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Ontological (In)securities in Turkey and Israel:
Unpacking the Nation-Building, Security Culture, and
Conflict Resolution Triangle

Umut Can Adısönmez

Abstract

This study explores two intertwined stages: a) the various processes contributing to Turkey's and Israel's historical development of national self-images and security cultures, b) how these conflictual dynamics and processes playing themselves out vis-à-vis two key conflict resolution initiatives taken in both countries. In order to study these stages, ontological security theory is applied to grasp: a) the impact of the psychological driving forces in the shaping of Turkish and Israeli national identities and security routines, b) and the leverages of these historically shaped notions on Turkey's and Israel's preferred conflict resolution agendas and mistrust perception towards the minorities, namely Kurds and Palestinians. In doing so, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis method is employed to deconstruct the Turkish and Israeli policymakers' contextual fixations of the key signs, e.g., *Turkishness* and *Israeliness*, through the legal frameworks, national security articles and military laws shaping the very rationale and logic behind their prevalent mistrust of the Other. Put otherwise, drawing on the ontological security perspective, this thesis initially investigates Turkey's and Israel's nation-building processes as well as experienced internal clashes contributing to the mistrust formation; and explore their interactions with the first conflict resolution attempts. Then, it examines Turkey's and Israel's relatively successful second conflict resolution plans through a trust-building framework incorporated into the ontological security lexicon, i.e. strategic communication. The purpose is to further identify the plans' shortcomings in order to proffer an alternative outlook for future peace projects.

Keywords: *ontological security theory, nation-building, security culture, mistrust formation, strategic communication, Turkey, Israel.*

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List of Abbreviations

AKP (Turkish Abbreviation of): Justice and Development Party

ICFI: International Committee of the Fourth International

ICG: International Crisis Group

IDF: Israeli Defence Forces

IMFA: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

IPC: Istanbul Policy Center

JMCC: Jerusalem Media and Communication Center

JVL: Jewish Virtual Library

NUBK: National Unity and Brotherhood Project (aka *Kurdish Opening*)

PKK (Kurdish Abbreviation of): Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê

PLO: Palestinian Liberation Organization

PSR: Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research

TBMM (Turkish Abbreviation of): Turkish Grand National Assembly

TMFA: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

TPM: Turkish Prime Ministry

List of Terms

Arab League: A regional organisation formed by Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon Saudi Arabia and Iraq in 1945. Today, it has more than twenty member states.

Committee of Wise People (in Turkish *Akil İnsanlar Komitesi*): A committee consisting of recognised opinion leaders which was commissioned during the Second Kurdish Opening in 2013 to listen to the society's complaints.

Entente States: A group of states (British Empire, France, Italy et al.) which fought against the Central Powers (Germany, Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary et al.) in the World War I (WWI).

Fedaayen: Palestinian guerrillas who were mostly expelled from their homeland in 1948. They later formed a basis of *Fatah* and *Hamas*.

Haganah: A Jewish paramilitary which was actively used between 1920-1948 and then transformed to IDF.

Kibbutz (Plural *Kibbutzim*): An agricultural community system which was introduced during the pre-Israeli state period and still maintains its significance in today's Israel. People who live in Kibbutzim have been called as *Kibbutznik*.

Kuva-yi Milliye (in English *Turkish Revolutionaries*): Locally organised paramilitaries which were actively used during *Milli Mücadele* (explained below). It was later transformed into the Turkish regular army.

Millet: In the Ottoman Empire, *Millet* was utilized as one's religion. Since the early Turkish Republican era, *Millet* has been referring to "nation", e.g. Türk Milleti = Turkish Nation.

Milli Mücadele (in English *Turkish War of Independence*): An umbrella term for the Turkish national resistance movement (1919-1923) combatted its external and internal rivals.

Palmah: A sub-section of *Haganah* which was particularly used to establish settlements and buffer zones in strategic places in Palestine.

Ümmet: It refers to the Islamic society encompassing all Muslims. As the Ottoman Empire was the prominent Muslim state, the Ottoman Caliphs had been perceived as the protectors of the *ümmet*.

Virtue Party (in Turkish *Refah Partisi*): It was established in 1983 and closed by the Turkey's constitutional court in 1998 based on their anti-secular vision. Cadets of the party, such as Turkey's current president Erdoğan, have later found AKP.

Zionism: A founding philosophy of Israel which was formulated by Theodor Herzl. It was supported by Jewish intellectuals and institutionalised through several bodies cooperated well while making of Israel.

All translations are made by the author throughout the thesis.

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To my father

Levent Adisönmez

A Colonel of Turkish Land Forces,
Who thought me how terrible war is
And always believed peace will come.

1. Introduction

1.1. Disposition

The development of new schools of thought on security studies since the end of the Cold War has attracted growing scholarly attention, heralding a new era in which experts discuss “broadening” the security agenda in the form of changing the referent objects of security and moving toward studying the discursive foundations of friend-enemy construction. Acknowledging the role of ethno-religious minorities in shaping the nation state’s security culture, it is no wonder that the concept of national identity has often explored in the scope of political clashes between the majority and the stereotyped Other. In contrast, states’ historical formation of domestic narratives and security routines, against the backdrop of their psychological engagements with conflict resolutions, has until recently attracted less attention. Moreover, as of writing this thesis, the growing scholarship has exclusively dealt with the translation of the national *self* into internal clashes within the context of narrow conflict resolution strategies — that merit the physical security. In comparison with this rather weak conflict resolution agenda, which is still under the influence of the orthodox security theories, the psychological linchpins of states, such as collective memory, fear and trust have often been overlooked. However, incorporating these main pillars into a conflict analysis offers a different and, I would say, novel approach in studying today’s Turkey and Israel. Both countries were founded on unsubstantial democratic backdrops with a deep-seated military tutelage and experienced devastating Independence Wars. Therefore, Turkey and Israel have shaped the siege mentality over time, which has pertinently formed the alarmist self-image becoming the major impetus of their security cultures. This attitude has firmly limited the reflexes of the Turkish and Israeli policymakers and methods they applied while settling the internal unrests

with the Kurdish and Palestinian communities. The ruling authorities, which are represented by Turkey's AKP and Israel's 25th and 28th governments, designed two conflict resolution strategies in order to reach a sustainable socio-political atmosphere. In doing so, they endeavoured to revise the two countries' traditional security cultures to the accommodative model. Nevertheless, the long-standing war model policy against the ethnic turmoils and lack of trust of the Other incapacitated their peace plans. This comparative study of Turkey and Israel has revealed many aspects that mistrust, as the major issue behind their conflict resolution breakdowns, is the common phenomenon not only among the two governments but also the societies involved in the peace processes. Through applying ontological security theory and Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis method, I first tease out the historical backdrop of this mistrust and explain the resolution failures of Turkey and Israel. I then evaluate their comparably effective second resolution attempts via alternative trust-building framework, strategic communication, which aims at providing roadmap to reconcile the negative emotional dynamics while assisting peaceful settlement.

1.2. Research Questions and Aim of the Thesis

As indicated above, my comparative research of Turkey and Israel principally focuses on two intertwined stages — investigating the formation of Turkish and Israeli national identities in light of their interactions with the first conflict resolution processes; then, more specifically evaluate their second resolution attempts through applying strategic communication framework. The findings serve the two-fold aim of this research. First, I attempt to analyse the early nation-building processes of both countries and their experienced internal clashes underpinning the state and societal levels of ontological security in terms of a *mistrust of the Other*. I compare the driving forces of these developments, being domestic narratives and legal frameworks, and examine their psychological impacts on the security culture formation. The findings of the comparative study are then used to explicate the

relationship between the routinized state behaviours and their leverages on the trust formation influencing the conflict resolution awareness of both societies. Second, I anticipate that this comparative research helps my thesis analyse how different social groups derive a sense of ontological (in)security from the constructions of national and group narratives. Considering the empirical findings, I argue that the underlying miscalculations of Turkey and Israel's first conflict resolution attempts were their *vague* structures, *abrupt* implementations and *top-down-orchestrated clandestine* natures which failed to reshape existing mistrust into a sustainable track. Based on these, I further explore their relatively successful second conflict resolution plans through trust-building framework incorporated into the ontological security lexicon which identifies the plans' shortcomings and delivers an alternative outlook for future attempts.

With regards to these aims, I define two research questions be answered within this thesis:

1. In which ways can the formation of Turkish and Israeli national identities and their translations into civil conflicts be investigated through an ontological security perspective?
2. Pertinently, how can strategic communication play a key role in settling the ontologically insecure atmosphere?

1.3. Thesis Structure

The thesis is structured into several chapters. After the introduction, I provide a theory chapter. Since this thesis is a predominantly *theory-driven research* and strives to introduce a new approach, strategic communication, to the ontological security literature, the theory chapter is relatively long compared to the following methodology part. Therefore, the theory chapter is divided into various subsections. Against this backdrop, I briefly discuss the concepts of security and conflict, assess the new security schools' potential contributions to my thesis and explain why

ontological security offers a suitable framework for this thesis. In the last subsection of the theory chapter, I propose my trust-building framework of strategic communication and highlight its relevance for the conflict resolution projects. On the grounds of this chapter, I offer the third chapter, which introduces my method and sources, explaining how this thesis utilises Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis method to deconstruct the Turkish and Israeli policymakers' contextual "fixations" of some keywords through the legal frameworks, national security articles and military laws. Based on my empirical findings, I open up my fourth and fifth chapters where I evaluate my case studies of Turkey and Israel by contemplating their nation-building processes, formations of security cultures and past conflict resolution attempts. These do not only analyse the relationship between the early state experiences and routines but also their interactions with the conflict resolution agendas. Then, the sixth and last chapter offers a concluding discussion that digests this comparative research of Turkey and Israel.

1.4 Relevance and Limitations

Last but not least, I feel obliged to underscore the relevant aspects and limitations of this thesis. To start with, this research is a timely and valid project since ontological security remains an uncharted framework albeit there being some scholarly works implementing the theory in reading the Turkish (Rumelili, 2014; Zarakol, 2010) and Israeli (Lupovici, 2011; 2015) socio-political developments. I explain the scope of these existing researches in the following theory section. Furthermore, analyses of Turkish and Israeli ontological security from a nation-building perspective are so far completely absent. While stressing this absence within the field, this thesis seeks to approach the collapsing peace initiatives of Turkey and Israel from a different angle. Although a limited number of human-centric researches are carried out on the Turkish (Rumelili, 2015; Başer and Çelik, 2014; Ulusoy, 2007; Aydinli and Ozcan, 2011) and Israeli (Peleg and Waxman, 2007; Cohen-Almagor, 2012; Bar-Siman-Tov, 2010; Lupovici, 2015) conflict

resolution agendas, there has been an ever-thickening literature relying on materially-motivated goals which have been sought to describe the failures as part of the physical security needs of Turkey and Israel. Therefore, psychological dynamics of the resolution processes are neglected. To conclude, this thesis takes up the notion of mistrust, which has not received sufficient attention in the ontological security literature and proposes a novel framework, being strategic communication.

For the limitation part, it should be mentioned that although this thesis benefits from some general concepts of the conflict resolution field such as peacebuilding and reconciliation, it primarily aims to contribute to the burgeoning ontological security literature. Therefore, empirically speaking, the primary and secondary data are employed accordingly. Other limitations are associated with the framework of ontological security in terms of the agent-structure dilemma that manifests itself in this work as the intertwined relationship between the state and society. As I explain in the theory part of this thesis, analysing a society level ontological security allows researchers to see its extension over a state level. Considering this assumption as my point of origin, I apply ontological security theory in two ways when dealing with my case studies. Thus, while doing this research, I have struggled with the agent-structure puzzle and have aimed to clarify their impacts on each other in several ways.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Security and Violent Conflicts

Why do civil conflicts occur? What are the driving forces behind them? Is achieving a permanent peace possible after a long-lasting conflict? How can routinized conflict policies and deeply entrenched mistrust of the Other which catalyse such conflicts be transformed? In theory and practice, governments, academia, and practitioners across the globe have been endeavouring to propose solutions to these challenging questions for decades. Although an immense amount of resources is being devoted to sustainable peace agendas, many long-lasting conflicts remain unsolved. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program report, (Harbom et al. 2006) more than 40 percent of the conflicts which reached peace agreements between 1989 and 2005 have returned to violent means within the next five years. The complexity of internal struggles makes the cases even more challenging in order to recognise the reasons behind why some peace processes have not achieved sustainable grounds, while others have albeit limited in numbers. As this thesis primarily seeks to understand the background of unsuccessful conflict resolution attempts of Turkey and Israel while looking at the importance of cognitive and emotional dynamics sustaining the intergroup violence, the theoretical dialogue focuses on the concept of security in the first place. Therefore, there is a need to ask how various thinkers and security schools approach conflict? It is, furthermore, significant to discuss their positions and potential contributions to conflict prevention agenda.

“Conflict precedes conflict resolution”, argues Wallensteen (2007, p. 13). Undeniably, there are valuable analyses regarding the origins of international and intergroup conflicts. On one hand, in the classic Eastern literature, Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*, Ibn Khaldun’s *Muqaddimah* and Yusuf Has Hacib’s *Kutadgu Bilig* can

be evaluated as the central pieces emphasising war strategies and survival during international conflicts. These thinkers did not only explain the nature of early conflicts but also proposed the preliminary versions of the concepts we now adopt to construe the structure of the *social*. For instance, Khaldun's understanding of "social conflict" and "cohesion" influenced many intellectuals such as Durkheim, Reinaud, and Montagne in the development stage of modern sociology (Hannoum, 2003). On the other hand, in the Western sphere, Clausewitz's *On War* and Machiavelli's *Dell'arte della guerra* anchored the premises of classical realism and what we interpret as traditional security in today's political science (POLS) and international relations (IR) scope.

2.2. Genesis of the Post-Cold War Security Schools

In contemporary academia, especially after the collapse of the bipolar world system in 1991, a concept of security and conventional attachments to the notion have started to be challenged and refined. This broad discussion has resulted in the formation of various security schools. Falling under this category, one group of academics calling themselves "critical theorists" point to the declining sovereignty of a state and switch the referent object of security from state to agent (human) and many sectors (Buzan and Hansen, 2009). Critical security theorists develop diverse perspectives, which have later been recognised as Paris, Third World, Aberystwyth, and Copenhagen Security Schools. Both considering the impact factors they have and this dissertation's research aim, contributions of the last two Schools to the security field are noteworthy.

