Trauma, Memory, and Agency: Making and (Re)making the Intractable Conflicts of Turkey and Israel

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Abstract

This work investigates slow-moving sociopsychological mechanisms that are argued to establish and sustain the main contours of Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts with, respectively, Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê and Palestinian Liberation Organisation (and later Hamas). It mainly argues that traumatic conflict experiences – acquired during the full-scale Independence Wars and internal conflicts– of the early Turkish (1918-1938) and Israeli leaderships (1936-1964) became their psychological cornerstone, and so defined their social reality and individual level patterns of actions. At the time of state formation, these traumatic experiences were instrumentalised by the leaderships to consolidate a particular collective identity, namely the imagined Turkishness and Israeliness, and its in-/out-group boundaries. More precisely, these imagined national agencies and their psychologically defining properties, such as their autobiographical narratives, were formed through the relation of difference vis-à-vis the selective Other(s) –Kurds and Palestinians– that the early leaderships violently encountered. Coupled with the particular context in which these conflict memories are shaped, the binary reading of the Other(s) informed Turkey's and Israel's harsh security agenda which was adopted to secure and stabilise the particular collective identity against the selective Other(s) over the decades. These developments in turn prepared the epistemic basis and nature of both states' intractable conflicts. Yet, the conflicts were sought to be settled by the "National Unity and Brotherhood" project in Turkey (2009-2015) and the "peaceful coexistence" project in Israel (1984-2000). These initiatives, however, remained ineffective to facilitate the projected sociopsychological change at the society level, which promptly marked reapplication of the binary reading of the selective Other(s) and intractable conflict pattern in both states. Drawing on the concepts of trauma, memory, and agency making in ontological security, this study contributes to the recent theoretical literatures in International Relations on memory and trauma, and Turkish and Israeli studies in two ways. First, it uncovers the interplay between psychological and sociohistorical processes of security and imagined national agency making. Second, it shows the importance of a particular national context in which traumatic memories are shaped and in turn become constitutive elements of politics, security and conflict. Thus, it discovers a direct relationship between traumatic experiences, memory making (and narrating), collective identity, making of (and securitising) selective Other, and the propensity to shape and spur the intractable conflicts of Turkey and Israel.

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

ADS – Discourses and Speeches of Atatürk I-III (*Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri I-III*)
AKP – Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*)
ANAP – Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*)
AP – Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*)
ASALA – Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
ATASE – Archives of the Turkish General Staff
BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
BDP – Peace and Democracy Party (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*)
CFR – Council on Foreign Relations
CHP – Republican Peoples' Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*)
CJN – Canadian Jewish News
CNN – Cable News Network
CSS – Critical Security Studies
CUP – Committee of Union and Progress (*Ittihad ve Terraki Komitesi*)
DP – Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*)
DW – Deutche Welle
DTP – Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*)
EU – European Union
FETÖ – Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation (*Fetullahçı Terör Örgütü*)
FM – Foreign Minister
FMEP – Foundation for Middle East Peace
GADNA – Youth Battalions of Israel (*Gdudei No'ar*)
GB – Great Britain
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
GNA – Turkish Grand National Assembly
HADEP – People's Democracy Party (*Halkın Demokrasi Partisi*)
HDP – Peoples' Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*)
ICIPP – Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace
ICG – International Crisis Group
IDF – Israeli Defence Forces
IDI – Israel Democracy Institute
IHH – Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief
ILO – International Labour Organisation
IMFA – Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs
IR – International Relations
ISIS – Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JCA – Jewish Colonisation Association
JNF – Jewish National Fund
JTA – Jewish Telegraphic Agency

JVL – Jewish Virtual Library Project
JWA – Jewish Women's Archive
KDPT – Kurdistan Democratic Party (*Türkiye Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi*)
KUKP – National Liberators of Kurdistan (*Eniye Rizgariye Navata Kürdistan)*
LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
LHA – Light House Association
MDSD – Most Different System Design
MEMRI – Middle East Media Research
MENA – Middle East and North Africa
MHP – National Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*)
MP – Nation Party (*Millet Partisi*)
MSP – National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*)
MSSD – Most Similar System Design
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO – Non-governmental Organisations
NLF – No Legal Frontiers
NSC – National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*)
NUBP – National Unity and Brotherhood Project (*Milli Birlik ve Kardeşlik Projesi*)
OT – Occupied Territories of Palestine
PA – Palestinian Authority
PIJ – Palestine-Israel Journal
PKK – Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê*)
PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PM – Prime Minister
PNM – Peace Now Movement
PYD – Democratic Union Party (*Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat*)
RP – Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*)
SDP – Socialist Revolutionary Party (*Sosyalist Devrim Partisi*)
SETA – Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research
TAF – Turkish Armed Forces
TALI – Enhanced Jewish Studies
TCCB – Presidency of the Republic of Turkey (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı*)
TDV – Türkiye Diyanet Foundation (*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı*)
TESEV – Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation
TIP – Marxist Worker's Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi)*
TKIP – Turkey's Workers-Villagers Party (*Türkiye İşçi Köylü Partisi*)
TMFA – Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
TOBB – Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
TRT – Turkish Radio and Television
UK – United Kingdom
UN – United Nations

US – United States
WWI – World War I
WWII – World War II

Table of Contents

List of Figures

1. Introduction: National Agency, Intractable Conflict, and Resolution Nexus in Turkey and Israel

"Why war?", asked Einstein (1933) in his letter to Freud in 1932. Following the catastrophic World War I (WWI), he was seeking to understand whether or not psychologists can control the "mental processes" facilitating collective violence. Almost a century after the Einstein-Freud correspondence, myriads of studies have sought to address the sociopsychological factors underlying collective violence. In doing so, scholars have not only offered various paradigms to capture the intertwined relationship between unproductive state policies and their violent outcomes. Their diverse epistemological lenses have also challenged our existing knowledge of key concepts such as violence and conflict, serving as bridges between and among various academic fields. Consequently, these efforts have engendered unique perspectives in making sense of violent conflict, different layers of conflict psychology, and alternative resolution strategies. With these contributions in mind, as Einstein tried to understand, I ask myself, "why intractable conflicts?"

Coined by Kriesberg et al. (1989), the term intractable conflict refers to a specific type of intergroup ethnic conflict, that is, to briefly put, protracted, containing violence, perceived as unsolvable and demanding great investments. It was later advanced by Bar-Tal (1998a; 2013), as he incorporated three psychological notions into the intractable conflict framework, being "total, central, viewed as a zero-sum contest" (Bar-Tal, 2013, p. 37). The framework has recently drawn wider scholarly attention since thickening critical approaches towards intergroup conflicts adopted

alternative theories and cross-disciplinary tools in studying them. Given a limited number of studies applying the intractable conflict framework, there are two broad research motivations in the literature. They either seek to assess the effectiveness of peace agendas and/or state policies designed to solve these particular conflicts (Smyth, 1994; Plonski, 2005; Yogev, 2010; Vries and Maoz, 2013; Bachar and Weiner, 2014; Handelman, 2017), or strive to understand sociopsychological forces behind the intractable conflicts, e.g., national identity and collective memory, which inform us about various levels of phenomena shaping and sustaining such conflicts (Kriesberg et al., 1989; Kriesberg, 2007; Bar-Tal, 1998b; 2013; Bar-Tal et al., 2014; Bar-Tal et al., 2017; Salomon, 2004; Burgess et al., 2006; Tomlinson and Lewicki, 2006; Fiol and O'Connor, 2011; Halperin et al., 2014; Halperin and Sharvit, 2015).

This thesis focuses on the latter part for two reasons. First, from a professional point of view, I have several empirical and theoretical concerns related to the lacunas in the literature, which are teased out in the following sections. Second, from a personal point of view, my motivation is to understand sociopsychological driving forces that shape and sustain Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts. Based on these two inspirations, Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012) argued that the seed of research ideas may originate from both academic literature and scholars' subjective experiences – basically, from their own lives. In this sense, local knowledge of social and political life and how they interact form the main contours of *a priori* knowledge which is integral to interpretivist works and plays a central role in building of research interests and questions (*ibid*).

Seen in this light, hosting some of the world's oldest and richest civilisations, the cultural, social, and religious notions have played historically important roles in

the Middle East, both at state and society levels. As an inhabitant of this geography, I have been in an epistemically privileged position in observing the dynamics among the above given "identity makers" in a daily context and their violent reflection over the political field. This subjective position shaping my *a priori* knowledge on the intergroup conflicts has gained scholarly leverage following my exposure to the trauma literature in ontological security theory,[1] helping me to recognise various phenomena making and sustaining these conflicts. Building on these, I have two related research questions to be answered in this thesis:

1. How did the early Turkish and Israeli leaderships' national agency making projects shaped and spurred the intractable conflicts of Turkey and Israel?
2. How did the subsequent Turkish and Israeli leaderships contest the sociopsychological boundaries in both societies to resolve the intractable conflicts, albeit failed?

The early Turkish and Israeli leaderships' sociopsychological conditions at the time of state formation and particular ways of making national agency are interesting subjects as they are intertwined at many levels. My major driving force is to trace their complex weight on Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflict environments and failed conflict resolution efforts. To my knowledge, this dissertation offers the first book-length work which investigates how the early collective identity making projects in

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[1] Some ideas in this doctoral thesis are initially discussed in my master's thesis (see Adisonmez, 2017). It also utilised ontological security theory, which in turn prepared background to develop my arguments in this research project.

the two countries prepared the sociopsychological "roots" of their perpetual intractable conflicts.

My main hypothesis is that traumatic conflict experiences –acquired during the full-scale Independence Wars and internal conflicts– of the early Turkish and Israeli leaderships became their psychological cornerstone, and so defined their social reality and individual level patterns of actions. At the time of state formation, these traumatic experiences were instrumentalised by the leaderships to consolidate a particular collective identity, namely the imagined Turkishness and Israeliness, and its in-/out-group boundaries. More precisely, these imagined national agencies and their psychologically defining properties, such as their autobiographical narratives, were formed through the relation of difference vis-à-vis the selective Other(s) –Kurds and Palestinians– that the early leaderships violently encountered. Coupled with the particular context in which these conflict memories are shaped, the binary reading of the Other(s) informed Turkey's and Israel's harsh security agenda which was adopted to secure and stabilise the particular collective identity against the selective Other(s) over the past decades.

These developments in turn prepared the epistemic basis and nature of both states' intractable conflicts lasting more than three decades as of today. Yet, these conflicts were sought to be settled by the "National Unity and Brotherhood" project (NUBP) in Turkey (2009-2015) and the "peaceful coexistence" project in Israel (1984-2000). Specifically, these projects sought to resolve the intractable conflicts by promoting alternative national agency based on multicultural mindset and cosmopolitanism that contested the singular logic and rigid ontological security-seeking routines of the imagined Turkishness and Israeliness. However, they remained

ineffective to facilitate the projected sociopsychological change at the society level, which promptly marked the reapplication of the binary reading of selective Other(s) and intractable conflict pattern in both countries, remaining valid to this day.

I shortly explore the central concepts of this thesis to establish a dialogue between national agency and the intractable conflict phenomenon. Before shedding light on these concepts, I underline that one of the main goals of this interdisciplinary work is to contribute to the burgeoning ontological security theory. This work is built on the theory which was introduced by psychiatrist Laing (1961) and later developed by sociologist Giddens (1991) who applied the theory to critically evaluate the place of individuals in the changing modern society. When traditional attachments on the notion of security started to be disputed and reformulated during the 1990s, the theory has begun to be employed in international relations (IR) and political science domains with the works of Huysmans (1998) and McSweeney (1999). Having said that, this thesis adopts the theoretical conceptualisations of Kinnvall (2004) and Steele (2008b). They argue that the "physical survival" of states is not the only basis of security they seek to defend. There is another source that strongly motivates states to be "consistent" and "stable", such as the routinisation of state policies and security mindset. These concepts are clarified in the theoretical framework along with the contributions of this thesis to the ontological security field (see Chapter 2).

Having covered the main research motives of this work, what follows (Chapter 1.1) is the exploration of its operational framework, the intractable conflict, which is then linked to the agency discussion in the "unorthodox" security literature, i.e., critical security studies (CSS) and sociopsychological readings to security. The purpose of this map is twofold. It firstly helps this research project to locate its

empirical boundaries – aiming at analysing Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts through the sociopsychological lens. Building on this, it secondly prepares a fertile background for the agency debate, which further deepens our understanding of the intergroup conflicts in both countries vis-à-vis this project's research questions.

After exploring the central concepts and definitions, I offer a review of the extant empirical literature (Chapter 1.2), which excludes the ontological security studies as they are explored in detail in Chapter 2. This section surveys the existing works on the nation building processes of Turkey and Israel, both countries' sociopolitical transformations over the past decades, and the "unorthodox" security literature seeking to understand Turkey's and Israel's long-lasting conflicts with the Other(s) and failed conflict resolution processes. This section mainly reviews journal articles, monographs, autobiographical works, and book chapters. It eventually establishes a background for my theory-driven hypotheses as it highlights the reinforcing aspects and shortcomings of the existing literature.

Chapter 2 presents the analytical framework of this thesis. This chapter is built on two major elements. First, it offers a comprehensive review of the ontological security literature, which identifies key debates and questions on the self-Other making (Chapter 2.1), main research areas in the field (Chapter 2.2), and perspectives on the unit of analysis (Chapter 2.3). In this way, the first element explores why ontological security offers a unique analytical lens for this interdisciplinary work and locates research lacunas to be bridged in this thesis. This nuanced survey informs the second major element of the analytical framework, the "Complex Tetragon" (Chapter 2.4), in which I develop my hypotheses. Then, Chapter 2.4 identifies and interlinks major sociopsychological drivers that establish and sustain the intractable conflicts

within Turkey and Israel contexts. In doing so, it establishes conceptual and empirical links between traumatic experiences, memory making (and narrating), collective identity, making of (and securitising) selective Other, and the propensity to shape and spur the intractable conflict.

Chapter 3 offers the research design of this work in three sections. The first section explains the rationale behind the case selection of Turkey and Israel, demonstrating how the juxtaposition of the two cases becomes valuable to investigate in light of major variations they represent in economic and sociopolitical senses. The second section offers the methodological approach and sources employed for the empirical chapters. It discusses how the comparative historical method aligns with the theory-driven hypotheses of this work in tracing and decoding the slow-moving and complex sociopsychological mechanisms that shaped and spurred the intractable conflicts in a longitudinal perspective. The last section articulates the potential limitations of this thesis and highlights some research puzzles which could be filled by future works in the field.

This contextual, theoretical, and methodological arrangement sets the stage for this thesis to carry out an empirical examination in two parts: Turkey Part and Israel Part. To highlight the cross-case similarities, each country part adopts a similar structure based on historical periodisation. The first chapters of Turkey and Israel Parts (respectively, Chapter 4.1 and Chapter 5.1) analyse both countries' foundational years which prepared the epistemic basis and nature of their intractable conflicts to be shaped. These chapters present macro-structural and national contexts in which the early state leaderships' traumatic experiences with the external and internal Others were formed. Then, they explore how these traumatic conflict memories crystallised

in the elites' agent level patterns of actions and then resonated at their imagined collective identity making projects, while informing particular political discourses, law articles, and military practices. The second chapters (Chapter 4.2 and Chapter 5.2) explore major sociopolitical turmoil and subsequent transformations in both states. These chapters not only demonstrate that the early state elites' institutionalised traumatic memories inform the state actions and particular collective identity in ways that sustain the binary reading of the "Other" over decades – ultimately preparing the violent eruption of the intractable conflicts. They also explore the emergence of counter-hegemonic groups and popular contestation areas over time, challenging the Kemalist and Labour Zionist status quo.[2,3] Raising on these two chapters, the last empirical sections (Chapter 4.3 and Chapter 5.3) initially examine politically and normatively ripe conditions that enabled the parties with "liberating" agenda coming to the power in both countries, i.e., the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey and new Labor in Israel. Then, the chapters analyse how these new leaderships utilised various counter-hegemonic stories within the domain of their failed peace projects – that would catalyse major social change and settle the intractable conflicts.

The findings of Turkey and Israel cases are drawn together in the conclusion section (Chapter 6). This chapter starts with a summary of the contributions of this thesis towards the current theoretical literatures in IR on memory and trauma, and Turkish and Israeli studies. Then, drawing on Toros' (2017) interpretation of

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[2] The subjective principles of Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk), the founder and first president of Turkey, are termed Kemalism. It constituted the official ideology of the Turkish state and carried its hegemonic role for decades (see Chapter 4.2).

[3] There are two types of Zionism: religious and political. Theodor Herzl was the founding figure of the political Zionism, implanting the Jewish national aspirations with his book "The Jewish State" (1896). It was applied as Israel's official ideology and frequently associated with the Labour Zionist movement led by the Ashkenazi elites. This ideology was later contested by the religious Zionist camp (see Chapter 5.2).

Bourdieu's *habitus* concept, I offer my self-reflection about this research project and imagine about future directions in Turkey and Israel vis-à-vis their intractable conflicts.

1.1. Intractable Conflict: Operational Framework for Sociopsychological Surveys

Zizek argues that "every violent acting out is a sign that there is something you are not able to put into words. Even the most brutal violence is the enacting of a certain symbolic deadlock" (Fiennes, 2012). Then, what happens if this symbolic deadlock is not a one-time action, but gradually becoming a vicious circle, a prolonged conflict? What are the catalysts producing these types of violent conflicts? How can we decode the motivations behind these fear-fuelled occurrences that are imprinted in all the aspects of social and political life?

For decades, numerous academics and practitioners around the globe strive to offer effective roadmaps to answer these questions. Harbom et al.'s (2006) study provides a snapshot of previous conflict resolution attempts: over 40% of violent conflicts attaining peace covenants between governments and rebels (1989-2005) returned to violence in the following five years. The idiosyncrasy and multiheadedness surrounding intergroup clashes make each case empirically demanding to assess and explore why some resolution plans have not been effective, while others have. In this context, the intractable conflicts deserve attention, not only because they are challenging to assess, but have complex structures absorbing exposed societies in them. Then, there is a challenging question: Why is that so?

To begin with, there are many types of violent conflicts that dominate all aspects of sociopolitical life, undermining state capacity and authority. Scholars developed various parameters to categorise them such as the level of brute force being employed, the role of material and ideological factors behind antagonistic sides' aims, and the degree of international support to rebels (see, for example, Hamilton and Hamilton, 1983; Badey 1998). For Bar-Tal (2013), one of the key classifications of intergroup conflicts is their level of violence and durability that comparatively decides whether a conflict is tractable or not. On the one hand, tractable conflicts last short since groups involved in them are prone to solve their dispute without deepening an existing resentment. On the other hand, some conflicts are protracted, containing a high level of hostility and reproducing a vicious circle of violence (Kriesberg et al., 1989). Indeed, some conflicts were solved in a relatively short time, e.g., the Northern Ireland conflict, but some we witness today have started almost a century ago.

In describing these long-lasting conflicts, scholars also developed various frameworks alongside the parameters.[4] In this vein, following the works of Kriesberg et al. (1989) and Bar-Tal (2013), the intractable conflict emerged as a useful operational framework to systematically assess intergroup conflicts that suffer from impasse. The framework is introduced to assess long-lasting conflicts extending into capillaries of society, within which two antagonistic groups are involved in a zero-sum competition. What is unique to the intractable conflict is that the framework approaches these complex intergroup conflicts as a *sociopsychological* issue. That being the case, if the objective of this thesis is to reach internally consistent and

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[4] E.g., Azar and Farah's *protracted social conflict* (1981); Burton's *deep-rooted conflict* (1987); Goertz and Regans' *enduring rivalries* (1997); Pruitt's *asymmetric conflict* (2009); See, Demmer's *Theories of Violent Conflict* (2012), for a detailed review of them.

inclusive explanations towards the Turkish-Kurdish and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, I can hardly make progress by exclusively focusing on the physical aspect of such intractable conflicts have in common, e.g., huge military expenditures. Thus, the framework attaches importance to the abstract dimension of intergroup conflicts as an inseparable part of the structural scheme of what is to be termed an intractable conflict, rather than only focusing on the "armed conflict" aspect in the definition of "conflict" (further discussed in the following section).

The reasoning here is that the intractable conflict is an outcome of slow-moving sociopsychological mechanisms that are inherently linked to macro-structural and historical context of a particular state. As this research seeks to shed light on similar mechanisms, the framework helps it to recognise the sociopsychological pillars of Turkey's and Israel's conflicts alongside their physical counterpart. Then, how are the intractable conflicts to be explicated? And, how can we analyse the underlying reasons behind these long-lasting sociopsychological struggles?

1.1.1. Approaches to the Framework, "Unorthodox" Security Literature, and National Agency

Prior to exploring the conceptualisations of Kriesberg et. al. (1989) and Bar-Tal (2013), another noteworthy work must be briefly examined to capture the variations among the intractable conflict approaches: Burgess, Burgess and Kaufmann's *The Challenge of Intractable Conflicts: Introduction to the Colloquium* (2006). For Burgess et. al. (2006), the term intractable conflict is controversial as it almost implies that these types of conflicts are impossible to settle. As a response, they evaluated the intractable conflicts "as lying at the frontier of the field, seeming to stubbornly elude

even the best available resolution techniques" (*ibid*, p. 173). Then, they dragged attention to the intractability level of conflicts, i.e., *ripeness* and *danger*, which depends on practitioners' assessment towards a particular struggle.

