syria in less fearful terms.²⁸⁹

The beginning of the handling the issues in normal politics in Turkey's Syria Policy started at the end of 1990s. In other words, the relations between Turkey and Syria began to harmonize after signing Adana Records in 1998. Yet, the desecuritization of Turkey's Syrian Policy became crystallized starting from 2003 and 2004 with the political discourse of 'brotherhood'. For the developments in domestic context, the rejection of 1 March Proposal in 2003 by a parliamentary vote, which could have helped the deployment of the US forces in Turkish soil for a solution to the Iraqi Crisis, was appreciated by the Syrian side in the regional context and indicated that both states had similar concerns about the Middle East.²⁹⁰ Also, the Iraqi Crisis caused, on the one hand, a share of common fear between Turkey and Syria, because the partitioning of Iraq might create a possibility of emergence of a Kurdish state and this would affect both states due to the fact that they have, with Iran, huge amount of Kurdish population in their territories. On the other hand, it showed that Turkey, which was previously perceived as 'pro-

²⁸⁶ Aras and Polat Karakaya, *From Conflict to Cooperation: Desecuritization of Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iran*, p.507

²⁸⁷ Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe: Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar*, pp.317-346.

²⁸⁸ Hansen, *Reconstructing desecuritization the normative-political in the Copenhagen School and directions for how to apply it*, p.546

²⁸⁹ Ibid

²⁹⁰ Meliha B. Altunışık and Özlem Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No.2, (2006), pp.229-248.

Western' by Syrian state, could be against US decisions. Under this light, the Syrian appreciation was embodied when the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad came to Turkey in 2004; only one year after the AK Party elites came to the government. The President Bashar Al-Assad visited Turkey on 6-8 January 2004, which was the first official visit of a Syrian president to the Turkish Republic that has ever been.²⁹¹ This was the first official visit of a Syrian president to the Turkish Republic ever been. The Syrian President summarized his visit by stating "We have together shifted our relations from an atmosphere of distrust to trust".²⁹² Erdoğan pointed out the importance of this meeting importance later in his 15 August 2010 speech by saying that:

Turkey and Syria had conflictual relations up until only seven and half years ago; however, we, came together with 'my Assad brother', negotiated and were mutually consulted our relations, as a matter of fact, we, 'with my brother' brought Turkey and Syria as friend and brother countries in the region.²⁹³

The visit of President Assad initiated a period of cooperation on many areas including political, economic, and military ones. Thus, the cooperation was not only aimed at states, but also for improving relations of the people of Turkey and Syria. Therefore, perception of Turkey and Syria changed at the level of society, too. For instance, a consulate in Gaziantep was decided to open and the establishment of border centers for facilitation of trade followed this both between Turkey and Syria, and among the region. These centers enabled Turkey to sell its goods and services into the region through Syria easily, and Syrian products could also be sold to the West through Turkey²⁹⁴. Besides, the territory bordering two sides began to be demined and agricultural practice flourished²⁹⁵.

Turkey's PM Erdoğan also visited Damascus in December 2004 and Free Trade Agreement was signed between Turkey and Syria.²⁹⁶ In this respect, the improvements of the economic relations began to solidify during the same year by the AK Party elites, and

²⁹¹ Ibid, p.241

²⁹² Aras and Polat Karakaya, *From Conflict to Cooperation: Desecuritization of Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iran*, p.509

²⁹³ Bağımsız Özgür Medya Web Tv, "Tayyip Erdoğan: 'Biz Geldik Esad Kardeşimle Oturduk Konuştuk'", March 2018, http://bagimsiz-ozgur-medya.web.tv/video/tayyip-erdogan-biz-geldik-esad-kardesimle-oturduk-konustuk_bqljywpexhm (10 June 2018)

²⁹⁴ Altunışık and Tür, *From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations*, p.242

²⁹⁵ Ibid

²⁹⁶ Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe: Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar*, pp.317-346.

that led to huge amount of business investments in the upcoming years.²⁹⁷ However, Erdoğan's speech during his Damascus visit gave more important messages beyond the cooperation of politics, economics and military. For the first time for Syrians, Turkey's Syrian Policy seemed different from the traditional security elites' understandings. Within this scope, Erdoğan was underlining similarities of the people of two states and highlighting the brotherhood of them: "Is it possible to differentiate a Syrian and a Turk among the people of enlightened faces in this hall? I want to call you not my friends but my brothers."²⁹⁸

With this speech, Erdoğan was not only attempting to improve the relations with the Ba'ath Party as the state elites of Syria, but also aiming at influencing Syrian people's understanding of Turkey.²⁹⁹ Also, he wanted the people of Syria to infer the possibility of common views and that common perception among the states could be established.

Secondly, desecuritization was also stepped up with 'rearticulation'. Accordingly, within the scope of rearticulation, previous threats should be lifted from the political discourse and this should be supported by the political engagements. In that sense, it was highlighted by the AK Party elites' discourses that previous threat is not the threat at the moment. As a matter of fact, Syrian leader articulated a previous securitized issue of Turkey, PKK, as a terrorist organization. In June 2005, Bashar Al-Assad also condemned a PKK attack and characterized that event as "the PKK attack on a train in June 2005 'a heinous terrorist act'".³⁰⁰ In addition to that, Assad further mentioned in 2004 that Syria shares 'common views and threat perception' with Turkey specifically on PKK and in general Kurdish issue that could emerge with the Iraqi crisis in the region by stating, "a Kurdish state would violate our red line too" in the region with the possibility of Iraq's disintegration.³⁰¹ In 2007, Gül, as the MFA, expressed, "...we are sharing common view

²⁹⁷ 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, (2011), pp. 589- 602.

²⁹⁸ Altunışık and Tür, *From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations* p.245

²⁹⁹ This was, most of time given in Turkey's media and academia, even in the critiques directed to Erdoğan. Accordingly, Erdoğan not only addressed the palaces of the Middle East region, but also he addressed the streets of the Middle East region.

³⁰⁰ Altunışık and Tür, *From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations* p.241

³⁰¹ Ibid

with Syria, we have legitimate concerns about the future of Iraq and we should cooperate in every possible way...”³⁰²

Furthermore, a series of political engagements was also begun to proceed. Syria became a part of ‘Iraq’s Neighbors’ Initiative’ started by Turkey. Those were followed by the cooperation of two states in many areas such as politics and economy. Thus desecuritization came one step further by constructing mutual trust among institutions, and it also came from ‘more extreme version of political engagements’ not only among the two states, but also with political engagements in regional context to solve regional issues.

Thirdly, the AK Party’s ‘central state’ value in the international and regional contexts increased Turkey’s perception in the Syrian side. In regarding its pro-active foreign policy; for instance, Turkey became the first home ownership of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) meeting in June 2004 and it was also promoting EU candidacy norms in international context. Also, it became a part of the Broader Middle East and North Africa Project and signed free trade agreements with Gulf Cooperation and Council. Besides, it boosted its economy within the Middle East³⁰³ and has achieved friendlier relations in the region with Israel.

Therefore, all of those improvements increased the credibility of AK Party’s Turkey in international context. ‘Central state’ value of Turkey promoted the AK Party elites as a mediator in Syria-Israel dispute in regional context. The AK Party increased benign relations with Syria and Israel at the same time and this allowed Turkey to mediate conflicts between them, which were related with the Israeli settlement over Gaza and Golan heights. Thus, indirect talks began between Syria and Israel under Turkish mediation and five meetings held in 2008.³⁰⁴

³⁰² Aras and Polat Karakaya, *From Conflict to Cooperation: Desecuritization of Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iran*, p.510

³⁰³ Aras and Polat Karakaya, *Turkey and the Middle East: Frontiers of the New Geographic Imagination*, p.476

³⁰⁴ Altunışık and Martin, *Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP*, p.573.

Although, the mediator role of the AK Party elites diminished after the Erdoğan's speech on Davos 2009 World Economic Forum, that event indirectly led to dimensional change of AK Party's era in the regional context. According to that, the criticisms made by Erdoğan towards Israel's President gained lots of popularity through the streets of Syria as much as the public opinion of Turkey.³⁰⁵ Especially, Erdoğan's accusation of Israeli government for committing the state terror to the innocent Palestinians during the meetings raised the popularity of Erdoğan in the minds of people in Syria and also in the minds of other Middle Eastern countries' people. Therefore, the sense of Turks and Turkey turned into sympathy for peoples of these countries,³⁰⁶ where AK Party's interests in foreign policy and its identity in regional context become convergent. In fact, "positive feelings among the societal level increased commercial and cultural relations and also that led to increase of the Turkey's economic and diplomatic relations in the state level."³⁰⁷

In 2007, Davutoğlu argued that Turkey's 'zero problems with neighbors' policy had been successfully implemented during 'the past four years' to the Middle East and Syria could be seen as the benchmark of it.³⁰⁸ By using political discourse of civilization with the reinterpretation of its geography and history, by promoting model state and central state values, AK Party tried to desecuritize its relations with its Syria, it is also applied other countries in the region.³⁰⁹

The year 2009 could be the most concrete form of desecuritization of Turkey's Syrian Policy, because MFA in two states, Ahmet Davutoğlu and Walid Muallem came together in October 2013 to sign an agreement for lifting visa requirements among the two countries in the basis of High Level of Strategic Cooperation Council. Similarly, a joint cabinet of ministers came together to sign an agreement that aims 'a total economic

³⁰⁵ For more about the public opinion of Turkey, see: Emre Erdoğan, "Dış Politikada Siyasallaşma: Türk Kamuoyunun "Davos Krizi" ve Etkileri Hakkındaki Değerlendirmeleri", **Uluslararası İlişkiler**, Vol.10, No.37, (Spring, 2013), pp. 37-67.

³⁰⁶ Mustafa Kibaroglu, "What Went Wrong With the "Zero Problem with Neighbors Doctrine?", **Turkish Policy Quarterly**, Vol. 11, No. 3, (Fall, 2012), pp.86-93.

³⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 87.

³⁰⁸ Davutoğlu, *Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007*, p.80.

³⁰⁹ Ahmet K. Han, "Paradise Lost: A Neoclassical Realist Analysis of Turkish Foreign Policy and the Case of Turkish Syrian Relations", Raymond Hinnebusch and Özlet Tür (Ed.) in **Turkey- Syria Relations: Between Enmity and Amity**, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2013, pp.55-69

integration' with Syria.³¹⁰ Even the concept of '*Şamgen*' introduced as "a joint visa policy among Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq, taking its inspiration from the Schengen system of the European Union."³¹¹ Those developments were seen as the first times in Turkey's Foreign Policy history as Turkey came 'that close with another state that much'.³¹² According to that, Davutoğlu raised the importance of those events by saying:

...It should be a third Bayram (religious festival) between Ramadan and Sacrifice celebrations...we aim of two states (Turkey and Syria) with one government... From now on Turkey-Syrian relations can be characterized by the mottos of common destiny, common history and common future...³¹³

In June 2010, it was further declared that Turkey, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon would create a free trade zone with all visa requirements lifted.³¹⁴ Furthermore, Joint Cabinet meetings in the name of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council followed lifting of border barriers along Syria.³¹⁵

2.2.3 The Existential Threat

All in all, as it can be seen so far, the AK Party formulated its Syrian Policy in the meaning of desecuritization. The rearticulation model indicates that how previous existential threats are not threats any more at that moment and gives details of political engagements constructed by the AK Party elites. Moreover, reinterpretation of Turkey's geography and history in domestic, regional and international contexts is understood through the examination of values. In fact, there is a need to look at Erdoğan's 2010

³¹⁰ Birgül Demirtaş, "Turkish-Syrian Relations From Friend 'Esad' to Enemy 'Esed'", **Middle East Policy**, Vol.20, No.1, Spring 2013, pp.111-120

³¹¹ Demirtaş, *Turkish-Syrian Relations From Friend 'Esad' to Enemy 'Esed'*, p.116.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid, p.111.