To briefly state, the Aberystwyth School, which was established on the works of Booth (1991) and Jones (1995), incorporates the Frankfurt School's critical social theory into the security field. With the Frankfurt School tradition in mind, this new approach is founded on a human emancipatory security understanding. Copenhagen School of Security (CSS), however, forms its security outlook in a different way. Rather than relying on the agent-centric aim of the Aberystwyth School, the CSS is

motivated to examine (de)securitization processes of the diverse sectors such as environment, health, economy and etc. In so doing, the CSS concentrates on the security concept itself and its framing through speech act, linguistic usage, and media coverage. They situate the securitization theory at the heart of their analysis in surveying presentations of the cases and objects as existential threats that need to be addressed immediately (Buzan et al., 1998). Rejecting these two Schools' arguments, another group of academics, who are recognized as "traditional security scholars", claim that the field of security and conflict must be restricted to war, survival strategies and the control of hard power (Walt, 1991; Ayoob, 1991). Predictably, their disapproval towards human-based and broadening critical security schools locates them on a state-centric position in analysing the conflicts. This limitation, however, has rendered them to stick to the assumptions of the neo-realist school, which often promotes positivist instruments to justify empirical data. Therefore, one may logically claim that "seeing is believing" constitutes an ontological basis for traditional security scholars (Chalmers, 1999, p. 4).

There is no doubt that defining, limiting and reshaping the concept of security is a matter of puzzle "because no neutral definition is possible" (Smith, 2005, p. 27). Although a fixed definition is neither essential nor possible to describe the concept, I argue that security disputes and conflicts, which are violent extensions of these disagreements, can be classified as socio-psychological processes because conflicts are built on adverse emotional dynamics related to stereotyping and othering. This is the reason why fear and mistrust-driven conflicts, represented as the Turkey's Kurdish and Israel's Palestinian disagreements, cannot be directly reviewed through material examination or "seeing". Nonetheless, the abstract dimensions of these struggles such as religion, culture, ethnicity and being a community have been experienced and have impacted on how the confrontation between state and the Other has thus far divulged. Hence, traditional security scholars have limited contribution to this thesis because not only would the key concepts be established on a diametrically opposite foundation but also the research concerns. Critical security schools, however, can have a substantial influence on this work,

acknowledging the CSS's securitization theory and Aberystwyth School's normative guidance. On the one hand, the CSS can help my analysis to focus on the "othering policies" and desecuritization attempts of the conflicts during the transformation phases. On the other hand, my work can benefit from the emancipatory standpoint of the Aberystwyth School while surveying the revisions of security cultures from a war model to an accommodative one.

This research, however, delves into an often-neglected aspect of the ontological security of states and individuals during conflict resolutions — that is a mistrust formation. As one of the core questions of this thesis, a strategy of trust-building which help antagonistic parties reach a sustainable peace has received little attention compared to other notions being discussed within the ontological security literature. Instead, much more effort is allocated to the study of anxiety during conflict resolutions (Rumelili, 2015; Lupovici, 2015; Çelik, 2015). Despite the fact that these studies offer enlightening perspectives on the function of psychology towards violent conflicts, they are mostly limited in scope and exceedingly descriptive when addressing the narrow needs of society. It is, therefore, the assumption of this thesis that trust-building is a profoundly efficient mechanism in leading to peaceful resolutions after long-lasting conflicts, which should be further investigated and practised. Within the realm of the trust-building canvass, this research aims at filling the research gaps in the ontological security and conflict resolution fields by identifying, conceptualising and empirically engaging with a type of framework not previously dealt with— Strategic communication. Prior to introducing the proposed notion, an overarching theoretical framework of this thesis, ontological security, should be elaborated.

2.3. Why Ontological Security?

As declared above, the development of contending theories of international security studies since the end of the Cold War has triggered scholarly debates about "broadening" the security agenda and themes in terms of changing the referent

objects of security and studying the discursive and visual construction of the friend-enemy binary. With regard to the academic brainstorm, the psychological importance of the Other during the group and state construction processes has gained a ground (Campbell, 1999). In this respect, state identity is associated with a set of principles and routines that do not only reformulate state relations but also draw a line between a state and the Other (Buzan and Hansen, 2009), which can be echoed in diverse ways as I explore in the following chapters, e.g., *mistrustful* Other, *reactionist* Other, *antagonist* Other and etc. Following this, a new approach investigating states' motivations to protect their distinctive self-images is introduced to the security studies besides the physical understanding of the security:

...scholars routinely assume that states seek physical security, which upon close inspection is no less problematic than ontological security. Physical security-seeking assumes that states have something like 'bodies' that can die. What exactly is the state's body? Territory? True, like the body, the state's territory gives it a spatial boundary; but certain body parts are essential to human functioning — brain, heart, etc. — whereas it is not obvious that any particular piece of the state is similarly essential (Mitzen, 2006a, p. 351).

In line with Mitzen's assertion, most IR theories concede that states primarily seek to protect their physical security as *raison d'état* in achieving their goals (Waltz, 1979) because "unless men enjoy some measure of security against the threat of death...they are not able to devote energy or attention enough to other objects to be able to accomplish them" (Bull, 1977, p. 5). It is true that states need to ensure their physical existence, which is closely linked to their soil and borderlines defining it. Nonetheless, a number of IR theories also stress that states must have "human needs" beyond the basic urge of survival because the same approaches embrace some type of "humanly" expressions that function at a state level. Thus, the physical existence of states is not the only source of security they seek to protect. There is another source driving them to be consistent and stable, that is: ontological security (Huysmans, 1998; McSweeney, 1999; Kinnvall, 2004).

Coined by Laing (1960) and further developed by Giddens (1991), ontological security refers to "the need to experience oneself as a whole, the continuous person in time — as being rather than constantly changing — in order to realize a sense of

agency” (Mitzen, 2006a, p. 342). To put it differently, regardless of individuals or states, all beings can only exercise their agency if they form a stable way to exist because the very entities need to feel secure in who they are through experiencing their externalised identities and self-narratives (*ibid*). As a vital point, expressing the being or *self* requires a certain emotional environment which enables actors to systematically relate their means to ends. In the same manner as with individuals, states also strive to construct cognitively unique identities through establishing behavioural routines, which are interlocked with their self-narratives (Giddens, 1991). In doing so, they overcome “fundamental existential questions” (*ibid*, p. 47). To recapitulate, established routines facilitate agents to eradicate radical uncertainties challenging emotional and cognitive realms where actors practice their sense of agency, or in other words, their sense of unique identities.

In this respect, a question mark arises. How do they manage to establish their identities in relation to ontological security? There are three different arguments concentrating on the issue. First of all, Steele (2008) puts forward that a state’s ontological security is entrenched in its self-image, which is internally shaped. In other words, a state forms a self-identity by itself; then, engages its interstate relations by applying this imaginary profile. The second assumption, in comparison, offers a relational perspective. According to Mitzen (2006a), a state’s identity is not formed by itself but it is constructed through dynamic interactions with significant others. From this point of view, an identity of a state or a sense of *self* must only be constituted in light of the relationships established among varied actors. The third and last evaluation, which this thesis applies, while answering the ways in which the formation of Turkish and Israeli national identities are decoded into the conflict resolutions, suggests that internalized self-narratives can never be separated from a constructed relationship with the significant Other because a *self* is responsive to *newly formed* inter-personal affairs (Kinnvall, 2004).

While devising a state’s self-image, whether one reckons the intrinsic model or Kinnvall’s approach, it is a common understanding that the main purpose of a routinized behaviour is to utilise a stable identity. However, experiencing a stable

self requires an actor to show biographical continuity (Kinnvall and Mitzen, 2017). In this regard, an agent's actions are expected to either constantly imitate an existing identity or oppose it (Mitzen, 2006a). Because identity prompts behavioural patterns, its permanence over time is closely tied to being supported by an actor's practices. This is the reason that even detrimental and self-defeating relationships may provide a stable identity pattern in tracking ontological security (Rumelili, 2015). Thus, states may prefer to pursue ongoing conflicts rather than experiencing an unsettling condition of deep uncertainty since conflicts put the ontological security of parties in a threatening position (Mitzen, 2006a), a position that exposes existential questions concerning one's self-portrait vis-à-vis the Other (Williams, 2003).

Since routinized interactions also help agents stabilise their identities, one can safely contend that states may become attached to their routines and security practices regardless of their contents. Hence, long-lasting conflicts such as Indo-Pakistani, Turkish-Kurdish, and Israeli-Palestinian can be viewed as ontological security determinants of these states. In this way, states may uphold socio-political construction of historical fears that enable them to create a *network* distinguishing allies from opponents (Kinnvall, 2004). This network regulates a state's "moral standards" which are proposed as preconditions for the survival (Rumelili, 2015) — that is steadily integrated into routinized security apparatuses. In practice, these moral standards authorise security actors of states to settle violent conflicts by employing hard power while legitimising their exceptional actions. Therefore, by referring to the moral standards as a point of origin, I argue that the security actors of Turkey and Israel have played a crucial role in the routinisation of states' attitudes towards the internal conflicts.

Having that said, a unique self-portrait of states can be challenged in critical situations such as conflicts, wars and peace processes where states' stable identities and groups forming them may face potential changes (*ibid*). Although conflict resolution processes are intrinsically designed to mitigate security-oriented fears, these periods situate historically attached self-narratives and long-lasting habits of

states in an uncertain position because these transformation attempts may reveal ontological insecurity (*ibid*). As Kinnvall (2004, p. 746) argues it is an opposite situation of ontological security that is defined as a condition of general anxiety deriving from the interruption of habits and incapability to maintain a lucid narrative about “doing, acting, and being”. The sense of insecurity destabilises actors’ *trust relations* while underlining the potential threat which may come from the Other; therefore, force agents to pursue their tested practices. This perception, however, may pave the way for the “manipulation of this distrust by political actors, who act to re-channel this anxiety into specific and habituated fears” (Rumelili, 2015, pp. 7-8). Concomitantly, as part the above-mentioned agent-structure shift, there is an imperative question begging to be asked: will this thesis concentrate on the ontological security of states or groups forming them? For Krolkowski (2008) and Chernobrov (2016), observing ontological insecurities of political agencies and state-level actors are challenging because these bodies do not confront with the fundamental insecurity conditions such as identity crisis and death. Notwithstanding, one may be able to spot this phenomenon through the bottom-up analysis. According to Steele (2008), analysing a society level ontological insecurity allows researchers to identify its extension over a state. Institutionally speaking, this assumption can be best observed in investigating the formation of an *imagined community* through the nation-state apparatuses (Anderson, 2006). Thus, ontological security seeking is inherently a double-edged process. Considering these as a point of departure, this thesis applies ontological security theory in two ways when analysing the case studies. Firstly, the constructions of Turkish and Israeli ontological security are examined against the backdrop of their early nation-building processes. Secondly, the influence of established ontological security on the identity formation of various groups is investigated as a way to grasp why Turkish and Israeli ontological security negatively reacted against the conflict resolution attempts. This two-layer analysis supports my thesis to tease out in which ways the different ethnic groups derive their sense of ontological (in)security from the introduction of distinct national narratives that are shaped while addressing the physical needs of Turkey and Israel.

From a vantage point, in the Turkish and Israeli contexts, their early war traumas have formulated the detached mindset towards various ethno-religious identities that stimulated the two states pursuing the war model-driven security culture rather than implementing the population-centric approach. Although both countries have been trying to switch their attitudes since the early 1990s, their established state routines and security cultures made several conflict resolution attempts obsolete. As can be inferred from the arguments of Kinnvall (2004) and Rumelili (2015), Turkey and Israel stuck to their self-deteriorating but approved war model in solving the internal disputes rather than employing unproven methods. In this way, they also followed their historically shaped policy routines.

I contend that the early Turkish and Israeli governments considered insurgency movements as existential risks to their newly formed states' ontological security. Within this framework, any threatening ideologies such as the Kurdish and Palestinian nationalism were labelled as reactionist and authorised to be repressed by hard power. Accordingly, the Turkish and Israeli self-narratives have intentionally or unintentionally expelled these groups from their value systems because an identity building process is profoundly interrelated with the historically shaped inter-group affairs (Kinnvall, 2004). In time, this sentiment has laid the foundation of piercing state reflexes while managing the domestic quarrels.

2.3.1. Critics towards Ontological Security

Critically assessing a state's self-narrative attachment, Chernobrov (2016) argues that historically cultivated narratives of a majority vis-à-vis the Other often reflect a sense of superiority that may be recognised as a narcissistic self-defence mechanism. For Chernobrov, this puzzling structure may instinctively reproduce flawed dichotomies dividing the social sphere, for example, between virtuous-dishonest and progressive-unmodern labels (*ibid*). He further disputes this narcissistic segregation by the Hegelian ethos of "the value that I am or that I 'represent' (should) be the value desired by the other" that ontological security

scholars ought to reckon (*ibid*, p. 588). There are also deep disagreements among ontological security scholars on “whether the study of ontological security opens up or closes down the question of the subject in world politics” (Kinnvall and Mitzen, 2017, p. 6). In this vein, Rossdale (2015) criticises the above-mentioned ontological security-seeking argument of Kinnvall (2004). Rossdale claims that an ontologically insecure environment can only be transformed by radical political movements having potentials to forestall counterproductive imitations of tested but violent state routines, namely the national narratives (*ibid*). Taking an ethically-motivated research as a point of departure, Rossdale underlines the *continuity obscuration* of ontological security. He challenges the assumption of ontological security that some state routines replicate unproductive violent instruments and privileged position of the ruling class which lead to exclusion of the Other (*ibid*). Alternatively, Rossdale proposes that a binary understanding of *self*, incoherent relationships with the Other and contradictory self-routines underscoring the opacity of the *self* (he quotes a queer identity) can draw a pattern for the “creative moments” for resistance against the historically dominant and delimiting ontological security of states (*ibid*, p. 379). He argues that by challenging social norms, binary codes and fixated reference points attached to the group narratives, militarised routine of the state may eventually dissolve (*ibid*). One may argue that his recommendations to resist state practices through unfitting and inconsistent ontological routines are exemplary for the literature in order to see the theory’s limits on the state routines. Nevertheless, I claim that his conceptualization of the creative moments for resistance reaches on the impasse in two ways. Firstly, although there are numerous alternative ontological security forms that individuals may adopt to resist states’ “militarised” routines, there are rigid limits while implementing the creative routines at a state level. In terms of swiftness, for instance, it is hardly possible to transform states’ ontological security parameters at a rate of individuals — that one may evaluate the most salient restriction against the state level creative moments as the hundreds of years old bureaucratic structures imposing hierarchies on states which slow down the decision-making processes (Strange, 1998; Trondal, 2011). As a second rebuke, it should be mentioned that,

apart from his resisting strategy, Rossdale fails to introduce a *transformation agenda* against the violent state routine and harsh security culture and his article leaves unanswered a much-desired question — how can we modify unproductive state routines?