Their intractability level argument can be summarised in three points. Firstly, practitioners are the main actors who devise resolution plans and develop interest-based practices to terminate the intractable conflicts. Therefore, it is hard to make worthwhile progress if experts identify a conflict as intractable. The second point is about reaching a consensus over factual quarrels that influence the intractability of conflicts. This issue is based on historical uncertainty, highlighting a much-debated issue of whose assertions are more "legitimate" than others among conflicting sides. Lastly, political framing of critical issues is directly linked to the intractability of conflicts both as causes and as potential solutions – that may make conflicts more tractable or worsen them due to existing mistrust among antagonistic groups.

Burgess et. al.'s (2006) approach is thought-provoking in considering the practical issues gravitating around the intractable conflicts in general and their intractability level in particular. Aside from its merits, there are some points worth elaborating on. First, one may question the vagueness of the approach. Among others, they do not specify what the notions of ripeness and danger infer separately for intrastate and international conflicts. For example, had the danger level of the Cold War been constant from the Potsdam Conference to the collapse of Berlin Wall? Or, had Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts always been as perpetual as today? There is also a dilemma in heavy reliance on the practitioner-oriented vision. Although the non-involvement of practitioners and/or non-governmental organisations (NGO) into the intractable conflicts protects these actors, this reserved stance may neglect 1)

21

the destructive power of violent conflicts on locals who already suffered enough, and 2) the spillover effects of these conflicts, e.g., the Rwandan Genocide and the following First Congo War.

Above these critical reflections, the main reason why I did not prefer Burgess et. al.'s (2006) framework is twofold. First, it is relatively underdeveloped in terms of the sociopsychological accounts of the intractable conflicts. Second, it does not clearly articulate what causes the intractable conflicts to occur in the first place, creating an applicability issue. Then, the rest of this section first explores the points of Kriesberg et al. (1989) and Bar-Tal (2013), which are then linked to the national agency discussion.

According to Kriesberg et al. (1989, pp. 2-10), the intractable conflict concept can be examined in three points. First, not all conflicts can be easily resolvable, especially when opposing groups establish their idiosyncratic features in a binary sense, highlighting absent identity makers in and, more critically, incompatible with the Other. It restrains groups to negotiate on critical issues, which in turn makes conflict hard to settle. Second, if sociopsychological characteristics of conflict are juxtaposed with material disagreements between groups, e.g., territorial dispute, it contributes to the intractability of any intergroup violence. Therefore, they argue that conflict resolution scholars must not overlook material motivations underlying the intractable conflict while exploring their sociopsychological evolution, or dynamic "life cycle" (*ibid*, p. 4). Third and last, radical differences among individual agents in terms of reasoning and ontology may drag them into a vicious contestation circle. In other words, dissimilar experiences throughout conflict may thwart sides to find a common ground. For example, the position of an Izz al-Din al-Qassam member,

Hamas' military wing, living in the Gaza Strip can be diametrically opposite to an Israeli soldier regularly intervening in this territory – that informs their subjective understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Nonetheless, Kriesberg et al. (1989) stress that there is a possibility to resolve the intractable conflict if antagonistic sides believe that they are destined to experience the outcomes of political choices taken by their leaders. Although one may question Kriesberg et al.'s (*ibid*) resolution proposal given the failures of peace plans in Turkey and Israel, their conceptualisation did not only introduce a novel framework to the conflict analysis field. It also inspired other scholars to advance it, such as political psychologist Daniel Bar-Tal. In contextualising the Turkish-Kurdish and Israeli-Palestinian struggles, I adopt Bar-Tal's intractable conflict framework for two reasons. First, he advances the framework by incorporating three points focusing on the centrality, totality, and zero-sum nature of the intractable conflicts. He argues that the totality characteristic of the intractable conflicts is founded on contradictory goals of antagonistic sides which make the conflict an existential factor for group survival. Building on the totality perspective, the conflict occupies a central place in society, dominating lives of individuals and collectives alike; and is seen as the zero-sum struggle in which two autonomous sides aim at surviving without giving major compromises (Bar-Tal, 2013, pp. 37-45). Second, these sociopsychological insights align well with my theoretical lens and offer a suitable operational framework to uncover the dynamics that shape and sustain Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts.

Bar-Tal emphasises that a particular national/social context in which individuals live shape their ideas, motivations, feelings, and behavioural patterns (*ibid*,

p. 32). Seen in this light, the intractable conflict environment has a strong influence in constructing and deconstructing these affect-centric paradigms which inform cognitive and emotional structures of human beings. Thus, one needs to have a robust evaluation of historical framework of a particular conflict within which range and scope of human actions today gradually gain their current values. In doing so, there are two key parameters that help this work to grasp the epistemic basis and nature of Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts. First, the epistemic basis of intractable conflict originates from situational-temporal events, such as series of wars and/or conflicts (*ibid*, p. 37-43). Second, the intensity of these destructive clashes later informs the future trajectory and means of intergroup struggle in a given context (*ibid*, pp. 247-254).

These two co-constituting points are further explored in the theory chapter where I argue that they not only informed the discriminative identity politics in Turkey and Israel against the selective Other(s), respectively Kurds and Palestinians. They also informed the strong security mindset in both countries that curbed apparatuses applied by various governments, ultimately motivating the marginalised Other(s) to employ systematic political violence in making their voice heard. Before further discussion, there is a question to be answered: How can we make sense of the two countries' intractable conflicts from a historically informed manner? Said differently, how do the key parameters of Bar-Tal play themselves out vis-à-vis the early Turkish and Israeli state elites' national agency making projects? A brief reflection on the transforming security studies field may serve as a fulcrum to address these vital questions.

Unlike the expanding security studies literature in contemporary academia, the concept of security was regarded as "underdeveloped" in the 1980s and accused of carrying "heavy military emphasis" and state-centrism (Buzan, 1983, p. 3). This narrow focus later exposed the analytical and normative limits of the state-centric security approaches, especially after 1991 (Buzan and Hansen, 2009). The critique raised towards the former limit was based on the fact that the end of the Cold War did not bring expected peaceful atmosphere. On the contrary, it propagated new means of security threats, i.e., non-traditional security threats, such as transnational insurgencies and migration "crises". The critique focusing on the latter limit paved the way for the CSS literature which problematises diminishing sovereignty of nation states and mainly aims at shifting referent object of security from "state" to "individual" agent. This intellectual debate facilitated the development of new "broadening" and "deepening" schools in the security studies literature from the Copenhagen school and its securitisation tool to the Aberystwyth school with a critical emancipatory agenda. In this vein, various scholars critically revisited taken-for-granted topics related to the concept of security by drawing on Derridean "deconstruction" method. Questions to be asked in these regards are as followings: How can we make sense of "security" in the nexus of "identity"? What are the discursive foundations of self-image and friend-enemy construction?

With these questions in mind, the sociopsychological readings of security focus on the significance of "Other" (e.g., ethnic/religious minorities) in making collective identity (see Campbell, 1998b). It is claimed that identity, whether individual or collective, can be "constituted through relations of difference" and "the pressure to turn difference into radical, threatening Otherness [is] overwhelming"

(Buzan and Hansen, 2009, p. 218). Here, subjective position of political leadership gains importance because it frames "something" as of certain significance to threatened self. Then, national agency is not a self-contained notion. It is constituted through the effect of a contingent set of relations that develop after direct engagement with the Other (Campbell, 1998b). In other words, collective identity building is a dynamic process through which "nation" is produced (and reproduced) with a certain self-image. What is critical here is that the national agency echoes state elites' fantasised beliefs vis-à-vis how citizens are expected to perform in a particular sociopolitical context as the elites delineate the boundaries of action by their subjective framing practices. I further investigate these central concepts in connection with ontological security theory in Chapter 2.

Nonetheless, there is a critique articulating that the sociopsychological readings take the security notion as an ontological double requirement. It originates from the assumption that states need to feel secure, but they simultaneously need aggressive Other. Thus, the role of aggressive Other is to define the boundaries of states' own identity (Hansen, 2017). In light of the discussion above, it can thus be argued that challenging and reformulating the notion of security is a subjective scholarly effort because there is "no neutral place" to define the concept (Smith, 2005, p. 28). Then, I align myself with the sociopsychological readings in making sense of national agency and various ways in which it affects the intractable conflict. I believe that Campbell's approach towards the "making of Other" is enlightening to deconstruct and reassess what is regarded as familiar before. Hence, this thesis critically "rereads" the imagined national agency making projects in Turkey and Israel to uncover the sociopsychological forces that construct and reconstruct the self-Other

separation and its reflection over the historical framework of both countries' intractable conflicts.

More specifically, I claim that the prolonged intractable conflicts are sociopsychological extensions of what can be observed in the Turkish and Israeli contexts as the outcome of situational-temporal traumatic experiences with the external and internal Others. This is the major reason why identity-based and emotion-laden conflicts as exemplified by the Turkish-Kurdish and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts are not suitable to be explored by exclusively focusing on the tangible factors. Yet, the abstract magnitudes of these intractable conflicts, such as the in-/out-group boundaries, and their sociopsychological drivers help this work to trace how the confrontations between the Turkish and Israeli states and the Kurdish and Palestinian Other(s) have been revealed in discursive and practical domains.

With this contextualisation in mind, I offer a detailed literature review below, which excludes the literature applying ontological security theory as it is provided in Chapter 2. The following section reviews the existing literature on Turkey's and Israel's nation building processes, the sociopolitical transformations experienced in both countries over decades, and the "unorthodox" security literature, i.e., the CSS and sociopsychological readings to security, seeking to grasp their long-lasting conflicts with the Other(s) and collapsed resolution processes. This section finally prepares a suitable background for my theory-driven hypotheses since it helps me to spot the reinforcing aspects and shortcomings of the existing works.

1.2. Review of Empirical Literature

The violent intergroup conflicts of Turkey and Israel attract much scholarly attention considering that they have been lasting for decades, claiming thousands of lives and

dragging high international attention. Apart from their individual evaluations, comparative studies on the two countries' conflicts recently gained momentum, studying various assimilationist policies of Turkey and Israel (see Peleg and Waxman, 2007; Ariely, 2020). These novel works highlighted Turkey's and Israel's shared structural and historical challenges vis-à-vis the ethnic minority Others that make them two applicable countries to be investigated despite they are being different in many ways – that is explored in the research design chapter (Chapter 3).

Notwithstanding the wealth of knowledge that we can derive from the literature on the conflicts of Turkey and Israel, we still know very little about the sociopsychological "origin" points and driving forces that establish and sustain these intractable conflicts, which also informed (and limited) how particular conflict resolution agendas were conducted in both states. This lack mainly originates from two reasons. First, both countries enigmatically returned to their destructive practices after the downfall of their peace processes which promised deep changes in the social and political organisations of Turkey and Israel after decades of violence. Second, there is a lack of theoretical and comparative reception of the sociopsychological approaches applied to Turkey's and Israel's conflicts.

Against these challenges, Turkey's and Israel's conflict resolution failures brought back identity-related debates in the two states, for example, on the historical and ideological properties believed to constitute the imagined Turkishness and Israeliness, the deep division between the secular and conservative groups, and the majority-minority asymmetry in the intergroup conflicts – that raised several timely and critical questions for research, some of which are to be explored within the scope of this thesis. With this regard, the questions to be asked in this empirical review are

the following: What were the dominant nation building goals and collective identity making aspirations among the early Turkish and Israeli state elites? How have they played themselves out vis-à-vis the sociopolitical structures and state apparatuses? How have the elites' nation building goals and collective identity making trajectories been contested by various social strata over the past decades? To what extent have these slow-moving psychological and sociohistorical processes escalated and/or de-escalated the intractable conflict environment in the two countries? In navigating these questions, this thesis makes use of a rich scholarship and contextual background on the subjects which include a range of empirical, methodological, and theoretical inputs. These studies which align with the research questions of this thesis inform this work in bridging its specific research gaps.

While exploring Turkey's and Israel's foundational years (Chapter 4.1 and Chapter 5.1), sociopolitical transformations and subsequent intractable conflict settings (Chapter 4.2 and Chapter 5.2), this thesis is established on historical and normative works. These works not only focus on the sociopolitical structure of the young Turkey and Israel, but also the state elites' political mindset (see Gilbert, 2008; Lewis, 2001; Piterberg, 2008). In addition, there are influential biographies revealing the early Turkish and Israeli elites' feelings and ideas (e.g., Atatürk, 2017 [1927]; Ben-Gurion, 1963), war and rebellion memories with the external and internal Other(s) and subjective nation building goals after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (hereafter the Ottomans) and the ending of the Jewish "exile" (see Volkan and Itzkowitz, 2011; Killi, 2003; Kazancigil, 1994; Edelman, 1964). The political science literature, on the one hand, offers rich academic debates gravitating around Turkey's and Israel's strong central government structures, state (and military) apparatuses (see Robinson, 2014;

Lewis, 1974; Finkel and Sirman 1990; Heper, 2015), and the elites' perceptions towards the concepts of ethnicity, nationhood, and territoriality (Rayman, 1981; Birtek and Dragonas, 2009; Ahmad, 1993; Barkey, 1997). The political sociology literature, on the other hand, delivers a significant body of scholarship dealing with the modernisation initiatives of Kemalists and Ashkenazim (Bozdogan and Kasaba, 1997; Willner, 2015; Fischer, 2016); these hegemonic movements' innovation of Turkishness (Al, 2015; Nefes, 2018; Kadioğlu, 1996), and Israeliness (Suleiman, 2011; Nahman, 2006; Herman, 1988; Sela-Sheffy, 2004); and the group level ideological tensions in Turkey and Israel during the state formation years (Blatt et al., 1999; Turnaoğlu, 2016). Furthermore, there are a few but noteworthy empirical works on the intertwined military-politics relations and the question of military tutelage dominating Turkish and Israeli sociopolitical life (see Hale, 1993; Perlmutter, 1978; Sezer, 1981; Weiss, 2002).

The literature above provides a background to grasp the "epistemic basis and nature" of the intractable conflict environments to be shaped in both countries, delineating groups' "limitations, frames…and thus [dictating] to a large extent the types, range, and scope of human behaviors" (Bar-Tal, 2013, pp. 33-60). Without question, Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts and their resolution failures require a reassessment of this previous body of literature as far as it informs this thesis about the long-term developments in both countries. As this work concentrates more systematically on Turkey's "Kurdish Question" and Israel's "Palestinian Question", it is more strongly rooted in the literature that explores the influence of both countries' sociopolitical settings on the intractable conflict environment.

Beyond general studies on Turkey's and Israel's foundational years, there are many significant works teasing out the sociopolitical transformations they underwent throughout decades. These studies must be cited before moving on to the literature concerning Turkey's and Israel's pressing Questions. The analysis of Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts and their structural setup builds on studies which focus on the transforming sociopolitical environment in the two countries, including the continuities and changes towards Turkey's and Israel's democracies, military tutelage, and bureaucratic logic. To better comprehend the "violent eruption" (Bar-Tal, 2013, pp. 61-100) of their intractable conflicts, it is important to track these domestic transformations. They inform this thesis about how the "antagonistic" groups' grievances and collective goals were influenced by these critical junctures and then transferred into systematic violent mobilisation.

These major developments spread into a large spectrum in Israel starting with the "al-Nakba" (meaning "catastrophe") –forced and voluntary departure of Palestinians from their lands after the Israeli Independence War in 1948– (Dessouki, 1973; Navon, 2015; Nofal et al. 1998) to Israel's following discriminations against the Palestinian communities (see Gordon, 2008; Saloul, 2012). With these particular issues in mind, there were five complex developments unfolding after the state formation period in Israel. They left their imprints on the Israeli state and society and worsened the state's strong security mindset vis-à-vis the Other: 1) the rise of traditional-conservative enclaves (see Maman, 1997); 2) the IDF's (Israeli Defence Forces) increasing power in the state ruling (see Perlmutter, 1978); 3) Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza after the Six Day War (1967) which promoted ethnoreligious feelings (see Quigley, 2005); 4) the unexpected Yom Kippur War

(1973) with Egypt and Syria which resurrected Israel's chronic siege mentality (see Grosbard, 2003), and lastly, the mounting competition between the dominant left-wing party Mapai (Labour) and rising right-wing Likud in the 1970s (see Gazit, 1998). These sociopolitical developments not only destabilised the dominant Labour aristocracy in politics (Gelvin, 2007) and the Ashkenazi hegemony over the society (Mautner, 2011) – that indicated a switch from consensus politics to confrontational and bipartisan majoritarianism (1967-90s) (Hazan, 1999) – also, see Ben-Refa·el et al. (1991); Kimmerling (2001); Rowley and Webb (2007); Abulof (2014).[5] They also aggravated how Palestinians were treated by Israel both at discursive and practical domains (see Handelman, 2004; Sasley and Waller 2016).

Interestingly, a similar pattern is observed in Turkey from the 1950s onwards, particularly after the implementation of a multiparty system in 1945. According to Pevsner (1984), Democrat Party's (DP) success in the wake of the first free election of 1950 marked a turning point for Turkey as the party's origins were laid in the ideological conflict between the traditional-conservative groups and Kemalists – the former questioned the Kemalist priorities, such as state-guided economic development, centralised polity, and secular education system through a new parliamentary counter-elite. These domestic contestations starting in the 1950s' Turkey later intensified the sociopolitical divisions between the political and military elites as well as various groups in the society, particularly between the religious and secular camps (Altunisik and Tur, 2018; Heper and Guney, 2000; Jenkins, 2001; Schick and Tonak, 1987), and between Kurds and Turks (see Mackenzie, 1981; Heper,

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[5] Mendelsohn (2016, p. 51) refers to this turn as the "religious settler movement" which was born after the Six Day War in 1967.

2008; Jorgenden and Akkaya, 2016). This multifaced debate between the traditional Kemalist institutions, such as army and judiciary, and the religious right-wing parties, such as Nation Party (MP), Justice Party (AP), National Salvation Party (MSP),[6] entrenched the existing "central-periphery dichotomy" in Turkey's turbulent 1960-1980 period that witnessed chronic military coups and interventions against the alleged anti-secular governments, undermining the progress of civilian democracy (see, for example, Mardin 1971; 1989; Mellon, 2010; Toprak, 1987; Vertigans and Sutton, 2002).

These massive sociopolitical developments and disparities caused by various identity clashes facilitated the rise of new group identity(ies), being the "Islamic-Turkish identity" (see Kadioglu and Keyman, 2011; Kieser, 2013; Nachmani, 2003) and the "ethnoreligious Israeli identity" (see Fischer, 2016; Mendelsohn, 2016; Thomas, 2011) – that challenged the hegemonic Turkishness and Israeliness narratives while opening Pandora's box of Kemalism and Labour Zionism in the following decades.[7,8] Coupled with the arrival of new political demands and ideological realignments in the 1980s' Turkey and 1970s' Israel, the most notable manifestation of these identity contestations would be the mounting awareness or the rebirth of the "Kurdish national identity" (see Bulut, 2006; Taspinar, 2005; Yavuz, 2001), or

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[6] These religious parties were disbanded for encouraging anti-secular stand and religious obscurantism. The MP was outlawed in 1954; the DP in 1961; the AP in 1972; the MSP in 1972.

[7] The manifestations of these "identity changes" and "contestations" reflect on the party politics in Turkey (see Chapter 4.2.1) and Israel (see Chapter 5.2.1). On Turkey, Özbudun argues (2000, p. 81) that Turkish politics is "dominated by and large party politics" which echo these identity contestations. On Israel, Oren (2010, p. 196) claims that the questioning of the imagined Israeliness reflect on "two main parties in Israel (the dovish Alignment/Labour and the hawkish Likud) during the years 1969-2006".

[8] Tracing the complex relationship between these counter-hegemonic groups and traditional state elites is important as it escalated and/or de-escalated the intractable conflicts of Turkey and Israel (see the research design chapter, Chapter 3).

Kurdishness (Aras, 2013; Yeğen, 2006), and the "Palestinian national identity", or Palestinianness (Alam, 2010; Khalidi, 2010; Rowland and Frank 2002; Swedenburg, 2003; Torstrick, 2000). The puzzle here is that the binary reading of and destructive policies towards the Kurdish and Palestinian Others were reproduced in this period although the hegemonic identity makers of Turkishness and Israeliness were challenged (see Chapter 4.2 and Chapter 5.2).

Then, the Kurdish Question and Palestinian Question have become important subjects of discussion from these periods onward as the historically resonant discriminative practices and state violence motivated the marginalised Other(s) to employ systematic political violence against the Turkish and Israeli states. Following this critical juncture, the "antagonistic" groups mobilised their members into the intergroup conflict (Chapter 4.2.3.2 and Chapter 5.2.3.2). Once the systematic violence aspect of identity-based conflicts erupts, it often escalates since "the goals of the rival parties seem to be existential to both sides" (Bar-Tal, 2013, p. 101). Thus, these Questions increasingly dominated the sociopolitical life in Turkey and Israel for decades to come, indicating that the clashing parties' "grievances, objections, and contentions, as well as the aspirations, claims, and desires, are not considered but are rejected and even countered with stronger actions" (*ibid*, p. 101).

In line with the systematic violent mobilisations in Turkey and Israel, the literature focusing on their challenging Questions have increased in number. Thus, there is a robust literature drawing on the counterinsurgency and terrorism studies since the two countries' peace processes transpired relatively recently. This particular body of literature seeks to explain the emergence of the violent intergroup conflicts as part of the physical security needs of both countries and shed light on the territorial

34

dilemmas faced by the "antagonistic" groups (see Al-Abid, 1968; Cattan, 2000; Cohen, 1989; Davis, Mack and Yuval-Davis 1975; Gunter, 1990; Kirisci and Winrow, 1997; Beriker-Ayitas, 1997; Rogan, 2008; Schulze, 2008; Smith, 2012; Tessler, 2009; Tezcür, 2015; Tilley, 2015; Ünal, 2012a; 2012b; 2016; Adamsky, 2017; Rodman, 2018; Freilich, 2017; Sobelman, 2017; Williams, 1975; Derin-Güre, 2011; Sentas, 2018). These works empirically pioneered a new venue in the "conflict research" vis-à-vis Turkey's Kurdish Question and Israel's Palestinian Question. However, they were mainly motivated to explore the "material" aspect of these intergroup clashes – that do not explore the sociopsychological paradigms playing themselves out in these struggles, such as collective identity and in-/out-group narratives.