³¹⁴ Han, *Paradise Lost: A Neoclassical Realist Analysis of Turkish Foreign Policy and the Case of Turkish Syrian Relations*, p.64

³¹⁵ Ibid, p.65

speech in order to understand what the existential threat that transformed Turkey's Syrian policy from securitization to desecuritization was:

Turkey and Syria had conflictual relations up until only seven and half years ago; however, we, came together with 'my Assad brother', negotiated and were mutually consulted our relations, as a matter of fact, we, 'with my brother' brought Turkey and Syria as friend and brother countries in the region. We cooperated in every sphere, signing agreements on economy, trade, foreign policy, culture and the art, demined our borders and even lifted visa requirements. All of the existential threats, fears, and suspicions were meaningless... They are not more than construction of previous governments' imaginary scenarios ...³¹⁶

As it can be inferred from the passage, there was not any existential threat related with Syria during this era; rather, the existential threat for Syria was the previous securitizing actors of Turkey and their imaginations. According to Erdoğan, traditional security understanding of Turkey was no longer adequate to implement Turkey's Syrian Policy; thus, the desecuritization of Syria was better to serve states' needs, priorities, the values and the identity of the AK Party that it created through Syria.

CHAPTER 3

THE (RE)SECURITIZATION OF TURKEY'S SYRIA POLICY DURING THE AK PARTY PERIOD: 2012-2018

This chapter analyzes the securitization of Turkey's Syrian Policy during the AK Party period between 2011 to the midst of 2018 by observing the dramatic transition from the category of desecuritization with examination of changing identities and values within

³¹⁶ Bağımsız-Özgür-Medya, "Tayyip Erdoğan: 'Biz Geldik Esad Kardeşimle Oturduk Konuştuk'", March 2018. http://bagimsiz-ozgur-medya.web.tv/video/tayyip-erdogan-biz-geldik-esad-kardesimle-oturduk-konustuk_bqljywpexhm (10 June 2018)

in the same unit of the same political elites: the AK Party, about changing domestic, regional and international contexts. By saying that, this chapter discusses that the politics applied toward Syria during this period framed the Syrian President Assad as a matter of 'security' not only by the political discourses of the main securitizers, Davutoğlu and Erdoğan. Besides, it understands how Syria became an issue of national security, which was thought to be handled by state-centric approach with military means like the traditional understanding in TFP.

Thereafter, this chapter questions whether the dramatic transformation can only be explained by changing identities and values of Turkey's 'new' security actors or there is a need of other factors to explain the dramatic changes in Turkey's Syrian Policy. In order to understand that, firstly I apply the main questions of the securitization theory to the case of AK Party for examining its transforming identity in Turkish Politics with respect to Hopf's argument "states can define themselves over 'the others' and the identity of the states formed by states' domestic positioning as much as their international positioning".³¹⁷ Within this respect, the AK Party's changing values and threat perception and their reflection on Turkey's Syrian Policy implementation is discussed in detail through comparisons of its own previous time and in reference to changing developments in the domestic, regional and international contexts under the main questions of the securitization section. Then the units of the securitization theory are used to find out the main functions behind the political discourse and political actions of securitization of Turkey's Syria Policy during this era.

As Balzacq defined securitization is a set of interrelated practices, the processes of their production, diffusion, and reception/translation that bring threat into being.³¹⁸ In this light, this chapter talks about the processes of AK Party's production, diffusion and translation of Syria into threat being. As securitization theory prompted that language is not only concerned with 'what is out there' as in the traditional understanding's objectivism, but it is also constitutive of world politics by inter-subjective representation.

³¹⁷ Ted Hopf, **Social Construction of International Politics: Identities & Foreign Policies**, Moscow, 1955 and 1999, New York: Cornell University Press, 2002, p.10.

³¹⁸ Balzacq, *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, preface

Accordingly, threats are dealt by states' after perceiving them as 'menace',³¹⁹ which gives political leaders a little role for taking appropriate roles to confront threats in traditional understanding;³²⁰ whereas the securitization theory gives the main role for political leaders for state action to define threat in security analysis by saying that threats are also the product of their entrepreneurship.³²¹ Thus, this chapter is not only given to the some chosen speeches of the AK Party's political leaders, specifically Davutoğlu and Erdoğan so as to understand how Syria turned into a threat by their entrepreneurship, their changing political discourse enlightens us to understand the transformation; because, as it is given before, "something becomes a security problem mainly through discursive politics";³²² but also it is given in the changing contexts of the shifting agendas of security.

3.1 The Main Questions of Securitization

As Williams argued that securitization theory must be seen in the context of the shifting agendas of security and as part of the broader theoretical movement to study the social construction of security³²³. Therefore, securitization theory specifies how and under what conditions the security-ness of an issue can be determined. Within this scope, this part explores how Syria was treated as a security issue not as an objective condition, but as an outcome of specific social process; because, "the processes of securitization take on forms, dynamics and institutional linkages that cannot fully be assessed by focusing speech acts alone".³²⁴ Then, the social construction of threat from Syrian President Assad and its Ba'ath regime can be better understood with the main questions of securitization and it can help observation of the forms, dynamics and institutional linkages in reference to domestic, regional and international contexts.

3.1.1 Who the group is

³¹⁹ Ibid

³²⁰ Ibid

³²¹ Ibid

³²² Ibid

³²³ Michael C. Williams, "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 47, (2003), p.513

³²⁴ Williams, *Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics*, p.513

The AK Party's value system, conservative democrat identity and the political discourse of civilization,³²⁵ was still alive in the period between 2011-2018. However, these elements transformed their dimensions regarding changes in domestic, regional, and international contexts.

In the domestic context, the AK Party had to overcome some crisis towards itself coming from the traditional security actors of Turkey. For instance, it had to deal with the closure trial of the party, which was overturned 'with an only a split decision' by the Constitutional Court in March 2009,³²⁶ it had to deal with the sum of traditional security actors in *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* trials, and also it tried to amend and even to replace the old constitution of Turkey that was prepared in 1982 by the crafts of the military elite after the coup d'état.³²⁷ Furthermore, as a political party in Turkish politics that came to the office in 2002 with 34.3 vote sharing, increased it in the following years: 46.6 percent in 2007 and 49.9 in 2011 and reached almost two-thirds of the parliamentary seats.³²⁸

While the AK Party consolidates its power in domestic contexts, it was also consolidating its conservative identity by promoting usually its political Islamist value. Similarly, Çınar argued that the AK Party not only promoted more Muslim and less pro-Western identity in its political discourse, but also this argument proved itself in policies that it applied, as it consolidated its position in Turkish Politics.³²⁹ Likewise, the PM Erdoğan began to refer to Islamic themes in his political discourse more than the previous periods. He made some statements insulting alcohol drinkers and against for the abortion, also he banned the advertisement of alcohol brands. Moreover, he changed the schools' curricula by promoting more Islamic themes starting from the elementary schools.³³⁰ As Erdoğan further started to consider political Islam in his political discourse in Turkish Politics, the question of 'majoritarian drift' of the AK Party started to resonate in domestic context.³³¹ Some people started to ask what the AK Party has been doing to Turkey could be

³²⁵ Çınar, *Turkey's 'Western' or 'Muslim' identity and the AKP's civilizational discourse*, 2017

³²⁶ Ziya Öniş, "Monopolising the Center: The AKP and the Uncertain Path of Turkish Democracy", **The International Spectator**, Vol. 50, No. 2, (June, 2015), pp. 25-26

³²⁷ Ibid, p.27

³²⁸ Ergun Özbudun, "AKP at the Crossroads: Erdoğan's Majoritarian Drift", **South European Society and Politics**, Vol. 19, No.2, (2014), p.156

³²⁹ Çınar, *Turkey's 'Western' or 'Muslim' identity and the AKP's civilizational discourse*, 2017

³³⁰ Özbudun, *AKP at the Crossroads: Erdoğan's Majoritarian Drift*, p.157

³³¹ Ibid

described whether as a “majoritarian autocracy” or as a necessity of ‘being the post-military tutelage’”,³³² and the same question was also resonated in the international context.

Moreover, in this era of the AK Party, its conservative democrat identity started to change in the lights of international contexts, too. In the international context, the democratic commitment to the pro-Westernist terms, which created ‘the distinctiveness of the AK Party in its previous time, lost its popularity in the political discourse of the AK Party elites,’³³³ mostly due the disappointments of the possible membership to the EU candidacy process. According to Özpek and Demirağ, the EU highlighted that Turkey under the AK Party government was lacking of progress on accession process in its domestic context such as freedom of expression, the freedom of media, and there was also some suspicions about the old military elites.³³⁴ For the AK Party, the EU did not show ‘enthusiasm’³³⁵ for Turkey during the accession process, and the continuous economic problems among the EU members such as Spain together with the ‘exclusionist political attitudes’ of the EU’s leading countries as France and Germany³³⁶ caused degrading its eagerness towards the EU in the international context.

While the EU lost its position as the existing institution representing democratic and economic reforms hand in hand that helped to AK Party to consolidate its identity and values within and out of Turkey, alternative commitments for other institutions such as the Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO) with Russia and China appeared to be replaced whose countries could not be seen as the examples of democracies.³³⁷ Those developments made people question whether the AK Party was choosing “a new style of conservative globalism... adoption by ‘minimalistic’ understanding of democratic rights and institutions.”³³⁸ As a consequence, the conservative democrat identity that made the consolidation of the AK Party in Turkey’s politics and that also increased the AK party’s

³³² Suavi Aydın and Yüksel Taşkın, *1960’tan Günümüze Türkiye Tarihi*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2017, p.477

³³³ Çınar, *Turkey’s ‘Western’ or ‘Muslim’ identity and the AKP’s civilizational discourse*, p.8

³³⁴ Burak Bilgehan Özpek and Yelda Demirağ, “Turkish Foreign Policy After the ‘Arab Spring’: From Agenda-setter State to Agenda-entrepreneur State”, *Israel Affair*, Vol. 20, No.3, (2014), p.343

³³⁵ Ibid

³³⁶ Ibid

³³⁷ Öniş, *Monopolising the Center: The AKP and the Uncertain Path of Turkish Democracy*, p.24

³³⁸ Ibid

legitimacy in its foreign policy previously, started to diminish its pro-Westernist democratic sense in the international context.