2.3.2. Transforming the Ontological Security Routines

Getting caught in counterproductive routines does not mean that a state cannot succeed to remodel its security culture and established mistrust after a long-lasting conflict. As a corollary of the hypothesis that agents cannot cope with all dangers at once, transformation attempts highly depend on the “removal of some existential questions from the table” (Mitzen, 2006b, p. 273). In doing so, as the first and foremost step, states need to create the basic trust system. Giddens (1991) refers to this system as a *cognitive cocoon* that helps actors reframe certain opinions and resolve existential questions shaped by internal conflicts. Primarily, the cocoon notion can be evaluated as a defence mechanism of an agent, which is formed as a consequence of early experiences (*ibid*). In other words, the mechanism reflects an early pattern of state socialisation in terms of policy routes and preferred security agenda. While reshaping the cognitive cocoon, states must “break down the rigid attachment to routines and create routines of interaction that permit parties to reveal aspirations and learn from interactions” (Mitzen, 2006a, p. 363).

As one may notice, interaction is outlined as a key concept to re-create an existing trust system which is informed with agents’ historically established security concerns and existential dilemmas. Nevertheless, how can a state planning to launch a conflict resolution model unfold this interaction? How can potential ontological insecurities of a transformation process be curtailed? According to Bar-Tal (2000), a long-lasting conflict can be understood as a psychological struggle that parties involved perceive as an intergroup zero-sum game. Needless to say, it should not mean that material bargaining during resolutions has no significance whatsoever; rather, it should be pushed onto the second place because only psycho-cultural

reconciliations alter societies' fixation on mistrustfulness of the Other (*ibid*). Relating this, Bar-Tal (2000) also argues that societal resistance to change and peace agreements may be observed during conflict resolution processes. However, avoiding an interaction with the Other may culminate in a deadlock while searching for a sustainable peace environment as studied by the *contact hypothesis* (Allport, 1958). This is the fact that only a limit number of peacebuilding initiatives reaching settled conditions between states and armed groups have survived because establishing a peace atmosphere needs to grasp *local dynamics* and everyday practices while creating mutual trust (Maoz, 2006). Therefore, I argue that while initiating conflict resolution processes with insurgency movements, intrastate groups must reach a *trust consensus* that enables states reshaping an existing cognitive cocoon. Having reached this consensus, states will realise that “security-seeking is a social practice” (Mitzen, 2006a, p. 341). Against this theoretical backdrop, I further claim that the strategic communication concept leans itself well to cooperate with the cognitive cocoon in establishing a *mutual understanding platform* for citizens through the interactive environment it provides. Set against this background, one of the central concerns of ontological security is to investigate the narratives we tell ourselves and make sense of the cognitive reasons why individuals, groups and states experience insecurity and existential anxiety in the emotional nexus (Kinnvall and Mitzen, 2017). This is the impetus that prior to embracing the significance of the two concepts within the scope of this thesis, addressing the below question better guides the audience in the following discussion: Although associated with different realms, can a *strategically* designed tool be able to collaborate with the *emotional* field in relation to ontological (in)security?

2.3.3. The Cognitive and Emotional Level Intersection

Based on the Freudian analyses within social psychology, until recently, there has been a disposition among scholars to treat cognitive and emotional spheres as two

discrete subjects (Kleef and Fischer, 2015). In this debate, while cognitive actions of agents have been associated with the *conscious* and *rational* performances such as strategic thinking, reasoning, and remembering, the emotional sphere has mostly correlated with *impulsive* and *uncontrollable* feelings. Starting with the book of Ortony et al. (1988), the current scholarship concerning behavioural routines challenge orthodox approaches on the parallel systems of cognition and emotion. Concordantly, there are pioneering outcomes which may help ontological security researchers explore the interdependence of emotions, behaviour, trust and decision-making process against the backdrop of political psychology. It is argued that *inherently* emotional impressions such as stereotypes and prejudices are embedded within the cognitive horizon that shape agents' behavioural routines (Kaiser and Major, 2004) that are the toe-hold of ontological (in)security. In other words, inconsistent with the previously attached impulsive and abrupt characteristics, emotions are revealed as capable factors which may be found at the cognitive level, i.e. "strategically" motivated activities. Therefore, as cognitive actions have come to be understood within the socio-emotional dimension their dependence on the emotional sphere are appropriately explored (Storbeck and Clore, 2007). In this line, Oatley et al. (2011, p. 1342) argue that the former distinction between the emotional and cognitive patterns emanated from the lack of empirical research; however, it is now proved that "the core of the cognition is central to emotion" because we *regulate* our emotions in order to fit the social life. This elucidates how emotions facilitate the creation of new routines and different survival strategies as an effective cognitive mechanism (Kleef et al., 2011; Hess and Fischer, 2013). Therefore, emotions are able to critically approach an ontologically insecure situation and strategically prepare an appropriate course of action. This does not only clarify that emotions are rationally motivated dynamic structures but also demonstrate how historical fear conditioning may impose trust issues (Storbeck and Clore, 2007). The preceding explanations also confirm the hypothesis of Covington and Omelich (1988) that since the conflict psychology and anxiety of change enact the same area of the brain, it is possible to analyse the inseparable relation between emotions and cognitions. Seen in this light, the concepts of strategic communication

and cognitive cocoon work coherently in order to shift the anfractuous ontological trajectories that the conflict climates impose on agents. This process, however, fundamentally intends to re-decode the emotional domain, or “e-motion”, as Planalp (2009, p. 6) sets forth: “if we want to move people, we must study e-motion because it is pathos combined with logos and ethos that change people, for good or for ill” (*ibid*). With this objective, in the following section, I introduce strategic communication as a framework whose partial employment in Turkey’s and Israel’s second conflict resolution attempts comparatively mitigated the majorities’ ontological insecurities. I believe that it may serve as a catalyst for *e-motion* and offer a practical outline for future resolutions, if fully applied.

2.4. Strategic Communication and Cognitive Cocoon

Energising and remobilizing a society towards a shared problem entail an engaged public space where dialogues are embodied around a designated issue and work collectively to resolve it (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). Collaborating with this vision, Atashi (2009) and Coser (1967) argue that peace requires not only a top-down approach but also a bottom-up political communication because a transition from violence to reconciliation is often founded on a sustainable ground when the Other participates in a dialogue process. However, both scholars also admit that there is a little known about the effective peace strategies reinforcing such societal dynamics (*ibid*). In order to fill this gap within the literature, I propose the strategic communication framework as a practical strategy which may play a key role in revitalising a public sphere and motivate a society to work together in modifying mistrust narratives while initiating a conflict resolution with the armed groups associated with the Other.

Mostly, while the strategy is known as architecting fast and effective methods in reaching pre-defined goals, communication is viewed as a transmitting process of a message through specific channels. Combining these two, strategic communication arises as a new public diplomacy tool in line with the paradigm

shift from the mechanistic monologue forms of communication to the complex and dialogical understanding (Klerk and Verlew, 2013). Its essence is to “communicating purposefully to advance its mission” (Hallahan et al., 2007, p. 4); therefore, the tool is designed to “increase stability and reduce uncertainty” (Klerk and Verlew, 2013, p. 364). In the emerging and converging communication field, strategic communication has most often been applied by private company studies concentrating on effective management, marketing and technical support (Hallahan et al., 2007). Nevertheless, Sandhu (2009) argues that as a young and promising discipline, strategic communication is applicable for explanatory methods and sub-branches deriving from neighbouring disciplines which may well adopt the concept within their theoretical scope. Verifying this, the concept is recently associated with the conflict communication domain through incorporating the public relations and political diplomacy under a single roof as a corollary of multifaceted conflicts, e.g. the Iraqi War and intertribal struggles in the sub-Saharan Africa (Hallahan et al., 2007; Pratt and Omenugha, 2014).

The major characteristic differentiating strategic communication from other traditional methods is its modernist approach. Such an approach makes the concept suitable not only to spreading policy routes of governments but also for interactively engaging them through bottom-up approaches (Seidl, 2007), such as participation of civil society and high profile locals. Therefore, strategic communication supports an asymmetrical dialogue process in which many diverse voices and viewpoints are encouraged to solve a common disagreement (Ströh, 2007). In this way, strategic communication uses an interactive model offering an opportunity to modify pre-established meanings, routines and narratives that rebuild shared reality through *dialogue* and the *free flow of communication* (Hallahan et al., 2007). According to Wang (2007), in doing so, strategic communication focuses on a single coordinated effort (e.g. mistrust transformation) in which all communication activities (e.g. civil society, locals, etc.) work together to create momentum. In a Habermasian way, the framework makes inroads for civil society to take a direct part in socio-political decision-making mechanism

(Habermas, 2006). Therefore, the overarching purpose of this process is to reach a common emotional and cognitive platform or *consensus-building* because strategic communication, in the first place, does not re-impose power structures but rather tries to assure a mutual understanding (Hallahan et al., 2007). In this sense, the notion should not be evaluated as a manipulative communication tool designed to distort existing opinions in the interest of states. Instead, it is essentially created as a trust-building framework between the groups because the technique offers a transparent, persistent, and effective dialogue process (Reding et al., 2010), which serves as a “common denominator” for the sides involved in this project (Tindall and Holtzhausen, 2011, p. 74).

In this respect, society can achieve a mutual understanding, mitigate fear-driven prejudices, and create a common future vision through a well-designed interaction agenda. The above interpretations allow this thesis to explore the links between civil society, communication, and the political agenda in order to understand emotional and cognitive level changes. Accordingly, building on ontological security, my purpose is to implement the framework to study the second conflict resolution attempts of Israel and Turkey through questioning a) What were the fulfilled strategic communication assertions that alleviated the ontological insecurities of the Israeli and Turkish majority in relative terms and energised their socio-political environment to modify mistrustful cognitive cocoon? b) What were the unfulfilled strategic communication assertions made Turkey and Israel unable to remove some existential questions from the table and modify their historically built antagonism and mistrust towards the Other?

For Giddens (1991), this antagonistic structure is closely related to the prejudice phenomenon originating from negative emotional experiences such as anger and hatred. He claims that prejudices that unavoidably impose mistrust emphasise the distinctive characteristics and behavioural routines of a group that are missing in the Other (*ibid*). This psychology, however, helps people maintain a stable identity and secure their unique self-values (*ibid*). Following this discussion, Giddens argues that a prejudice-driven identity formation can be modified in a healthy way

(*ibid*). In making that statement, it is fundamental to increase local ties and establish a clear information flow between the social groups that propagate trust while striking at the foundations of the negative relations (*ibid*). In the same manner, most conflict resolution researchers agree on the fact that the restoration of the majority-Other relation is an imperative emotional component of the sustainable peace agenda (Rothstein, 1999; Mendeloff, 2004). To establish common terrains between this section and an ontological security framework, I maintain that the above-mentioned agent-structure argument translates itself into the childhood era observations of Giddens. Hence, several IR scholars highlight that although states adopt antagonistic perceptions towards the Other as a result of their early clashes with them, the very states may also internally contest their existing behaviour in various ways (Huysmans, 1998; Lupovici, 2015). One can infer from this subsection that the implications of the cognitive cocoon and strategic communication approaches reach a critical crossroad in reading the circumstances that enable agents to modify their early mistrust formation. Thereby, their employment to the Turkish and Israeli conflict resolution contexts may investigate to what extent Turkey and Israel removed some existential questions from the table and managed to “break down the rigid attachment to (their) routines...and learn from interactions” (Mitzen, 2006a, p. 363).

To recapitulate, failure to change the mistrustful cognitive cocoon formation has shattered the peace plans of Turkey and Israel twice. On the one hand, their first resolution plans, represented as the 2009 Kurdish Opening and the 1993 Oslo I Accords (hereafter Oslo Accords) were *abruptly* started as *vague* initiatives. Apart from their *top-down* and *secretly* carried nature, which isolated NGOs and local voices, they culminated in prevalent ontological insecurity in both majorities as public opinion polls have later presented. On the other hand, their second attempts, defined as the 2nd Kurdish Opening 2013-2015 and the 2003-2004 Roadmap for Peace, fulfilled several premises of strategic communication whose utilisation increased the public support by 30% for Turkey and 12% for Israel. The problematic part of the latter attempts, however, were the ignored premises of the strategic

communication (e.g., Israel's top-down approach blocking local voices and Turkey's yet unclear peace formula), which I explain in the concluding sections of the fourth and fifth chapters.

As Mitzen argues:

Practitioners more than theorists have stressed public sphere oriented strategies for preventing and ending conflict, and no clear theoretical justification has been provided. Ontological security provides that justification, and a framework for further research (2006a, p. 363).

Set against this background, the assertions of strategic communication cooperate well with the ontological security theory that may help Israel and Turkey to settle their existing conflicts and enable them to acknowledge that mistrustful behaviours can be reshaped. Accordingly, one may raise a concern over the fact that to reformulate the state and social level mistrust, this thesis needs to grasp the reasoning behind these negative attitudes. It is, therefore, imperative to methodologically deconstruct the narratives and legal frameworks formulating the Turkish and Israeli national identities and observe their translations into civil conflicts. In this line, the ensuing chapter introduces an enlightening tool, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis method, which decodes the driving motives of the Turkish and Israeli domestic narratives and legal frameworks in order to allow ontological security theory to track their psychological impacts on the security culture development as well as reading how various groups derive a sense of ontological (in)security from the constructions of these narratives.