Having reviewed these early works, the more recent literature covering the emergence of Turkey's AKP (2002-present) and the rebirth of Israel's Labour party with a libertarian outlook (1984-1995) is especially valuable in the context of this thesis (for Turkey, see, for instance, Barkey and Fuller, 1998; Aydinli, 2002; Somer, 2004; Loizides, 2010; Bozarslan, 2018; for Israel, see Dowty 2012; Gelvin, 2007; Harms and Ferry 2008; Ovendale, 2016; Said, 2001; Kimmerling, 2001; Rouhana, 1989; Khalidi, 1997; Bar-On, 1996; Oz, 1989; Diamond, 1986; Shafir, 1989; Morris, 1987; Flapan, 1988; Segev, 1986; Pappe, 1992; 1995; Leshem and Shuval, 1998). These novel studies are dominated by explanatory accounts towards the transforming sociopolitical climates vis-à-vis the long-lasting Questions and bring awareness to the "human" aspect of the intergroup conflicts. Yet, they do not completely look at the sociopsychological accounts contributing to the intractable conflicts of Turkey and Israel. Notwithstanding, these readings offer essential contextual information which is used to recognise and assess the historical evolution of both countries' intractable

conflicts prior to their peace initiatives (which are explored in Chapter 4.3 and Chapter 5.3).

Raising on the studies having reviewed above, I turn to the key "unorthodox" security literature on (or including) Turkey's and Israel's intergroup conflicts. This literature can be brought together under two categories: 1) conflict narratives and in-/out-group dynamics that contribute to these long-lasting struggles, and 2) previous conflict resolution initiatives in both countries and future proposals for a peaceful settlement. Under the first category, I now review seminal works exploring conflict narratives and in-/out-group dynamics in Turkey and Israel. To begin with, Bar-Tal et al. (2014) argue that groups involved in the intractable conflict establish conflict-supporting narratives. These narratives do not only tend to involve distorted and simplistic beliefs attached to counter group – that shape and sustain the self-Other distinction. They also assist each group to justify their in-group attitudes against the selective Others both at discursive and practical fields.

In the Israeli context, several studies falling under the conflict ethos and intergroup emotions category focus on the "negative conflict narratives" (see, for example, Dowty, 2006; Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter, 2006; Teichman et al., 2007; Hassouna, 2016; Gutman, 2017; Gandolfo, 2016; Amir, 2017; Canetti et al. 2017; Zeitzoff, 2018; McDonald et al., 2017; Daphna-Tekoah and Harel-Shalev, 2017). For instance, in his recent work, Zeitzoff (2018) explores the ways in which the historical grievances, e.g., the al-Nakba versus Israeli Independence War, serve as a catalyst for the intergroup conflict, while Canetti et al. (2017) trace how the exposure to violence during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict uphold the historical conflict ethos promoted by the Israeli leaderships. On the out-group attitudes towards the intractable conflict,

Teichman et al. (2007) find out that the contextual information provided and/or circulated by the media and political elites plays an important role towards the Israeli in-group aspirations and self-esteem vis-à-vis the Palestinian Other, informing the cross-group distrust and biases. Drawing on the asymmetry between the majority and minority, Smith (2012) highlights the uneven power dynamics between Israelis and Palestinians in the pre-peace project era. He argues that non-accepting the existence of the Palestinian Other paved the way for the institutionalised discrimination and conflict narratives in Israel against the out-group "Other". On the one hand, Waxman (2006) explores how the Israeli conflict ethos have shaped and reshaped Israeli foreign policy approaches, informing the state's involvement in chronic wars and interventions against the Arab forces in the region. Oren (2019), on the other hand, examines the change in the Israeli conflict ethos after the Six Day War in 1967 with a particular take on Bar-Tal's (2013) *societal belief* understanding. She links the imagined collective identity making project in Israel to the conflict-supporting narratives – that most closely align with the theory-driven arguments of this thesis that are detailed in Chapter 2.

Recalling Einstein's question asked at the beginning of this thesis, Halperin et al. (2014) argue that researchers need to work on emotional and behavioural control mechanisms in transforming the negative affect-centric dynamics, especially intergroup hate and anger attached to the Other. The literature on the conflict ethos and intergroup emotions is at the development stage in Turkey as Turkey's intractable conflict has rarely been analysed from a sociopsychological lens, commencing with the ephemeral impetus of the conflict resolution attempts in the country (2009-2015). Yet, in the vein of Halperin et al. (*ibid*), one of the heated topics covered by these

limited but exceptionally deep works was the "in-/out-group perception" and "attitude change towards the Other" – that offers us insights about the political and psychological asymmetry between Turks and Kurds (see Onbasi, 2015; Uluğ et al., 2017; Çelik, 2021). In this sense, Bilali et al. (2014) examine the role of high-intensity conflict in Turkey on the social distance and discrimination issue between Turks and Kurds, finding out that "Turks view[s] Kurds as rogue, whereas Kurds view[s] Turks as barbarian" (*ibid*, p. 252). Related to the issue, Çelebi et al. (2014) argue that the social distance issue lessens when the two groups agree that the conflict is between Turks and Kurds – as a shared issue aggravated by both ethnic groups. However, it shows the opposite trend when they blame the other ethnic group more (*ibid*). On the in-group favouritism, Bağcı and Çelebi (2017) observe that the "ethnic identity" reference negatively influences the intergroup perceptions between Turks and Kurds, while the "national identity" reference promotes positive intergroup attitudes if it is framed as an inclusive framework. Finally, Sarigil and Karakoc's (2017) recent work reveals that Kurds are relatively more tolerant than Turks within the conflict setting; which in turn enables the former to challenge the historical conflict ethos and stereotypical self-Other reading. These "unorthodox" works do not specifically focus on the early Turkish state elites' collective identity making projects vis-à-vis their intractable conflicts. However, they throw the initial light on the neglected sociopsychological dynamics behind Turkey's intractable conflict, while providing important knowledge on the conflict ethos and "antagonistic" sides' beliefs attached to each other.

Acknowledging the various sociopsychological barriers towards peace, articles in the second category seek to analyse previous peace attempts in Turkey and

Israel and discover the potential ways in which their intractable conflicts can be solved. These studies give this work significant leverage in exploring its second research question. Herein, it must be rehighlighted that the sociopolitical transformations experienced from the 1940s' Turkey and 1970s' Israel onwards prepared a suitable background for the systematic violent eruption of their intractable conflicts. Nonetheless, the multifaced identity contestations towards the imagined Turkishness and Israeliness played a vital role in shaping up the ripe conditions that made Turkey's NUBP and Israel's peaceful coexistence project possible (see Chapter 4.3 and Chapter 5.3). In this sense, the recent conflict analysis literature on Israel's intractable conflict is in a dialectical relationship with the past state policies (see, for example, Hermann, 2003; Cohen-Almagor, 2012; Pappe, 2012; Tessler, 2009; Rowland and Frank, 2002; Rynhold, 2007; Oren, 2010; Roy, 2012; Tilley, 2015; Esu, 2016; Newman, 2010; Tartir, 2016; Bashir, 2016; Gutman, 2017; Yarchi, 2018). Among these works, Handelman (2017) proposes the following, which is probably the most frequently probed question in this intractable conflict: "Is it possible to build the foundations for peace and stability in Israeli–Palestinian situation or are two societies destined to continue living in ongoing violent conflict for a long time?" (2017, p. 461). He discusses various ways to create social and political momentum to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while highlighting that the Israeli leaderships have constantly failed to advance the peace atmosphere at the social level. In this vein, Vries and Maoz (2013) analyse the sociopolitical limits of the Oslo peace process in two points. First, the process remained ineffective to reach (and convince) all strata of the Israeli society, or its substantial part, as the resolution efforts could not lead to the final and mutually accepted agreement. Second, there was diminishing support of both sides' political

39

leaderships towards the initially agreed peace agenda – that gradually undercut the peace process.

As can be noticed, one of the important debates in the literature is the ineffectiveness of the peace processes between Israelis and Palestinians. As a result, a large number of studies deal with two questions: 1) What were the social, political, and psychological dynamics that the Oslo Accords could not grasp?; and 2) What would be a future resolution agenda? Firstly, the Oslo Accords strived to disseminate the peaceful coexistence notion among Israelis and Palestinians. It is argued in this thesis that this normative framework was 1) initially engineered by the liberal Labour party elites, i.e., Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, to promote a new collective self-image with multicultural and cosmopolitan outlook (1984-1995), and 2) then externalised via the Oslo I and II Accords signed with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). This project aimed at modifying Israel's controversial policies towards Palestinians at home and abroad and ultimately mitigate the perpetual intractable conflict (see Chapter 5.3). The very essence of the peaceful coexistence agenda, however, is criticised by, for example, Mavroudi (2010) and Kuttner (2017). They argue that the discursive articulation of the peaceful coexistence among the two groups could not create the anticipated impact due to the overlooked historical grievances. They propose the "shared space" agenda for future coexistence initiatives – a space that needs to be reconstructed through the changing concepts of citizenship, collective identity and nation state in the 21st century. In the same vein with these accounts, Jamal (2016) argues that the two conflicting parties must develop a mutual construction of time, as history and memory. In this way, he continues, Palestinians

and Israelis may mitigate the long-lasting fears and grievances that gradually developed since the 1940s.

In parallel with the peaceful coexistence debate, the "two state solution" (creation of Israeli and Palestinian states as projected by the UN Resolution 181(II), see Chapter 5.2.1), and its alternative, the "one state solution", have attracted significant attention. For example, Miller (2016, p. 438) argues that the two state formula is the only "desirable and necessary" solution given the ethnonationalist renewal of the conflict following the collapse of the peaceful coexistence project in 2000. Newman (2010) claims that alternatives to the two state solution are ideologically oriented, ignoring the demographic realities and territorial disputes between Israelis and Palestinians. In line with these two works, Hussein (2015) also argues that there are critical issues with the one state solution, e.g., the occupation of the West Bank by the Israeli forces. Notwithstanding, she posits that the one state solution might open "liberating pathways" towards mutual reconciliation, justice and peaceful coexistence if the Occupied Territories (OT) are decolonialised (*ibid*, p. 521).[9] On the same subject, Bashir's (2016) recent work assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the two state solution. He argues that although this agenda may address the two groups' major claims, promote democratic values and help Palestinians and Israelis to normalise their collective rights to exist, it is not applicable due to 1) the existing intergroup fear and mistrust, and 2) the power asymmetry between the societies. Going beyond both solution formulas, Allegra and Napolitano (2011) propose that we should first look at the structural elements, especially the role of the

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[9] The OT refers to Israel's territorial expansions over the Palestinian-populated areas following the Six Day War (1967), namely the West Bank and Gaza Strip (including East Jerusalem).

two leaderships which failed to take the peaceful coexistence project to a next level in the past. In this vein, Ben-Artzi, Cristal and Kopelman (2015) claim that the root causes of the conflict must have been detected and addressed by the Israeli leaderships. Having failed to do so, they could not promote the coexistence agenda as the conflict resolution tool (*ibid*). Covering the peace process from a different perspective, Tilley (2015) argues that the achieving of a permanent peace requires Israel to grant the collective rights of the Palestinian people at home and abroad – they live as the minority Other inside Israel and as the non-citizen Other under the Israeli sociopolitical control in the OT (this particular case is explored in Chapter 5.2.2).

If we move on to the Turkish context, there is a burgeoning body of literature focusing on Turkey's conflict resolution process with Kurds and possible solution agendas for future initiatives. In line with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the recent literature concentrates on the past state practices and recent resolution attempts with the *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê* (PKK). These works inform the chapter on the failed conflict resolution initiatives in Turkey (see Chapter 4.3). One of the significant research areas in this developing literature is the role of "framing", such as the media coverage and political framing vis-à-vis the Kurdish Question. The works of Loizides (2009) and Öney and Selck (2017) are among the first to analyse how various political parties in Turkey's parliament reassess the historical Question. On the one hand, Loizides' article illustrates how the political framing practice is rooted in the public identities and definitions of national interest in Turkey. He shows that there were only a few changes in the dominant nationalist discourse towards the Kurdish Question until the commencing of the NUBP. On the other hand, Öney and Selck explore four different parliamentary discourses employed during the NUBP, each revealing varied

political agendas of mainstream parties: 1) socioeconomically motivated, 2) relative deprivation-oriented, 3) pro-Islamist, and 4) terrorism-centred. On the media framing issue, Yuksel-Pecen (2018) explores how the Kurdish Question and terror attacks are represented in Turkey's four big newspapers during the NUBP. She argues that their coverage of the armed conflict between Turkey and the PKK mainly depends on their ideological affiliation with particular media groups in Turkey, e.g., Islamist *Yeni Safak* versus secular *Cumhuriyet*. Another pressing issue, the youth framing towards the peace process, is discussed by Başer and Çelik (2014). They argue that the Kurdish youth feel socioeconomically marginalised and politically alienated even during the NUBP. On the nationhood reframing, Kışlıoğlu and Cohrs (2018) argue that the future solution agenda must deconstruct the Kemalist status quo and reconceptualise the nationhood as a shared social place. However, this trajectory has already failed – deconstructing the Kemalist status quo and its singular understanding of Turkishness were the key objectives of the NUBP and its multicultural and cosmopolitan outlook. In doing so, the ruling AKP discovered the impact of the Ottoman-Islamic aspirations on the intergroup reconciliation. The scant literature (see, for example, Sarigil, 2010; Baysu et al., 2018; Baysu and Coşkan, 2018; Yavuz, 2020) explores the ways in which the Ottoman-Islamic framing practices empower the "Islamic brotherhood" vision between Kurds and Turks – these limited works offer a valuable empirical platform to grasp how the popular counter-narratives against the Kemalist leadership were instrumentalised during the NUBP, e.g., the neo-Ottomanism narrative (see Chapter 4.3). As the last work on the framing case, Gürbüz and Akyol (2017) argue that the NUBP could not bring social peace because the plan was not well designed to attract the public perception of both sides. This democrat(ising) endeavour, they continue,

should have been based on human rights framing vis-à-vis Turkey's historically discriminative position against Kurds.

Approaching the "democratisation" issue from a different angle, Tezcür (2010) argues that the NUBP did not bring peace as it created a competitive environment that challenged the political hegemony of the PKK among Turkey's Kurds. In other words, the multicultural mindset does not offer a panacea to the intractable conflict as long as the PKK can recruit new members (*ibid*). Precisely due to this issue, Aydinli and Ozcan (2011) assert that neither the conflict resolution agenda nor the harsh counterterrorism methods alone can solve the Kurdish Question. The Turkish leadership may settle this issue if it simultaneously engages with both, but avoids prioritising one over the other, they claim. Toktamis (2018), in her recent article, advances Tezcur's claim, arguing that there was a hegemonic clash –a Gramscian "War of Position"– among the AKP, the PKK, and the Gülen (Nur) Movement in destabilising Kemalist structure. These three players trapped in the "claim making" competition towards the intergroup peace and violence (also, see Yavuz and Balci, 2018). Kardaş and Balci (2016) also look at how the competing ideological dynamics between Turkey's three major actors, namely the political Islamists, Kurds, and Kemalists, established a security dilemma among them during the NUBP. Tracing this security dilemma and social tension through interviewing laypeople, Uluğ and Cohrs (2017) put forward that the future peace process in Turkey requires a bottom-up incentive – as opposed to the top-down structure of the recent resolution attempt.

Alongside these works, there is a strong body of literature focusing on the role of peace education and NGOs within Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflict contexts (see Lehman-Wilzig 1990; Bekerman and Horenczyk, 2004; Bar-Tal,

Diamond and Nasie, 2017; Abu-Nimer, 2004; Demir 2011; Kepenekci, 2005; Pinson, Levy and Soker 2010; Stephan et al., 2004) – that inform one of the powerful ways via which the NUBP and peaceful coexistence projects were sought to be disseminated (see Chapter 4.3 and Chapter 5.3) To begin with, Bar-Tal et al. (2017) argue that the political socialisation of youths starts earlier than previously thought in the intractable conflict. The particular framings of the official conflict narratives at the school environment shape youths' sociopsychological repertoire and then reflect on their daily interactions with the Other (*ibid*) (for the continuities and changes of the official conflict ethos in the Israeli school curriculum, see Podeh, 2001; Bar-Tal, 1998a). In this sense, Plonski (2005, p. 398) argues that the limited multicultural peace education and civil society networks helped deconstructing the "national myopia" in the 1990s' Israel. In the future resolution attempts towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, these channels must be promoted because peace education, intercommunal contact programmes, and social movements appeared to be "the only context for peace learning" and "social change" (*ibid*, p. 406).

Seen in this light, while the transformative agenda of peace education planted the initial but limited seeds of the peaceful coexistence philosophy in Israel, the social campaigns and NGO activities contributed to disseminate it by challenging the dominant social structure and rigid understanding of the imagined Israeliness (for the seminal works, see Hall-Cathala, 1990; Maoz et al., 2002; Maoz, 2004; Hermann, 2003; Benvenisti et al., 2019). For example, Salomon (2004) finds out that promoting the coexistence-oriented narratives mitigated the negative intergroup perspectives and binary reading of the Other. He observes that youths developed a better ability to recognise the Other's subjective position during the resolution process, albeit limitedly

due to the long-attached collective grievances. Departing from Salomon's angle, Yogev (2010) claims that adopting the critical pedagogy lens towards history education may help the subsequent Israeli and Palestinian generations to objectively evaluate their violent past. In turn, it would heal "the wounds of the present by means of a rational and grounded perception of the past" (*ibid*) – indeed that was one of the missing pieces in the peaceful coexistence project (see Chapter 5.3.5)

In the Turkish context, there is a growing literature on the impact of peace education and humanitarian NGOs during the NUBP (see, for example, Kaliper and Tocci, 2010; Aras and Akpinar, 2015; Başer 2015; Kaliper, 2016; Başer and Ozerdem, 2019). Among these works, Başer and Ozerdem's (2019) recent article explored how the civil society initiatives, e.g., the Memory Center (*Hafıza Merkezi*), in Turkey discussed the similar intractable conflict cases in the world and organised workshops that contributed to reducing the intergroup prejudice, while promoting the peaceful mindset until the recent authoritarian turn of the AKP. From the knowledge production point, these NGO activities went hand in hand with the revised national education programmes of the AKP leadership. For example, Kancı (2009) claims that the curriculums were adjusted to promote a multicultural community vision with chapter names like "Everybody Has an Identity" (*ibid*, p. 370) and "All Together" (*ibid*, p. 369) (see Chapter 4.3.2 and Chapter 4.3.3) – that contested the strong nationhood claims of the Kemalist structure. However, Demir (2011) draws attention to the absence (and ineffectiveness) of peace literature in the curriculum that could have contributed towards the intergroup tolerance in Turkey and instil the development of peace culture as an alternative to violence. Approaching the neighbouring issue from a longitudinal perspective, İnce (2012, p. 129) claims that the educational materials in

Turkey on "democracy, national identity, and social diversity…are [still] regrettably out of step with contemporary political and social reality". It imposes a major issue because achieving of cosmopolitan and multicultural mindset at the social level first requires genuine self-interrogation that would force the collective self to critically reconsider its past practices against the marginalised Other. Then, the collective self can alter its ontological boundaries and reimagine the future collective existence with the Other – that would promote the promised sociopsychological change of the NUBP at discursive and practical fields as opposed to the particular Kemalist imagination of the Turkish state and society.

The sudden collapses of Turkey's and Israel's much-promised conflict resolution processes leave many fundamental questions unanswered. In light of the conceptual and empirical reviews above, one may argue that the robust "unorthodox" security literature on Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts are comparatively new. Notwithstanding, many scholars employ critical approaches to analyse the two cases in this burgeoning field. Their research topics spread into a diverse range from the negative conflict narratives to the internal power contestations before and during the peace processes. None of these works, however, provide a broad analysis of the early Turkish and Israeli state elites' collective identity making projects and their sociopsychological weight on Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflict trajectories. Moreover, the ways in which the subsequent leaderships of both countries contested the rigid ontological security-seeking routines of the imagined Turkishness and Israeliness in order to settle the perpetual intractable conflicts have not been systematically examined within the present body of literature.

As indicated throughout this introduction chapter, this thesis aims at reaching internally consistent and inclusive explanations towards Turkey's and Israel's emotion-laden intractable conflicts through the sociopsychological lens. This particular lens helps this thesis to explore 1) the slow-moving sociopsychological mechanisms that shaped and spurred Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts from a longitudinal perspective, and 2) the subsequent leaderships' top-down conflict resolution agendas which remained ineffective to facilitate the projected sociopsychological change at the society level – that enigmatically marked the return to the binary reading of the selective Other(s) and destructive conflict patterns.

Consequently, while making use of neighbouring, and contributing to existing scholarly works, this thesis seeks to analyse the overlooked (or sparsely treated) sociopsychological dynamics working behind Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts by locating itself within the theoretical literature of ontological security. What follows is an in-depth examination of the analytical lens of this research and its theory-driven hypotheses. These hypotheses are used to investigate the complex interaction between the psychological and sociohistorical processes of security and collective identity making projects in Turkey and Israel and their resonance over the sociopolitical structure.