On the other hand, the AK Party's democratic commitment came to forefront mainly in the regional context whereby its accentuating Muslim identity could perform. By doing this, the AK Party still aimed the presentation of Turkey to the West in international context that parliamentary democracy and political Islam could go hand in hand.³³⁹ At that time, the on-going Arab uprisings in the Middle East Region, which was started in December 2010 Tunisia and led to topple down Tunisian dictator *Zeynel Abidin bin Ali* in 28 days, was spreading through the region as Egypt where led to topple down Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak in 18 days.³⁴⁰ The AK Party elites perceived both events as opportunity to pursue their values and identities in the region. According to Davutoğlu, those developments were related to the democracy desires of Muslim people, which could be defined as “the right changings of the course of history”.³⁴¹ Davutoğlu declared, “Egypt is the heart of the Arab World; we expect the developments would influence the region in a positive way by domino effect.”³⁴²

After Mubarak resignation, Davutoğlu called and congratulate him by saying that he did the right thing; it was a time of listening to the fair demands of the people,³⁴³ regarding the democracy. Also, Erdoğan interpreted this event by using mostly Islamic themes and underlining Muslim identity in his speech at the parliament. Accordingly, he stated:

All of us are mortal. As being Muslim our final destination to go is a two-meter grave... When we die, the Imam will not call you as the President or as the head of the state, but as a Muslim...What the matter is to be remembered by respect...the peace, stability and the security of Egypt is more important than your position...³⁴⁴

³³⁹ Bora, *Cereyanlar: Türkiye’de Siyasal İdeolojiler*, p.482

³⁴⁰ Fehim Taştekin, **Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!**, İstanbul: İletişim, 2015, p.61

³⁴¹ Ibid, p.96

³⁴² Ibid, pp.96-97

³⁴³ Ibid

³⁴⁴ Gürkan Zengin, **Kavga: Arap Baharı’nda Türk Dış Politikası 2010-2013**, İstanbul: İnkılap, 2013, pp.54-55

Besides that, both of the protests were tried to deal their governments' military means by their dictators, though they were not enough to stop their ends.³⁴⁵ Moreover, the governments of Middle East region choose to deal with the issues in the meaning of securitization. Rather than dealing with the developments in normal politics in their domestic contexts, the military interventions to the uprisings resulted resonation of protests throughout the region. And the protests reached Libya, where the regional uprisings became concrete in the meaning of international context with the NATO operations and with the reactions of Western political elites that imprinted in the memories of the Middle East Regions' people, such as the secretary of the US for torturing videos to Libyan dictator Qaddafi as "we came, we saw, he died".³⁴⁶ Although, the PM Erdoğan spoke, as the representative of a central state in world politics, Turkey was against a possible NATO operation by saying "Should NATO intervene Libya? How can it be possible? What is the NATO looking for in Libya? This is unthinkable!"³⁴⁷

The President Gül reversed this speech of Erdoğan on the following day.³⁴⁸ Those were the examples of the beginning of a period that was converging of different foreign policy speeches. Also, it could be the indicator of changing values in TFP during the same party period. According to the AK Part elites' perception, the cause of the uprisings was the Middle East peoples' desire for revision of basic public services: specifically, on economic and political spheres. Moreover, the people of the Middle East region no longer wanted to live in dishonor life conditions, as a protester woman declared in Tahrir Square during the resignation of Mubarak "We do not want to live in dishonor anymore, we are here for our honor".³⁴⁹ Those desires were closing lastly to Syria where the AK Party's previous desecuritized foreign policy implementation was at stake.

³⁴⁵ Mete Çubukçu, *Yıkılın Bu Düzen-Felyaskut Ennizam!: Arap Ayaklanmaları ve Sonrası*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2012, pp.74-75

³⁴⁶ Hillary Clinton's, the secretary of US State at that time being, watching the torturing videos with a smiling face and that scene was presented by the US media to the World. For more Clinton on Qaddafi series see: CBS, "Clinton on Qaddafi: We came, we saw, he died", 20 October 2011 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlz3-OzcExI&ab_channel=CBS (10 June 2018)

³⁴⁷ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.98

³⁴⁸ Jonathan Head, "Libya: Turkey's Troubles with Nato and Nofly Zone", BBC News, 25 March 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12864742> (10 June 2018)

³⁴⁹ Çubukçu, *Yıkılın Bu Düzen-Felyaskut Ennizam!: Arap Ayaklanmaları ve Sonrası*, preface

The Arab uprisings reached Syria's southwest city of Dera nearly in March 2011.³⁵⁰ Dera is a city that only four kilometers away from Jordanian borders, whose people were in relation with some political Islamists as the members of the Muslim Brotherhood (the MB),³⁵¹ and where its rural people's poverty diminishes not only because of the water-scarcity; but also due the lack of public services and investments and increasing political oppression of the Assad's government.³⁵² Similar to the people of the other countries in the Middle East region, Syrian people began to protest their government with the desire of democratic reforms, taking measurements for anti-corruption and developing human rights for their country.³⁵³ In the beginning of Syrian protests, the AK Party elites supported Assad's government's taking steps on democratic reforms such as giving Syrian Kurds citizenship who did not have official Syrian identities even if they were born and lived there, negotiating some Kurdish clan leaders, releasing some Islamist prisoners who was discharged as political crimes by taking *niqab* in their civil service, the resignation of Syrian PM *Naci Itri* and lifting emergency rule in the country.³⁵⁴ The AK Party appreciated those steps taken by Assad; the PM Erdoğan called Assad in March 25 and congratulated him for implementing democratic reforms.³⁵⁵ On the other hand, as it can be seen, the reform and negotiation steps of Assad was based on the two dynamics of his country, the Kurdish issue and the political Islam; therefore, all of the political and economic demands was coming from mainly those two dynamics which would form the base of the dramatic transformation of Turkey's Syrian Policy in the following months.

3.1.2. What the values are

The notions of political Islam and the Muslim identity behind the 'civilizational discourse'³⁵⁶ were the main values of the AK Party in the period of 2011-2018. The change in understanding of civilization seems as in contradiction with the previous era in

³⁵⁰ Euronews (Türkçe), "Erdoğan: Suriye İç Meselemiz", 7 August 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilgQsC-FQew>, (10 June 2018)

³⁵¹ Ayşe Karabat, *Suriye Savaşları*, İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2013, pp.105-107

³⁵² Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.62

³⁵³ Özpek and Demirağ, *Turkish Foreign Policy After the 'Arab Spring': From Agenda-setter State to Agenda-entrepreneur State*, p.339

³⁵⁴ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.65

³⁵⁵ Ibid, p.99

³⁵⁶ Çınar, *Turkey's 'Western' or 'Muslim' identity and the AKP's civilizational discourse*, pp.21-27

domestic and international contexts. In the international context, it is mostly about a “rejection of the Western hegemony in world politics and not accepting the legacy of Westernization”³⁵⁷ while in the domestic context it included the notions of “the exclusion of the pro-Western secular societal sectors”.³⁵⁸ However, those values would promote the whole Middle East Region easily along the uprisings, because both of them could be valid with the values that created in the previous AK Party’s period: the model and the central state. Therefore, the AK Party’s political discourse of civilization was taking more Islamic notions emphasizing the Muslim identity as the protests expanded to the whole region and that would lead the AK Party to play an important role for ‘culmination’³⁵⁹ of its consolidated power in Turkish Politics, for presenting Turkey to the region as the model state, and for playing the central state role in the international context. Under those lights, the AK Party elites perceived that promotion of those values were ethically just and politically right; as a matter of fact, they thought themselves as “being at the right side of the history”.³⁶⁰

The perception of being at the right side of history with the civilizational discourse worked in Tunisia; the AK Party’s supported *Ennahdha* Party whose Islamist commitment could be summarized as ‘being reformist’³⁶¹ came to the office after the protests end.³⁶² Similar perception was also applied for Egypt. As a country of where its military-backed in its nature, the political Islamist the MB rooted, Freedom and Justice Party, whose Islamic commitment could be summed up as an ‘integrationist/fundamentalist’ came to the office after the elections following the Mubarak’s resignation.³⁶³ The same perception doubtfully applied to Libya, Erdoğan in May 2011 remarked that it was not possible to construct a future over brothers’ blood; we wanted Qaddafi to retreat, he had to take step for the course of the history.³⁶⁴ Erdoğan’s

³⁵⁷ Ibid

³⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 11

³⁵⁹ Birdal, *Davutoğlu Doktrini: Stratejik Öznenin Populist İnşaası*, p. 137

³⁶⁰ Ibid

³⁶¹ Taşkın, *AKP Devri, Türkiye Siyaseti, İslamcılık, Arap Baharı*, p.214

³⁶² Tunus’ta AKP Seçim Kazandı, 2011, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/dunya/2011/10/25/tunusta-akp-secim-kazandirdi> (21 May 2018)

³⁶³ Taşkın, *AKP Devri, Türkiye Siyaseti, İslamcılık, Arap Baharı*, p.214

³⁶⁴ Erdoğan, Kaddafi’yle Köprüleri Attı: Artık Çekil, 2011, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/dunya/erdogan-kaddafiyle-kopruleri-atti-artik-cekil-1048123/> (21 May 2018)

Libya statement resonated also along the streets of Syria, the protesters in Dera were taking Erdoğan's posters and shouting slogans for him; accordingly, "Erdoğan has been a unique statesman in the Arab World who can solve Syrian people's problem as he honored them by strong positioning towards the Israel President."³⁶⁵

Those compliments were getting credit in Turkish media; the Islamic notions were appreciated by most of the Turkish society who had been in crisis since the Republic's establishment. So, they also felt honorable, as being proud of the possibility of a political Islam rooted in Turkey could become a model state to the region.³⁶⁶ Turkish business people had also positive sentiments as Turkey could play more important roles for the infrastructure of where the protests damaged their cities.³⁶⁷ However, the notion of political Islam that applied Syria to some extent differed from that applied to Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. The discourse towards Syria was taking some sort of sectarian notions itself that was highlighting religious identical differences of Sunni and Alawism. According to Taştekin, Erdoğan's discourse turning 'from brother Assad to Alawite Assad' and that turning came just after the visit of the chief of US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to Turkey.³⁶⁸ In that sense, during an interview on a TV channel following that visit, Erdoğan interpreted the protests in Syria as emphasizing on religious characteristics of Assad and his regime as the following:

Bashar is a Nusayris (Alawite) and his wife is a Sunni; actually, those characteristics can make him strong in Syria's structure. The most of the protestors saying at the beginning of the events "we are not totally against to the Bashar; our problem is related with the regime"...³⁶⁹