3. Method and Sources

3.1. Discourse Analysis

Do discourses have the ability to contour identity norms and state routines? Is *Israeliness* or *Turkishness* a constructed phenomenon? If so, how can we study the policymakers' narratives and legal statements creating these structures and "fixating" our identities? Almost all distinguished scholars who have tried to shed light on the above inquiries have come up with their own paradigms. Foucault (1995) for example argues, on the one hand, that discourse is a powerful tool which constructs and deconstructs *the truth*. In this way, he continues, discursive actions facilitate ruling parties (or the hegemon) to spread their devised knowledge and alter the preceding attachments to any concepts. On the other hand, different from Foucault's top-down understanding, Fairclough and Chouliaraki (1999) evaluate discourses as hybrid practices in which their meanings and purposes are always changing as a result of the dynamic social environment. As one may notice from this snapshot, perspectives on discourse analysis are wide-ranging. Concomitantly, each approach would offer unique methodological lenses in analysing the Turkish and Israeli national narratives and legal frameworks. Nevertheless, drawing on ontological security theory, I believe that their experienced state traumas, as embodied in harsh security cultures are well decoded through Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis method. Since it provides a flexible deconstruction technique, which is particularly useful when it comes to examining the identity creation and political content analysis, their methodological tool allows this research to critically engage with the very rationale and logic behind the mistrust formation.

3.2. Why Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Analysis

Method

The baseline of Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory, which also lends itself well to be applied as a methodological framework, is a composition of post-Marxist schools of thought and post-Saussurian linguistics that Laclau and Mouffe merge into the same theory as they strive to explore social structures (Rear and Jones, 2013). According to Laclau and Mouffe, all social actions can be perceived as discursive "signs" (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). These signs constitute the "syntactic galaxy", in which linguistic (speeches, articles, etc.) and non-linguistic practices (behaviours, emotional expressions, etc.) interrelate and engender a meaningful social sphere (Dabirimehr and Fatmi, 2014). Instead of relying on the Foucauldian methodology which analyses the discourse by deconstructing the entire text, their approach concentrates on the signs in explaining the direct relationship between the social sphere and power structures forming it (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). Therefore, for Laclau and Mouffe, discourse is not a consolidation of sentences but rather using a range of signs. These "signs acquire their meanings by being different from each other (e.g. a *Turk* sign is inclined to enjoy its unique identity by distinguishing itself from a *Kurd* sign in line with what Chernobrov argues above), but, in ongoing language use, we position the signs in different relations to one another so that they may acquire new meanings" (*ibid*, p. 25). Hence, each sign can only be understood if evaluated within their specific historical contexts because in this way one may spot their constructed meanings and translations into actions. In this regard, the Turkish and Israeli legal frameworks and behavioural performances are to-the-point examples for observing some key signs, such as *Jewishness*, the *Turkish nation*, the *promised land* and their impact on the nation-building projects. In this vein, if the socio-political environment is put under the sign microscope, one may also recognise that language is a *single fishing-net* constructed by the *knots*, namely words and performances (*ibid*, p. 26). At the centre of the fishing net, there is a *central signifier* which fixates the meanings of

the germane signifiers by categorically designating their boundaries (Laclau and Mouffe, 1992). For instance, there are specific signifiers, such as *Jewish ethnicity*, *Zionism* and the *Palestinian Other*, associated with the *Israeliness* central signifier, which ascribe a special meaning to these signs. When viewed from this perspective, Laclau and Mouffe are inspired by Foucault's understanding of power, meaning that political élites establish their influence through fabricating our social sphere point-by-point (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). Thus, the central concern behind Laclau and Mouffe's methodological model of the signs and central signifiers is to deconstruct the existing socio-political matrix and remark its historical modification. While deconstructing the matrix, this thesis grasps the hegemon's contextual usage of the *discursive*, *behavioural* signs and narratives in connection with their fixations through the public speeches, legal frameworks, national security articles and military laws. In the following phase, it teases out the fixated signifiers forming the self-defeating behavioural routines and mistrust; then motivates the strategic communication framework as a way to "resituate" these signifiers via a transparent dialogue process.

3.3. Sources

Prior to providing my sources, I need to clarify that this thesis, the analysis of the conflict resolution agenda of Turkey and Israel, is based on a comparative approach. I identify several variables — nation-building processes, security cultures and transitions attempts. Therefore, I select Turkey and Israel for the research in line with the "most alike nation-building and conflict resolution experiences with minorities in the Middle East". To be precise, there is no doubt that the governmental structures of two states are different from each other: Turkey is a "Civil state" but Israel is a "Jewish and Democratic state"; the Turkish population is largely Muslim while the Israeli society is Jewish; the former was built on the "six-century-long Ottoman Empire", heritage whereas the latter was once a "European minority" that is now the major ethno-religious group in Israel. The

study of the above-mentioned variables has uncovered noteworthy parallels between the two states that I further explain and use to depict the relationship of the early nation-building traumas and their impacts on the conflict resolution processes.

Therefore, this thesis carries an interdisciplinary and qualitative nature that qualifies the research and benefits from a variety of resources. To a considerable extent, this thesis utilises secondary English, Turkish and Hebrew sources; academic articles and books focused on Israel and Turkey. Besides, primary sources such as Turkish and Israeli national circulations reflecting nationwide opinions and central thoughts of the two societies; official documents like the Constitution of Turkey and the Israeli Declaration of Independence; national security articles as Israeli military laws; public statements and speeches of the political leaders are also employed. Last of all, this work makes use of reports which are released by the civil society actors as NGOs and policy associations as ICG and ICP; public surveys conducted by the recognised polling organisations as the JMCC, JVL, KONDA and PSR.

4. Case Study Analysis: Turkey

4.1. From Empire to the Nation

It is convenient to evaluate the transition of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire (hereafter occasionally referred to as “Empire”) into the secular nation-state, the Republic of Turkey, as the “progressive modernization process” (Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997, p. 3). The intellectual origins of this modern nation-state, however, go back to the mid-19th century. While attempting to restore its unproductive fiscal policies, the Empire appeared susceptible to the rapid rise of the nationalistic movement and; thus, it was seen as the “Sick Man of Europe”¹. Concerned with this tumultuous atmosphere, nationalist intellectuals criticised the Empire for not embracing the values of the Turkish community and failing to protect their rights as a “founder ethnicity”. For Namık Kemal, mastermind of Turkish nationalism, the absence of the “motherland” idea among Ottoman rulers who were interested in preserving the “dynasty” rather than the “nation”, was the primary cause of the Empire’s anfractuous trajectory (1873). Another thinker, Ömer Seyfettin (1977, p. 42), who later helped the Republican regime develop at Turkish identity, argued that “Ottomans hesitate to pronounce Turk, Turks, Turkishness and Turkey and they even get angry when someone voices these words”. Therefore, opposed to the Empire’s policies and seeking to underscore the preliminary versions of “Turkishness”, “Turkey” and “motherland” concepts, these intellectuals laid the politico-cultural foundations of the possible Turkish nation-state by “imagining the nation through printed media” (Akdeniz and Göker, 2011, p. 320).

In a future sign of the deteriorating situation, the WWI erupted. Debilitated by the aforesaid issues, the Empire could not defend its territories while deploying troops

¹ It refers to Ottomans’ financially and militarily weak era that is still utilized by Turkish policymakers to depict Europe’s longstanding perception.

on six fronts. At first, the Ottomans' were forced to sign an armistice in 1918 and then the Sevres Peace Treaty. I hereby explain the main articles of the treaty concerning the territorial partition. I, then, tease out the Articles 62 and 64 (designed to establish Kurdistan), which lays the foundation of Turkey's mistrustful cognitive cocoon, in the following security culture section.

According to the Articles 27, 36 and 94 of the Sevres Treaty (Başkent University, 2017), the Empire was to withdraw from all its territories and the remaining part (today's Turkey) was divided into eight parts among the *Entente States*. Rejecting the treaty, former Ottoman officer and founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and some high-ranking generals organised a local resistance; and transformed it into a full-scale war, known as *Milli Mücadele*. After three years of fighting against both external and internal rivals, *Milli Mücadele* accomplished its mission with the Loussane Peace Treaty in 1923 and the Republic of Turkey was established in the same year.

According to Alaranta (2014, p. 18), while constructing the Republic, Atatürk "rejected the long-lasting universal context of Islam and replaced it with nation". In line with inventors of the Turkish nationalism, Atatürk thought that instead of restoring the caliphate, a *territorially defined modern nation state* had to be formed. This was the primary purpose of the Kemalist Revolution that the constituent government would adopt a "secular justification for a national political community" (*ibid*), and fixate the meaning of *religion* by delineating its boundary as a *non-governmental* sign. The second purpose of this policy was to nurture a *national identity* through clearly defined physical frontiers showing *where Turks live* (Ülken, 1948). Prior to resituating the sign, nation (*millet*) was inferred to one's religion, argues Aktürk (2008). Rather than adhering to the *religious* signs attached to *millet*, Atatürk switched the preceding signs and introduced the idea of the Turkish Nation (*Türk Milleti*); sharing the common nation, language and culture; and live in a defined and unitary soil (Mumcu, 1983). Constitutionally speaking, the transition from the Ottomans' *ümmet* to the Republic's *millet* is ensured by Article 2 of 1924 Constitution which has ever since remained intact:

The Turkish State is republican, nationalist, populist, étatist, secular and revolutionary. Its official language is Turkish and its capital is the city of Ankara (Peasless, 1956, p. 404).

Three caveats merit attention insofar as the preceding Article is concerned. Firstly, the shifting of signs takes place in the form of transition from the Empire's *religious community* outlook to the *national* one. Secondly, the article introduces a territorial definition, that is a capital, instead of reinstalling the Empire's superficial border concept recognising all Muslims as its subject regardless of their origin. Thirdly and most importantly, Turkey describes itself as a nationalist entity that *millet* living in this Republic founds a core of the Turkish *nation*. It is based on this solid ideational ground that, *millet* is expected to speak *Turkish* if it is willing to instil and develop a sense of belonging. As described above, the discursive constructions of the nation-state are fundamentally designed to exercise *progressive modernization*. From this point of view, Turkish transformation bears striking similarities to Jacobins in French Revolution because Kemalism also aims to reform the society in light of the *intellectual* as well as *tangible* values of the West as Bozdoğan and Kasaba argue (1997). In this context, Atatürk proffered that the Empire's archaic structure was to be blamed for Turkey's *noncivilized* and *underdeveloped* condition:

We lived through pain because we did not understand the conditions of the world. Our thinking and our mentality will have to become *civilised*... Take a look at the entire Turkish and Islamic world. Because they failed to *adapt* to the conditions and rise, they found themselves in such a catastrophe and suffering (cited by Bozdaglioglu, 2003, p. 52, emphasis added).

Against this ideological backdrop, Atatürk tried to break down the old routines with the purpose of cultivating a novel *agency* for the Turkish nation. Nevertheless, since the signs of human progress of the Republic were fixated to a *new* and *modern Turkish identity*, Ottoman-associated traditional structures, state routines and beliefs such as *religious orders* and *backward communities* were distinguished as ontological insecurity sources against Turkey's "civil" self-image. It must, however, be borne in mind that although Atatürk rejected the racial attachments on the *millet* argument by framing it as the *upper identity* of the nation-state, by virtue

of the experienced internal conflicts during the nation-building process, Turkish administrations have acknowledged ethnically diverse groups and religious factions as counter-revolutionists. Put differently, these communities are categorised as existential rivals of Turkey's modernising identity pattern which strongly opposes the cultural conservatism of the former system. Hence, in the ensuing section, I explicate how experienced internal clashes with existential rivals form the mistrust-driven security culture which in turn becomes a challenging element of the unique Turkish *self*.

4.2. Shaping the Security Culture

For Deringil (1982), Turkey's reflexive security culture is primarily formed as a corollary of the regional tensions during the World War II (WWII). Although I admit that the WWII atmosphere had catapulted Turkey's alarmist security measures to a new height, Deringil's premise is limited if one delves into the origins of this behaviour. Accordingly, I claim that Ottoman officers who later became influential figures in the Turkish administrations had already begun routinizing the security culture of the forthcoming Republic while settling insurgencies in the 1920s. As shown above, the local resistance movement combatting the domestic and external adversaries was organised after the Sevres Treaty whose Article 62 obliged the Empire to accept a committee determining Kurdish territories which would later gain autonomy. Furthermore, if ever these autonomous entities wanted to secede, they would go to the League of Nations; and in the case of an agreement, "Mosul (has since then Iraqi territory) residents of Kurdistan would voluntarily join this independent Kurdish State without encountering any opposition from the *Entente States*" according to Article 64 (Başkent University, 2017, p. 22). Following the Sevres, *Kuva-yi Milliye*, locally organised Turkish paramilitaries, suppressed fourteen ethno-religious uprisings; and the heads of the revolts were

sentenced to death for *treason* by the *Independence Tribunals*². Among these, Koçgiri Rebellion, orchestrated by the British-backed Society for the Rise of Kurdistan and Milli Aşireti, French-backed Kurdish Rebellion, were the ones possessing huge grass-roots support. Having said this, one may ask as to whether or not *Kuva-yi Milliye* might have otherwise alleviated the hostilities by adopting a more restraint and compromising policy? On the one hand, with the full-scale war environment in mind, the question deserves a thorough investigation in another work. On the other hand, one may well observe the biographical continuity of this war-model paradigm after the WWI.