2. Ontological Security Theory: Analytical Microscope[10]

As briefly outlined in Chapter 1.1.1, the emergence of new paradigms in the security studies has prompted a discussion gravitating around the "widening" and "deepening" security agenda, focusing on, among others, the altering referent objects of security and discursive manufacturing of the friend-enemy dichotomy. Related to this debate, the psychological prominence of the Other in making of group as well as state level agency has received significant scholarly attention (for example, Grosbard, 2003; Sucharov, 2005). Within this research scope, state identity is largely associated with an array of principles (see Kaarbo, 2003) that not only lay out the basic assumptions between states and the external Other but also draw a line between states and the internal Other (Campbell, 1998a; 1998b). In parallel with the widening-deepening security agenda, a novel approach exploring states' motivations to protect their subjective sense of self has made its way into the flourishing security studies. In her thought-provoking work, Mitzen argues that:

> IR 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 (2006a, p. 351).

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[10] The substantial part of this chapter is published in an international peer-reviewed journal, namely *Political Psychology*, see Adisonmez (2019). Some parts of this chapter are also published in *Uluslararası İlişkiler/International Relations* journal, see Rumelili and Adisonmez (2020).

In agreement with Mitzen's argument, several IR theories are grounded on the same premise that states seek the ways in which protecting their physical survival (Keohane, 1980; Mearsheimer, 2001) in order to realise their interests since:

> Unless men enjoy some measure of security against the threat of death or injury at the hand of others, they are not able to devote energy or attention enough to other objects to be able to accomplish them (Bull, 1977, p. 5).

Needless to reiterate, states have to defend their physical security, which is associated with their governments, territories, and citizens, from the harassment of aggressor party. Thus, the physical survival of states is the *primary* source of security they strive to defend. Critically approaching this traditional security approach, McSweeney scales up "states' security hierarchies" to a new height:

> If we allow that physical survival has a *logical priority* over other needs, this makes it 'primary' only in the uninteresting sense: it is a logical pre-condition of doing anything that we remain physically alive and capable of doing it. It becomes significant for the allocation of resources only if we live in a jungle where this level of security is empirically the most pervasive and common concern. If we assume …that wherever we live we live in a jungle, then it is reasonable to conclude that it is complacency rather than rational assessment not to elevate physical survival to the highest rank in the *hierarchy of human needs*. Conversely, it is paranoia to organise our lives on that assumption without compelling evidence to support it. The division of human needs between the *social*, *cultural*, *psychological*, *biological*, and their ranking in an abstract hierarchy is notoriously contentious. Which need is 'primary' is not resolvable by empirical observation (emphasis added, 1999, pp. 153-154).

Like McSweeney, many scholars challenge the abstract hierarchy attached to states' physical security and question their preconditions to survive. Departing from the attribution of states' anthropomorphic features, which goes beyond states' basic need of physically existing, they argue that states need as well as show humanly expressions in order to operate, such as being recognised by other states (Wendt, 2004; Mitzen, 2006a; Steele, 2008b). Seen in this light, there is *another* source of security

which motivates states to be consistent, stable (Huysmans, 1998; McSweeney, 1999; Steele, 2005; Kinnvall, 2004; 2007; Rumelili and Adisonmez, 2020) and feeling the sense of self (Mitzen, 2006a; 2006b) – that is ontological security.

Theorised by Laing (1960) and then advanced by Giddens (1991), ontological security underscores individual's need to experience oneself as a whole in order to comprehend his/her sense of agency (Mitzen, 2006a, p. 342). In other words, individual actors can practice their agency only if they establish a stable way to exist since the very actors need to feel secure with regards to their identities and self-narratives (*ibid*). Thus, ontological security is "the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action" (Mitzen and Larson, 2017, p. 3, citing Giddens, 1990, p. 92).

Articulating this self-identity in a daily setting compels a certain cognitive landscape, through which individuals form, sustain, and stabilise their performative routines and autobiographical narratives. In this way, people mitigate the "fundamental existential questions" (Giddens, 1991, p. 47). The emergence of these existential questions at critical junctures would provoke ontological insecurity, defined as a condition of deep anxiety originating from the disruption of performative routines and inability to experience a stable narrative of "doing, acting, and being" (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 746). In doing so, individuals' actions need to show biographical continuity (Kinnvall and Mitzen, 2017); therefore, they are anticipated to either support their existing identity or contrast it (Mitzen, 2006a).

To recap, performative routines and their expression by autobiographical narratives help individual agents to eliminate "interrupting" uncertainties which

prompt them questioning their self-images. Thus, the ontological security-seeking process is evaluated as a conservative need, a kind of "homeostatic tendency" which can be both applied to state level and group level relations (Mitzen and Kyle Larson, 2017, p. 4). In this sense, three interrelated questions arise: 1) How do states and groups formulate their ontological security?; 2) What are the research topics of ontological security/insecurity studies?; and 3) Whose ontological security do scholars focus on?

In order to answer the questions above, it merits to be mentioned that the literature is far from unipolar not only in understanding intrastate behaviours and their formulation processes but also intergroup as well as state-society levels of ontological security-seeking. Therefore, the following section first explores various approaches explaining how agents formulate their ontological security. Then, it categorises the topics of ontological security research. Lastly, it proceeds to the third question. After addressing these core questions, a specific research agenda of this work is provided in Chapter 2.4.

2.1. How does Agent Formulate its Ontological Security?

The central concepts attached high importance within the ontological security literature, such as identity formulation, are previously used by the social constructivist school (for example, Houghton, 2006; Wendt, 2009). According to the school, states act how they want to be recognised by other actors. For example, states with democratic identity projection may support diplomatic negotiations rather than pursuing military intervention in light of the behavioural codes of "being a democratic state". With this literature in mind, the innovative aspect of ontological security is to

investigate the sociopsychological forces working behind this agency formulation that provide actors certain roles and facilitate a cognitive background for action.

In the literature, there are three different perspectives regarding the ontological security formulation: externalist, internalist, and reflexive. According to Mitzen's externalist approach (2006a), states' ontological security is not shaped by their domestic dynamics. Instead, it is formed in light of external actors' influence on states. From Steele's internalist outlook (2008b), however, states' ontological security is shaped by means of discursive articulation of self-images and narratives, which are internally formed. Said differently, states first construct their self-identity and autobiographical narratives vis-à-vis their domestically shaped dynamics. Then, they act with this imaginary-self in mind.

The third formulisation, which this research adopts co-constitutively with Steele's approach, provides a more flexible scope. According to this approach, agency of state/group cannot be understood as an independent subject from historically formed relationship with the significant Other since self is responsive to recently shaped relations (Kinnvall, 2004; 2011). In other words, intergroup and international relations are not fixed but reflexively altered in light of developments happening around agent.[11] This is not to say that agents can change their ontological security-providers, such as self-image, within a short period. Instead, it claims that agents reflexively adjust their ontological security considering major developments. Steele's example of Great Britain's (GB) decision of not to intervene in the American Civil

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[11] Although Steele focuses on the internalist outlook, he uses different kind of reflexive approach – termed as self-interrogative reflexivity. This approach points out the questioning of "identity makers" ascribed to state's agency, on which there may be several contested topics and counter-narratives (Steele 2008b). This is further explored in Chapter 2.4.2.

War is a paragon of this reflexive attitude. He notes that the GB was planning to involve in America's internal conflict at the beginning. Nevertheless, the "Emancipation Proclamation" was declared in the following period, clearly showing that this internal clash was about slavery. The GB officials evaluated that providing support to the slaveholding Confederacy camp would challenge the GB's self-image as they perceived themselves as the emancipators of Europe, intervening in tyrannical regimes, such as Netherlands and Belgium (Steele, 2005; 2008b). Based on Steele's historical analysis and Kinnvall's reflexive approach, the "significant Other" hypothesis is worth distilling before moving on to the second question.

In studying the changing world politics with regards to the decolonisation movements, Crawford claims that there are three constituents of what is to be termed political identity: "1) a sense of self in relation to or distinct from others, or 'social identity'; 2) a historical narrative about the self (which can be mythical or religious); and 3) an ideology" (2002, p. 114). For Clero (2008, pp. 41-42), this division between self and the Other, or "social identity", needs attentive reading in order to understand different rationales constructing them. Clero argues that there are two types of "others" playing vital roles in making of agency: The other with a small 'o' and the Other with a capital 'O'. From the one side, "the other" ascribes an empirically happening *other*. It refers to the event/development/occurrence that takes place around agent and can be understood as a label which is used to identify the event. On the other side, "the Other" is far more complex. Unlike its former version, the Other has a function of Otherness. It can be seen as "a role, a situation, an institution, code, supreme fiction, transcendence" (Burgess, 2017, p. 8).

Said differently, the Other does not exist in an empirical sense. It rather sets "the horizon for thought and action for Otherness" (*ibid*). Thus, the role of the Other is to assign the governance codes and regulating dynamics which define what is allowed and what is not within the boundaries of a particular political authority. Against this backdrop, the Other is "known" through agents' dialectical experience with the Other, such as via their bodily involvements. In this sense, the body serves as the "means through which information becomes sensible" (Hutchison, 2018, p. 7, citing Marlin-Bennett, 2013, p. 602). Therefore, bodily involvements, such as violent encounters, can develop into *informative developments* for agents' performances which are experienced and learned during the dialectical interaction between the self and the Other(s). Consequently, the boundaries of "self" are profoundly shaped/enacted/performed in light of encounters with the Other. In this sense, these encounters, particularly violent ones with the Other has a major impact on agents' patterns of actions. These encounters, on the one hand, attach the Other a function of Otherness as discussed above. They, on the other hand, become reference points in drawing the boundaries of a particular agency in light of learned experiences and anxieties associated with the Other. In this sense, this affect-centric experience with the Other can be used for the subject identifications which are discursively articulated and rearticulated through various "human labels" (Solomon, 2013), such as "modern versus backwards", "secular versus reactionary" and "ignorant versus civilised", as shown in this thesis. These "human labels" or narratives not only help agents to navigate her/his "self" in the world but also distinguish her/his "self" from the Others. Accordingly, states' official narratives which articulate particular subject identifications are the projection of certain political choices. In other words, these

narratives echo state elites' fantasised beliefs vis-à-vis how citizens are expected to adopt certain roles and performances within a defined political context.

Consequently, the split between the self and the Other is often studied as groups/states' variances are something incompatible with each other. One reason for this incompatibility perspective stems from the fact that the identity takes a "doxic" shape at group level. In other words, group itself emerges as the outcome of a collective "expectations and habits of distinction-making" process (Bourdieu, 1977, cited in Rumelili and Todd 2018, p. 3). This process intuitively reaffirms the above "human labels" which read social space through a binary lens. Critically approaching this process, Chernobrov (2016) claims that the historically nurtured autobiographical narratives towards the Other frequently reflect a sense of superiority, interpreted as agents' egoistic self-defence mechanism. It is a relevant point as this self-defence mechanism discussion may be linked to agents' necessity to have a unique self-image.

From this vantage point, this fragmentation lays out the imperative mechanisms working behind agency making process that the ontological security scholars seek to explore. Building on the above discussion, it can be argued that ontological security provides a rewarding perspective in locating, for example, states' efforts to form and sustain a unique national agency and institutional practices in relation with the significant Other. The below section now turns to the second question.

2.2. What are the Research Topics of Ontological Security?

The ontological security literature has concentrated on four areas in terms of the research subjects: "foreign policy analysis", "recognition/misrecognition and nation

branding", "affect, collective memory and anxiety studies", and "peace and conflict studies". As noted at the beginning of the analytical framework, most scholars have employed ontological security theory in analysing state level relations. To begin with, the role of ontological security in tracing state level relations is introduced by Steele (2005), claiming that states discursively produce their self-identity and then engage in IR. For instance, he observes that Belgium's decision to fight Germany during WWI was going to have devastating physical consequences for Belgium. However, "a state can completely jeopardise its own physical security" (Steele, 2008b, p. 95) while pursuing its self-identity (which he refers to as the "Belgian Honour"). In another historical research, Zarakol (2010) aims at explaining why non-Western countries, exemplified as Turkey and Japan, hesitate to apologise with regards to their proceeding's historical crimes: the Ottomans' Armenian massacre and Japanese Empire's Nanking massacre. Although apologising has no material cost but help countries to enhance their relationships, taking this action would force both states to reconsider "its sense of self" and threaten their long-attached autobiographical narratives (Zarakol, 2010, p. 7). Three years after, she wrote a co-authored piece with Subotic. By particularly looking at the collective values, such as shared ideas and narratives on the Balkan conflict in the 1990s, they explore that the Serbian, Croatian and Dutch governments' responses towards their internal critiques differ in each state based on their structural positions and historically attached self-images (Subotic and Zarakol, 2013).

The second working area in the ontological security literature is the "recognition/misrecognition and nation branding" – that focuses on state level as well as group level recognition and change. For example, Subotic (2018) explores the post-

communist states' anxieties of not being recognised as the "full European Union (EU) member". She argues that the EU's collective memory politics on the Holocaust force these states to reconsider their self-images and ultimate create an ontologically insecure environment. In other project, Gustafsson points to the contemporary Sino-Japanese relations. Approaching the bilateral relations, he explores the interconnected dilemma of China's demurring behaviour to "recognise" Japan as a "peaceful state" and Japan's reluctance to "recognise" China as a "past Japanese victim" of the Nanking massacre (2014; 2016). Unfolding the recognition subject further, Selden and Strome (2017) explore how India's reluctance to cooperate with the United States (US) has changed after the Cold War. They argue that the main reason for India's uncooperative approach was its foreign policy during the Cold War, as India was associated with the Non-Alignment Movement. After the Cold War, however, India has observed the emerging regional powers, such as China, and decided to establish strong ties with the US – that shows how Kinnvall's *reflexive* approach plays itself out vis-à-vis the empirical cases. What is interesting in Selden and Strome's work is that they look at how the Indian media switched the Non-Alignment image of the country to the democratic one. The Non-Alignment Movement is also studied by Vieira (2016). He shows that the Movement's shared understanding and community-image still persists even after the Cold War as the collective decision-making process has become its members' ontological security routine in the international arena. Lastly, Behravesh (2019) explores Iran's state revisionism. According to him, Iran tries to justify its nuclear security politics and works against the status quo in the Middle East, while self-portraying itself as a "non-accepted/recognised" state in the eyes of the Western powers.

In parallel with the topics above, Browning (2015) explores the "nation branding" case by drawing on ontological security theory. He examines the ways in which several countries advertise their national self-images through worldwide marketing. For example, he finds out that the United Kingdom's (UK) "Cool Britannia" and Chile's "Chile, Always Surprising" campaigns are as closely linked to making of coherent national narrative as economic advantages. In other project on the nation branding, Subotic (2017) revisits various employment ways of the Yugoslav Airlines in making the Yugoslav and Serbian state identities. She argues that the airline company had not only been used to articulate the multiple Yugoslav identities on the international stage. Its branding technique had also been reflexively modified depending on the changing regional politics in the Balkans.

The third area of the ontological security literature concentrates on the interaction between the intergroup level of ontological security-seeking vis-à-vis the politics of religion, nationalism, and Otherisation. This area of research builds on the recently bourgeoning field of the affect, collective memory, and anxiety literature which reads the identity notion from the lens of long-ignored but constitutive elements of politics such as "insecurity", "fear", and "victimhood". In this vein, Kinnvall first explores the link between the national agency and ontological security. She argues that nations' "chosen traumas" and "chosen glories" are being reproduced in certain times, such as national crises, in order to mitigate the ontologically insecure atmosphere (2002; 2004).[12] Similarly, Steele (2008a) surveys how "traumas" are being used by agents. He argues that the utilisation of traumatic events can provide a clear trajectory for agents' autobiographical narratives. In this vein, Solomon (2012) highlights that

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[12] The nexus of trauma and ontological security is further explored in Chapter 2.4.

the articulations of the US citizens' anxious feelings following the 9/11 attacks overlap with the US society's historically resonating self-narratives.

It is also rewarding to employ the ontological security framework to explore the rise of populist right-wing movements in the contemporary Europe. In their recent work, Kinnvall et al. (2018) claim that the ontological insecurities remaining from the postcolonial histories of the European actors have prepared a fertile background for the right-wing populism after the migration "crisis" in 2015. According to Alkopher (2018), the discourses employed by these rising populist movements in fact show parallels to many EU states' long-attached autobiographical narratives and migration policies (also, see Mitzen, 2018). In the work of Skey, which focuses on the ethnic "Others" within the English context, populist nationalism is described as an abstract tool informing the sense of ontological security through behavioural routinisations and institutional codes. Within this framework, nationalism serves as a tool of "anchoring subjectivity", according to Innes and Steele (2013, p. 24). Echoing Skey's study, Croft (2012, p. 220) also deals with the same topic, focusing on the ways in which the presentations of the British Muslims as a source of ontological insecurity against "Britishness".

The fourth and last research area of ontological security encapsulates the peace and conflict studies. Rumelili's (2015) edited book *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security* opens up this new chapter in the field. In this edited volume, drawing on Kay's work on Northern Ireland (2012), Rumelili (2015) conceptualises how the conflict resolution attempts may create ontological insecurity among citizens. Deriving from one of the main claims of ontological security, which is agents' anxiety of change, Rumelili surveys the ways in which a physical security-providing process,

i.e., conflict resolution, disturbs agents' long-attached routines. Within this edited work, for example, Çelik (2015) explores the intergroup level ontological security/insecurity dynamics unfolded between Turks-Kurds during the peace process. She examines the ontological asymmetry case between the conflicting sides, arguing that the long-attached routines of the dominant ethnic group, Turks, must be challenged during the peace process in order to grasp the position of the Kurdish minority (also, see Rumelili and Çelik, 2017; for the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot cases, see Loizides, 2015). The ways in which this thesis is informed by the premises of these works are highlighted in Chapter 2.4.

Based on diverse research areas in the theory, one can recognise that the case selections and unit of analysis vary among the scholars. With this in mind, the following section moves on to the last question: Whose ontological security do scholars focus on?

2.3. Whose Ontological Security?

Researchers are not sometimes clear about whose ontological security they analyse although there are four distinct ways to do so (Mitzen and Larson, 2017, pp. 12-13). Based on the "Belgian ontological security" example, Mitzen and Larson argue that the notion might first *literally* be treated as if states are agents having their unique ontological security. Second, it might be evaluated in an *as if sense*, assuming that states are treated in line with certain characteristics they are attached to, such as the Non-Alignment Movement. Third, states' ontological security might be seen as the ontological security of a *specific agent*, for example, Belgium's prime minister (PM) who involves in the decision-making process for the nation. Prior to exploring the last

approach, upon which I build my research agenda, some critical points towards the above approaches are merit to be cited.

There is a discussion "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). Several scholars criticise the employment of the theory concerning its state and group level explanations as well as its normative stance. On the one hand, Rossdale (2015) challenges Kinnvall's (2004) understanding of ontological security-seeking along with the normative position of the theory. Departing from the routinisation of political codes and national narratives, he argues that the theory reaches a deadlock as it is trapped into the continuity issue. Building on the queer identity, Rossdale offers that a binary understanding of self and contradictory behavioural practices may help agents to contest states' exclusionist ontological security-seeking routines. In this sense, radical political movements, e.g., queer movements, can challenge hierarchical position of status quo-seeking ruling elites. Then, protesting states' damaging social codes and autobiographical narratives in asymmetrical ways would ultimately modify these notions. Rossdale's approach towards states' strong ontological security routines is crucial to rethink the theory vis-à-vis state practices.

In spite of its merits, Rossdale's "creative moments for change" argument encounters a practical dilemma. Many scholars (Kinnvall, 2004; Steele, 2005; 2008b) argue that states can reflexively adjust their ontological security, such as the GB case, in accordance with major developments. However, these cases do not evidence that they could *promptly* change their political codes, and more importantly, their security mindset. There are some structural limits in executing these variations at state level while individuals may well challenge states routines in asymmetrical ways. By

extension, implementing Rossdale's binary understanding of self becomes a demanding task at state level. It may not be possible for states to modify their ontological security-seeking dynamics as easily as individual agents. It should be noted that one of the most notable constraints over state level "creative moments" is states' laggard bureaucratic structures which not only decelerate decision-making practice (Strange, 1998), but also compel states to "convince" the majority about the change of ontological security network (see Chapter 4.3.5 and Chapter 5.3.5).

On the other hand, regarding the scope of ontological security, Krolikowski (2008) argues that the notion of state personhood may obscure the significant aspects of how states, as changing entities, influence their citizens' sense of ontological security. Challenging Mitzen's routinisation approach (2006a), she claims that individuals encounter ontological insecurity, not states. Applying the Chinese case, Krolikowski argues that although states have a need for ontological security, such a hypothesis assumes that they evolve their ontological security routines and then inoculate them to their citizens. Krolikowski's point is worth considering because it is comparatively easy to find more empirical support on the "individual-as-actor" perspective than the "state-as-actor". However, the recent studies find a way to track this interlaced relationship – that is the fourth approach towards "whose ontological security".

The fourth and last approach towards the "Belgian ontological security" builds on the rationale that states' ontological security is the "shorthand for the ontological security of Belgian society, which can be supported, undermined, and manipulated by elites" (Mitzen and Larson, 2017. p. 12). Adopting this approach, Lupovici (2015) and Subotic (2016) aim at shedding light on the causal link between elite intervention and

group level ontological security. On the one hand, Lupovici's early work (2012, p. 812) claims that the Palestinian terror attacks during the second *intifada* (2000-2005) provoked "ontological dissonance" among multiple Israeli identities after the Oslo peace process. Advancing his argument, Lupovici (2015) later argues that the Israeli leadership strived to mitigate this society-wide anxiety by differentiating Hamas from Fatah (PLO). Consequently, it portrayed Hamas as the Palestinian *enemy Other* while Fatah was referred to as a faction with which Israel could *talk* – that intervention informed how the future Israeli society would engage with the "two" Palestinian Others.