The use of sectarian notions of political Islam towards Syria exacerbated with increasing violence towards the protestors. Although, the Assad used political means that AK Party suggested to deal with the Syrian uprisings; some protesters thought that reforms that Assad made were cosmetic. That is why, the protests started to turn into sectarian violence

³⁶⁵ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p. 102

³⁶⁶ Funda Özkan, "Kahire Sokaklarında Erdoğan'a Sevgi, Arap Birliği'ne Tepki Var", *Akşam*, 14 September 2011, <https://www.aksam.com.tr/dunya/kahire-sokaklarinda-erdogana-sevgi-arap-birligine-tepki-var--67094h/haber-67094> (21 May 2018)

³⁶⁷ Ibid

³⁶⁸ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, pp.98-100

³⁶⁹ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p101

in April 2011 and in following months. Accordingly, the President Assad had put their Nusayris family members into Syrian's military's crucial positions, such as his brother Maher and *Rifat* Assad, his cousin *Nemr* Assad and his nephew *Fevvaz* Assad, who were dealing with the protests in military means. Specifically, the brother Maher was also known among the Syrian opposition as the 'massacrist'³⁷⁰ and the leading figure of the Ba'ath regime's oldest unofficial militias, called as *Şebbiha* that help the survival of the unofficial Nusayris regime 'from time to time' since the establishment of Ba'ath Party and that was also known as working on 'dirty businesses' such as smuggling and they were also being corruption scandals.³⁷¹

In this respect, the protesters started to cry out against the oldest unofficial militias' discrimination of Sunni protesters in order to make the Syrian protests to be heard in the regional and international contexts. According to Taştekin, because if the protesters chose to blame Assad directly and his unofficial Nusayris regime, it might not be credible in those contexts; yet, using the Sunni notions for describing the Assad's violent method for dealing with the protestors worked to be heard.³⁷² For instance, some of the protestors send a letter to Erdoğan and told about the 'other side of the coin about Assad's violence' to Sunni people; so, they wanted 'the leader of the region' to intervene Syria, with the argument that Erdoğan was the only one who could save them from the massacres:

Syrian people, have always been accepted, see you as the leader of Muslim people in this region. We are sending some of the videos that include Assad's regime violence in Dera and Humus. We remember your speech as "we do not allow for a second Dera massacre", yet every part of Syria have been witnessing real massacres.³⁷³

In this light, the political discourse of the AK party elites started to change its dimension from giving optimist statements to support the brother Assad for democratic reforms to send signaling pessimistic endorsements by criticizing Assad not only by hesitating to apply democratic reforms, but also perceiving him as the main problem that contributes to the increase of violence and turning of the events into massacre due to the Assad's

³⁷⁰ Ibid, pp.68-69

³⁷¹ For more information about this concept, see Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, pp. 68-71 and Karabat, *Suriye Savaşları*, pp.119-124

³⁷² Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.70

³⁷³ Ibid, p.103

sectarian discrimination for dealing with protests. In that sense, in May 2011, Erdoğan said:

We have some concerns about dismantling, diffuse and territorial disintegration of Syria over possibility of a religious sectarian war. We do not want to see and live this possibility. Syria does not look like Libya; we cannot see Syria as a foreign policy issue. We have 911 km territorial border with Syria, so if any possible disintegration was taking place, we would not take Syria as foreign policy, it would become our domestic problem.³⁷⁴

In June 2011, Davutoğlu prompted that from now on what Assad had to do is so difficult,³⁷⁵ while Erdoğan's speech was more aggressive in the same month:

Unfortunately, the Assad family, specifically Maher Assad does not behave humanistic. Their scenes on the top of women their killed cannot be acceptable. As these scenes placed in our memories; we cannot stay in silence, we cannot support and say Syria anymore in international context. We are against for that kinds of violence and we are preparing the UN Security Council meeting. Good relations with Syria cannot last forever.³⁷⁶

The AK Party's desecuritized Syrian Policy was previously constituted with the political discourse of civilization that maintained sharing similar geography and similar people, common history and the common future of the two states with the brotherhood of Turkey and Syria and with the brotherhood of Erdoğan and Assad whose countries had historical continuities coming from centuries' experience. Within this scope, the AK Party elites interpreted that Turkey and Syria had been 'the same family of nations in the region'.³⁷⁷ Accordingly, the AK Party's Turkey could be a model state to the governments of whole Middle East region, and a central state in the international context and desecuritized Syria Policy was the exemplification for both of them. However, at that time being, changes the regional context made re-consider and re-arrange the perception of Turkey's Syrian policy; because there had a still belief in the minds of the AK Party elites as Turkey should be insisting on being a central state in regional and international politics. For the sake of

³⁷⁴ Erdoğan Esad'ı uyardı, 2011, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2011/05/14/erdogan-esad-uyardi> (23 May 2018)

³⁷⁵ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.103

³⁷⁶ 800 bin Suriyeli'ye Hazırız, 2011, <http://www.haberturk.com/dunya/haber/638822-800-bin-suriyeliye-haziriz> (21 May 2018)

³⁷⁷ Kibaroglu, *What Went Wrong With the "Zero Problem with Neighbors Doctrine?",* pp. 85-93.

the central state value and also for being at the right side of history, the political discourse of the AK Party and Turkey's Syrian Policy began to transform and the value of model state that was exemplified in Syria was left. In these circumstances, some necessary means should be taken into consideration in promoting the AK Party's identity and in protecting some of the values that were previously created.

3.1.3 Where the threats come from

Buzan argues that threats and vulnerabilities could arise in many areas -military and non-military- but they must meet strictly defined criteria that distinguish them from the normal flow of politics to be classified as security issues.³⁷⁸ Under this light, reaching of Syria's protests to sectarian violence and to description of massacre later on was interpreted by the AK Party elites, as defined criteria of the normal politics and diplomacy should have suspended. Yet, it is important to note that the defined criterion of the AK Party's desecuritized politics was distinguished from normal politics not only from the violent acts of Assad, but also it came from historical description of security: threats to the core values. According to this, Davutoğlu explained that from now on it would be difficult for them to prioritize diplomatic commitment on Syria, after a six-hour long meeting with his Syrian counterpart Muallem in August 2011.³⁷⁹ The notion of political Islam and the Muslim identity behind the AK Party's civilizational discourse started to turn into a 'harsh populist'³⁸⁰ sense by emphasizing the differences of Assad's understanding of Muslim identity.

The AK Party elites' tone change in its civilizational discourse behind the Syrian Policy was coming from the threat feeling that coming to the acquired values in previous period in regional context. Accordingly, Turkey was perceived as the central state in the Middle East region that can be model to the states of the whole region. According to the perception of the prime advisor of Erdoğan, İbrahim Kalın, Turkey was acquired those values thanks to the AK Party elites:

³⁷⁸ Buzan, et. al, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p.8

³⁷⁹ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.105

³⁸⁰ Çınar, *Turkey's 'Western' or 'Muslim' identity and the AKP's civilizational discourse*, p.12

If the status quo is changing in the Middle East recently, this changings thanks to what Turkey formulated its foreign policy since the 7-8 years of AK Party period. As being the model state we have contributed to this changings and that led to creation of an unprecedented interest in the Arab world towards Turkey.³⁸¹

As Kalın told, in this period of the AK Party, TFP has turned its direction to the Middle East region, particularly to Syria, not only for promoting and protecting the acquired values of central and model states in the regional context; but also for the consolidation and creation of the AK Party's identity in Turkey's domestic context. Therefore, the threats that the AK Party perceived were not only coming from the regional context, but also from the domestic contexts. As Çınar argued, on the one hand, the AK Party has improved its regional standing from Syria to the Middle East region; on the other hand, the AK Party indirectly has expressed and proved its paradigmatic difference from Turkey's traditional Westernist political class and Western-oriented foreign policy design.³⁸² Within this scope, change in the political discourse of civilization has made in concert with the changes in the identity of conservative democracy.

In the domestic context, the political discourse of civilization, founded by Davutoğlu and promoted mostly by Erdoğan, served the mission of creating 'the other feeling' in the minds of Turkish society. Accordingly, "TFP had been the work of alienated Westernist elite" before the AK Party period,³⁸³ and those elites had not only believed in the possibility of successful civilization shift towards the West; but they had also lacked interest and knowledge about the native geography and culture that Turkish society lives.³⁸⁴ Thus, Davutoğlu and Erdoğan consolidated the other frequently on their 'poetical and mystical political discourses' in reference to the their civilizational interpretation³⁸⁵ and most of the time they did that by attacking traditional state elites of Turkey and were blaming them as the ones "who could not grasp Turkey's potentials stemming from its geographical and historical depths in the region,"³⁸⁶ and the critics towards the AK Party

³⁸¹ Cansu Çamlıbel, "Türkiye Orta Doğu'yu Etkiledi", *Hürriyet*, 8 May 2011, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/turkiye-ortadoguyu-etkiledi-17735010> (23 May 2018)

³⁸² Çınar, *Turkey's 'Western' or 'Muslim' identity and the AKP's civilizational discourse*, p. 12

³⁸³ Ibid

³⁸⁴ Birdal, *Davutoğlu Doktrini: Stratejik Özenin Populist İnşası*, p.137

³⁸⁵ For more about the notion of poetical discourse see Bora, *Cereyanlar: Türkiye'de Siyasi İdeolojiler*, p.482 and Bora, *Zamanın Kelimeleri: Yeni Türkiye'nin Siyasi Dili*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2018

³⁸⁶ Çınar, *Turkey's 'Western' or 'Muslim' identity and the AKP's civilizational discourse*, p. 12

as “drifting from democratic discourse”³⁸⁷ started to be increased following the changing civilizational discourse to Syria.

As a matter fact, the changings in the regional context specifically in Syria led the AK Party elites re-evaluate its political discourse in domestic and regional contexts. Using Hoph’s argument, the AK Party started its re-position towards the changes in regional context as well as its domestic context.