After overcoming the *Entente* occupation, the Republican regime experienced seven more ethno-religious upheavals (four of them had Kurdish backgrounds) sharing the same pattern with the preceding conflicts. Instead of examining all, it is imperative to tease out the Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925), which was supported by the British mandate regime in Iraq to create a buffer zone Omissi (1990); that, as I read it, has firmly fixated the pre-existing *modus operandi* of Turkish security apparatuses. Although it fundamentally emerged as a counter-revolutionist movement demanding the re-establishment of the caliphate (Feroz, 1993); the rebellion also carried nationalistic elements as their leaders distanced themselves from nonaligned Kurdish tribes by counter-framing them as *enemy soldiers* and *Turkish* (Aybars, 1995). Firstly, Atatürk had already established the basis of the modern nation state. Hence, existential enemies jeopardising the nation's fixated central signifiers, such as *secular* and *civil agency*, were to be countered and eliminated. Secondly, given that he and his political cadres had for several years served as military officers fighting against the *Entente States* and pre-republic revolts, one may reckon that their mistrust of the Other was deeply entrenched in and directly emanated from their physical and psychological war traumas before the Sheikh Said Rebellion. As the continuation of their tested and proved conflict resolution method, *Independence Tribunals*, which previously helped them defeat

² These courts were actively used as an enforcement mechanism against counter revolutionists hampering the *Milli Mücadele*.

the Other, the new legislation, *Law for the Maintenance of Public Order*, passed from the national assembly:

Organisations and *religious orders* supporting *reactionist* and *insurgent* movements...endangering the *Turkish social order* and peace; are thereupon authorised to be restrained by the Turkish government after President's confirmation. Herein, the government will hand over those acting against these actions to the *Independence Tribunals* (TBMM, 2017, emphasis added).

The Article cited above is crucially important. Not only does it reinforce Atatürk's *social order* signs in conjunction with the Western values and non-conservatism (*aka* civil and secular agency), but it also distinguishes people who would pose a threat to this social matrix. In line with Rumelili's moral standards argument (2015), Turkish modernization involves the implementation of a set of *survival preconditions* through taking necessary measures by security forces against reactionaries, namely *Kurdish nationalists* and *Sharia supporters*. Hence, one can argue that reactionist and insurgent movements are framed as not just physical security threats; but as major ontological insecurity sources. These almost routinized insurgency movements receiving foreign aid have formed a siege mentality, *Sevresphobia*, which is Turkey's perception that there are forces constantly seeking to separate and destroy them (Akçam, 2004), structures and agents alike. It thus explains why Turkey's national-self ostracises these communities from its *ethos* because the identity formation process is inextricably tied to the historically formed intergroup relations (Kinnvall, 2004).

Fuelled by the historical traumas stemming from Turkey's mistrust towards the *malicious intentions* of the Other and *duplicitous deeds* of *Sevresphobia*, Turkish administrations did not follow irredentist policies during the WWII and the Cold War but observed the neighbouring developments with an alert watchfulness. Against the background of unremitting physical and ontological insecurities, Turkey has largely been framed as a "security-oriented state" whose primary security policy is invariably three-fold: "ensuring the *survival* of the population; protecting *territorial integrity* and *preserving the basic identity* of a nation" (TMFA, 2017a, emphasize added) that parallel Turkey's "coherent narrative about

doing, acting, and being” (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 746) since the 1920s. Habitually, the fixation on the *mistrustful* Other imperilling Turkish-self persists as a determining factor behind the stable sense of agency and continuity for Turkey in its relations with the domestic actors given that the nation has since the mid-1980s been experiencing a multidimensional civil conflict against PKK. Although this security approach was intended to be reshaped by AKP, their attempts were futile in reshaping the society’s mistrustful cognitive cocoon. It is, therefore, crucial to gain insights about what PKK is in the first place and understand how significant a role it plays in the AKP’s transition agenda.

4.3. PKK, AKP, and the Transition

4.3.1. PKK

For Barkey and Fuller (1998), PKK emerged during the 1970s’ tempestuous political atmosphere that witnessed three military coups and stringent security policies against the Kurdish minority. Originally established as a Marxist-Leninist organization to “unify Turkey’s left for revolution”, PKK later abandoned its unifying approach because of the “Turkish lefts’ social chauvinism” (Jongerden and Akkaya, 2015, pp. 35-36); and rolled out an ethnic insurgency agenda whose primary goal was to achieve a “unified and independent Kurdish state” (Kurdipedia, 2017, p. 37). By applying hit-and-run tactics, PKK calculated the conventional army’s immobility and utilised Turkey’s weak presence in the country’s southeast. Complying with the tested legal ground³ to suppress opponents, Turkish security forces implemented the “Field Dominance” method by establishing outposts and controlling the Kurds’ social matrix to diminish the PKK’s influence. Culminated in these security measures, PKK failed to expand the resistance and declared several

³ Enacted by the 1982 Constitution, the *State of Emergency Law*, Article 122, may be enforced in case of rebellion and violence against the Turkish state (TPM, 2017). It has since then been practiced for several times.

ceasefires in the 1990s (1993, 1995 and 1998). After sixteen years of civil conflict, in 1999, Turkey captured and incarcerated Öcalan, the founding leader of PKK. Öcalan's capture was *supposed* to be a defining moment for all of Turkey but it did not pay off as expected.

Before we proceed ahead, it is imperative to highlight Çelik and Blum's (2007) three points to broaden our discussion. Firstly, it is the struggle of Kurds' politico-cultural rights and their exclusion from the value system. Secondly, it is about the issues surrounding reconciliation routes on how to ensure disarmament and reintegration. Thirdly and most significantly, it is the question of *how to settle the social tensions* between Turks and Kurds. Evaluating the Öcalan's ceasefire announcement as a promising step, the left-wing government designed a reform program to fulfil the first point and initiated Turkey's candidateship to be a European Union (EU) member. For Akdeniz and Göker (2011), this process led to a relaxation of the traditional nationalist policies that all governments had until then harmonised their domestic agenda with military means. In order to comply with the Copenhagen Criteria, Turkey has advanced its reconciliation agenda whose main purpose was to start a democratisation move to terminate the state of emergency in the southeast.

4.3.2. AKP

At such a promising time, AKP prevailed as a majority party in the 2002 elections. Consistent with the existing policy line, they continued enhancing Kurds' politico-cultural rights and addressed the second point: shifting from the war-model approach to adopting an accommodative one. In doing so, AKP met the EU conditionality while mitigating the long-held grievances of the *reactionist* Other. Given the AKP leadership's pro-Islamic orientations and background largely associated with the *Virtue Party*, one may contend that both AKP and Kurds found themselves on the common "victim" ground. For one thing, while being fixated as *ontological insecurity* signs against the *civil* and *secular* agency of Turkish

Republic, *Islamists* and *Kurds* had constitutionally been alienated from the national and governmental matrixes. Furthermore, the presence of a strong security culture, which had been authorised by the Republic's moral standards, had unsettled the existential foundations of both groups as well as their stable agencies and behavioral routines. Adopting a liberal but extremely populist discourse, AKP portrayed itself as *civilian democrats* whose primary aim was to shift Turkey's security-orientation (Altunışık and Martin, 2011). In doing so, AKP sought to address the Kurdish population's physical and ontological insecurities by virtue of adopting a range of conciliatory measures and unilateral solutions in line with Öcalan's demands. The accommodative measures include *inter alia* reforming hard-power protocols, easing military patrols quantity-wise, hastening the "Return to the Village and Rehabilitation Project", and subsidizing citizens who escaped from the conflict to resettle (TMFA, 2017b) and were tracked down until 2004 when PKK resumed its activities. The latter issue was regarded as a major source of contention and distrust between the two in the future conflict resolution processes.

Ünal (2015) argues that during its longest ceasefire period, PKK sought to convert itself into a non-violent body. However, Turkey's diplomatic efforts to classify them as a terrorist organisation forced the group to resort to violence. Bacik and Coskun (2011) claim that the resumption of violence was attributed to the AKP's rising popularity among Kurds, a worrisome trend that diluted the PKK's influence and position as the *Kurds' representative*. Although I concur with these scholars, I think there are several reasons that can best explain why PKK returned to force. Firstly, there had been no progress concerning Çelik and Blum's third point: *ameliorating the social tensions* between Turks and Kurds. Therefore, considering the fact that the PKK's strongholds, i.e. Kurdish towns, were shifting their political alliances as a result of the AKP's rising profile, the organization's resurgence could potentially make up for the ontological insecurity among the Kurds. Secondly, although the establishment of a unified Kurdistan or democratic autonomy has been the principal objective of the PKK and its leader Öcalan, the Iraqi Kurdistan's

territorial gains situated the former group in an ontological uncertainty. More to this, such territorial advances posed a significant challenge to and even questioned their thirty-years-long self-reinforcing militant routines against Turkey. As Kinnvall (2004) would claim, the *change potential* challenging the PKK members' long-attached self-narratives and behavioural routines resulted in ontological insecurity. Notwithstanding the rising violent activities, however, AKP clung to the conflict resolution processes and for that matter laid the foundations of the first of its kind, namely the *Kurdish Opening*.

4.3.3. First Opening

In 2005, then-prime minister Erdoğan remarked that the “Kurdish Issue is my own issue” (Hürriyet, 2005). In fact, by recognizing the case as a socio-political issue rather than framing it in military terms, Erdoğan not only re-situated the *Kurd* sign within the social matrix but also indicated a major shift from the traditional state routines. On the other side of the equation, however, there was a major agent-structure dilemma to account for. In the aftermath of the PKK's renewed activism, there was an exponential increase in terms of *mistrust of Other* and *fear of change* among the secular and nationalist factions (KONDA, 2006; IPC, 2014). In this context, ontologically insecure agents⁴, the Turkish majority, ascribed the growing mistrust to the historical *Sevresphobia* while AKP pragmatically pursued its Kurdish agenda, employing nationalistic discourse that yielded them 46% of the overall votes (50% votes of the Kurdish cities) in the 2007 elections. Consequently, it seems tenable to argue that Kurds felt ontologically secure as a result of the preceding democratization process despite the AKP's changing discourse and narratives. Seizing the opportunity in 2009, AKP abruptly initiated the *Kurdish*

⁴ Regardless of political orientation, several think-tanks and news agencies framed this case within the “external powers” framework: *Türk Solu* (2004); *Milli Gazete* (2005); *ICFI* (2006).

Opening designed to remove the *Othering emotion* and dissolve PKK (NUBP, 2010, pp. 12-13). According to AKP, the aim of the project was to:

Improve the *friendship bounds* between communities and *trust environment* in southeastern Turkey; break the *alienation* and the feeling of *Other* in face of the security forces; (*ibid*, p. 62) also imagine Turkey as the powerful democratic *Islamic country* (*ibid*, p. 64).

As an *e-motion* project, it strives to address Giddens' guidelines when modifying the negative cognitive cocoon (1991): breaking isolation, enhancing friendship bonds and ensuring trust. At the outset, while the project aims at mitigating fundamental ontological insecurities, it places secular *self* in an abstract position if not *non-governmental* by referring to Turkey's Islamic structure. As Mitzen (2006a) would probably concur, the deployment of the new discourse afforded AKP an opportunity to construct and disseminate an alternative *self* (Islamic identity) partly via resituating signs which had ever since the 1920s been identified as the nation's central signifiers. Optimistically approaching the process, one may, yet, claim that the overarching goal of this unifying mission is to include Kurds to Turkey's value system.

The failure of the project cited above was owed to the *abrupt* and *uncertain* structure of the resolution program, not to mention the *absence of dialogue* between groups arising from its top-down nature. Simply put, except for the AKP's rough information handout and shallow media framing, such as "Turkey to reach mutual platform" (NTV, 2009), and there had been no *information flow* regarding the process. Hence societal groups asking central questions, such as with whom AKP negotiates, what the future policy prescriptions and national strategies are? In the midst of the turbulent political settings, thirty-three PKK members dressed in traditional green militant uniforms entered Turkey through the Habur Border Gate. Although it was planned to be a token of disarmament, the group was saluted by fifty thousand people carrying the PKK flags. Due to the minor but extremely critical nuances accompanied by the AKP's unilateral top-down approach, while Kurds saw the group as a *positive asset* for achieving peace, the majority of the Turkish population evaluated the event as a PKK *victory* (KONDA, 2010). Drawing

on Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking's (2011) argument on the direct proportionality between linear traumas and ontological insecurity, one can posit that the peace process lost traction as a corollary of the opposition parties' as well as the media criticisms — even though the public support of the process stood at 51% in the beginning (KONDA, 2011). Reiterating the preceding arguments, it seems that the *hasty* introduction of a *top-down-designed equivocal* resolution plan, not to mention its *clandestine* implementation, was a key factor in AKP's broader miscalculation of the situation. Seen in this light, although AKP received the public approval, the circumstances gave rise to ontological insecurity instead of achieving an anticipated *e-motioning* and reshaping the mistrust-driven cognitive cocoon.

4.3.4. Second Opening

According to Çelik (2015), Turks' experienced trauma and fear as a direct result of the Habur incident contributed to a chronic increase in nationalistic tendencies. One may claim that since there had not been any psychological strategy to modify the cocoon, ontologically insecure agents fixated the incident on the question of "making peace with the *mistrustful* Other". Accordingly, they reutilized the nationalist discourse to secure their sense of agency. This mistrust, however, was also prevalent among Kurds as AKP disbanded the pro-Kurdish party and resorted to the traditional security culture.

Taking lessons from the first attempt, I argue that AKP's second *e-motion* process in 2013 compassed some key strategic communication assertions that assuaged the ontological insecurities of the Turkish majority in relative terms and energised their socio-political matrix to modify mistrustful cognitive cocoon:

- First of all, AKP strove to shift its monological *top-down* communication pattern to a *dialogical understanding* in order to "communicate purposefully to advance its mission" (Hallahan et. al, 2007, p. 4). Thus, the actors involved in the second resolution process were *diversified* as AKP,

PKK (represented as the “Kurdish side” in the *Oslo Records* which I elaborate below) and the pro-Kurdish party.