On the other hand, Subotic (2016) explores the complex relationship between elite intervention and foreign policy. Evaluating the Serbian politicians' actions towards Kosovo, she argues that the Serbian elites activate certain narratives attached to the national identity in order to persuade Serbs to accept the state's foreign policy manoeuvres. Reading Subotic's lines, the Serbian elites tried to modify autobiographical narratives of the Serbian majority on Kosovo, a province which had been perceived as a part of the "Serbian identity". For the Serbian elites, sticking to the secessionist approach towards Kosovo would pose an issue for their foreign policy agenda, i.e., the EU accession process. For Mitzen and Larson, the existing ontological security works demonstrate elite intervention towards particular narratives that:

> …provide society with ontological security, often discussing this in terms of elite "activation" of particular elements of a narrative, invoked specifically to suit their purposes at a given moment…This type of analysis suggests that the ontological security that matters is that of the mass public: their narratives of national mythology and their conceptions about the identity of the state (2017, p. 12).

What is vital considering elite interventions in light of national narratives is to explore context-specific dynamics and structures that establish main sociopsychological contours of a given society. At this juncture, ontological security theory provides a unique theoretical lens to identify this intertwined relationship. Nonetheless, each approach, scope, and unit of analysis within the theory has its own analytical value in surveying the ontological security of states and/or diverse groups that constitute them. This thesis aims at exploring two related phenomena of interest, being methodological and empirical, which remain relatively unexplored within the literature by drawing on Kinnvall's reflexivity and Steele's self-interrogative reflexivity approaches vis-à-vis the significant Other.

First, the existing ontological security works explore the "freezing moment in an ongoing process" (Mitzen and Larson, 2017, p. 13), e.g., modifying self-image and group level ontological security-seeking routines in political junctures (for example, Lupovici; 2012; Çelik, 2015; Subotic, 2016). This methodological approach leaves a causal analysis gap within the literature in making sense of how and why a particular version of collective identity becomes a constitutive element of politics, security, and conflict from a longitudinal lens. In this respect, it firstly examines the early Turkish and Israeli policymakers' (respectively, Kemalists and Labour Zionists) traumatic conflict experiences with the significant Others. Exploring these anxious clashes offers a conceptual background to demonstrate the ways in which the early Turkish and Israeli leaderships' subjective conflict experiences were echoed at a group level ontological security formation, informing, e.g., the in-/out-group boundaries and autobiographical narratives of Turkishness and Israeliness vis-à-vis the significant Other(s). This approach secondly enables this work to systematically track 1) the

sociopsychological mechanisms that shape and spurred the intractable conflicts of Turkey and Israel, and 2) the society-wide contestations raised towards the imagined Turkishness and Israeliness over decades that made their peace processes possible in the first place.

Second, the recent ontological security works offered nuanced perspectives on top-down elite interventions in reshaping the existing collective identity, e.g., Lupovici (2015). Nonetheless, they do not provide a broad analysis of two particular issues: 1) how various counter-hegemonic stories and narratives are used by state elites to contest the sociopsychological boundaries of societies in order to settle the intractable conflicts, and 2) why societies stick to their long-attached ethnic identity makers and destructive conflict patterns when these interventions remain ineffective. In other words, we still know very little about the "particularity of ontological security resonance" (Mitzen and Larson, 2017, p. 14) – that is, to make sense "why particular discourses and policies resonate" in a given context over decades (*ibid*, p. 19).[13] Building on the first phenomenon, this study aims at bridging the empirical gap behind the *dynamic stickiness* of societies to their deep-seated political and sociopsychological routines by analysing the NUBP in Turkey (2009-2015) and the peaceful coexistence project in Israel (1984-2000). With these research gaps in mind,

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[13] There are two clarifications vis-à-vis discourse. First, this work adopts Hutchison's (2016) take on discourses, claiming that they are communicated in diverse ways, i.e., via behavioural and semantic performances. Second, it analyses the Turkish and Israeli state elites' discourses with their psychological dimension, articulating their ideas and feelings (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, 2011). This affect-centred reading of discourse highlights "the capacity of symbolic and semiotic interpretation to elucidate both terms of langue/parole and structure/agency", demonstrating how the "political mind" and "political society" come to be intertwined and mutually constitutive (*ibid*, pp. 7-8). This arrangement helps this study to show how the elites' experiences with the selective Other(s) are discursively expressed; and in turn offered them a suitable setting to shape a particular collective identity, law articles, and state apparatuses.

"the trauma turn" in ontological security literature helps me to construct my hypotheses in the following section.

2.4. Complex Tetragon: Trauma, Nation, Security, and Transformation

"The past is never dead. It's not even past", writes Faulkner in his book *Requiem for a Nun* (1951). The line describes the pains of the main character, Temple, who finds herself in an identity crisis. She needs to face her violent past in order to peacefully continue her life. However, it is very challenging for her to encounter agonising reminiscences, which in turn reproduce the very crisis. If one scales up the scope of this individual level narrative to state level, one may trace the common arguments in Zarakol's (2010) study. In this work, Zarakol aims at grasping how the historical ontological insecurities of Turkey and Japan, such as being labelled as "barbarians" vis-à-vis the Armenian and Nanking massacres, had been shaped vis-à-vis the perceptions of international actors. With regards to these particular insecurities, Zarakol asks a critical question, "Are interactions and the international environment the main source of ontological anxiety for a state, or are the insecure interactions merely a consequence of the state's own uncertainty about its own identity?" (2010, p. 6). It is hard to offer a straightforward answer to Zarakol's question, especially if the given insecurities are shaped in light of *traumatic memories* developed after catastrophic events. In other words, it is imperative to investigate the sociopsychological driving forces behind particular traumatic memories as they dominate agents' mental landscape and establish a cognitive background for action.

Although trauma is one of the fundamental concepts of ontological security, it had long remained understudied (except Kinnvall 2002; 2004) until it became increasingly relevant in the literature. The recent but limited works exploring the role of trauma as a source of interruption (Steele, 2008a), the interplay between affect and discourse in understanding the American reactions to the 9/11 (Solomon, 2012), the European trauma informing the way in which governing the past, present, and future (Kinnvall, 2012), and the reconstructions of historical traumas and collective memory in devising a gendered space (Kinnvall, 2017) nuanced our insights about the complex interaction among traumas, collective narratives, and political field.[14] I argue that by building on these recent works and reassessing the previous trauma literature in ontological security, we can expand our knowledge on the interplay between psychological and sociohistorical processes of security and agency making, and their ontological resonance over the sociopolitical structure.

To begin with, trauma is not an easy concept to define. It is a "messy" concept as it evokes various feelings such as pain and confusion (Pace and Ali, 2018, p. 503). In this "messy" setting, a traumatic experience can be discursively articulated in order to create a foundational place for action (Giddens, 1990, p. 243). Therefore, communicating traumatic experiences can be understood as a mechanism that provides agents with a suitable background for action, inherently informing their future practices. In this sense, trauma is significant to make sense of ontological security in

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[14] This section is also informed by the limited trauma and memory studies in politics and IR disciplines. These works, among others, include the study of trauma and memory in IR (for trauma and global politics, see Bell, 2006; Zehfuss, 2011; for the post-traumatic state actions, see Edkins, 2003; for the 9/11 and its impact on the US' policy making, see Fierke, 2006). The contemporary theoretical works on the trauma and politics are also recognised and utilised to strengthen the application of ontological security in this section (for example, Sasley, 2011; 2013; Pace and Bilgic, 2018).

two different ways (Inness and Steele, 2013). On the one hand, traumatic events and memories might be utilised in a way to formulate a collective identity of nation. On the other hand, traumatic events may force individuals and collectives to question their existing sense of self because trauma imposes a rupturing moment, provoking ontological insecurity. To recap:

> The reinforcement of a traumatic memory reinforces the notion of a collective needing the will to 'walk through blood' in order to obtain the right of self-determination. Trauma is not a precursor of ontological security-seeking, but it can be both destructive and formative in the national identity that unites a collective under a shared framework of belonging…Thus national identity and collective memory can be built upon formative traumatic events, but the nature of that identity may be either questioned or reappropriated and reinforced after [another] insecurity inducing trauma (*ibid*, p. 23).

I evaluate the above lines in two ways. First, "the nature of identity" reference and its support and/or contestation during the insecurity inducing periods is a vital assertion – that is empirically explored against the turbulent environments of Turkey (1980-2002) (see Chapter 4.2.3) and Israel (1973-1989) (see Chapter 5.2.3). Second, I slightly differ from the binary understanding on the utilisation and manipulation of formative traumatic memories. For example, in the Turkish and Israeli contexts, the formative traumatic events –Independence Wars and the following internal clashes– are mostly used as a "chosen trauma" (Volkan, 1997), described as the mental remembrances of certain catastrophe(s) experienced by groups' descendants that make them feel victimised and suffering (Volkan and Itzkowitch, 2000). These "chosen traumas" are used to consolidate a particular identity politics against the significant Other as explored below. At the times of national crises, e.g., after major terror attacks, however, the same traumatic events are presented as "chosen glory(ies)" (the opposite term of "chosen trauma", providing a group with self-esteem) to demonstrate how

brave and strong (and self-sacrificing etc.) the Turkish and Israeli nations were in the past and will continue to be so in the future.

In this sense, the Independence Wars and subsequent internal clashes serve as informative traumatic events in the Turkish and Israeli cases – that are being utilised as a formative basis to reinforce ontological security and also are framed as a source of ontological insecurity depending on the sociopolitical context. Nonetheless, this work mostly employs the "chosen trauma" concept as it well captures well how the early Turkish and Israeli leaderships formed a particular collective identity vis-à-vis the significant Others. This concept is further explored below, which follows by some of my theory-driven hypotheses.

2.4.1. Traumatic Experience as a Source of National Agency

The birth of a nation's agency is a complex sociopsychological development. There are various ways, timings, and occurrences via which it is constructed and reconstructed. With this regard, Smith (1991) proposes several subquestions in exploring the "origins of nations". One of his queries can serve as a fulcrum for the following discussion: "How and why is the nation?" For Smith, the term nation includes some awareness of political community which indicates common ideology, historical myths, legal duties, and a definite sociopolitical space (1991, pp. 9-11). Although these signifiers, which Smith likens to the "chameleon-like" permutations (*ibid*, p. 14), reflect a provisional definition of a nation, there are various critical junctures when a group converts itself into a nation. Regarding these critical junctures, one may first think of Tilly's renowned argument: "war made the state, and the state made war" (1975, p. 42). To put simply, the nation states arise as an invention of

successful wars and conflict fought against the external rivals seeking to seize their "historically and emotionally attached" territory, e.g., the "Anatolian motherland" case in Turkey and its "Mount Zion" counterpart in Israel. In fact, the violent wars and conflicts making state is the first step behind the creation of the nation state. For Tilly, there are three further steps.

After defeating its external rivals, the dominant group (usually, the ethnic majority) secondly clashes with its internal rivals to expand its authority within a defined sociopolitical space. In the third step, the authority of the dominant group is consolidated by particular legal codes of practices echoed at, for example, constitutions, national laws, and military rules that legitimise and empower its hegemonic position in making of state and society. In the last step, the dominant group (which can now be seen as a ruling group) employs the necessary modus operandi to preserve the status quo it attained after years of wars and conflicts with the Others. However, the hierarchical position and particular sociopolitical trajectory of the ruling group can be challenged by the significant Other(s) who is long kept distant from the political centre of the nation but sharing the common public domain with the majority group, as witnessed in the PKK's and PLO's (and later Hamas') resistances against the Turkish and Israeli states. Until this point, Tilly's four steps lay the background for the first part of Smith's question, "How the nation?". It can now be moved on to its second part, "Why the nation?", which helps this thesis to relate the chosen trauma with the national agency.

In order to uncover *why* the nation, we must return to the very first step of *how* the nation – the wars and conflicts making of the Turkish and Israeli nation states. Then, Tilly's four steps formula is perhaps the most appropriate framework to travel

back in time and grasp the creation of the two states since they were founded by dint of the Kemalist and Ashkenazi circles' clashes with their external and internal rivals during the full-scale Independence Wars. These clashes later followed by several internal rebellions after the establishment of the nation states, exacerbating the vivid conflict memories.[15] Before exploring the impact of these catastrophic wars and conflicts on the creation of hegemonic Turkishness and Israeliness, it is important to reflect the difference between "identity" and "agency" as the separation of the two underlines the added value of ontological security theory. As Mitzen and Larson (2017, p. 15) argue, ontological security is frequently associated with the notions of "identity" and "recognition" that are covered in the foreign policy literature and nearby disciplines (see, Boucher, 2011; Nicolaidis and Egan, 2001; Kavalski, 2013; Weller, 2014). However, as briefly examined in Chapter 2.1, ontological security theory seeks to discover the sociopsychological mechanisms providing actors certain agencies that facilitate a cognitive background to perform a set of practices, assigned roles, and "national duties", e.g., the self-sacrifice case mentioned above.

Against this background, the intense wars and conflicts at the times of the Turkish and Israeli states' formation left significant imprints on "all walks of a nation's life", as Chickering et al. (2005, p. 2) would argue. This is because the politicomilitary

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[15] In the Turkish Independence War (1919-1923), which took place after WWI (1914-1918), the provisional government in Ankara fought against the Entente powers (GB, Italy, France, Armenia, and Greece). In the Israeli Independence War (1948-1949), also known as the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Jewish paramilitary forces, whose leaders later established Israel, fought against Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. In the following decades, Turkey harshly settled several rebellions organised by the Kurdish groups in southeast and few Islamists uprisings. Although the same pattern was followed by Israel in settling the Palestinian uprisings, its post-1949 resolution agenda was more controversial as the Israeli leadership did not adopt the United Nation (UN) Partition Plan for Palestine, i.e., the UN Resolution 181(II). These are explored in a detailed way in Chapter 4.1 and Chapter 5.1.

elites, who later established both nation states, fought in these devastating clashes as active participants and/or victims of the massive atrocities which bring in traumatic experiences. In this sense, the notion of traumatic experience can be examined as one of the main driving forces underlying the ontological security-seeking process as it becomes a hallmark of individuals' behavioural codes, inherently informing their future actions. Seen in this light, trauma is understood to "invade[s] the [individuals'] mind, becoming a dominant feature of the mind's interior land-scape" (Varvin, 2003, p. 210). In most cases, it becomes a fragmenting experience, in which past-present-future division become unclear (*ibid*, pp. 210-216). Under this condition, individuals experience "time-collapse" (Volkan, 1997) – when their specific feelings towards the particular groups and structures (in this case, the Kurdish Other and Palestinian Other) become gradually fixed and reproduced through discursive performances. Thus, there is a connection between these specific discourses and the particular traumatic context in which they are shaped, e.g., the end of the Ottomans and the catastrophic environment it produced (see Chapter 4.1). This is vital in two ways. First, it demonstrates the foundational idea behind why certain discourses represent particular meanings in a given nation. Second, it sheds light on the rationale behind why certain discourses are powerful enough to resonate over time and reproduce historical narratives attached to the significant Other.

Herein, Volkan's (1997) "chosen trauma" notion finds relevance. As briefly explored above, chosen traumas are understood as the mental presentation of a particular past event(s) that cause groups (for example, ethnic community or nation) to feel victimised and in pain (Volkan and Itzkowitz, 2000). In other words, it is a remembrance of a certain catastrophe(s) experienced by groups descendants'

(Kinnvall, 2002). What is important is that the political employment of chosen traumas strengthens the in-/out-group boundaries in linguistic and non-linguistic ways, for example, via political discourses as well as monuments and statues – that constantly reproduce the traumatic past (*ibid*). In this sense, chosen traumas contain "information, fantasised expectations, intense feelings, and defences against unacceptable thought" (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 755). Then, the chosen trauma can operate in two ways. They first occupy individual agents' mental landscape, becoming *informative developments* for their future actions. Second, they can, at the same time, be instrumentally used to construct a particular collective identity. Thus, although collectives feel traumatic events, individual agents (in this case, state elites) remember the collective past and reconstruct group consciousness (Smelser, 2004). At this juncture, state elites' "cognitive and emotional practices represent, comprise, and reflect that of the group [state] and so determine how the state will act" (Sasley, 2011, p. 454).[16] Seen in this light, the traumatic memories affect masses and state elites only to be instrumentally exploited by the latter.

Building on these interpretations, it can be claimed that the conflict traumas experienced by state elites can be consciously chosen and articulated via discursive performances. This experience/performance nexus vis-à-vis the *informative developments* can draw the boundaries of self (Kinnvall, 2004), as these traumatic events are experienced in light of violent encounters with the Other(s). Accordingly, communicating these chosen traumas through state elite discourses powerfully delineates the nature of a particular national agency and facilitates a background for

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[16] This is in line with the fourth approach towards ontological security (see Chapter 2.3), seeing the role of state elites both as nationals and key decision makers for nation.

them to define this agency's in-/out-group boundaries. In other words, within this process, the "imagined" national agency is dialectically narrated in relation to the selective Other(s). Thus, there is a dynamic relationship between state leadership and nation, which Volkan (2006) likens to a huge canvas. Herein, state leadership represents the main pillar of the canvas. They erect the canvas in the first place and later help it to sustain through security policies (Volkan and Itzkowitz, 2011). Before exploring the Turkish and Israeli elites' security policies in the following subsection, I offer some of my hypotheses set against the analytical discussion above.

I argue that the traumatic memories developed after the catastrophic wars and following internal conflicts with the significant Other(s), particularly Kurds and Palestinians, informed the early Turkish (1918-1938) and Israeli (1936-1964) leaderships' cognitive and emotional landscapes, and so defined their social reality and individual level patterns of actions. At the time of state formation, these traumatic experiences were consciously expressed as chosen traumas and instrumentalised by the leaderships to consolidate a particular collective identity, namely the imagined Turkishness and Israeliness, and its in-/out-group boundaries vis-à-vis the selective Other(s). Then, the imagined collective identities were defined by the early state elites' sociopsychological properties which had become "known" via violent encounters with the external and internal Other(s). In other words, the chosen traumas of the early Turkish and Israeli elites became their behavioural signposts which were at first dialectically experienced. Then, they were instrumentally articulated by their speeches, codified in legal articles, and routinised via social and institutional practices of the young Turkey and Israel. Thus, their imagined national agency and its particular

subject identifications were shaped through a set of affect-centric relations with the Other(s) (see Chapter 4.1 and Chapter 5.1).

Coupled with the particular traumatic context in which the conflict experiences are shaped, i.e., the collapse of the Ottomans (Chapter 4.1.1) and the resurrecting "Jewish Question" in the early 20th century (Chapter 5.1.1), these positioning practices in Turkey and Israel –making of Turkishness and Israeliness vis-à-vis the binary reading of the selective Other(s)– informed both states' harsh security agendas. These strong agendas have been adopted to secure and stabilise the particular collective identity against the selective Other(s) for decades. In turn, these slow-moving sociopsychological developments prepared the epistemic basis and nature of Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts lasting more than three decades as of 2021. Raising on this dialogue, the following section first expands the discussion on Turkey's and Israel's security mindsets and then conceptualises their conflict resolution attempts from the ontological security lens.

2.4.2. Security Mindset and Conflict Resolution Nexus

To recap, the articulation of conflict traumas is one of the powerful ways to formulate the imagined national agency. The boundaries of this agency can be constructed by state elites' discursive performances which are experienced and learned during the violent encounters against the "threatening" Other(s). In this sense, particular "human labels" not only help agents to navigate their sense of "self" in the world but also distinguish themselves from the threatening Others as explored in Chapter 2.1 Then, traumatic events help agents to establish a defence mechanism against particular groups and structures which are perceived as the main cause of their traumatic

experiences. In other words, traumas facilitate a background for individuals to form a psychological "security border" (Volkan, 2001; 2003; 2004) in light of their "learned" experiences. This imaginary border (referred to as "cognitive cocoon") serves as a protective mechanism which informs individuals about the threatening elements that could potentially harm them, both physically and psychologically (Giddens, 1991, pp. 39-40). This affect-centric experience implies two co-constitutive points. First, it shapes individuals' psychological "security border" after traumatic events, informing them about the threatening Other(s) which/who could potentially "interrupt" their sense of self. Second, it pertinently locates certain groups and structures in antagonistic places by means of framing them as threatening elements. Against this backdrop, the articulation of autobiographical narratives helps agents to eliminate these anxiety-laden elements that challenge and destabilise their sense of self, provoking ontologically insecure environment. Therefore, the ontological security-seeking process is evaluated as a conservative need that requires the stabilisation of autobiographical narratives (Mitzen and Larson, 2017).