3.1.4 How the preservation of value can be achieved

The transformation of Turkey’s Syrian Policy from desecuritization had been in progress since the Syrian protests turned into violence during the year 2011. The AK Party initially used its pro-active diplomacy means with the suggestion of democratic reforms; therefore, the political discourse of the state elites was formed by those suggestions. For instance, with the beginning of the demonstrations in Syria, the first suggestion for democratic reforms came from the PM Erdoğan. Accordingly, Erdoğan told Assad in his Aleppo visit in February 2011:

As it understood, it is not possible to escape from this changing wave; this may come and find you too. It is not a wave that you can resist, so it is the time. What you need to do is to embrace and adopt the wave and govern it. Syrian people already liking you, if you could succeed it, you would be the leader of the Arab World. We can support you as much as we can.³⁸⁸

Besides that, the President Gül told the Syrian President “Assad, do not wait till it is too late” for the implementation of reforms and for the solution to on-going crisis,

I don't want to see you looking back one day and regretting that what you have done was too little and too late... Leading the change instead of being carried away by the winds of change will place (you) in a historical position³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷ Murat Yeşiltaş, “The New Era in Turkish Foreign Policy: Critiques and Challenges”, **Insight Turkey**, Vol. 16, No. 3, (Summer, 2014), p.27

³⁸⁸ Zengin, *Kavga: Arap Baharı'nda Türk Dış Politikası 2010-2013*, p.99

³⁸⁹ *Turkey's Gül Tells Assad: Don't Wait Till Too Late*, 2011, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/18687/World/Region/Turkeys-Gul-tells-Assad-Dont-wait-till-too-late.aspx> (21 May 2018)

Since March 2011 to August 2011, Davutoğlu visited Syria more than sixty times in order to maintain Turkey's desecuritized Syrian Policy by insisting on democratic reforms.³⁹⁰ For Davutoğlu, the dialogue between Turkey and Syria was the essence of the perfect relations. In this regard, he remarked in May 2011:

Our PM and the President have 'perfect' trust relations with Mr Assad. After lifting visa requirements, our societies started to know each other more closely, and they love each other more than before... Thereby, we want Syria to initiate a determined reform process without resulting any conflict or security problem. On the reform matter, we can take best shot for supporting.³⁹¹

Moreover, the AK Party's pro-active diplomacy resting on suggestions of democratic reforms was also followed by the series of meeting organizations in Turkey. The first of them organized in Istanbul in April 2011, the representatives of Syrian opposition who came from all different sects of Syria, including leftist, Kurdish people and Christians and also political Islamists who defined themselves as Alawite, Sunni, Arab and Turcoman, showed that all of the opposition solidified and mobilized over one idea: for the sake of their country, Assad, his government and his regime must go. However, another important thing that should have been noticed, there was not any solidification on the idea of how the alternative government should be established.³⁹² The Assad government reinterpreted this meeting by establishing dialogue channels through the meetings with the representatives of the opposition and further it declared that a new reform packages would be announced in May 2011, which could make all Islamist prisoners that named guilty for the political crimes free;³⁹³ however, the protesters in the Damascus was saying "No dialog, leave Assad".³⁹⁴

Furthermore, the AK Party hosted the second meeting in Antalya in June with the motto, changing Syria; according to the representatives, who mostly coming from Syrian business class and had connections with the MB,³⁹⁵ changing of Syria was urgent, the Assad government could not anymore be rehabilitated; in that sense, they argued that the

³⁹⁰ Kibaroglu, *What Went Wrong With the "Zero Problem with Neighbors Doctrine?",* p. 93

³⁹¹ Zengin, *Kavga: Arap Baharı'nda Türk Dış Politikası 2010-2013,* p.108

³⁹² Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, pp.72-73, Karabat, *Suriye Savaşları*, pp.137-144

³⁹³ Karabat, *Suriye Savaşları*, p.142

³⁹⁴ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, pp.79-80

³⁹⁵ Karabat, *Suriye Savaşları*, pp.137-144

President of US, Obama was also sharing the same perception with us and they stated “we demanded from international authorities to raise more awareness for leaving Assad our country”.³⁹⁶ However, there was an emerging disagreement for the nature of the changing Syria while some required revolutionary changes by taking extraordinary measures such as armaments of the opposition; some of them were insisting on evolutionary change.³⁹⁷ Those disagreements rushed up the ongoing differences between Arab and Kurdish representatives; in that sense, some Kurdish representatives including *Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat* – Democratic Union Party (PYD) started to boycott the organization.³⁹⁸

Moreover, AK Party’s pro-active diplomacy was pursued by the warning of economic sanctions to Syria;³⁹⁹ because according to the AK Party elites, Turkey’s efforts did not receive mutual enthusiasm from Syrian partners for the pursue of desecuritization.⁴⁰⁰ On this matter, Davutoğlu stated that Turkey would initiate an Arab League proposal for the imposition of economic sanctions to Syria whether Assad hesitated to listen to our suggestions for implementing democratic reforms.⁴⁰¹ On the other hand, as the protests turned into a civil war among different sects of the society in Syria, people started to escape from their country. The first Syrian refugee group came into Turkey, from *Hatay – Yayladağı* border checkpoint on April 29, 2011 with Turkish flag in their hands; 250 Syrians were shouting with Turkish slogan of “We want to live as much as Turks do”.⁴⁰² The number of Syrian refugees reached 10.000 at the end of 2011,⁴⁰³ and Turkey had to

³⁹⁶ *Antalya’da “Değişim İçin Suriye” Konferansı*, 2011, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/diger/253806/Antalya_da_Degisim_icin_Suriye_Konferansi_.html (24 May 2018)

³⁹⁷ There were lots of opposition groups mushrooming, I use the two mainstream of them: the Sunni Islamists which would be in relation to MB and PYD, for more about those different groups see Karabat, *Suriye Savaşları*, pp.137-81

³⁹⁸ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, pp.84-85

³⁹⁹ Zenonas Tziarras, “Turkey’s Syria Problem: A Talking Timeline of Events”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol.11, No. 3, (2012), pp.132-133

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid

⁴⁰¹ Marc Champion, “Turkey Threatens Syria with Sanctions”, *Wall Street Journal*, 25 November 2011, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970204630904577059813146005898> (21 May 2018)

⁴⁰² Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.101

⁴⁰³ Zengin, *Kavga: Arap Baharı’nda Türk Dış Politikası 2010-2013*, p.107

open refugee camps along the border cities. That formed one of the leading problems that Turkey should face in the following years.

The AK Party's non-military means, political and economic engagements and active diplomacy and handling the issues in normal politics during its previous period, required to be transformed into dealing with the issues in more extreme version politics; because changes in the regional context, specifically in Syria, might influence the identity and the values of AK Party that it was previously constructed. Until the end of 2011, according to the AK Party elites' perception, the Arab uprisings had provided Turkey some opportunities for promoting its central state value, as being "the leading advocate of the democracy in the Middle East".⁴⁰⁴ However, with the increasing number of the refugees, and a possible disintegration of Syrian territories with an emerging civil war and emergence of non-state actors along the Turkish-Syrian borders started to deterioration of political discourses and political constellations from the both sides.

For the Turkish side, Assad forces were killing almost 3.000 protesters and Assad was the main source of security transforming the protests into the civil war along 2011 year,⁴⁰⁵ at least three times more of this number escaped to Turkey till the end of the same year. Regarding this, Erdoğan blamed Assad in September 2011 for not sharing the casualties of the violence properly. Accordingly, he told:

I asked him (Assad) how many political prisoners there were. He told me 83 and said 'I can send you a list'. But I found out from various other sources that there are thousands of political prisoners...He says, 'I will lift the state of emergency', but he is not serious. He attacks *Latakia* from the sea. Freedom for political parties has not come about either.⁴⁰⁶

Under this light, as Erdoğan signaled cutting all normal politics ties, the AK Party's Turkey started to securitize its Syrian policy by using more threat discourse for taking

⁴⁰⁴ Şener Aktürk, "Turkey's Role in the Arab Spring and the Syrian Conflict", **Turkish Policy Quarterly**, Vol. 15, No. 4, (March, 2017), pp. 87-97.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid

⁴⁰⁶ Thomas Seibert, "Erdoğan Set to Cut All Turkey's Ties with Syria", **The National**, 27 September 2011, <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/erdogan-set-to-cut-all-turkey-s-ties-with-syria-1.383843> (23 May 2018)

extraordinary measurements and implementing some political constellations with military means, likewise armament of the Syrian opposition.⁴⁰⁷

For the Syrian side, Latakia was Assad's hometown; he was organizing some of its people towards Erdoğan's positioning by protesting Erdoğan's harsh political discourse. Assad further claimed that Erdoğan had some contributions to fuel up the increasing of violence by spreading unreal videos of the protestors being tortured and also by helping weaponing of them.⁴⁰⁸ The events taking place in *Jisr al-Shughur*,⁴⁰⁹ the northern east city of Syria that is only 20 km close to Turkey's border, showed that some of the protestors who attended the meeting of organizations of the opposition in Turkey and who were also in relation with the al-Qaeda and some Salafi groups were putting on weapons, killed 123 of the Syrian soldiers and polices and tortured their killed bodies.⁴¹⁰

Consequently, Turkey's Syrian Policy witnessed again a process of securitization by the AK Party elites similar to the traditional security actors of Turkey. The issues related to Syria transformed into dealing with by military means; because of not only the values that the AK Party acquired; but also the necessities of the regional context. Therefore, since 2012, Syria turned to be on the top of Turkey's political agenda regarding its national security considerations as it has been in the traditional understanding of security.

3.2 The Units of Securitization

The state can be seen as the main referent object of security for security analysis. As it mentioned before, the Turkish state and society has been transformed during ten years of the AK Party period regarding the changes in domestic, regional and international context. Therefore, as it is discussed in the second chapter; survival is about sovereignty for a state; but it is about identity for a nation.⁴¹¹ Within this scope, Turkey's Syrian Policy between 2012 to the midst of 2018 has been perceived by the AK Party elites as a matter of survival in both respect: the Syrian Civil War has been perceived as a source of survival problem that threatens Turkey's state sovereignty, and it has also been the source

⁴⁰⁷ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, pp.86-89

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, pp.86-89

⁴⁰⁹ For more about the course of this event see Karabat, *Suriye Savaşları*, pp.124-128

⁴¹⁰ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.90

⁴¹¹ Buzan, et. al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p.36

of threat against the identity of the AK Party. Whereas the first case is about the traditional understanding of security, the second is about the social constructivist interpretation of security. Therefore, it can be better understood by observing the units of securitization in order to analyze whether Turkey's Syrian Policy can be seen as a matter of sovereignty or identity, or both.