- Secondly, completion of this assertion helped to *increase stability* and *reduce uncertainty* since AKP and PKK (via the *mediation* of the pro-Kurdish party) strained to *work collectively* and *transmit their information flow*, if not leaked (T24, 2013a).
- Thirdly, AKP and PKK *barely* agreed on the peace formula as a token of re-switching routinized security-orientation. To *spread this policy route*, AKP commenced a parliamentary board seeking peaceful ways to settle the civil conflict (Official Gazette, 2013).
- Fourthly and most remarkably, AKP commissioned the pro-government *Akil İnsanlar Komitesi* (shortly *Akil İnsanlar*). *Akil İnsanlar*, which consisted of 63 famous people and recognised opinion leaders, ensured that many *diverse voices* and *viewpoints* towards the Kurdish issue were listened to and encouraged to *rebuild a shared reality*, a fixated socio-political matrix, through an asymmetrical dialogue platform. Ideally, *Akil İnsanlar*, therefore, would not only facilitate an *interactive bottom-up engagement* but also *decode* the society’s ontological insecurities to reach a *common emotional* and *cognitive platform* that would proliferate *trust* while diminishing the negative foundations of their cognitive cocoon formation (Giddens, 1991).

In light of the *Akil İnsanlar*’s regional reports acquired from both communities, one may safely claim that there are two-must-to-do points: a) we need to break the prejudices; b) other than PKK, society must be heeded (Hürriyet, 2013). On the one hand, it was a success of the reviewed communication channels that the society recognised their ontological insecurities and were seeking to change their mistrustful cognitive cocoon. On the other hand, however, there were several unfulfilled strategic communication assertions that could not help Turkey to remove some existential questions from the table, which stonewalled AKP to properly modify their historically-built antagonism and mistrust towards the Other:

- First of all, one may notice from the regional reports that people disapproved the AKP's PKK fixation. It was later revealed in the *Oslo Records* that AKP had *confidentially negotiated* and *designed both resolution processes* with PKK (CNN Türk, 2012). Under these circumstances, Turkish society could not track a *clear agenda* to break down its firm routines and reshape the pre-established meanings with the Other.
- The second missing assertion, which also contributed to increasing in mistrust, concerns the fixation of the *Kurd* and *PKK* signs to each other. According to the leaked *Oslo Records*, which has not been denied by AKP, prior to the first Opening process, the "Turkish side" was represented by a *few* national intelligence bureaucrats commissioned by AKP, while the "Kurdish side" relied on some PKK militants who agreed on nine articles (known as *Oslo Protocol*) that *had not only* set the course of the first Opening but also the *second Opening* as the *Akil İnsanlar*'s reports unfolded. AKP thus did not only reduce a ninety-years-long socio-political dilemma to the "dropping guns" criteria but also ignore the psycho-cultural *consensus-building*, which would re-situate the society's *mistrustful* Other sign.
- The third missing assertion of the *Oslo Protocol* deals with the two-fold representation issue: a) by accepting PKK as Kurds' *only* representative, AKP by-passed *de jure* the pro-Kurdish party which would help AKP to push the PKK-linked material bargaining to the second place and provide a sustainable platform to design a *stable* and *clear* resolution plan; b) there was a major civil society problem. Although AKP received the social grievances concerning the *mistrust* and *enlargement of the resolution actors*, they only utilised the pro-government *Akil İnsanlar* and had not promoted the *bottom-up approaches* as they did not *incorporate the local voices* and *civil society* into the *decision-making mechanism*. This attitude has not only blocked the involvement of the other actors to reach a *mutual understanding* but also demarcated traditionally arbiter institutions, e.g. Turkish Armed Forces.

In such a delicate resolution program in which only pro-government *Akil İnsanlar* was operational, both communities were suffering from the representation problem, PKK designated a *sin qua non* for the peace process while requesting Turkey to defend Kobane, a Kurdish town in Syria, which was under the ISIS threat at that time:

Opening and Kobane are two separable issues. If one breakdown, the other one also collapses (Radikal, 2014)

As one may foresee, accompanied with the tempestuous atmosphere triggering from the Arab Spring, this fixation had reached a deadlock and led to a political crisis of “Turkish soldiers to defend Kurds in Syria but to what end?”. After this crossway, two sides had lost their trust of each other, which had been cultivated after rugged processes; then started to give ultimatums and preconditions to each other for a peaceful solution. As this “preconditions war” or more of a shuttle diplomacy between Erdoğan and Öcalan collapsed, the process diminished accordingly.

In this attempt, public support for the peaceful resolution increased to 81% (KONDA 2013 report, cited by T24, 2013b) albeit only some claims (relatively stable and clear agenda, transmission of the information flow, spreading of policy routes and one-way initiated bottom-up social engagement) of the strategic communication were partly fulfilled by AKP. One may thus argue that in the case of full attachment to strategic communication, parties may remove existential questions from the table more efficiently and mitigate ontological insecurities while reshaping their mistrustful cognitive cocoon. Notwithstanding, the adverse impact of the missing assertions may delineate a roadmap for future resolution programs that the parties need to re-fixate the myriad of antagonistic symbols, conflict ethos and self-defeating behavioural routines which directly influence the agents’ emotional level. Therefore, strategic communication may deliver two lessons. Firstly, parties are obliged to grasp the basic elements of the historically-shaped antagonism and conflict psychology whose reconciliation is the hardest part of the peace processes and require more effort than ensuring physical security. Secondly, they must be aware of the fact that the conflict resolution is a *communication*

process, an essentially *emotional* one, not an *event*. Therefore, it requires a transparent and clear conflict resolution agenda, an engaged civil society motivated to incorporate both societies into the decision-making process, which is the key for to restoration of the majority-Other relation to collectively *rebuild shared reality*, and most significantly, socio-political commitment to reaching a common emotional and cognitive platform which would modify the mistrustful cognitive cocoon and create a momentum for *e-motion*. Otherwise, even if the second conflict resolution initiatives reach more public support than the previous attempts, parties may re-start to perceive each other as *untrustworthy* (ICG, 2014); and attach their politico-military agenda in line with their moral standards shaped in light of their tested and proved routines.

5. Case Study Analysis: Israel

5.1. From Ethno-religious Community to the Nation

According to Goren (2009), for centuries Jews were exposed to anti-Semitism and othering policies that transmission of these experiences between the generations has given rise to creation of an introvert Jewish *self*. Jewish socio-cultural matrix, in fact, has been carrying the heritage of isolated victim image⁵ as prominent Jewish holidays, *Purim* and *Channukah*, memorialise Jews' victorious revolts against ancient despots. The centuries-old routinized fear and existential insecurities that Jews have encountered have therefore contributed significantly to the formation of a mistrustful cognitive cocoon. The cocoon shaped up to be the dominant ontological security provider as recurrent dreads and insecurities compelled Jews to search for a safe haven through the Zionist movement. With this proposition in mind, I will in this part dwell on particular themes and discussions around the construction of *Jewishness*, the central signifier of the Israeli identity, followed by a thorough examination of Zionism and its role in the making of the Israeli nation.

To begin with, it is safe to posit that Jews acquire their cognitively unique *self* through many cultural-Biblical references such as *Peter* 2: 9 and *Exodus* 19: 6. From among these numerous references, it seems that *Genesis* 12: 1-2 serves as a key passage crafting Jewishness:

The Lord had said to Abram, “Go...to the *land* I will show you (today’s Israel)”; “I will make you into a *great nation*, and I will *bless* you; I will make your name *great*...” (Biblegateway, 2017, emphasis added).

This discursively formulated sense of *God’s chosen tribe* agency interlocks Jewish ethnicity with religion. Thus, in contradistinction to the classic understanding of

⁵ Israeli policymakers still refer to this image.

ethnicity, Jewishness is founded on two overarching signs: *religion* and *ethnic belonging*. Against this backdrop, during the 1800s', the Jewish community was tried to be homogenised within the European prototypes of the modern nation-states. These sets of circumstances and contributing factors, which later played a key role in the construction of the "Jewish question"⁶, motivated Jews to seek out ways of survival and security. Strictly speaking, they had two options: either to be assimilated by the nation-states, which would protect their physical existence but annihilate their behavioural routines of a Jewish *self*; or to reject anti-Semitic policies and establish their own "legally secured homeland in Palestine" (JVL, 2017a). This re-establishing of the *promised land* project, however, was proposed by Zionists who would seek to build a *secular* nation-state encompassing *all* Jews. One may claim that the Zionist overture was unprecedented in the Jewish history primarily because the *religious* sign of the Jewish *self* was re-situated and assigned a peripheral space in the construction of the imagined nation. Although many traditionalist Orthodox Jews disputed the Zionists' radical Jewishness vision, the movement was later on regarded as a beacon of survival during the catastrophic WWI period.

By means of lobbying activities in the 1910s, the establishment of a British-protected Jewish "national home" in Palestine was guaranteed through the *Balfour Declaration* (1917). While the long-awaited *promised land* was in the making, there was a vital strategy to be pursued: "restore the country (Palestine) without a people to the people (Jews) without a country" (Zangwill, 1901, p. 15). According to this view, it can be inferred that the underlying plan was to colonise Palestine. Nevertheless, a closer look at the pre-Israel developments reveals that the plan required a two-fold agenda: 1) formation of a new Jewish *self*, 2) ensuring its existence. As for the first objective, the new secular *self* would emerge by dint of purveying the apparatuses and accoutrements needed for creating a nation-state. Hence, Zionists established the national legislature, later to be known as the Israeli

⁶ In "On the Jewish Question", Marx argued that it emerged due to the capitalist expansion.

Parliament; arranged multi-party elections, and authorised courts under the *British Common Law*. Add to these paramount initiatives the revival of the ancient Hebrew language founded upon the Cartesian principle of the new Jewish *self* in light of the fact that the language was almost vanished until the Jewish autonomy came to being. Meanwhile, the aggression between the Palestinian and Jewish communities, which had been experienced since the 1920s, aggravated by the 1936–39 Arab Revolt in Palestine. Under the circumstances, a paramilitary force, better known as *Haganah*, was created in an attempt to fulfill the second objective. *Haganah* members later on became high-ranking Israeli policymakers, namely Ben-Gurion, founder of Israel, and Dayan, IDF's chief of staff among others, whose personal and direct experience of war traumas contributed to a strong security culture which I will explain in the following section.

The year 1947 was the turning point for the *promised land*. Upon the British request, the United Nations (UN) proposed the famous *Partition Plan* of Palestine between Jews and Palestinians. Although the Jewish side accepted the plan, Palestinian side and the *Arab League* supporting their *brothers* (Khalidi, 2001) rejected this territorial division. The disagreement between the two camps transformed an ongoing civil war into an all-out war between Arabs and Israelis in 1948 which resulted in a Jewish victory and the *Declaration of the Establishment of State of Israel*:

Palestine was the birthplace of the Jewish people...generations had been working to re-establish their ancient homeland. We appeal — in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months — to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State...We appeal to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Israel in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding... the redemption of Israel (IMFA, 2017a, the original text written in italics).

Many points merit attention as the declaration cited above is concerned and contextualised within the scope of Zionist doctrines. To begin with, this centuries-old remoteness of Jews from their homeland, Israel, is inextricably entrenched in the cultural continuity of Judaism. Acknowledging the nation-building apparatuses,

one can argue that this tradition-bound *religious* sign of *Jewishness* is to a great extent intertwined with the newly introduced national identity (Israeliness). As Schweid (2002, p. 84) argues, Israel, on the one hand, can be viewed as “the state of the Jews”, and, on the other hand, “a Jewish state” — that commits itself to the Zionist principle of encircling *all* Jews under the legally secured homeland. What can be inferred here is that these structures and dynamics are challenging because Palestinian-Israeli relations are conceived in a volatile and flimsy atmosphere wherein their religious and national identities are diametrically opposed. This might be the core reason that although the Israeli majority demonstrates a willingness to live with the Other, they recognise the Other as Arabs, not *Palestinians*. Hence, the state of Israel does not only fixate *Palestinians*, who previously inhabited the Israel, out of the newly formed state’s value system but also refuse their assistance while re-making the *promised land*. Countering the denial of the Other’s existence, Grosbard (2003) highlights the national euphoria both experienced but only one camp could catapult this emotion to a high altitude after the *War of Independence*. His argument is enlightening to grasp the reasoning behind how the fixation of the *Palestinian* Other is directly connected with the twenty-years-long ideological fight between Palestinian nationalists and Zionists who were constantly trying to limit each other’s socio-political matrix. In light of the aforesaid arguments, I will in the proceeding security culture segment try to further investigate the several driving forces causing this distancing between Israelis and Palestinians as well as the decade-long conflicts.

5.2. Shaping the Security Culture

It is quite axiomatic that the Jewish population was subject to physical and ontological insecurities for centuries as evidenced by the traumas of the Holocaust, which has had an enduring influence on the political decision-making processes in Israel. This factor has contributed to Israel’s feelings of insecurity which since 1948 has dominated the socio-political environment and the resultant chronic insecurity

syndrome among Israelis (Bar-Tal et al., 2009). Hence the claim here is that this routinized insecurity, spurred by the early conflicts and in opposition to the *Palestinian Other*, has become an integral component of the mistrustful cognitive cocoon. Furthermore, it has been a major challenge to ontological security that underpins Israel's alarmist security culture and motivates it to adhere to its tested rebellion-settling routines. Based on Laclau and Mouffe's premise according to which Israeli behavioural and policy practices, irrespective of whether or not they are linguistically implemented, help knot-by-knot construction of the Israeli socio-political matrix (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002), the following section is set to deconstruct the routinization of the Israeli security culture through *behavioural signs*.

Compared to Turkey's *Milli Mücadele* movement, which was largely associated with and informed by the former Ottoman officers' imperial army experiences, Jews had not served as combatants or formed resistance groups until the 1920s. However, as briefly stated above, they needed to defy and counter the internal and external opponents. Concomitantly, they created local paramilitary groups such as *Haganah* and *Palmah* prior to the establishment of the state of Israel. These groups struggled for the existence of the new Jewish *self* by deploying hard power against anti-Jewish riots and Palestinian guerrilla activities. The very defence organisations were formed in such ways to protect *kibbutzim*, agricultural communities where the majority of Jews lived before Israel was found, while receiving voluntary troops from these communities (Haganah, Vol. 8). This self-promoting system was devised at the time of escalation of Palestinian-Jewish conflict during the 1930s as a result of which *kibbutzim* was molded into a politico-military structure. This would mean that *kibbutzniks*, people who live in these communities, were expected to participate in the *Haganah's* revised security strategy sought to provide "complete independence of any non-Jewish factor" (*ibid*, p. 202). For that matter, adjacent *kibbutzim* were combined into several monoblocs and their living matrixes were isolated by concrete walls. For Allon (1971), *Palmah* commander, this strategy situated *kibbutzim* at the apex of Jewish socio-political matrix in which

they served as local bulwarks against Palestinian incursions while promoting the Jewish colonisation project. Allon's claim, in fact, proved itself as almost entire *kibbutzim* supported paramilitary forces in the *War of Independence* while defending the newly declared Israel against the *Arab League* and Palestinian troops on multiple fronts.