I argue that one way to stabilise the autobiographical narratives of the Turkish and Israeli state elites' "imagined" national agency was to silence "interrupting" ontological insecurity sources that remind them of particular structures associated with anxiety-inducing and traumatic wars and conflict. In this sense, the early Turkish and Israeli state elites' violent encounters with the Other(s) during the traumatic setting influenced the ways in which their psychological "security border" was shaped. In the Turkish and Israeli contexts, this imaginary defence mechanism has stayed active for decades after the acute phase of their violent encounters. The first reason underlying this continuation is because the conflict traumas not only shape individual level

practices but also resonate at the nations' institutional codes, collective myths, and symbols through official narratives (Volkan, 2003; Bar-Tal, 2013) – that are reproduced in time. The second reason behind this continuation is because this imaginary defence mechanism was encoded in Turkey's and Israel's historically most powerful institutions: Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) and Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). These military apparatuses were not only designed to protect the physical boundaries of Turkey, Israel, and both countries' nationals from the aggressive parties. They were also designed as the unique protector of national values to secure and stabilise a particular collective identity against the ontological insecurity sources reminding the traumatic conflict setting. Empirically, the early state elites' "learned" conflict experiences normatively granted the TAF and IDF political ascendency through the legislative actions and legal articles so that they have the role of defending particular collective identities by taking necessary measures against the threatening Kurdish and Palestinian Other(s) (see Chapter 4.1.4 and Chapter 5.1.4).[17]

Herein, two points must be explored. First, the small-scale resistance movements conducted by the Other(s) did continue after the nation state formations (1923-1938 in Turkey and 1948-1964 in Israel). They not only deepened the early Turkish and Israeli elites' already detached mindset towards the selective Other(s), which were violently encountered during the Independence Wars, but also informed the coercive agendas of the TAF and IDF in settling the future intergroup disputes. Second, the Other(s) organising these anti-hegemonic resistance movements were not only framed as the physical security threats but as the source of ontological insecurity,

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[17] The TAF's vision to uphold the early Turkish elites' psychological "security border" was challenged in the 1980s (see Chapter 4.2.3).

destabilising the autobiographical narratives of the new Turkish and Israeli subjectivities in the making. To recap, the particular security language to stabilise the two subjectivities implied "a specific metaphysics of life" (Huysmans, 1998, p. 231). In this sense, Turkey's and Israel's affect-based reading of security added an emotional dimension to the security-seeking practice in a wider discursive and institutional context (Kinnvall, 2004). Accordingly, the ontological insecurity sources imposing "interrupting uncertainties" against the securitised subjectivities' autobiographical narratives further intensified the quest for a single and stable agency in Turkey and Israel. This quest towards the Other(s) excluded the Kurdish and Palestinian communities from the sociopolitical matrix as the identity building process is profoundly interrelated with the historically shaped intergroup affairs (*ibid*).

This particular security mindset brought in oppressive policies and complete securitisation of all walks of life in Turkey and Israel vis-à-vis the material and ideological identity makers of the Kurdish and Palestinian Other(s). These slow-moving sociopsychological developments later informed the further construction of collective grievances, historical symbols, and rebellion narratives for modern Kurdish and Palestinian nationalisms, motivating the marginalised Other(s) to adopt systematic political violence to express themselves through "occupying" minds and in response to the state violence. By extension, these emotionally moving elements were used as the master narratives for the PKK and PLO (and later Hamas) insurgencies, promoting their would-be hegemonic justifications regarding the Kurdish and Palestinian movements, which dialectically aggravated how the TAF and IDF treated the minority Other(s) (see Chapter 4.2.3 and Chapter 5.2.3).

The critical point is that the collective agency is not stable; it can be reflexively altered in light of major developments transpiring around us (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, 2011). Yet, the institutionalised traumatic memories were widely recirculated and reproduced at different times and occasions in both states even in the context of the declining hegemony of the Kemalist and Ashkenazi veterans. This anxiety-inducing "trauma politics" enabled various Turkish and Israeli leaderships to reconstruct the in-/out-group boundaries of Turkishness and Israeliness, especially with the eruption of systematic intergroup violence (1984-ongoing for Turkey and 1968-ongoing for Israel).[18] Consequently, the binary reading of the threatening Other(s) has been reaffirmed in "innovative" ways with modern insurgency turn. It did not only further restrain the boundaries of human action within the increasingly violent context, but also constantly resituated the Turkish-Kurdish and Israeli-Palestinian subjectivities into antagonistic places – that ultimately sustained the intractable conflicts.

That being said, both countries sought to settle their intractable conflicts after two decades of systematic violence with the Other(s) – via the "National Unity and Brotherhood" project in Turkey (2009-2015) and the "peaceful coexistence" project in Israel (1984-2000). In agreement with my theory-driven hypotheses, there is one more question to be explored: How did the subsequent Turkish and Israeli leaderships contest the rigid sociopsychological boundaries in both societies in order to resolve their intractable conflicts? At this juncture, the ways in which agents formulate their

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[18] For example, the binary reading of the Kurdish Other was reproduced by being attached various divisive labels, e.g., "Godless" and "Armenian" (see Chapter 4.2.3). For the reproduction of Kurdishness versus Turkishness, see Chapter 4.2; for Israeliness versus Palestinianness, see Chapter 5.2.

ontological security are discussed above. Nevertheless, how they modify their existing ontological security-seeking practices are not explored in a detailed manner yet. The rest of this section explores this issue from the conflict resolution angle.

The literature finds a common ground in the transformation of existing ontological security. Seminal works suggest that the modification of ontological security-seeking routines requires powerful developments such as the globalisation phenomenon (see Kinnvall and Jönsson, 2002; Kinnvall, 2004) and the Arab Spring (Inness and Steele, 2013) – that catalyse major social changes at psychological and emotional levels. However, there is no single understanding of major social change as it is fundamentally grounded on how a particular group/agent devised its performative routines and autobiographical narratives to feel its sense of self. For example, globalisation process may provide a new way of daily life and mode of interaction for a group of people with its ever-intensifying interconnectedness between various geographies and customs. However, it may simultaneously provoke an extremely unstable environment for reserved societies, motivating them further withdraw into their religious and/or ethnic communities (see Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, 2011). In this case, globalisation is an exogenous phenomenon in nature. Then, how can we read major social change in light of endogenous developments orchestrated by state elites as evidenced in the Turkish and Israeli cases?

At this juncture, domestic narrative contestations towards national identity can be seen as a prominent mechanism for major social change as they indicate a "rupture or revision moment" (Innes and Steele, 2013. p. 20), forcing agents to rethink their particular identity makers, social codes, and performative roles. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 2.1, this particular questioning practice is termed as self-interrogative

reflexivity (Steele, 2008b) – that can question, undermine, and modify the ontological boundaries ascribed to an imagined collective subjectivity by drawing on popular contested topics and counter-narratives in a given nation. These powerful counter-narratives may historically evolve in the context of identity debates between the "rival" sociopolitical groups, e.g., the Kemalist intelligentsia-bureaucracy versus provincial elite and traditional-conservative class which constantly reclaimed that they are hierarchically and normatively prime candidate to become the nation's "storyteller" (see Chapter 4.2). The vital point is that the self-interrogation practice involves contesting narratives that challenge states' long-attached ethos and powerful apparatuses alike. This in turn provides the new leadership with the political and normative leverage to pursue its promised domestic social change against which the old state structure and modus operandi offer a basis for contestation – in other words, they are instrumentalised as a "comparison device" (*ibid*, p. 152) in reimagining the past, present, and future of state and society.

In this sense, the "National Unity and Brotherhood" and the "peaceful coexistence" projects were designed to resolve the intractable conflicts by promoting alternative national agency which was driven by powerful counter-narratives, i.e., the neo-Ottomanism nostalgia in Turkey and the peaceful coexistence narrative in Israel (see Chapter 4.3 and Chapter 5.3). These counter-narratives would first self-interrogate the singular logic of the imagined Turkishness and Israeliness, contesting both their rigid ontological security-seeking routines and the old state routines which had so far alienated the minority Other(s) from the nations' centre. Then, they would rebirth the ethnic Turkishness and Israeliness with multicultural mindset and cosmopolitanism at the core. This would not only open up the political and normative

space for the marginalised Kurdish and Palestinian Other(s), but also integrate them into the expanding nations' sociopolitical centre. In other words, Turkey's AKP and Israel's new Labour party leaderships sought to propose a "broader" collective mode of existence and alternative cognitive framework for doing, acting, and being.

These top-down resolution agendas, however, could not facilitate a suitable cognitive environment between the "antagonistic" sides where the historically shaped and structuralised dichotomous reading between the self and the antagonistic Other could be peacefully reframed and reflected into everyday practices due to the lack of, among others, active listening to the majorities' anxiety-laden voices during the peace process and interactive dialogue platform hearing the ignored historical grievances, sufferings and fears of the minority Others. Then, the peace processes remained ineffective to mitigate fundamental existential questions of the self vis-à-vis the Other (Mitzen, 2006b) and "break down the rigid attachment to routines and create routines of interaction that permit [the self] to reveal aspirations and learn from interactions" (Mitzen, 2006a, p. 363). Having ensured so would not only remove the self's anxiety-laden ideas and feelings gravitating around the "threatening" Other(s), but also help the self to alter its psychological "security border" (Volkan, 2003; 2004), or "cognitive cocoon" (Giddens, 1991, pp. 39-40), formed in light of the dialectical experiences with the Other(s). In other words, the peace projects in Turkey and Israel could not offer ontological common ground where "the majority of society members…form new beliefs about the former adversary, about their own society, and about the relationship between the two groups" (Bar-Tal, 2000, p. 356). Consequently, these much-promising projects could not catalyse the projected ontological change at the society level, which swiftly marked the *dynamic stickiness* of both societies to their deep-

seated political and sociopsychological routines, i.e., the binary reading of the selective Other(s) and intractable conflict pattern, remaining valid to this day (see Chapter 4.3.5 and Chapter 5.3.5). Before moving on to the research design chapter of this thesis, the below figure is offered, which visualises the theory-driven arguments unfolded in this chapter (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1 - Dynamic Structure of the Intractable Conflicts of Turkey and Israel

3. Research Design

3.1. Case Selection Design: Why Turkey and Israel?

In her celebrated book, Skocpol argues that each influential developments, such as revolutions, occur in a particular way within the control of a unique set of social and structural circumstances (1979, p. 33).[19] In this vein, she raises the following question, "How then can a sociologist hope to develop historically valid explanations of social revolutions as such?" (*ibid*). It is a valid question for all testable generalisations we make within the social sciences, but in particular, for theory-informed hypotheses. Then, how can an IR researcher like me hope to develop historically valid explanations for Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts in general and their conflict resolution failures in particular?

It should be noted that this work does not intend to come up with a deep historical analysis of all existing intractable conflicts worldwide. Nor does it intend to examine two randomly selected countries trapped in the intractable conflicts. In order to deliver in-depth explanations towards its research puzzle, this thesis seeks to conduct small-*N* research by choosing two *purposive* cases, Turkey and Israel, which are carefully selected, and their grouping criteria are clearly defined. With this rationale in mind, Turkey and Israel cases are analysed under the two parts by applying Most Different System Design (MDSD). The MDSD suggests that significant social and structural variances among two country cases, such as their disparate gross

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[19] Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* explores the impact of similar historical developments, being the split of military elites during war time, on the revolution outcomes in Russia, France, and China. In doing so, she studies the causal narratives explaining these particular revolutions which occurred in socially and structurally different countries.

domestic product (GDP) per capita, demography and predominant religion, cannot explain the phenomenal similarities shared by two (Anckar, 2008). Thus, the MDSD is more suitable for "the theory-driven small-N analysis" (Otner, 2012, p. 572). Accordingly, my reasoning and deductive logic of inquiry initially began with the review of empirical literature which followed by my evaluation of the Turkish and Israeli cases through the lens of ontological security theory – that ultimately facilitated my hypotheses as detailed in Chapter 2. In this thesis, these hypotheses are examined by a set of observatory methods, for example, military laws and state elites' discourses, to grasp the same outcome that the two countries reached. To this end, the method and sources of this work are explored in the following section. On the lines below, I first shed light on my understanding of the MDSD with regards to the Turkish and Israeli cases.

Without question, Turkey and Israel are significantly different states with respect to defining and grouping. According to Taydas and Peksen (2012), despite the lack of consensus among academics,[20] there are three *main* indicators employed to categorise state capacity for sustaining peace and eliminating intergroup conflict setting: economic, political, and social structures of states. The underlying assumption is that large variations among these indicators prepare a background for opposite circumstances, e.g., peaceful or antagonistic intergroup relations between different ethnic/religious communities in a given state. Seen in this light, Turkey and Israel have five major social and structural variances which are directly related to Taydas and Peksen's scope: GDP per capita, demography, territorial size, major religion, and sociopolitical context. As a result of these major variations, Turkey and Israel have

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[20] See, for example, Hegre and Sambanis (2006).

profoundly different state and society structures from each other. However, they have a shared experience and outcome that are not explained by their varying features. Prior to exploring this issue, their economic, political, and social differences must be highlighted.

To begin with, there is a noteworthy economic variation between the two countries. For instance, the current GDP per capita of Turkey is approximately $11,000 while the same indicator is three times more in Israel, $37,000 (World Bank, 2018a; 2018b).[21] In the same vein, the recent unemployment rates in the two countries show a large gap: 11% in Turkey and 3.5% in Israel (Trading Economies, 2018a; 2018b). The demographic features of Turkey and Israel are diverse too. Israel's population is 8,5 million while Turkey's is ten times more than its counterpart. Additionally, Israel is more urbanised than Turkey: 92% of the Israeli population lives in cities while 73% of Turkey's population resides in metropoles (The World Factbook, 2018a; 2018b). The gap between Turkey's and Israel's urbanisation density mainly results from their territorial and geographic differences. In this sense, the territorial difference between the two countries is huge: Turkey is thirty-nine times bigger than Israel. Geographically, the feasibility of rebel manoeuvres is frequently associated with mountainous and challenging terrains. Then, states' ability to control rough areas through conventional army is very limited, as witnessed in, for example, the Vietnam War, the Soviet-Afghan War, and the Turkish-Kurdish conflict case.

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[21] This huge difference in the GDP per capita between Turkey and Israel has been used as a major indicator in making sense of their changing national welfare policies during the intractable conflicts (see, for example, Goodhand, 2001). On the one hand, the GDP per capita of Turkey had been around $1,500 when the clashes were mounting between the PKK and Turkey in the 1980s. In 1990, it raised to $2,800. On the other hand, Israel's GDP per capita had been $4,500 in between the 1970s and the early 1980s while the conflict was escalating between the PLO and Israel. In 1990, Israel's GDP per capita was $12,600 - six times more than Turkey's 1990 GDP per capita (Wold Bank, 2018a; 2018b).

However, Israel has low-profile geography unlike Turkey's mountainous southeast terrain where the PKK members operate since the 1980s. Yet, Israel has not been immune to chronic attacks of the PLO (and later Hamas) in its territories and the OT.

Linked to the demographical discussion, the predominant religions in Israel and Turkey are different. On the one hand, 75% of the Israeli population identifies themselves as Jewish while 15% of the country is comprised of Muslim Palestinians (JVL, 2018). On the other hand, 82% of Turkey's population perceive themselves as Muslim, including the vast majority of the Kurdish citizens of the country (IPSOS, 2016). Therefore, not only the major religious beliefs in Turkey and Israel are different but also the Kurdish and Palestinian minorities' preferences as the former shares the same religion with the ethnic majority while the latter does not.[22] With that said, this subsection moves on to the last and most remarkable difference between Turkey and Israel: their sociopolitical contexts.[23] Turkey is founded as a secular nation state in 1923. The community which would turn into a nation in the "Anatolian motherland" had nevertheless been living there for many centuries. Therefore, the Ottomans', Turkey's predecessor, influence on Turkey's sociopolitical environment is undeniable

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[22] The intractable conflicts of Turkey and Israel have transnational aspects as both the PLO/Hamas and PKK benefit from economic and political supports from the Palestinian and Kurdish diasporas in neighboring areas, e.g., the PLO from Lebanon and the PKK from Iraqi Kurdistan. However, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict differs from its counterpart in one aspect. It has increasingly embodied transnational characteristics after Israel's occupation(s) of the OT following the Six Day War in 1967. Since 1967, the conflict sits on two columns: Palestinian minority inside Israel and non-citizen Palestinians living under the Israeli administration in the OT. This unique case is explored in Chapter 5.2 and Chapter 5.3.

[23] According to the Turkish Constitution, Turkey is a "Civil State". In other words, the country has no "official religion" and is supposed to provide equal opportunities to all citizens. Yet, one can question whether Turkey has consistently followed this principle or not, e.g., the "1942 Wealth Tax" issue vis-à-vis Turkey's non-Muslim citizens. Israel, however, is a self-proclaimed "[Ethnic] Jewish state" as stated in the Israeli Declaration of Independence. Although it was later modified as "Jewish and Democratic state" in the 1992 constitutional revision, there has always been a debate in the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) between the Labour and religious Zionists about the political character of Israel (see Chapter 5.3).

(see Chapter 4.2.1). Whereas the same conclusion cannot be drawn for Israel. The state of Israel is the first state level Jewish political organisation in history if the ancient Hasmonean Kingdom is not included in the equation. To be more precise, the majority of Jews were forced to migrate to various geographies (such as Sephardim in Spain, Ashkenazim in Germany and Eastern Europe, Mizrahim "Oriental Jews" in Iraq and beyond) from where they lived –today's Israel and Palestine– after the Babylonian occupation in BCE 597. Unlike the "ethnic Turkish majority" in Anatolia, expelled Jews lived as ethnoreligious minorities in various parts of the world until they became a "majority group" in 1947 – three decades prior, in 1917, they constituted less than 10% of the Ottoman Palestine's population (Shlaim, 2021).

According to the MDSD reasoning, these significant variations among economic, social, and political indicators cannot explain Turkey's and Israel's shared outcomes: decades-long intractable conflict and failure to mitigate it with peace processes. The premise of this thesis is that these shared outcomes originate from a crucial similarity –an influential causal phenomenon– that is, the early Turkish and Israeli state elites' particular collective identity making projects which were informed by their violent encounters with the selective external and internal Other(s) before and during the time of state formation. This particular collective identity became a constitutive element of politics, security, and conflict from a longitudinal lens by the state leaderships' instrumentalisation of war and conflict traumas that were reproduced throughout decades and resonate at military apparatuses, institutional practices, and political speeches. From this vantage point, there is much to be absorbed from the juxtaposition of Turkey's and Israel's early collective identity making projects and their sociopsychological weight on both countries' intractable conflict trajectory.

3.2. Methodological Approach and Sources

According to Hall, methodology can be understood as a tool that "scholars employ to increase the confidence that the inferences they make about the social and political world are valid" (2003, p. 373). The most striking examples of these implications are about causal relationships, where the object of a methodology is to increase the reliability in claims that one phenomenon or event applies a causal effect on the other (*ibid*). Although methodologies designed to track these implications vary, it must be born in mind that "many important social processes take a long time –sometimes an extremely long time– to unfold" (Pierson, 2003, p. 178). Then, it imposes a time horizon challenge that may restrict the boundaries of research projects and pertinently motivate scholars to focus on immediate developments which are time-based and/or rapidly unfolding (*ibid*). Consequently, this approach may leave some significant slow-moving processes working behind social and political development(s) unexplained.[24] To better address this challenge in this work, the cause-outcome logic of Pierson (2003) might be useful (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2 - Cause-Outcome Relationships of Four Different Cases

		Time Horizon of Outcome	
		Short	Long
Time Horizon of Cause	Short	**I** Military Ambush	**II** Nuclear War/Extinction
	Long	**III** Strategic Bombing	**IV** Intractable Conflict

Source: Adapted from Pierson (2003, p. 179)

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[24] See the causal analysis gap discussion in ontological security (Chapter 2.4.3), i.e., the "freezing moment in an ongoing process" debate (Mitzen and Larson, 2017, p. 13).

Accordingly, there are four different time horizons for research. Each of these time horizons explores different causal accounts. This analogy is applied to the violent conflict domain below – that helps this work to clarify its cause-outcome understanding of the intractable conflicts of Turkey and Israel. First, consider a military ambush. Ambushes happen fast and their outcomes become available in a very short time. In this sense, it is a quick/quick case that the development reveals itself in a short time, and so does the outcome. An analysis of a strategic bombing would look different. Akin to the military ambush, the action itself takes place in a relatively short period. Its causal impact, however, invokes a slow-moving development. In this sense, its explanatory account may reveal in months after bombing action because it not only aims at diminishing the military capability of the enemy but also demoralise its soldiers and possibly society, e.g., the impact of the 1967 Six Day War on the Arab and Palestinian communities (see Chapter 5.2.3). A third case is a catastrophic military action – a nuclear missile lunch. In this case, a causal event occurs in a short period but produces radical outcomes with long-term impact – first, killing millions in moments and then imposing nuclear fallout for decades and so on. A final case is an intractable conflict, situated at the heart of this work. As explored in the theoretical framework, complex sociopsychological mechanisms shape and spur intractable conflict over a long period. Then, both intractable conflict and its deep impacts on all walks of state and society gradually reveal themselves. In return, it requires us to recognise these slow-moving sociopsychological forces that are intrinsically grounded on the macro-structural and historical contexts of states – like Turkey and Israel. Based on this logic of inquiry,

what follows is my methodological approach, namely the comparative historical method.

To begin with, the comparative historical method seeks to provide "historically grounded explanations of large-scale and substantively important outcomes" in purposive cases (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003, p. 4). Thus, the method is often employed in comparative and longitudinal research projects which aspire to study *big questions* and complex research puzzles exploring, for example, why dictatorships emerge (Moore, 1966) and why revolutions occur (Brinton, 1973; Skocpol, 1979). In this sense, the method does not evaluate substantial outcomes, e.g., intractable conflicts, as "static occurrences taking place at a single, fixed point" in time (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003, p. 12). Instead, it assesses them as a product of historical "sequences of events or causal chains" that evolve over time, and seeks to systematically track these processes (Mahoney, 2015, p. 202). In doing so, the comparative historical method does not rely on a single logic-in-use.[25] This work adopts the "macro-causal analysis" approach which strives to shed light on the slow-moving processes that produce (and reproduce) the macro-phenomena – the intractable conflicts of Turkey and Israel.