3.2.1 The Referent Object

The referent object of security has been mostly related with the history and geography of the Turkish state in accordance with the traditional understanding of security. Even though this understanding was re-interpreted by the AK Party elites in positive ways to enhance their identity and values between 2003-2011, the changing contexts forced the AK Party elites to accept traditional security actors' perception. While the history of Turkey has been still used for the culmination of the AK Party's identity and values in the changing contexts, the primary perception of the AK Party towards the Syrian Policy has been based on the political discourse around removal of Assad. To support it, negative sentiments like "killer", "murderer" and "massacrist" were mobilized, and discriminatory narratives about political Islam and Muslim identity such as "Alawite" and "Nusayris" were used starting from 2012. On the other hand, the geography of Turkey has become to be used as the main source of fear and threat, due to the reason of border violations in the Syrian Civil War. The fears and threats about Syria started to be defined and redefined over the last six years. Consequently, the securitization of Syria began to be normalized within the Turkish state society once again. The Turkish society witnessed some of security speech-acts of the AK Party elites during 2011. Yet, Erdoğan started the most concrete form of securitization of Syria on June 22, 2012, after Syrian air defense downed a Turkish Phantom reconnaissance jet. Accordingly, Erdoğan used similar words with Demirel's speech in 1998, stating:

I am underlining this, our jet was not downed in Syrian territorial waters; Syria downed our jet in international waters...I declare to the world very clearly, Turkey will take all necessary steps towards this unjust

event and Turkey will exercise its right towards the injustice according to the international laws in a time and place where Turkey will decide...⁴¹²

This speech can be interpreted as a historical breakthrough in Turkey-Syria relations for the last fourteen years. The reason is that, it cannot only be seen as transforming Syria from desecuritization to securitization, as the theory defines moving an issue from a situation to threat during the AK Party era, but it also indicates that Turkey needed to turn to accept traditional security actors' perception by the re-interpreting its geography. The understanding of geography, a value that could promote Turkey as a model and central state, had to be left and paved the way for turning to be a source of threat due to the violations. This forced the AK Party elites to reconsider geography in the meaning of the national security. In other words, the territorial violations against Turkey did not mean a direct threat towards the AK Party's identity, but it was a direct threat for Turkey's sovereignty as a nation state. In that sense, Erdoğan declared that 'rules of engagement' Turkish Armed Forces⁴¹³ changed:

...Our armed forces will evaluate every closing from Syria to Turkey borders as a military threat and will be seen as a military target, we warn Syrian regime not to make any mistake and not to test our patience.⁴¹⁴

In fact, Erdoğan proved that this securitization was also supported by the Turkish military. Actually, the Turkish military support to the AK Party's transformative Syria Policy had already begun at the end of 2011. Likewise, "Turkish jets were scrambled to intercept a Syrian chopper in September, firstly it was detected nearing the border and then the helicopter crossed the border of Hatay province, heading two kilometers deep into Turkey before it was shot down by the F-16s".⁴¹⁵ Furthermore, the Turkish military initiated the establishment of refugee camps in Turkey's Syrian border cities starting from 2012. In Hatay camp, some of the Syrian opposition groups that are composed of Syrian ex-

⁴¹² *Başbakan'dan Tarihi Suriye Kararı*, 2012, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/basbakandan-tarihi-suriye-karari-20847316> (27 May 2018)

⁴¹³ For more about this concept, see: İsmail Pamuk, "Angajman Kuralları: Tanımı, Kapsamı ve Uygulanması Üzerine Bir İnceleme", *Milletlerarası Hukuk ve Milletlerarası Özel Hukuk Bülteni*, Vol. 32, No. 2, (2012), pp. 105-145

⁴¹⁴ *Erdoğan: Türkiye'nin Gazabı Çok Şiddetlidir*, 2012, <http://www.posta.com.tr/erdogan-turkiyenin-gazabi-cok-siddetlidir-127106> (27 May 2018)

⁴¹⁵ *Turkey's Jet Shoot Down Syrian Chopper*, 2011, <https://warisboring.com/turkish-jets-shoot-down-syrian-chopper/> (27 May 2018)

military personal established the Free Syrian Army (*Özgür Suriye Ordusu*, FSA).⁴¹⁶ This group became known as the main military opposition organization that Turkey collaborates with and it was ‘helped’ by the Turkish military personnel.⁴¹⁷

As it can be seen, the AK Party has included the geography into the agenda of Turkey’s national security discourse, and Turkey’s political constellations followed. So, Turkey as a whole state turned in traditional understanding of security regarding the geography. On the other hand, the AK Party has still used the history for the survival of its Muslim identity. In the same speech on June 22, 2012, Erdoğan also mentioned:

...Syrian society is our brothers. I am greeting all of the Syrian people and calling out to my Syrian brothers and sisters, it is certain that the God’s help is soon. We are always with you. ‘Every kind of help’ will be given you until you will get around this bloody-minded dictator...⁴¹⁸

‘Every kind of help’ meant the support to the protestors, not only by establishing refugee camps and sheltering innocent Syrian people who have escaped from the war, but also by helping the mobilization of the Syrian opposition in military means. Accordingly, the downing of the Turkish jet was followed by the leaks of the international media. According to these news, Turkey was weaponizing the Syrian opposition, especially FSA, with the support US intelligence and financing of Saudi Arabia and Qatar.⁴¹⁹ These leaks were more efficient than the initiatives of Arab League and the United Nations (UN) to force international society to recognize the situation in Syria as civil war.

Regarding to this, UN Security Council met to discuss changing Syrian regime with an outside operation in February 2012. The aim was the declaration of no-fly zone as it was applied to Libya. Yet, it was rejected by Russia and China.⁴²⁰ Further, Syria sent a letter that blamed Turkey of helping Sunni-Muslim extremists and al-Qaeda linked rebels for

⁴¹⁶When clicking the information button in its website: “Contact Us: FREE SYRIAN ARMY, Mainbase: Hatay, Turkey” warning was corresponding, yet it no longer exist. For more see Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.108.

⁴¹⁷ Ceyda Karaaslan, “Fırarî Askerlerin Harçlığı Bizden”, *Sabah*, 19 February 2012, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2012/02/19/firar-eden-suriyeli-askerlere-tsk-yardimi> (27 May 2018)

⁴¹⁸ *Başbakan’dan Tarihi Suriye Kararı*, 2012, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/basbakandan-tarihi-suriye-karari-20847316> (27 May 2018)

⁴¹⁹Eric Schmitt, “C.I.A. Said to Aid in Steering Arms to Syrian Opposition”, *New York Times*, 21 June 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/21/world/middleeast/cia-said-to-aid-in-steering-arms-to-syrian-rebels.html> (27 May 2018)

⁴²⁰Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.143

increasing the chaos and killing innocent Syrians to the UN secretariat-general in September 2012.⁴²¹ The secretary of the Arab League, *Nebil el Arabi*, also argued that the increasing influence of al-Qaeda related groups among the Syrian opposition led to the diffusion of the opposition side, and claimed that even most of the protestors demanding democracy approximated to the Assad regime because of the fear of Sunni-Muslim extremism.⁴²²

To sum up, the securitization of TFP towards Syria that had taken place until the AK Party elites came into power started to be in progress again by using the geography of Turkey as the referent object of security. Thus, the AK Party elites began conceiving of Syria in fearful terms similar to the discourses and practices of traditional security actors. In that sense, it may not be wrong to argue that the new state elites of Turkey turned to be the new security actors of Turkey by implementing Syrian foreign policy and the security hand in hand.

3.2.2 The Securitizing Actor

The AK Party elites have transformed into Turkey's new security actors. Davutoğlu and mostly Erdoğan are the main securitizing actors for understanding Turkey's Syrian Policy since 2012. In that sense, they have been the actors who influence the dynamics of Turkey's Syrian Policy by performing the security speeches regarding the survival of Turkey's sovereignty. On the other hand, they have also been the agents of speaking security successfully on their own behalf in the meaning of the survival of the AK Party's identity. For the first, they have been using Syrian regime's violations of Turkish borders and re-perceived the geography as a source of security. For the latter, the Assad's brutality towards innocent people who shares similar identical roots with the AK Party, as the main threat that caused moving from the developments of normal politics to the security agenda.

⁴²¹ *Syria Accuses Turkey of Allowing Al-Qaida Transit*, 2013, <https://www.wenatcheeworld.com/news/2012/sep/16/syria-accuses-turkey-of-allowing-al-qaida-transit/> (27 May 2018)

⁴²² Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.149

First of all, the downing of the Turkish military jet was seen unacceptable and “Turkey described it ‘as an aggressive act’ violating all principles of good neighborhood and good offices and as ‘blatantly grave breach of international law’” in 2012.⁴²³ More importantly, this event started a process of series of harmful territorial violations to Turkey. In the beginning, five Turkish people were killed in *Şanlıurfa* for the reason of a mortar shell by Syrian regime forces in October 2012,⁴²⁴ and similar attacks occurred during the same month that led to several injuries.⁴²⁵ All of the attacks were received by the Turkish military means in accordance with the newly changed Turkey’s rules of engagement. Although there has been a growing concern among the Turkish society from the proliferation of those harmful events in media; from the AK Party side, there was no need to concern for Turkish society all necessary measure were taken. Accordingly, Davutoğlu stated that Turkey has been increasing security measures along the Syrian borders,⁴²⁶ and Erdoğan remarked that because of the Syrian regimes’ aggression, Turkish military might deploy forces in Syria, he stated:

...These aggressive acts on our territories are considered armed aggression. This has amounted to a situation posing serious risks and threats to our national security. It is now essential to act swiftly and take proper measures against the possible risks and threats on our territories. To this end, we hereby request authorization under article 92 of the constitution for a period of one year for the government to deploy and assign Turkish armed forces to foreign lands within the principles that shall be determined by the government upon the condition that the scope, size and timing of the deployment shall be determined by the government.⁴²⁷

As it can be understood, the entire Syrian regime acts towards Turkey was transformed to interpret as the threats to national security. In other words, using the military means to threats, which was thought as the best to deal with the issue, followed this state-centric interpretation. In this regard, Turkey demanded from NATO the deployment of Patriot

⁴²³ Cenap Çakmak, “Turkish-Syrian Relations in the Wake of the Syrian Conflict: Back to Securitization?”, **Cambridge Review of International Affairs**, Vol. 29, No. 2, (2016), p.14

⁴²⁴ Ibid, p.15

⁴²⁵ 2 *Yıllık İç Savaşın Kronolojisi*, 2013, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2-yillik-ic-savasin-kronolojisi/dunya/dunyadetay/07.01.2013/1652039/default.htm> (28 May 2018)

⁴²⁶ Çakmak, *Turkish-Syrian Relations in the Wake of the Syrian Conflict: Back to Securitization?*, p.16

⁴²⁷ Ibid, pp.16-17

defense system in *Malatya* province to prevent any possible Syrian airstrike.⁴²⁸ However, those developments did not solve the conflict, further it led to the intensification of it within Turkey territorial borders for the following years. Likewise, a car bomb attack came into existence in *Hatay - Cilvegözü* checkpoint and resulted in killing of fourteen Turkish citizens in February 2013.⁴²⁹ Then, another bomb attack took place in *Hatay's Reyhanlı* province which caused at least killing of hundred and injure of fifty Turkish citizens in May 2013.⁴³⁰ As a matter fact, the growing concerns among the Turkish society increased towards the Syria⁴³¹ as well as they increased towards the AK Party in domestic context.⁴³² While Davutoğlu interpreted the course of Reyhanlı event on the basis of Islamic sectarian notions, as he remarked that Reyhanlı attack was the part of Nusayris – Shiite zone where was attempted from the South Jordan to Hatay.⁴³³ Erdoğan conceived those events regarding the national security of Turkey. In these shadows, the securitization of Syria was intensified too, as Erdoğan prompted in October 2013:

Recent developments show that the Syrian regime has come to the point that they would rely on every kind of method and weaponry that is inconsistent with international norms. Turkey is vulnerable to the uncertainty and chaotic environment in Syria as well as any aggression that the regime could possibly perform. ... All these developments referred to above indicate that it is essential to take proper measures by virtue of our rights and entitlements under international law against all kinds of acts by Syria that pose a threat to our national security. Thus, I hereby request extension of the authorization granted [in October 2012] ... to preserve national security against possible threats, to protect Turkey's national interests ... and to develop swift and dynamic policies to avert any irreversible damage.⁴³⁴