I argue that *kibbutzim* and local paramilitary forces were the two constitutive elements forming the bedrock of Israel's security culture. On the one hand, *kibbutzim* members ensured the biographical continuity of the unique Jewish *self* through performing their behavioural routines and traditional identity within their insulated communities. On the other hand, they played a key role for the Jewish self-defence organisations while protecting the territory from the Other's influence. As a corollary of this strong embeddedness between *kibbutzim* and paramilitaries, IDF's security culture has not only become a natural extension of the Israeli society but also a complementary determinant of their *internalised* self-narratives and *continuous agency* after having been exposed to continual attacks and by literally constructing a "siege" against the Other. Accordingly, practices of the paramilitary groups, most specifically *Palmah* whose aim was to establish buffer zones between Jews and the Other, appeared to have vindicated their historically-embedded self-defence behaviour and shaped the IDF's ally-opponent *network* (Kinnvall, 2004), regulating Israel's *moral standards* for survival (Rumelili, 2015). Routinization of these moral standards into the state structure has later gained momentum because even Orthodox Jews criticising the Zionist vision appear to accept their fixation of the *Palestinian Other* (Peleg and Waxman, 2007).

Consequently, this strong distancing coupled with the centuries-long mistrust transformed the *Palestinian Other* into the *antagonist Other*, which poses an ontological insecurity threat for the unique Israeli *self*. This already delimited socio-political matrix is thus fixated on the new Israeli subject position, the lifeblood of Israel, as an element that needs to be secured without the Other's influence. Proving that claim, the *land* (Palestine) is assigned as the key signifier supporting the central signifier of *Israeliness* that disengaging from the territory is considered something

unimaginable (Lupovici, 2015). Therefore, to preserve the unique Israeli identity, *de-Otherization* of the land is legalised by *Law and Administration Ordinance of 1948* displacing more than a half million Palestinians out of Israel, and the *Law of Return*⁷ prohibiting those expatriates to reclaim their right upon the land. Subsequent Israeli governments have routinized this tested practice to keep the *Palestinian Other* (categorically fixated minority) away from the *Israeli territory* (key signifier of the majority) by means of passing a series of military articles. These military provisions include, *inter alia*, *Emergency (Security Zones) Regulations* (1949) authorizing military commanders to expropriate the land by “protected zone”, thus setting the stage for Israeli Military Governorate to rule the occupied territories after the Six-day War of 1967 (Mehozay, 2016); and *Land Acquisition Law* (1953) allowing Israel to control the recently confiscated Palestinian villages (Bisharat, 1994). In tandem with these isolationist policies, it is noteworthy that such *behavioural* signs undergirding their security orientation have demonstrated a biographical continuity as tested conflict resolution methods since the 1920s, exemplified by the construction of the Israeli West Bank wall separating the Israeli *agency* from the *Palestinian Other*.

Giddens (1991) would argue that the mistrustful cognitive cocoon around which the political psychology of the majority of Israelis was formed functioned as a conduit for inculcation of a unique sense of agency and distinct identity of Israeliness that were absent in the *Palestinian Other*. Nevertheless, this emotion-laden self-defence mechanism was intensified as the approved distancing behaviours were employed following *fedayeen* retaliations and destructive conflicts, such as the Six-day War and the Yom Kippur War (1973). As this insulated identity pattern hampering the enhancement of local ties with the *mistrustful Other* remains to be a major ontological security source of Israel’s biographical continuity, it exacerbates the conflict between IDF and PLO, later Hamas since the 1960s. Although this security culture was intended to undergo changes by Israel, attempts to restructure the

⁷ Aka “Aliyah Right” referring to Israeli-government-supported immigrations to Israel. The law discriminates against non-Jewish immigration and land reclaiming (Knesset, 2017).

society's mistrustful cocoon formation did not fall through as expected. It is thus vital to assess what PLO is at first and further examine what role it plays in the 25th and 28th Israeli governments' transition agenda.

5.3. PLO, Changing Israel, and the Transition

5.3.1. PLO

PLO was established as an *Arab League*-supported nationalist body seeking to liberate Palestine, *the homeland of the Palestinian Arabs and identity*, through armed revolution (JVL, 2017b) at a time of mounting pan-Arabist sentiments in the 1960s. Displaying many Othering resemblances with Israel's founding proclamation, the PLO Covenant rejected the *Balfour Declaration* and denied the "existence" of the Zionist and colonialist Israel (*ibid*). Nevertheless, the politico-military views of the PLO and its initial position underwent significant changes after the catastrophic Six-day War, which resulted in the defeat of the pan-Arab nationalists. For Mohamad (1998), along with the Israeli occupation over the remaining Palestinian hubs, this failure compelled PLO to design their own *national* liberation program. Conceding the engrained doctrinal backdrop and advanced human resources capacity, Fatah emerged as an attractive force that would lead and restructure PLO. The Fatah cadres were aware that the *Arab League* strategies, based on conventional attacks against the highly seasoned IDF soldiers, had become obsolete. Therefore, driven by the historical fears and antagonism towards the *Jewish Other*, their liberation agenda, the *People's Revolutionary War*, was built on guerilla tactics that would "not only the wiping out of an Imperialist base but, what is more important, the extinction of a (Israeli) society" (Fatah's Doctrine, 1968, p. 11).

Owing to the thick discourse and the renewed siege psychology, Israel sought to elevate the threat level of the *fedayeen* attacks to *intolerable terrorist activities*,

previously categorized as *political harassments* (Balpınar, 2012). Proceeding to the next step, Israel adhered to its routinized conflict resolution method, *de-Otherization* of the land by walls and checkpoints from the categorically detached Other, to secure the Israeli agency. Israel hence launched a military rule⁸, which was replaced with the civil administration in 1981, to delimit the Palestinian living matrix and control the *fedayeens'* manoeuvring area. On the Israeli side, one may see the damaging outcomes of these isolationist policies which added to the Israelis' mistrust (83%) towards the *Palestinian* Other (Smooha, 1984). On the Palestinian side, however, one could read the impact of the same policies as a step-by-step approach through the *Munich massacre*, the Yom Kippur War, and a critical Palestinian uprising, the *first intifada* (1987-1993) laying the groundwork for the Oslo Accords that tried to re-situate the *Palestinian* Other sign within the Israeli socio-political matrix.

5.3.2. Changing Israel and Oslo Accords

According to Golan (2009), prior to the Oslo Accords, there were a few missed peace opportunities to bring about peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In a chronological order, as Golan puts, the first attempt relates to the “intermediary” proposal of the Jordanian King Hussein (1967), which was rejected by Israel. The second initiative was made by the Egyptian President el-Sadat who through UN assistance (1971) proposed a peace treaty that would make the Yom Kippur War redundant. The third opportunity came during the Camp David negotiations (1978) in which the PLO's exclusion from the possible “autonomous Palestine plan” was proffered as a solution. Major obstacles arising from the three negotiation processes prevented accommodative and conciliatory approaches from yielding concrete and sustainable results such as reaching a peaceful roadmap. Regardless of these botched opportunities, one must be mindful that prior to the outbreak of the *first*

⁸ Authorised by the *Emergency (Security Zones) Regulations* (1949).

intifada, PLO was mulling over non-violent alternatives, such as the Amman Agreement (1985) under which a confederative Palestine could be established under Jordanian sovereignty which would put an end to the Palestinian guerilla fights. Similar to PKK's abrupt reactions toward the Iraqi Kurdistan case, PLO's radical wing insisted on the self-destructive military formula towards Israel (Süer and Atmaca, 2007). This was perhaps a continuation of their twenty-five-years-long behavioral routines that scuttled the PLO's peace initiatives, which would otherwise secure the Palestinian identity both physically and ontologically.

The *first intifada* erupted on the heels of the decade-long psychological pressures weighing down on the Palestinian socio-political matrix and the aggravated security culture. Notwithstanding the salience of antagonistic policies underlying the *intifada*, Israel first perceived the movement as a *rebellion*, thereby fixating the state apparatuses on *protecting the law and order* (Vitullo, 1989), authorised by the *Emergency Regulations* (1949). One may claim that coupled with the IDF's inability to control the *intifada*, PLO promptly utilised public resistance. Accordingly, it first abandoned terrorism means and accepted Israel's right to *exist* to legitimise the *intifada* (Mohamad, 1998), then unilaterally declared the independent Palestinian state on Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza that was recognised by the UN and various countries within a year.

Multiple caveats merit attention as the above psychological breaking points are concerned. Firstly, IDF did not alleviate the *intifada* albeit employing strict measures. Israel therefore, for the first time, failed to secure its land (socio-political *fortress*) where *Israeli* agency (central signifier) was being performed without the Other's influence. Secondly, this *living matrix*, which was fixated as the major signifier of *Israeliness*, was now recognised as the *non-existent* Other's state by the international actors that challenged Israel's biographical continuity being stably performed since the 1920s. Thirdly, Palestinians' awareness that the liberation of the *Palestinian homeland* and *identity* was not an invisible phenomenon but a reality that necessitated: 1) a collectively resisting society to *exist*, 2) a peaceful agenda to be *recognised*.

These colossal challenges appeared to shape the Israeli public opinion regarding the Palestinian living matrix so much so that they began to see collective uprisings as the natural consequences of Israel's physical and psychological domination over Palestinians (Bar-on, 1996). This major shift towards the Other has not only been embraced by the society apparatuses, but also by high-ranking officials as evidenced by Defence Minister Rabin's remarks:

The solution would have to be political – through *negotiation* leading to a political settlement, rather than *military means* (cited by Morris, 2001, p. 587, emphasis added)

As can be seen, for the first time an Israeli policymaker surveyed the Palestinian issue beyond the military program, discursively assigning Israel with an accommodative vision to reshape the *Palestinian* notion. As Rabin's discourse reiterates the existence of a *Palestinian identity*, it seems that he does not only re-situate the *Palestinian* sign within the Israeli socio-political matrix but also relay a major change towards the state routines which were soon to be unfolded. According to the then-deputy premier, Peres (1995), Israel has firstly reformed its military regulations concerning the cohesive power; secondly, improved the IDF's internal checks-and-balances system; and lastly, modified the notorious *Emergency Regulations* to protect the rights of Israel's *Arab citizens*. In the context of these conciliatory moves, the Israeli government and the Palestinian side practiced their first *face-to-face* peace dialogue in the Madrid Conference (1991). It is noteworthy to mention that several prudent considerations of the Madrid Conference, i.e. the *free flow of information* between groups, using *third party* and meeting in a *recognized platform*, helped Israel mitigate its mistrustful cognitive cocoon that had encouraged the Israeli government to design an *e-motion* project at Oslo that was alleged to build trust and long-term peace, which later on backpedalled due to crucial miscalculations.

Seeing the Madrid Conference as an opportunity to broker a peace between Israelis and Palestinians, the 25th government of Israel entered into talks with PLO in 1993. When the Oslo Accords was signed in the same year, Israelis “woke up to a new,

dramatic reality” (Cohen-Almagor, 2012, p. 563). The first principle of this *abruptly* arranged peace initiative was to:

Put an end to decades of confrontation and to live in *peaceful coexistence*, *mutual dignity* and *security*, while recognising their *mutual legitimate* and *political rights* (IMFA, 2017b, emphasis added)

The Article XVI of the Accord under the *Confidence Building Measures* section also incorporated some of the provisions and principles cited above:

...to fostering a positive and supportive public atmosphere...to establish a solid basis of *mutual trust* and *good faith*... new relations between *the two peoples*, both Parties agree to carry out confidence building measures (*ibid*, emphasis added)

As an *e-motion* project, it shares a similar vision with the AKP’s *First Kurdish Opening* plan aimed at modifying a self-damaging cocoon formation: alleviating the conflict through *trust* and *confidence*, promoting *mutual understanding*, etc. Lupovici (2015) argues that the Accord seeks to offer a democratic Israeli *self*. Concurring with the self-construction narrative, however, it is vital to note that while re-situating the historically shaped *behavioural* signs, the Accord introduces something more than a democratic *self*, who is expected to be liberal and respect the Other, but rather a peaceful *self* who first breaks its long-attached routinized isolation with the *non-existent* Other and then *co-exist* with it. In doing so, this *e-motion* assignment principally intends to introduce both communities to each other’s value system. Yet it did not envisage and carefully consider the psychological barriers perpetuating these systems and cognitive cocoon formations. Firstly, the Oslo Accords was a *top-down* initiative without *trust-building*. Unlike the Madrid Conference, this *secret* negotiation avoided any international arbitration and occurred between a *few* PLO élites and a small Israeli group (Parson, 2009). The peace accord was conceived on shaky ground since Israel fixated PLO as the *sole* representative of the Palestinians (trusted by 37% of Palestinians), and disregarded Hamas (trusted by 15% of Palestinians) (JVL, 2017c) whose *isolation* later revived the self-damaging behavioural routines of the Palestinian guerrillas such as suicide bombings that PLO had not controlled. Secondly, the peace project

was hastily arranged and announced accordingly without addressing the existential questions and re-fixating the key signs constituting the Israeli-Palestinian living matrix. Questions include “How can two sides work to alter the *conflict ethos*?”, “Is there an *emotional foundation* and transformation-driven agenda securing the peaceful co-existence?”, and most significantly, “Do these societies *trust* each other before operating the Accord?”. To put the argument one step further, a Palestinian interviewee answered the above questions in one paragraph:

On the one hand the rhetoric was of peace, while on the other hand the settlements were being expanded... ‘normalization’ could not continue... transformational modalities ... cooperation and communication channels... building trust so as to create support for a potential peace process (UNESCO, 2007, p. 30).