The macro-causal analysis approach is in agreement with my theory-driven hypotheses and case selection design for three main reasons. First, it is "the only way to attempt to validate [and invalidate] causal hypotheses about macro-phenomena" (Skocpol and Somers, 1980, p. 182). Second, it enables scholars to select their cases and make a controlled comparison. Third, it identifies critical junctures in establishing macro-causal links. These three points provide a useful methodological basis for this

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[25] For a detailed reading, see Skocpol and Somers (1980, pp. 176-187).

work to 1) test its theory-driven hypotheses on Turkey and Israel from a longitudinal aspect, 2) systematically track slow-moving sociopsychological mechanisms that gradually shaped and spurred the intractable conflicts of both countries, and 3) locate critical junctures with historical and sociopolitical patterns of Turkey and Israel in mind. Herein, Lange (2012, p. 48) metaphorically likens the critical junctures to the "black box[es]", exploring which help researchers to track and decode sequences of temporal events leading to the outcome to be examined. With the ontological security lens and its concepts on memory, trauma and agency making, tracking and decoding the critical junctures is crucial for this work to establish causation between the early collective identity making projects in Turkey and Israel and their sociopsychological weight on the intractable conflicts in three ways.

First, it will demonstrate a particular national context where traumatic memories are produced and then informed the in-/out-group boundaries of the "imagined" collective existence in Turkey and Israel, e.g., the Kemalist elites' war and conflict memories developed in WWI and the ensuing Independence War (see Chapter 4.1). Second, it will show how these traumatic memories are echoed on certain political discourses, law articles and military practices, and constantly resonated over decades. For example, the 1980 coup in Turkey will be explored to demonstrate how this incident intensified the traumatic "collapsing" memories, e.g., *Sévresphobia*, and the binary reading of Kurdishness versus Turkishness, ultimately setting the ripe conditions for the PKK's violent turn (see Chapter 4.2). Third, it will show the ways in which the Kemalist and Ashkenazi leaderships' top-down nationalisation (and secularisation) policies, e.g., the "melting pot" doctrine in Israel, contributed to the evolution of popular contestation areas and "rival" sociopolitical groups in both

countries that directly escalated and/or de-escalated their intractable conflict trajectories. For instance, some of these groups' alternative stories about doing, acting, and being were instrumentalised to reimage the past, present, and future "self" of Turkey and Israel. These stories later contested the strict sociopsychological boundaries of the Turkish and Israeli majorities in order to settle the intractable conflicts, despite failing to do so being marked by the *dynamic stickiness* of both societies to their deep-seated political and sociopsychological routines (see Chapter 4.3 and Chapter 5.3).

To systematically track these slow-moving psychological and sociohistorical processes and their violent outcome, this work is divided into two empirical chapters, namely Turkey Part and Israel Part. Each part consists of three chapters drawing on the critical juncture rationale. The first chapters of Turkey and Israel Parts (Chapter 4.1 and Chapter 5.1) analyse both countries' foundational years which prepared the epistemic basis and nature of their intractable conflicts to be shaped. In doing so, the discussion starts on the basis of secondary literature, e.g., historical and normative works dealing with the newly born states' sociopolitical structure. Then, the dialogue is advanced by relying on primary sources which include first-hand official information and context material on the state elites' speeches and legal documents. These are drawn from, for example, personal memoirs of high-ranking state and military leaderships, official party programs, constitutional acts (or *Basic Laws* in Israel), government websites, and archival material. In this sense, in Chapter 4.1, the parliamentary speeches of Atatürk and his *Private Archive* (ATASE) and *Discourses and Speeches I-III* (ADS) are selected as the key sources for state elite discourses, while the legal documents are mainly collected from the government bodies including

the Turkish Grand National Assembly (GNA) and Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (TMFA). In the same vein, in Chapter 5.1, the official discourses of David Ben-Gurion, the first general secretariat of *Histadrut* (pre-state Zionist parliament in the Mandatory Palestine) and founder of Israel, and his diary (see Ben-Gurion, 2015) are employed significantly. In addition, Ben-Gurion's recently translated memoir (see Segev, 2019), which provides first-hand materials about his feelings and ideas about the internal and external Other(s), is an important asset for this thesis. The key legal documents (including military laws), are extracted from archival documents, accessed via the government websites, e.g., Knesset, and influential NGOs' databases, e.g., the Jewish Virtual Library Project (JVL).

The second chapters of Turkey and Israel Parts (Chapter 4.2 and Chapter 5.2) investigate the sociopolitical turmoil and transformations unfolding in both states. These developments did not only offer a suitable environment for the emergence of influential counter-hegemonic groups, challenging the Kemalist and Ashkenazi status quo. They also prepared the systematic violent eruption of the intractable conflicts vis-à-vis major social and political disorder in Turkey and Israel. Echoing the first chapters, the discussion here bridges secondary literature with primary sources. For example, the military rulings of the TAF, e.g., the *White Papers*, and the IDF (mostly available via Knesset) are extensively used to show the reproduction of the harsh security mindset in securing and stabilising a particular collective identity against the selective Other(s). In addition to these legal (and military) sources, these chapters largely benefit from some recently digitalised periodical publications and documents,

such as *Dogu*, *Serxwebun* (PKK's bulletin)*, Sebilürreşad* (in Turkey Part)[26] and *Adab Al-muqawamah*, *Hadash* party documents, the PLO's *Fatah* doctrines (in Israel Part). The speeches of the PKK and PLO leaders, respectively Abdullah Öcalan and Yasser Arafat,[27] are also utilised in these chapters to demonstrate 1) emotional and material sources behind their violent methods, and 2) strategic changes and continuities in these methods. These publications/documents are released by the "interrupting ontological insecurity sources" in Turkey and Israel, i.e., Kurds and Palestinians, as well as the peripheral groups, e.g., Islamist in Turkey and Oriental Jews in Israel, sought to be "nationalised and secularised" by the Kemalist and Ashkenazi elites. In addition, documents/articles circulated by established local newspapers, e.g., *Milliyet* and *Hurriyet* in Turkey and *Haaretz* in Israel, and international outlets such as *Der Spiegel* and *New York Times*, are employed to better capture the contextual perspectives on Turkey and Israel. Unofficial documents, for example, informal party manifestoes, and unrecorded official discourses are not employed in order to avoid potential conspiracy files and beliefs.

Based on these two chapters, the study moves on to its last empirical sections of Turkey and Israel Parts (Chapter 4.3 and Chapter 5.3). These chapters first examine the rise of popular counter-narratives in Turkey and Israel vis-à-vis the changing sociopolitical terrain in both countries. This background provides insights on the political and normative driving forces empowering the recently elected AKP in Turkey

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[26] These periodical publications (covering 1908-present), such as *Sebilürreşad*, are recently recovered and become available for online access. They can be reached at https://idp.org.tr/.
[27] This is not to say that the PKK and PLO are unitor actors and completely under the control of Öcalan and Arafat (until his death). I mostly rely on their speeches and writings in my engagement with the PKK and PLO since I am focusing on the dominant discourses and ideas within these groups.

and the new Labor party government in Israel – both promised to reorganise the state and society in the first place and then the geography they are situated in, the Middle East. Then, it shows how the new Turkish and Israeli governments sought to resolve their intractable conflicts by promoting alternative national agency based on multicultural mindset and cosmopolitanism. With its novel analytical lens at work, this section utilises various secondary and primary sources that are mostly drawn from the official speeches and press interviews of the key state elites engineering the peace processes, for example, then-PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan (2003-2014) and foreign minister (FM) Ahmet Davutoglu (2009-2014) (in Turkey Part) and the Labour party chairman Shimon Peres (1977-1991) and Yitzchak Rabin (1992-1995) (in Israel Part). The speeches of Öcalan and Arafat are also used as they played prominent roles in the peace processes. In addition to the elite discourses, various context materials are employed in these chapters, for example, the official contents of the "National Unity and Brotherhood" project (2009-2015) and the "peaceful coexistence" project (1984-2000). School syllabuses, legal and military rulings, influential NGO (and peace movement) activities are accessed to demonstrate the ways in which multicultural mindset and cosmopolitanism were sought to be disseminated during the peace processes. Finally, public opinion polls, e.g., KONDA and JVL, and coverages of local and global media outlets are utilised to show ideas and feelings of diverse sociopolitical groups in Turkey and Israel during various stages of the peace processes. This research design chapter now moves on to its last section which explores the potential limitations of this work.

3.3. Potential Research Limitations

There are two main potential limitations of this interdisciplinary work. The first limitation is related to self-reported data employed throughout this study.[28] As mentioned in Chapter 1.1.1, subjective positions of individuals may influence their particular ways of seeing and feeling about war and conflict, for example, an Izz al-Din al-Qassam member versus an Israeli soldier in the OT. As this research engages with highly sensitive and emotion-laden issues, such as war and conflict memories, my secondary sources or original qualitative research that use self-reported data have limits by the fact that they can hardly be autonomously verified (Brutus et al., 2013). Regarding this, my autobiographical sources or self-reported data collected by the NGOs may comprise four potential biases: 1) selective memory – choosing to bypass particular past events, 2) telescoping – inaccurate timing of particular past events, 3) attribution – giving credit to himself/herself (or a collective that the self associates with) in articulating positive events, but blame the "Others", e.g., ethnic/religious Others or state authorities, in opposite situations, and lastly 4) exaggeration – overemphasising particular events more than they are explored by other scholarly works and/or data (Harris and Brown, 2010).

In this sense, the self-reported data/sources in this work are always open to crosscheck for future studies. However, this work employs a triangulation approach by drawing on Pawson (2006) and Dale (2006) to minimise this issue at two levels. It first triangulates its self-reported data with other sources of information, such as

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[28] The work is based on the University of Kent's Ethical Review (Code of Ethnical Practice for Research, 2009) and UK Research Integrity Office's Practice Pamphlet (Code of Practice for Research, 2009).

contextual readings and archival documents, to crosscheck their reliability and validity. That being said, I must highlight that I am also subjected to the biased/selective data issue. The empirical data collection of this thesis and their reading through the ontological security lens resonate my epistemic predisposition which I briefly discuss in the introduction. In this light, I secondly crosscheck my own arguments, for example, the impact of the Turkish and Israeli cadres' discursive performances on the political domain with other country-specific sources of data, such as social practices endorsed/forced upon the citizens of Turkey and Israel.

The second potential limitation of this work is related to its macro-causal analysis and process tracing rationale. Some scholars, such as Hall (2013), claim that the process tracing tool may encounter the equifinality problem, meaning that adopting other analytical concepts and/or following other empirical paths might lead to a similar outcome to be studied. The study seeks to avoid this problem with a strong case selection design and triangulated data collection. Firstly, shedding light on the intractable conflict phenomenon with comparative small-N research aims at eliminating the equifinality issue as it avoids the case selection on a dependent variable (Geddes, 1990). Secondly, comparative analysis of Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts with triangulated readings and sources would enable this work to offer country-specific generalisations. However, one can still challenge these country-specific generalisations from an external validity point, considering Israel's chronic clashes with its Arab neighbours, for example, the 1967 Six Day War and the 1982 Lebanon War – in this sense, these wars were specifically analysed from the trauma and memory angle (see Chapter 5.2).

Seen in this light, the above "challenge" actually provides us a new research puzzle – exploring the intractable conflicts unfolding in similar economic, political, and social contexts by employing, for example, Most Similar System Design (MSSD). In doing so, future studies can take this theory-oriented work as a test case for compatibility. It would provide an opportunity for us to 1) cross-fertilise varying intractable conflict cases, and 2) compare and contrast the analytical purchase of different theoretical approaches. Lastly, future works, if they are to employ the ontological security framework, can map out detailed long-term agendas to reshape sociopsychological routines in a sustainable way during peace processes. In doing so, the "cognitive cocoon" concept of Giddens (1991, p. 39) might be a useful navigational tool.

4. Turkey Part[29]

4.1. "Shedding Skin" and Inventing *Self*: From Archaic Empire to Wounded Nation

> From Herodotus to Montesquieu and beyond, poets, historians, and philosophers have recurrently produced one of our culture's standard literary forms: the dire for a fallen empire. Reflection on imperial decline has world-historical resonance because it records for all to see the fallibility of seemingly unshakable human enterprises (Tilly, 1997, p. 1).

On the eve of the rise of nation states in the early 20th century, the Ottomans, like other once-seemingly-unshakable powers, such as Russian and Habsburg Empires, was not immune to Tilly's point above. The downfall of the Ottomans is taken as this Chapter's point of origin. Problematising the collapse of the Ottomans offers a sufficient explanatory framework for the examination to follow in two dimensions. First, it helps this work to delineate the macro-structural context in which the early Turkish elites' traumatic experiences with the external and internal Others were formed. Based on this discussion, it, secondly, enables this study to demonstrate the ways in which the founding Turkish leadership's traumatic conflict memories crystallised in its agent level patterns of actions and then resonated at its imagined national agency making project.

In this sense, this Chapter first shows that the traumatic memories of the early Turkish leadership (1918-1935) developed before and during the time of state

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[29] The substantial part of Turkey Part is published in international peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes. Chapter 4.1 is published in *Political Psychology* journal, see Adisonmez (2019). Chapter 4.2 is in press for a book chapter in an edited volume from Bloomsbury Publishing. The last section of Chapter 4.3 is published in *Middle East Critique* journal, see Adisonmez and Onursal (2020). Authors have contributed equally to the last journal article.

formation became its psychological cornerstone, defining the elites' social reality and individual level practices. These traumatic memories were instrumentally used by the leadership to consolidate a particular collective identity with a secular and nationalist outlook in the Republican regime. More precisely, this particular collective identity and its psychologically defining properties, such as its autobiographical narratives, were consciously consolidated through the state elites' discursive performances. Secondly, it demonstrates that the early Turkish leadership perceived the traditional-conservative communities, particularly Kurds, as ontological insecurity sources in the young Republican context. On the one hand, these groups were violently encountered by the state elites during the Ottomans' collapse and the early Republican era. These traumatic encounters informed them about the various "counter-Revolutionist" groups which posed a threat against Turkishness and Turkey's social order. On the other hand, these groups were perceived as a reminder of the Ottomans' archaic structure which was argued to produce the traumatic conflict setting in the first place. Accordingly, these communities were framed as ontological insecurity sources which jeopardised the leadership's imagined national agency in the making. This is particularly important to grasp the sociopsychological driving forces establishing the "roots" of Turkey's intractable conflict to be shaped with Kurds because Turkey's military apparatus is structured to silence these ontological insecurity sources in a way to stabilise the autobiographical narratives of the state leadership's imagined subjectivity.

4.1.1. Context of the Collapse: Archaic Empire, Kurds, and Independence War

The large and complex organisation of empires grow rapidly depending on their degree of military and fiscal control over their domains. In the same manner, however,

they can dismantle dramatically fast. In the Ottoman case, there was not a single fatal flaw undercutting its imperial structure but various structural issues. In the mainstream versions of Turkish studies literature (İnalcik, 1977; Keyder, 1997), the kernel of its fast collapse has been frequently explained either by (one or a combination of) two domestically induced elements: its old fashion governance model and unproductive modernisation attempts; and the uncontainable rise of national liberation movements. The separation of the two is neither necessary nor achievable within the domain of this work. However, focusing on the second account vis-à-vis the status of the Kurdish provinces during the period of Ottomans' weakening may serve as a fulcrum for the following discussion. For this task, the following sections first take a step back and briefly explore the dialectical relationship between these liberation movements and internal critiques raised against them by the late Ottoman era Turkish nationalists. These nationalist thinkers were unknowingly setting the cultural underpinnings of the imminent Turkish state through "imagining the [desired] nation through printed media" (Akdeniz and Goker, 2011, p. 320).

Some scholars (e.g., Greenfeld, 1992) argue that nationalism emerges under specific circumstances, with an implication of its decline when the context changes. Nevertheless, one of the major causes behind the Ottomans' collapse was the long-held and organised national liberation movements. In the first half of the 19th century, the Ottomans acknowledged their diminishing central authority. Thus, they attempted to recentralise and modernise their administrative infrastructure through the Tanzimat reforms. The reforms created the pre-capitalistic logic which was accompanied by the emergence of the new educated middle class that shaped and spurred the nationalist movements within the Ottomans, particularly in its Balkan provinces (Gulalp, 1994).

The rise of nationalistic aspirations in the Balkans resulted in a dramatic loss of one-third of the Ottoman soil after the Russo-Turkish War in 1877-1878. The fall of (the majority of) Balkans not only resignalled the Ottomans' archaic governance practices, but also triggered a large Muslim population shift from the region to the "heartland" of the Ottomans, namely Anatolia. The most noteworthy aspect of these developments was the new influx of immigrants whose "sense of outrage and hostility fresh, were instrumental in articulating [their] Muslim awareness" (Keyder, 1997, p. 36). This group level categorical awareness shortly lent itself to the ethnocentric, institutionalised "Turkish nationalism" under the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) which forcefully restored the Ottoman Constitution in 1908.[30]

Against the Ottomans' turbulent setting, nationalist intellectuals were long criticising the Ottoman rulers in two points: 1) for not endorsing the values of the Turkish community; and 2) failing to safeguard the community's rights as it was seen as the Ottomans' founding pillar. According to Namık Kemal (1873), the architect of Turkish nationalism, the lack of motherland awareness among the Ottoman elites was the main cause of this problematic situation. They were concerned with supporting the dynasty instead of the nation, continued Kemal.[31] For Ömer Seyfettin (1977), whose insights were adopted by the Republican elites in making of their imagined national agency, the Ottoman elites were reserved to pronounce Turk, Turkishness, and

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[30] In the Ottomans, the communities were ruled based on the *millet* system. To put simply, the population was divided in light of their religion and sect (Muslim, Orthodox [Greeks], Armenian, Jewish and Catholics) under the Islamic dominion of the Ottomans. The logic was to rule different *millets* according to their particular religious laws, such as Halakha for Jews and Canon Law for Christians. With the rise of nationalism, one's *millet* began to be seen as one's *nation*. Thus, although the appeal of "Turk" was previously referring to someone who was Muslim and speaking Turkish, it was later increasingly associated with one's ethnic background.
[31] Kemal later influenced Ziya Gökalp who was acknowledged as the "best intellectual formulator" of the Republic (Berkes, 1954).

Turkey. Furthermore, they got annoyed when the European powers recognised the Ottoman state as "Turkiye" (*ibid*).

Against this ideological struggle, the CUP became an influential political actor in the final period of the Ottomans' weakening (1908-1922). The CUP was founded by military officers in the midst of the Balkan turmoil in Salonika. They had common political vision that the Ottomans could be transformed into a secular, statist, and unitary nation state (Ahmad, 1977). It could even be "Japan of the Near East" (Worringer, 2004).[32] Yet, the "Japan of the Near East" idealism was eclipsed by the "Sickman of Europe" narratives as a result of Bulgaria's declaration of independence together with the prompt annexations of the Bosnia-Herzegovina and Crete sanjaks. Following these developments, the critical watershed marking "no return to the Sickman's archaic regime" was heralded by the Balkan Wars (1912-1913). Clashes triggered gigantic migration flows once again, after which not only ethnically Turkish Muslims resettled in Anatolia but also other Muslim communities, such as Bosnians and Crimean Tatars (Karpat, 2017).

Two vital dimensions of these developments must be underlined. First, from a regional point of view, the Balkan societies throughout the war period were "unmixed". This later prepared an institutional background for ethnic homogenisation policies towards these groups within various nation states in the making, such as the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923. Second, from Turkey specific point of view, these clashes exacerbated the CUP's racial policies en route to

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[32] It is significant to highlight that Atatürk was a member of the CUP as a young Ottoman officer. He was sent to supress several rebellions in the Balkans and North Africa by the organisation. Although he cut his ties with the CUP before WWI, his core Kemalist tenets could arguably be traced back to the CUP's vision, such as secular, statist and unitary state paradigms as mentioned above.

WWI (Keyder, 1997, p. 40). These policies were later to encompass anti Muslim sentiments in light of traumatic confrontations with the "Turcophobe" Arab provinces "stabbing the empire-in-the-back" (Mardin, 1997, pp. 115-116). These historical developments, on the one hand, had not only silenced the Ottoman Muslim conservatives until the collapse of the Ottomans, but also their followers during the early period of the Republic, who were endorsing the Islamic culture as a basis of the Turkish agency as opposed to nationalist circles' ethnic propellants. These developments, on the other hand, had a potent impact on the social practices adopted/forced on the masses in the young Republic. They offered legitimacy for the ethnic proponents of imagined national agency vis-à-vis state policies after the traumatic collapse of the Ottomans.

The diminishing social fabric of the Ottomans, which led to numerous violent clashes ahead WWI, was also the harbinger of the imminent conflicts among the Turkish and Kurdish communities. In exploring this pressing issue, I first touch upon a parallel story revealing in the Kurdistan sanjak of the Ottomans. Until the 19th century, Kurds were a part of the Ottomans' Muslim *millet* system, operating semi autonomously, sending their taxes and soldiers to join invasions like other communities of the Ottomans. This reasonably well-preserved social contract had begun to crumble with the recentralisation and modernisation goals of the Tanzimat reforms, provoking violent clashes between the Ottomans and Kurds. Although Kurds' upheaval was not stimulated by nationalistic ends, this pattern changed after the first nationalistic rebellion in Kurdish history in 1880, namely the *Sheikh Ubeydullah* revolt which was driven to establish an independent chieftainship in the Ottoman Kurdistan

(Arakon, 2014, p. 140).[33] It was harshly suppressed by the Ottomans but several Kurdish uprisings took aspirations from the Ubeydullah revolt in the late Ottoman and the early Republican periods, which are discussed in the following lines. That being said, the Kurdish elites found a suitable platform to negotiate with the central authority when the Ottoman Constitution was restored in 1908. Nevertheless, all Kurdish associations and school were closed down under the Turkification policies of the CUP. This political trajectory influenced the Kurdish intellectuals to establish their own parties, societies, and newspapers after WWI (Jwaideh, 2006), manifesting the ideational split between the early Turkish and Kurdish communities.