Secondly, as the AK Party has stepping up the scope of the securitization of Turkey's Syrian Policy, there has been another emerging problem closing to Turkey's Syria

⁴²⁸ Ece Göksedef, "Patriot Kararı Ne Anlama Geliyor?", *Aljazeera Turk*, 17 Augst 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/patriot-karari-ne-anlama-geliyor> (28 May 2018)

⁴²⁹ *Cilvegözü Sınırkapısında Patlama: 13 Ölü*, 2013, <http://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/cilvegözü-sinir-kapisinda-patlama-13-olu-74390.html> (28 May 2018)

⁴³⁰ *Reyhanlı Saldırıları: 7 Soruda Olup Bitenler*, 2013, https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/05/130513_reyhanlida_ne_oldu (28 May 2018)

⁴³¹ Syrian regime refused and claim that we are not the ones to organize that kind of hainous attack

⁴³² *Telegraph: "Suriyelileri Öldürün: Türkiye'nin Öc İsteği"*, 2013, https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/05/130513_telegraph_reyhanli (28 May 2018)

⁴³³ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.251

⁴³⁴ Çakmak, *Turkish-Syrian Relations in the Wake of the Syrian Conflict: Back to Securitization?*, p.17

borders; the Kurdish issue. The Kurdish issue used to be the main factor the transformation of Turkey's Syrian Policy from securitization to desecuritization with the AK Party; however, the Kurdish issue retransformed into the securitization again with Assad's indirect support the empowerment of Syrian Kurds who were 'ironically' in the side Assad's opposition.⁴³⁵ Regarding this, "Assad spared Kurdish regions from Syria military excess, and then allow them to build separate autonomous enclaves along the Turkish borders".⁴³⁶ The Democratic Federation Northern Syria, *Rojava* (*Rojavaye Kurdistan* – Western Kurdistan) was the first de facto autonomous quasi-state form that established along the Turkey-Syrian borders with consisting of three self-governing regions: Afrin, Jazeera and Euphrates whose political side rooted in PYD and military side rooted in the *Yekineyen Parastina Gel* (People's Protection Unit – YPG) and Turkey perceived this form as a terrorist threat to its national security. Accordingly, Erdoğan remarked that it was not possible for us to permit a 'form of terror organization' in Northern Syria and to allow a source of threat for our country.⁴³⁷ In this light, Turkey's Syrian Policy turned out to prevent Kurdish settlements from gaining momentum and strengthening of YPG.⁴³⁸

Last but not least important threat for Turkey's geography has been expansionist activities of some Islamist extremists within Syria. As the Kurdish settlements were perceived as a threat to Turkey's national security, there has been another non-state actor emerging in the region, which could be defined as a source of security regarding Turkey's geography. The Islamist extremists, even the ones who were rejected by and excluded from the al-Qaeda, established a quasi-state by declaring Islamic Caliphate in 2014. Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) declared its autonomy after capturing Mosul from Iraqi government and aimed to territorial expansion in the region by challenging the emerging

⁴³⁵ Ayata, *Turkish Foreign Policy in a Changing Arab World: Rise and Fall of a Regional Actor?*, p. 103

⁴³⁶ Ibid

⁴³⁷ Erdoğan: Müsaade Etmeyiz, 2012, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/diger/359644/Erdogan_Musaade_etmeyiz_.html (29 May 2018)

⁴³⁸ Ruşen Çakır, "Ankara'nın hedefinde IŞİD mi PYD mi var?", 7 July 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0utpDa_-Q&list=PL92YMBE2Akjqyg42xun1LME5uaZ_Nxe-A (29 May 2018)

Kurdish enclaves in the region.⁴³⁹ Furthermore, the ISIL's threatening discourse towards the Western civilization and the ISIL's torturing videos expansion through the Internet raised awareness of the whole world to them as much as YPG/PYD.⁴⁴⁰ Although the US and the West were approaching this development as the main factor to conduct their Middle East policies to prevent ISIL from its domination in the Middle East region,⁴⁴¹ the AK Party did not indicate that much enthusiasm to call ISIL as a threatening development for Turkey's security.⁴⁴² In that sense, Davutoğlu argued in a TV channel:

...The ISIL may seem a radical and alike terrorist form; however, it has Turkish, Kurdish, Arab and Sunni supporters. 'The dislikes' in the Middle East region previously, gave it birth of it. If 'the anger accumulation' of years did not exist, the ISIL would not be created.⁴⁴³

Although Erdoğan hesitated to give political discourses as much as Davutoğlu regarding ISIL by saying that 'ISIL cannot be pale in comparison to others in the Middle East region' after ISIL's Mosul's capture,⁴⁴⁴ the critics towards the AK Party's Syrian policy have increased in the domestic context. Because, on the one hand the AK Party government was dealing with Kurdish issue in normal politics by establishing negotiation channels with the Kurdish leaders of PKK such as *Öcalan* and *Murat Karayılan*;⁴⁴⁵ on the other hand, the AK Party elites was still insisting on that PKK should have cut its ties with PYD. However, it was not a possible demand for the Kurdish side; because PYD has been receiving a direct support from PKK, PKK related leftists and even from Kurds in Turkey since the beginning.⁴⁴⁶ Furthermore, as the AK Party became self-assertive to deal with Kurdish issue in domestic and regional context differently; the ISIL started to initiate

⁴³⁹ Ruşen Çakır, "İŞİD, Irak Kürdistanı, PKK, ABD ve Türkiye Üzerine Beş Not", *Vatan*, 9 August 2014, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/rusen-cakir-666358-yazar-yazisi-isid-irak-kurdistan-pkk-turkiye-ve-abd-uzerine-bes-not/> (30 May 2018)

⁴⁴⁰ Ruşen Çakır, "İŞİD ve PKK: Bölgenin İki Yükselen Gücü Savaşıyor", *Vatan*, 15 August 2014, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/rusen-cakir-668366-yazar-yazisi-isid-ve-pkk-bolgenin-iki-yukselen-gucu-savasiyor/> (30 May 2018)

⁴⁴¹ Yazgan, *Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinin Suriye Sonbaharı: Ayrışan Değerler, Uzlaşmaz Çıkarlar ve Çakışan Politikalar*

⁴⁴² Ruşen Çakır, *Ankara'nın hedefinde İŞİD mi PYD mi var?*

⁴⁴³ Davutoğlu İŞİD için Öfkeli Çocuklar Dedi Mi?, 2016, <http://t24.com.tr/video/davutoglu-isid-icin-ofkeli-cocuklar-dedi-mi.4513> (30 May 2018)

⁴⁴⁴ Taştekin, *Suriye: Yıkıl Git, Diren Kal!*, p.220

⁴⁴⁵ Murat Karayılan, *Hasan Cemal'e Konuştu*, 2013, <http://www.ilkehaber.com/haber/murat-karayilan-hasan-cemal-konustu-25698.htm> (30 May 2018)

⁴⁴⁶ Ruşen Çakır, *Ankara'nın hedefinde İŞİD mi PYD mi var?*

terrorist activities in Turkey borders. While the first ISIL attacks came to the People's Democratic Party (*Halkların Demoktrasi Partisi* – HDP) official buildings in Adana, Mersin and Diyarbakır provinces, the harshest attack came into existence in July 2015, in *Şanlıurfa – Suruç* province. At the first time of the AK Party era, Turkey was facing a suicide bomb attack. According to Ruşen Çakır, what the ISIL aimed with this attack was pushing Kurdish movement of Turkey to the region and increasing the dimension of the ongoing conflict.⁴⁴⁷ In that sense, Çakır argued that the Kurdish people and critics of the AK Party were believed that attacks were related directly or indirectly with the Erdoğan government.⁴⁴⁸ In this light, the AK Party elites started to change its political discourse to “PYD is more dangerous than ISIL”,⁴⁴⁹ and Erdoğan remarked, “ISIL is bloody-minded terrorist organization”.⁴⁵⁰

3.2.3 The Existential Threat

As it is mentioned before, according to the securitization theory the existential threats are “...traditionally defined in terms of sovereignty, but sometimes also ideology of the state. Sovereignty can be existentially threatened by anything that questions recognition, legitimacy, or governing authority...”⁴⁵¹ In this regard, it can be argued that territorial violations of Assad regime was conceived as an existential threat to Turkey's sovereignty; thus, the AK Party as the leading figure of Turkey's state elites, turned out to be the security actors of Turkey by supporting their security speeches with their political constellations with the Turkish Parliament improvement of deployment of Turkey's Armed Forces in Syria. This kind of approach of the AK Party has an understandable manner, because anything related to the Turkey's state's sovereignty has been handled with the military means since its establishment. This method has been a concrete and consistent tradition in the TFP; that is why the AK Party did not receive any

⁴⁴⁷ Ruşen Çakır, “Suruç Katliamı ve Sonrası”, 21 July 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1QshzxPcRs&index=4&list=PL92YMBE2Akjgyg42xun1LME5uaZ_Nxe-A (30 May 2018)

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁴⁹ Ahmet Topal, Ebru Şengül and Hazal Ateş, “PYD DAES'ten Daha Tehlikeli”, *Sabah*, 19 June 2015, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2015/06/19/pyd-daesten-cok-daha-tehlikeli-1434663598> (30 May 2018)

⁴⁵⁰ Erdoğan IŞİD'e Terör Örgütü Dedi, 2014, <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2014/gundem/erdogan-isis-teror-orgutu-dedi-608801/> (30 May 2018)

⁴⁵¹ Buzan, et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p.22

kind of criticism and rather it gained the support of the Parliament for the securitization of Syria about this manner. In that sense, the securitization of Syria as in traditional understanding of security can be seen as ‘successful’ ‘by accepting the audiences’ in domestic context.⁴⁵²

On the other hand, the AK Party’s securitization of Turkey’s Syria Policy over the ideology or the values and the identity of the AK Party and relating the Syria where its previously constructed model and central state values at stake, with the notions of political Islam in its political discourse: remembering sectarian norms, contributing, organizing and weaponing the Syrian Sunni opposition led to the increase of criticism towards the AK Party’s securitization. In the domestic context, there has been the main disagreement the AK Party’s Islamist notions based political discourse whether the AK Party is implementing TFP towards the Middle East and Syria in order to strengthen its position in Turkish Politics. As Çınar argued, the civilization outlook behind the political discourse of the AK Party evolved into a phase “even more vehemently contrasting the West and the Islam as mutually exclusive categories.”⁴⁵³ In this regard, remembering the existential threat of Nusayris Assad regime in the foreign policy discourse led to centralize to political legitimacy and governing authority of Erdoğan more power in Turkish Politics and the goal of transforming Turkey’s power sharing Parliamentary based governing system to the power centralizing Presidential system in the hands of Erdoğan can prove that. For those reasons in the domestic contexts, Erdoğan took more governing authority in the foreign policy discourse and hesitated to show a concrete description of existential fear towards the non-state actors along the Syrian borders in the regional context.