Apparently, these fundamental questions were not considered in detail as the process was shortly interrupted by the Hamas-orchestrated suicide bombings and IDF’s harsh response. The Accords, therefore, had fixated on the *bodily* and *territorial security* criteria, “renouncing Palestinian terrorism” and “withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian territories”, rather than implementing *peaceful coexistence* program through modifying cognitive cocoon. This rapidly discussed and hastily crafted agenda was soon to be scuttled and it practically collapsed as a result of the ensuing violent conflicts and assassination of Prime Minister Rabin. Consequently, the two sides re-attached to their preceding vision and labelled each other mistrustful (Sela, 2009) although Israeli public support to the Accords was 48% (Leon, 1995).

5.3.3. Roadmap for Peace

The Oslo Accords has gradually collapsed after the series of negative experiences albeit tried to be restored through the Oslo II Accords (1995), which was signed two months before Rabin was murdered, the Hebron Protocol (1997) and Wye Memorandum (1999). One may nevertheless claim that since these agreements were largely designed as territory-driven agreements they ultimately fell into the

same error as that of the Oslo Accords. Apart from these attempts, the Camp David Summit (2000), the last attempt before the Roadmap for Peace (2002), merit mentioning before proceeding. According to the US Department of State (2017), which reflects the official records of the host country arranging the summit, the negotiations could not reach a settlement because the Palestinian side was not content with the final covenant although Israelis was going to make game changer concessions on Palestinians' right of return, something akin to the *Aliyah right*. A month after the failed negotiation, however, the second intifada erupted. From a vantage point, this uprising differed from its preceding example, the first intifada, in two ways. Firstly, as it broke out shortly after the unsuccessful Camp David Summit, the timing of the act raised interrogation marks regarding the nature of the second intifada. Attesting this claim, ontologically insecure agents fuelled with historical mistrust of the Other, portrayed the second intifada, as an architected movement of the Palestinian side remonstrating the Camp David fiasco (The Jerusalem Post, 2010). Secondly, unlike the first intifada showing the vivid pattern of civil disobedience and collective resistance, the Palestinian side rather employed the terrorism means in this attempt which, I believe, have impaired the "repressed Palestinian image" in the minds of international actors — that had legitimised the movement while making it visible eight years ago. In this socio-political turmoil where two sides had experienced war-like clashes, the 9/11 attacks occurred.

For the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the US involvement in the post-9/11 Middle East manifested itself by delivering the 28th Israeli Government a comprehensive peace agenda, namely the Roadmap for Peace (hereafter Roadmap) (2003). I argue that Israel's this initiative, which, in fact, was designed by the US as I explicate below, was planned to be another *e-motion* project like the Oslo Accords. The Roadmap, however, fulfilled some key strategic communication assertions that mitigated the ontological insecurities of the Israeli majority in relative terms and stimulated their socio-political matrix to modify mistrustful cognitive cocoon:

- Firstly and most importantly, this plan was *not secretly* designed and *immediately* initiated. Therefore, it *augmented stability* and *detracted*

uncertainty while informing the Israeli and Palestinian societies regarding the Roadmap, which was finalised after two drafts (EU-draft and US-draft) (The Road Map, 2003).

- Secondly, this peace formula was arranged by international arbitration, the US and UN Security Council⁹, which aimed at re-switching Israel's routinized security-orientation. To *spread this policy route*, they designated a clear outline, *the performance-based roadmap*, through appointing timelines and target dates that would promote accountability a parameter missing in the Oslo Accord.
- Thirdly, the internationally-devised roadmap was designed to inspire Israeli and Palestinian policymakers through providing a *transparent platform* where they would *transmit their information flow* and *work collectively* to execute the Roadmap's final stage, namely *permanent two-state solution* (UN, 2003).
- Fourthly, the Roadmap decided to utilise the NGOs during the resolution (*ibid*). However, neither their duties nor their names were described, not to mention them being allocated the *shortest* sub-section (two lines) in the eight-pages long Roadmap.

A year after its unveiling, this ground-breaking Roadmap, however, encountered a logjam as a corollary of unfulfilled strategic communication assertions that could not help Israel to remove central existential questions from the table, which obstructed the 28th Israeli Government from properly modifying their historically-built antagonism and mistrust towards to the Other:

- First of all, although the Roadmap was a *non-confidentially* designed formula for the peaceful resolution, which informed both societies, it was not motivated to assure the *mutual understanding*; and serve as a “common denominator” (Tindall and Holtzhausen, 2011, p. 74). This claim became visible when the Roadmap *vaguely* outlined the denouements of the

⁹ S/RES/1515 (2003)

existentially critical signs, e.g. the circumstance of the Other's sovereignty and Jewish settlements, rather than mitigating these ontological insecurity sources.

- Secondly, the Roadmap was a paragon of the *top-down* peace initiative that culminated in two-fold difficulties: a) two societies which were subjected to this plan, the Palestinians and the Israelis, were sceptic about the Roadmap's highly *top-down* nature (The Road Map, 2003) that did not *enlarge the resolution actors* and *incorporate local voices* and *civil society into the decision-making mechanism* as the US-plan by-passed their participation; b) besides, both sides' policymakers only requested minor revision to the Roadmap's outline that worsened this challenging agenda.
- Thirdly, the Israeli and Palestinian sides' compliance to the Roadmap was *primarily* fixated on the same condition that existed in the Oslo Accords: "end to the violence and terrorism" (UN, 2003, p. 1). The obligatory trait of this condition in fact brought positive results: 85% of the Palestinians who previously supported the violent second intifada (JMCC, 2001), claimed that they opposed the violence (73%) while the Roadmap was implementing (Ross, 2003). Nevertheless, this optimistic vision supporting an accommodative approach was not catapulted to new heights as the Roadmap did not only degrade the eighty-year-long socio-political conflict to the "dropping guns" condition but also ignored the psycho-cultural *consensus-building*, which would have re-situated the society's *mistrustful* Other sign.

As a corollary of major miscalculations and gradually progressing violence, the Roadmap reached a deadlock within a year and two sides lost their trust to each other regarding the peaceful transition that hindered parties from taking further steps to fulfill long-sought *peaceful coexistence*. After this intersection, parties could not track the Roadmap and had started to recriminate each other, which catalysed the Roadmap's collapse. On the one hand, the Palestinian side was:

Convinced that Israel will behave as it did during Oslo... and avoid real change (ICG 2003 report, cited by The Road Map, 2003, p. 87).

On the other hand, the Israeli Prime Minister, Sharon, announced in 2004 that:

There exists *no Palestinian partner* with whom to advance *peacefully* toward a settlement (IMFA, 2017c, emphasis added)

Following Sharon's statement, Israel has initiated a unilateral withdrawal by building concrete walls (Balpınar, 2012). This performance has not only concluded the Roadmap in practical terms, but also conformed with Israel's tested and proved politico-military routines which would once again isolate the majority from the Other's influence rather than depleting the *historically-built antagonism*.

In this inconclusive *e-motion* project, public support and optimism for the peaceful settlement increased substantially (Palestinians 60%, JMCC, 2004; Israelis 63%, PSR, 2004), although only a few assertions (stable and clear agenda, explicit information exchange, spreading of policy routes and state-level initiated cooperation platform) of the strategic communication were fulfilled by the 28th Israeli Government. Rehearsing my claim provided in the Turkey chapter, one may reckon that both camps could well remove the existential question from the table and mitigate ontological insecurities while reshaping their mistrustful cognitive cocoon if they comprehensively employed strategic communication. Nonetheless, the challenging effects of the unfulfilled assertions may provide instructions for future resolution attempts that both sides need to apprehend psychological driving forces of the self-defeating behavioural routines, which prevent societies from rebuilding their fixated socio-political matrix. Thus, strategic communication may deliver two lessons. Firstly, parties are compelled to understand the basic elements of the historically shaped antagonism whose transformation requires a *societal level mutual understanding*. Secondly, having reached this common emotional and cognitive platform, which may be ensured through a *bottom-up* communication agenda *broadening the resolution actors*, may create an impetus for *e-motion* and mitigate mistrust. This revision, therefore, may not only restore the majority-Other relations through *incorporating local voices* and *civil society into the decision-making mechanism* but also help them finding *common denominators* which would alleviate the society's ontological insecurities and motivate them to modify their

mistrustful cognitive cocoon through re-fixating interlocked *Palestinian* and *mistrustful* signs. Failing to accommodate these, both parties may re-start to perceive each other as untrustworthy or non-peaceful partners, and reapply their tested and proved politico-military routines, even if the public support for peaceful resolution attains far more support than the preceding attempts.

6. Concluding Discussion

Within the burgeoning ontological security literature, this thesis has initially explored the constructions of Turkish and Israeli ontological securities against the backdrop of their early nation-building and conflict resolution experiences. These experiences have long formulated their detached mindset towards minorities, thus stimulating the two states in pursuing harsh security cultures rather than implementing an accommodative approach. This study has pertinently teased out the adverse impacts of the ontological insecurity feelings as part of Turkey's and Israel's failed *e-motion projects* and has drawn attention to the alternative trust-building framework for future resolutions.

To briefly recapitulate, this thesis has firstly explained how different social groups living in these states have constructed a mistrustful cognitive cocoon in light of the conflicts practiced against external and internal enemies as Turkey's and Israel's nation-state structures were being established. Secondly, based on the above point, it has explored the underlying miscalculations of Turkey's and Israel's first conflict resolution attempts, which failed to reshape existing mistrustfulness in a viable way. Thirdly, it has further studied Turkey's and Israel's comparably successful second resolution attempts through strategic communication framework, striving to identify the plans' shortcomings and deliver an alternative outlook for future peace attempts, incorporated into the ontological security lexicon.

Theoretically speaking, minding the gap within the political science field, this thesis has focused on the collapsing peace initiatives of Turkey and Israel from a different perspective, ontological security seeking, rather than its physical pair. It has thus sought to grasp the neglected psychological dynamics of Turkey's and Israel's resolution processes. This setting has allowed the thesis to introduce a range of novel theoretical arguments within the scope of ontological security. Firstly, it has explored the mistrust notion, which had not received a sufficient attention within the ontological security literature. Secondly, it has proposed and employed an

innovative framework, strategic communication, exploring how this has been interrelated with the cognitive cocoon concept.

Methodologically speaking, a deconstructive reading of Turkey's and Israel's legal frameworks, their national security articles and military laws shaping the very rationale and logic behind social and state level mistrust of the Other, has illuminated how early nation-building processes and experienced clashes underpinning these emotions have been translated into the socio-political matrix through fixating *discursive* and *behavioral* signs. Moreover, this way of reading has shed light on the relationship between Turkey's and Israel's siege mentalities and alarmist self-images, which have long limited the reflexes and conflict resolution methods of the Turkish and Israeli policymakers in abating turbulences with the Kurdish and Palestinian communities.

Comparatively speaking, this thesis has designated Turkey's and Israel's several parallel variables and explored them in different sections as shaping of nations, security cultures and conflict resolution attempts. The empirical findings provided in these sections have demonstrated the relationship between the nation-building experiences and their impacts on the conflict resolution methods and processes, thus showing how and why the established state routines and security cultures obsoleted several conflict resolution attempts although both countries tried to switch their attitudes. Nevertheless, this thesis has also strived to explore why the Turkish and Israeli governments failed to remove major existential questions from the table and break down their behavioral routines against minorities. Such routines had not only been perceived as ontological insecurity sources against Turkey's and Israel's unique self-images but had also been labelled as the *mistrustful* Other, the *reactionist* Other, the *antagonist* Other, while their boundaries had been fixated out of Turkey's and Israel's value systems.

Notwithstanding, both countries have tried to modify their mistrustful cognitive cocoon formation by devising two conflict resolution attempts. In their first conflict resolution experiences, Turkey and Israel both made major miscalculations in terms of their peace programs' *vague* structures, *abrupt* implementations and *top-down-*

orchestrated clandestine natures, which failed to reshape existing mistrust of the Other albeit receiving approximately 50% public support. By taking lessons from their mistakes, in their second attempts, they have fulfilled some premises of the strategic communication framework and the public support for the peaceful settlement increased by 30% for Turkey and 12% for Israel. As this thesis claims, in the case of full attachment to strategic communication in future resolution processes, Israel and Turkey may remove existential questions from the table more efficiently and mitigate ontological insecurities while reshaping their mistrustful cognitive cocoon. In this way, Turkey and Israel may re-fixate the psychological driving forces of their self-defeating behavioural routines, which prevent societies from rebuilding their fixated socio-political matrix.

Reading their resolution programs through employing the strategic communication framework has therefore delivered several lessons for both countries. Firstly, both countries are obliged to grasp the basic elements of the historically-shaped antagonism and conflict psychology whose reconciliation is the hardest part of the peace processes and which require more effort than ensuring physical security. Secondly, they must be aware of the fact that the conflict resolution is a communication process, an essentially emotional one, not an event. Accordingly, it requires: a) a transparent and clear conflict resolution agenda, b) an engaged civil society motivated to incorporate locals into the decision-making process and c) to find common denominators to restore the majority-Other relation in rebuilding a shared reality, and finally, d) a socio-political commitment to reach a common emotional and cognitive platform which would modify the mistrustful cognitive cocoon and create a momentum for *e-motion*. Otherwise, even if their future resolution initiatives have received a more public support than their previous attempts, groups may re-start to perceive each other as untrustworthy and attach their politico-military agenda in line with their moral standards shaped in light of their tested and proved routines.

I would like to conclude this thesis by Kinnvall and Mitzen's argument that "the range of work and diversity among ontological security scholars to be exceptionally

productive, leading already to cross-fertilization and the deepening of our own approaches, while also inspiring new collaborations” (2017, p. 3). In fact, the employment of the theory with the help of deconstructive reading, which echoed my own position and preconceptions, has not only provided a new horizon in studying the relationship between the nation-building, security culture and conflict resolution triangle, but has also opened the way for emerging frameworks such as strategic communication to envisage further research designs within and outside the field. It is, therefore, recognized that within the scope of this research and purpose, only some aspects of the Turkey’s and Israel’s conflict resolution attempts have been explored. Thus, the future utilization of the theory may bring out more comprehensive research exploring the intertwined relationship between the ontological security seeking of states and societies, and the mapping of sustainable ways for reshaping a negative cognitive cocoon formation.

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