While Erdoğan collaborated and cooperated indirectly with PYD/YPG towards ISIL during 2015 Shah Operation Euphrates, he was also criticizing US for supporting YPG and planning a United Kurdish state in the Northern Syria.⁴⁵⁴ Similar to this, there was

⁴⁵² Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p.44

⁴⁵³ Çınar, *Turkey’s ‘Western’ or ‘Muslim’ identity and the AKP’s civilizational discourse* , p.15

⁴⁵⁴ Amberin Zaman, “PYD Lideri Müslim: Türkiye’nin Sınırlarını En İyi Biz Koruruz”, *Diken*, 6 July 2015, <http://www.diken.com.tr/pyd-lideri-muslim-turkiyenin-sinirlarini-terorden-en-iyi-biz-koruruz/> (30 May 2018)

also preparation between Turkey and US who aimed a buffer zone plan towards ISIL,⁴⁵⁵ yet these preparations did not come into existence, which cancelled Operation Olive Grove that aimed US-Turkey military common operation for demilitarization of Northern Syria from ISIL.⁴⁵⁶ Furthermore, as Kurdish groups intensified in the region after taking *Kobani* and *Manbij* from ISIL capture, Erdoğan still demanded US to cut the political and economic ties with the Kurdish groups. Ironically, Turkey was still going on contacting with PYD leader Salah Muslim by demanding him to be distant from PKK as Muslim remarked that we suggested Turkey to control its borders with our collaboration.⁴⁵⁷ As a consequence, Erdoğan's political Islam discourse to the Assad Regime and uncertain political constellations towards ISIL and PKK might seem to serve the mission of the culmination of Erdoğan's legitimacy and governing authority; however, it might not be true that this could be seen as the best means for dealing with Syria. As Erdoğan did not prove Turkey's regional power by promoting Turkey as a central state value according to Russia, Putin entered to the regional context so as to deal with different sides of the Syrian War, Erdoğan and Assad.⁴⁵⁸ However, after Putin's entrance, Turkey downed Russian Warplane in November 2015, which could be seen as Turkey's insistence on being a central state in international context. According to Turkey side, the Warplane had crossed Syria's border and violated Turkey air space;⁴⁵⁹ whereas Russian side denied Turkey's claim.⁴⁶⁰ Regarding this, Putin remarked:

Due to the fact that Turkey's incumbent government's 'islamicize' policies, Atatürk may turn in his grave. Turkey hosted Syrian terrorists and

⁴⁵⁵ Gencer Özcan, "Rusya'nın Suriye Bunalımına Müdahalesi ve Türkiye" in Gencer Özcan, Evren Balta and Burç Beşgül (Ed.), **Kuşku ile Komşuluk**, İstanbul: İletişim, 2017, pp.279-281

⁴⁵⁶ For more, Deniz Zeyrek, "'Operation Olive Grove' Nasıl 'Fırat Kalkanı' Oldu?", *Hürriyet*, 26 January 2018, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/deniz-zeyrek/operation-olive-grove-nasil-firat-kalkani-oldu-40722017> (30 May 2018)

⁴⁵⁷ Zaman, *PYD Lideri Müslim: Türkiye'nin Sınırlarını En İyi Biz Koruruz*

⁴⁵⁸ Frida Ghittis, "In Syria's Complex War, Is Turkey's Erdoğan the Wiliest Player?", *World Politics Review*, 19 April 2018, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/24587/in-syria-s-complex-war-is-turkey-s-erdogan-the-wiliest-player> (30 May 2018)

⁴⁵⁹ *Rus Savaş Uçağı Sınırı İhlal Etti, Türk F-16'lar Düşürüldü*, 24 November 2015, <https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/rus-savas-ucagi-siniri-ihlal-etti-turk-f-16lar-dusurdu, mP74HrTmEe3cc8qXBIqrA> (30 May 2018)

⁴⁶⁰ *Turkey's Downing of Russian Warplane-What We Know*, 1 December 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34912581> (30 May 2018)

they received treatments in Turkish hospitals. Thus, it is not impossible but very difficult for us to reconcile Turkey with its current leaders.⁴⁶¹

In the course of this event, Erdoğan's Turkey has started to be more criticized from the domestic context to the international context. In the domestic context, Erdoğan's AK party has been blamed for increasing societal polarization among the Turkish society, whereas it has been received as being sectarian towards Syria in the regional context. With the downing of Russian military jet and conflicting with US on the engagement with non-state actors along the Turkey-Syria borders has also led the increase of criticisms against TFP as being overstretched. As all of the contexts observed from the political discourses and political constellations of the new securitizers, specifically Erdoğan's, indicates that as the uncertainty increased for the identification of existential threat, the critics against the securitizers increased. In reflection, this uncertainty on the identification of the existential threat has still continued in Turkish domestic and foreign policy implementation. As a matter of fact, the uncertainty on the existential threat of the securitizer makes the securitization of Turkey's Syrian Policy by implementing 'ad-hoc' policies for its short-term national security requirements in the period of 2012-2018,⁴⁶² whereas the same unit used to be the (de)securitizing actor that formed consistent and coherent framework for the whole region by desecuritizing of Turkey's Syrian Policy.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to understand the transformation of Turkey's Syria Policy during the AK Party era within the scope of the desecuritization approach and the securitization theory. In that sense, it analyzed the desecuritization and the securitization processes by the main questions and the units of the securitization theory.

In the first chapter, before analyzing main questions and the units of the securitization theory, the relation of the foreign policy with the security concept was elaborated by

⁴⁶¹ *Putin: Atatürk Mezarında Ters Dönmüştür*, 17 December 2015, https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/12/151217_putin_turkiye (30 May 2018)

⁴⁶² Yazgan, *Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinin Suriye Sonbaharı: Ayrışan Değerler, Uzlaşmaz Çıkarlar ve Çakışan Politikalar*

attaching necessary importance. Furthermore, the realists' and social constructivists' approaches to the security concept were taken into consideration in order to understand traditional and social constructivist understandings of security. Moreover, central themes of the CS and the security analysis were emphasized; finally, the theory of securitization and the desecuritization approach were evaluated in details and they were reframed by critiques and contributions since both of them were used during the analysis of desecuritization and securitization processes of Turkey's Syrian Policy during the AK Party era.

The second chapter was divided into two sections. In the first section, the study started to analyze the desecuritization process of the Turkey's Syrian Policy by answering the main questions of the desecuritization. By doing that, first the group behind the desecuritization was described; accordingly, the AK Party's definition for itself as a conservative democrat identity can be seen as the main group behind the desecuritization process. Then, the values of the group were defined; in this respect, it was argued that focusing the democracy value with the political norms of the EU and pursuing a pro-Western foreign policy in international context helped the AK Party maintain its conservative value and its Islam-sensitive identity in the domestic context; as a matter of fact, the re-interpretation of history and geography of Turkey helped consolidate non-threat perception in its political discourse based on the civilization towards the regional context. Thirdly, their threat perception was interpreted, and it is argued that there was no need to perceive any existential threat coming to Turkey according to the AK Party, rather the threatening understanding behind the TFP had been coming from only traditional security actors' logic on securitized history and geography; that is why the AK Party created such values as model and central state under its conservative democratic identity in its political discourse of civilization that maintained common futures of Turkey and Syria. Lastly, the diplomacy as the method that the group used for the preservation of its values was explained.

In the second section of the second chapter, the study continued to analyze the desecuritization process of the Turkey's Syrian Policy by focusing on the units of the desecuritization. The referent object of the desecuritization was given to geography and history of Turkey, and as it is argued, both of them were no longer source of security for

TFP in AK Party's political discourse until 2010s; rather, the AK Party interpreted both of them in order to preserve and promote its identity in domestic contexts and desecuritize TFP in regional and international context. Then, the AK Party elites, specifically Davutoğlu and Erdoğan, were determined as the main desecuritizing actors and a selection of their political discourses was analyzed. Finally, as it is argued, this section concluded with the assumption that there was no existential threat coming to Turkey for the AK Party from the international context, there was no threat beyond the constructions of traditional security actors of Turkey; thus, Turkey's Syrian Policy was desecuritized and formulated in terms of political and economic engagements by the AK Party elites.

The third chapter was also divided into two sections. Along the first section, the study analyzed the dramatic transformation of the Turkey's Syrian Policy from desecuritization to securitization initially by answering the main questions of the securitization. In that sense, the group behind the transformation process was re-described in reference to the changes in domestic, regional and international contexts. According to that, the values of the same group were redefined and as it is argued that the conservative democratic identity of the AK Party began to change its democratic value in international context and domestic contexts, which was also followed by promotion of conservative identity with the enhancement of the political Islam value in the political discourse of civilization. Secondly, the values of the group were re-defined; thus, the re-interpretation of history and geography was seen as the best political means for the AK Party to influence the Middle East region and to promote its political Islam value; yet, both of them turned into a source of security with the Arab uprisings closing to Syria. Then, the AK Party's threat perception was re-interpreted and as it argued, because the values that AK Party created in its previous period as model and central state with Syria were turning to challenge the survival of the AK Party not only in the regional context, but also in domestic and regional contexts; that is why the political discourse of civilization transformed into a process of securitization that highlighted differences of AK Party's Turkey and Syria's Assad regime. Finally, the process of securitization went through some stages for the preservation of the AK Party's values such as using diplomacy at first to suggest democratic reforms and warning of economic sanction; later, non-military means did not work, and thus dealing with the issues by securitization was preferred.

During the second section of the third chapter, the study proceeded to analyze the securitization process of the Turkey's Syrian Policy by focusing on the units of the securitization. The referent object of the securitization was given to geography of Turkey, whereas the history of Turkey was still used for the culmination of the AK Party's identity in domestic, regional and international contexts. As the Turkey's territorial borders were violated by the Syrian regime, the political discourse of the AK Party turned into securitization and Turkey's Syrian Policy transformed into dealing with the issues mainly by military means, similar to traditional understanding of Turkey's security. Secondly, Davutoğlu and Erdoğan were chosen as the securitizing actors again and in order to understand how the main desecuritizing actors of the AK Party elites in their previous period transformed into security actors, a selection of their political discourses were also analyzed. Thirdly, this section was concluded with the assumption that the existential threat of the Assad regime constructed for the securitization of Turkey's Syrian Policy in reference to the sovereignty of Turkey state, and that also were perceived as source of security for what the AK Party achieved for culmination of its values and identity in domestic, regional and international contexts. However as the contexts changed in a very short time, the AK Party's existential threat perception turned to be defined in uncertainty; as a result, that paved the way to conduct Turkey's Syrian Policy ad hoc in comparison to the consistent and coherent formulation it in the previous period.

To sum up, as it was analyzed, Turkey's Syrian Policy during the AK Party era can be understood from the desecuritization approach and the securitization theory. The main finding of this study is that, since Turkey's foreign and security policies are interconnected and intertwined with each other; the securitization theory is most suited analytical tool to understand the dramatic transformation in Turkey's Syria Policy.



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