Set against these developments unfolding at various parts of the Ottomans, WWI erupted. Weakened by old governance practices and robust national liberation movements gripping the region, there was little room for the Ottomans to defend its territories in six different fronts. As a result, they were forced to sign an armistice in 1918 and then the Sevres Peace Treaty in 1920, preparing a background for the Turkish version of Germany's *Dolchstosslegende* trauma, *Sévresphobia*, in the Republican regime (see Chapter 4.2). It can be interpreted as anxiety that there are internal and external forces constantly seeking ways to destroy Turkey's unity. This anxiety-ridden condition was derived from the main articles of the Treaty, particularly Articles 27, 36 and 94 (Erim, 1953), concerning the partition of Anatolia. Articles 62, 63, and 64 proposed the establishment of an independent Kurdistan which added another layer to the structural anxiety that is examined below.

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[33] There is a debate on whether the *Ubeydullah* revolt was nationalistic or not. Some scholars argue that it was a religious revolt, such as Gunter (1990). The important point here is that the PKK emphasised more its "Kurdish" aspect than its religious face in mobilising the Kurdish youth (see Öcalan, 1983).

There are two points, which are interwoven at many levels, that merit exploration. The first point is the rejection of the Treaty by the GNA in Ankara established by the former Ottoman officers and Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk). This military elite cluster first organised a local paramilitary resistance by *Kuva-yi-milliye* (National Forces) and then incorporated it into *Kuva-yi-Nizamiye* (Regular Army). With the help of these bodies that the resistance was shortly transformed into a full-scale Turkish Independence War, known as *Milli Mücadele* (National Liberation, 1919-1923). The second point is to trace the psychologically defining moments of this military elite cluster, who became key politicians in the Republic, against violent encounters with Kurds. They experienced "time-collapse" after these clashes that their feelings towards the traditional-conservative communities and archaic governance structure were gradually crystallised and discursively articulated as chosen traumas in the Republic. In other words, this point of departure helps this work to show how the contingent impact of the clashes taking place from 1918 onwards had gradually echoed on the ways in which 1) the formation of unique Turkish national agency by the Kemalist Revolution, and crystallised 2) the Republican elites' detached mindset towards the Kurdish "Other" – that prepared the sociopsychological roots of intractable conflict in Turkey.

Prior to the National Liberation, the Ottomans suffered huge losses during WWI. In Anatolia alone, almost four million people lost their lives in battlefields along with the ethnic cleansing policies of the CUP towards Armenians. The physical infrastructure of the Ottomans and its multiethnic social matrix were ruined, not to mention the morale of survivors. Yet, soon after the armistice, Atatürk was able to organise a four-years-long resistance, following which the Lausanne Peace Treaty was

signed and the Republican regime was introduced in 1923. In this era, several commanders of the National Liberation, including Nurettin Ibrahim Konyar, Ahmet Cevdet, Pehlivanzade Nuri Bey, actively fought against the Entente powers and served in different parts of the Ottoman Kurdistan and El-Cezire fronts. Some of those officers settled more than fifty Kurdish rebellions in the pre-Republican period, such as the Sheikh Abdusselam Barzani and Mir Mehmet Pasha uprisings, most of which followed the same motivation of the Ubeydullah revolt. Among these commanders, Fahrettin Altay was sent to suppress the rebellion near Dersim (Tunceli) province. He later mentioned in his memoir that "it was that breakdown that made it necessary to mount another punitive expedition [referring to the Dersim Operation in 1937] in these parts after 28 years later" (Mango, 1999, p. 3, citing Altay, 1970, p. 53). Another officer, Izzetin Calislar (1993, pp. 100-140), Atatürk's chief of staff at that time, portrayed the social condition of the region vis-à-vis the conflict environment in his diary, writing that the Kurdistan locals suffer from "backwardness", having no idea about what the government means, but obeying their tribal leaders.

Like Calislar, Atatürk recognised Kurds' attachment to their tribal leaders and cooperated well with them at the beginning of the National Liberation. There were two main reasons behind his approach. First, Muslim Anatolian communities (Kurds being the largest) had to be mobilised against the Christian Entente powers. Second, the spread of the idea of an independent Kurdistan idea among the tribal leaders had to be managed. In his early telegrams to the Kurdish notables, Atatürk made an intensive "Muslim" and "brotherhood" connection between Turks and Kurds. For example, he stated that the creation of Kurdistan is a British-made plan; thus, "Kurds and Turks are true brothers and may not be separated" as "our existence requires that Kurds,

Turk, and all Muslim elements should work together to defend our independence" (ATASE, 1989, p. 33, quoted in Mango, 1999). He further asserted that "I am in favour of granting all manner of rights and privileges in order to ensure the attachment…of our Kurdish brothers, on the condition that Ottomans state is not split up" (*ibid*).

Seen in this light, several scholars (Bozarslan, 2008; Oran, 2010) claim that the Kurdish community supported the Kemalist-Kurdish alliance and opposed any kind of secessionist programme during that period. However, there were two critical junctures that increasingly ascribed the "Anatolian" resistance with a "nationalistic" character, which not only challenged this conjectural brotherhood but also became *informative developments* for subsequent state elites.

4.1.2. En route to the Republic: Violent Encounters, Trauma, and Otherness

The first point is associated with the locally organised, paramilitary forces that constituted the backbone of the National Liberation.[34] These local paramilitaries carrying the "ideological implications about the meaning and origins of Turkish nationalism" (Kayali, 2008, p. 122) were actively used to suppress the Kurdish rebellions, such as Cemil Ceto, during the pre- and post-Sévres periods. The leaders of these revolts were sentenced to death for treason by the Independence Tribunals.[35] The latter point builds on the former, as the military elites' violent encounters with Kurds became *informative developments* for their future performances. This

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[34] These forces were transformed into the TAF in the Republican era (see Chapter 4.1.3).
[35] Independence tribunals were used by the GNA as an enforcement mechanism to tackle counter-Revolutionaries hindering the National Liberation. They were also actively used in the Republic (see Chapter 4.1.3).

phenomenon can be traced by close events triggering the semantic shifts from the "Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood" to "People of Turkey" position which lastly reached to "Turkish people" with the signing of the Lausanne Treaty in 1923.

Following the closure of the last Ottoman General Assembly in February 1920 and the consequent inauguration of the GNA, Atatürk was still stressing that Turkey's unity was bounded by the national borders of Turks and Kurds (Tekeli and Ilkin, 1980, p. 321). However, he was cautious on territorial lines given the ongoing Kurdish rebellions in the region, stating that "every one of [elements] living within the borders of this fatherland has its own race, specific environment…Naturally, these have not been detailed, because this is not the time for it. The matter will be settled and resolved…when the existence is assured…" (ADS, 1989, p. 30). Meanwhile, a diplomatic breakpoint which jeopardised this "existence" transpired in August 1920: the signing of the Sevres Treaty whose Article 62 compelled the Ottomans to admit a commission defining the territories of an Independent Kurdistan which would achieve autonomy in the subsequent period. Moreover, if ever these autonomous areas aspired to secede, they would go to the League of Nations. According to Article 64, "Mosul [a major city in northern Iraq] residents of Kurdistan would voluntarily join this independent Kurdish State without encountering any opposition from the Entente States" in case of an agreement (Erim, 1953).

Although the Treaty was refused by the GNA, several Kurdish tribes, which had been hitherto supportive of the National Liberation, rebelled in Dersim, Siirt, Urfa, and near provinces. Motivated by the Treaty's promises, the *Koçgiri* Rebellion, organised by the British-sponsored Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (*Kurdistan Teali Cemiyeti*) in Istanbul, and the *Milli Aşireti*, the French-supported Kurdish Rebellion,

112

were harshly suppressed. In the GNA's report, the *Koçgiri* rebellion was depicted as an "anti-Kemalist reaction" (Olson, 1989), while the *Milli Aşireti* was described by Atatürk himself (1927) as a "deceiving move" in which the rebels first asked for mercy, but attacked the Turkish forces stationed in the region.

In the final stage of the National Liberation, suppressing these conflicts organised by various Kurdish groups had two major informative implications from the sociopsychological angle. First, settling these rebellions which managed to obtain grassroots support helped the military elites to consolidate their authority, becoming a hallmark event in drawing the physical boundaries of the pre-Republican space. This could be best captured by the first international treaty signed by the GNA with Armenia on the future of Anatolia and the eastern border provinces, which ignored Kurds (TMFA, 2019a). Second, self-rule demands anchored by the post-Sevres Kurdish rebellions aggravated *Sévresphobia*, becoming an *informative development* for the military elites in drawing the ideational boundaries between the two communities. Accordingly, Atatürk gradually switched his position from the "Turkish-Kurdish Brotherhood" to the "People of Turkey" narrative, which unfolded in his GNA speech in 1922 (ADS, 1989, pp. 37-39). This discursive shift was shortly echoed on the institutional practices of Independence Tribunals and the following martial law regime in the eastern provinces, both of which were summoned periodically in the Republic (see Chapter 4.2). Perhaps, the most evident discursive shift vis-à-vis *Sévresphobia* was Atatürk's 1923 speech where he expressed that "there can be no question of the Kurdish problem, as far as we, namely Turkey, concerned…the Kurdish elements within our national border live in very limited areas. If we wish to draw a border in the name of Kurdishness, it would be necessary to

destroy Turkishness and Turkey" (quoted in Mango, 1999, p. 8). This intersubjective reading had increasingly been traded with the "Turkish people" discourse after the signing of the Lausanne Treaty in the same year that ultimately made the Ottomans' authority obsolete and recognised Turkish Republic's sovereign rights over Anatolia and Thrace.

Based on the agent level traumatic events of the early Turkish leadership explored above, this work investigates the ways in which its traumatic experiences developed during the clashes informed its patterns of actions in the Republican setting. These actions were articulated by "chosen traumas" in two ways: 1) in the making of its imagined national agency, and 2) in designing the military apparatus to stabilise the autobiographical narratives of this imagined subjectivity.

4.1.3. Quest of Making and Stabilising the National Agency

Whether we have arrived to the end of imperial history or not, there is a challenging question to be raised, says Tilley (1997, p. 2): "How generally, when, and where, does the end of empires generate new forms of conflict, internal and external?". In the same vein, Barkey narrows down Tilley's query and asks: "Can we argue that the faster the empire collapses, the greater the likelihood of militancy on the part of the center?" (1997, p. 106). In-depth examinations of these pressing questions are beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, the section above sheds light on some propellants of the internal conflict and militancy cases.

Respectively, it first touched upon the Ottomans' recentralisation and modernisation efforts which engendered a chain of deteriorating reactions. These were particularly the rise of liberation movements vis-à-vis Turkish nationalism and its

114

institutionalisation through the CUP when the *millet* system began to shrink in the wake of the Balkan Wars. Related to this reorganisation failure, it analysed several unrests arising in the Kurdistan region from the 1880s onwards. Then, it investigated their changing nature during the pre- and post-Sévres periods. Drawn on these, it traced the gradual ontological distancing taking place between the military elites and Kurds, as manifested in discursive and practical fields.

Then, how are we to study the contingencies of these sociopsychological developments over the young Republic's institutional structure? How were the traumatic experiences with the external and internal Other(s) employed through chosen traumas as "reference points" to promote an imagined national agency? How can we read the ideological properties of the new state's military apparatus concerning its officially assigned roles? Last but not least, how have these various developments implanted the seeds of slow-moving Kurdish Question in Turkey?

Although Mango (2008) argues that the continuity between the Ottomans and the Republic should not be overemphasised, the culture of using bureaucratic tools to disseminate the regime's ideology has been transferred from the former into the latter. Therefore, what must be explored is how the Republican elites formulated national agency and strong institutions by way of their memories of traumatic conflict and the fragility of the Ottomans. In doing so, the following paragraphs start with the ways in which elites' conflict traumas developed from the 1918 onwards were articulated by discursive performances that narrated their feelings and provided a background for the imagined national agency via the Republican (or Kemalist) Revolution.

When empires collapse, they leave institutions behind. New elites are the main agents who reshape or deconstruct these institutions in light of their ideological

imagination since they are trained, socialised, and politicised in the context of a collapsing empire (Barkey, 1997). In the Republican setting, we must uncover how traumatic conflict memories are used as a mechanism, which first delineated the boundaries of action, and accordingly established a foundational place for action. From this vantage point, the collapse of the Ottomans and subsequent clashes formed a traumatic background for the Republican elites that became a fragmenting experience, in which past-present-future division become unclear (Varvin, 2003, pp. 206-217). Under these circumstances, the Republican elites experienced "time-collapse" through which their specific feelings towards the particular groups and structures became gradually fixed. If this traumatic time-collapse experience is utilised, it forms a cognitive space for action (Giddens, 1990). In other words, the utilisation of traumatic event provides individuals a suitable background in making their autobiographical narratives that tell them who they are vis-à-vis the Other(s) and motivate their future actions. Therefore, traumatic events might be used in a way to construct a unique sense of agency for a nation in the making and its in-/out-group boundaries.

At this critical juncture, remembrances of catastrophe(s) experienced by group's (e.g., ethnic community) descendants can be employed as "chosen trauma" (Volkan, 1997). Political employment of chosen traumas strengthens the in-/out-group boundaries by means of, for example, linguistic and nonlinguistic materials, such as monuments, relics, and statues, that constantly reproduce the traumatic past (*ibid*). Then, chosen traumas contain "information, fantasised expectations, intense feelings, and defence mechanisms against unacceptable thought" (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 755) – that inherently delineate the nature of particular identity.

Thus, the particular context of collapse/catastrophe/violence which state elites experience can become an influential phenomenon that affects their boundaries of action within the emerging state as explored in the section to follow. In this sense, first, the particular context of the Ottomans' collapse and subsequent clashes imposed a traumatic condition for the Republican elites that translated themselves into the fragmenting experience in their minds. Second, this experience gradually fixed the elites' specific feelings towards the Ottomans' archaic structure and traditional-conservative centres of power, specifically Kurds whom they violently confronted. Moreover, the particular conflict traumas of the Republican elites were instrumentally *chosen* and discursively performed to construct a particular collective identity. According to Atatürk, the Ottomans' governance methods, which rendered the Anatolian homeland underdeveloped, was to be blamed for the traumatic events with the Other(s):

> The Turkish nation woke up after long-suffering and catastrophe [referring to the wars and backwards structure]. We cannot go back to that backwards system…We have to [change] our thinking and mentality (my translation, ADS, 1989, p. 197)…We could not adapt the conditions to rise and compete with others. Our methods [referring to the governance codes of the Ottomans] were primitive that made us and the Islamic countries fall behind the civilisation (my translation, ADS, 1989, p. 219).

Prior to exploring the above discourse, it must be noted that the Ottomans shrank from vast territories into a relatively small nation state. This massive loss of territory within a short period of time added another psychological layer to the state elites' chosen traumas as it deepened the quest for new ways of ontological security seeking (Kinnvall, 2004). Against this background, there are two points worth distilling. First, Atatürk's narrative articulated the shared ideational formation and affective bonds among his early cadres because they had predominantly trained in the Western-

oriented institutes, knew each other, and fought together during WWI and the National Liberation.[36] Through discursive performances, this relatively homogenous mindset resonated within their imagined national agency. Second, Atatürk's narrative was resonant within the Anatolian communities as they also had been experienced these catastrophic events and were already developing some degree of group level awareness, as noted above. Thus, state elites here were "in a position not only to advocate [memories] but also to translate them into specific group behaviors" vis-à-vis their imagined national agency (Sasley, 2013, p. 139). The subject identifications for this agency, what it can do or cannot do, had been gradually learned from the "noncivilised" structure of the Ottomans in general and the violent bodily encounters with the "backwards" Kurds (1918-1935) more specifically as explored below. Thus, the imagined national agency and the mechanisms providing it with a cognitive background to adopt certain roles and a unique self-image were formulated in light of elites' subjective interpretation of "civilisation". In this vein, while criticising "nonprogressive" communities in the Ottomans, Atatürk argued:

> It is futile to try to resist the thunderous advance of civilisations, for it has no pity on those who are ignorant or rebellious…those nations who try to follow the superstitions of the Middle Ages are condemned to be destroyed…(ADS, 1989, p. 212, quoted in Kasaba, 1997, p. 26).

The following paragraphs analyse how this imagined national agency was formed in the young Republic, and will explore how the state's military apparatus was designed to stabilise the autobiographical narratives of this agency. I evaluate

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[36] Yet, Atatürk was confronted by his companions, especially due to his radical modernisation idea to abolish the caliphate in 1924. However, he managed to consolidate full authority from 1926 onwards by eliminating dissent voices in the military and political domains (Ahmad, 1993, pp. 52-71).

Turkey's transition from the multiethnic Ottoman rule into a secular nation state as the state sponsored modernisation during the single party (Republican Peoples' Party – CHP) rule (1923-1950). Within this realm, Kemalists "rejected the long-lasting universal context of Islam and replaced it with nation" (Alaranta, 2014, p. 18). This self-conscious secular nationalism had four objectives which powerfully delineated the in-/out-group boundaries of the imagined national agency.[37]

It would first offer an institutional background for the constituent Turkish government to adopt a secular rationalisation for the national agency instead of restoring the religious basis of legitimacy through the Ottoman caliphate. Kemalists, therefore, sent the Ottoman dynasty into exile and delimited the boundary of religion not only through secularising legal reforms superseding Islamic *Sharia'* law but also through controlling its practice by the legal body, Director of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*).[38] In doing so, they rejected the Ottomans' unclear border understanding acknowledging all Muslims as its subjects irrespective of their ethnicity. This would secondly help them to establish a defined nation whose frontiers are clearly shown. Furthermore, it manifested the abandonment of the religious connotations assigned to the *millet* notion in the Ottomans. In this sense, Kemalists altered the previous connotations of *millet* and scaled up the notion of the "Turkish people" introduced by the Lausanne Treaty to the "Turkish nation" (*Türk Milleti*). The Turkish nation was therefore positioned at the core of the Republic, sharing the common language, history, culture, and lives on a clearly defined and unitary ground.

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[37] This mindset was also codified in the 1924 Constitution's Article 2: "The Turkish State is republican, nationalist, populist, étatist, secular and revolutionary. Its official language is Turkish, and its capital is the city of Ankara" (Peaslee, 1956, p. 404).
[38] For a detailed discussion on the role of *Diyanet*, see Öztürk (2016; 2019).

Said differently, Kemalists imagined the nation in a secular, centralised, united, and territorial manner. Hence, they organised its institutions according to "rational-bureaucratic" lines and its political agency as "territorial-national" (Gülalp, 1994, p. 162). Third, this governance pattern would draw the transnational in-/out-group boundaries of national agency, which would not only be recognised by but also be included into the European society referred to as the "standard of contemporary civilisation" by Atatürk (1927). While communicating the ruling elites' fantasised expectations vis-à-vis the imagined national agency and its future projection, this reference to institutionalised civilisation rearticulated Kemalists' fixed feelings towards the Ottoman past which had to be deliberately buried due to its structural problems. I argue that the fourth and last objective of the modernisation trajectory was built on this unwanted legacy of the Ottomans: reforming the backwards society through the intellectual and the material values of the West and embedding the civilised national agency into it.

In the eyes of the leadership, the notion of modernity, or being civilised for the Turkish state and its nationals, was a holistic phenomenon. From the late 1920s onwards, it had crystallised and became fixed around certain secularising institutions, modernisation norms, and definitions codified in law, policies, and social practices. These would establish a fertile ground for Atatürk to break down old political routines and mentality/ies in making an imagined national agency. Along these lines, for example, a national education system was introduced by the *Law on Unification of Education* (1924). It became one of the most influential apparatuses in disseminating the Kemalist vision, which was more effectively used after the *Latinisation of the Turkish Alphabet* in 1928. These policies were accompanied by the establishment of

nationalist bodies such as the *People's House* and *People's Chambers* in 1932 that would further promote the spirit of Turkishness. In addition to these, religious orders were banished in 1925 followed by the penalisation of Islamic clothing in public spaces, particularly cloak and turban, except for the clerics (1934) (GNA, 2019a; GNA, 2019b).

At this juncture, the elites' "learned" emotions did not simply reflect social practices as norms and institutions as structures. Institutions themselves became an expression of emotions, indicating what kind of agency institutions embody (Pace and Bilgic, 2018, p. 508). The challenge here was that the subject identifications of human progress were fixed to the elites' own civilisation idea. Alongside the social practices explored above, counter-Revolutionist groups and outdated structures providing reminders of the archaic Ottoman setting were perceived as sources of ontological insecurity destabilising the autobiographical narratives of the civil(ising) national agency.

4.1.4. Ontological Insecurities as a Nature of the Intractable Conflict

There are two points vis-à-vis these ontological insecurity sources. As can be seen through various constitutional fixations, elite discourses, and social practices, the Revolution problematised the traditional-conservative elements and associated centres of power obstructing the modernisation trajectory of the imagined national agency. Thus, the Republican elites had to either eliminate these "interrupting" obstacles or confront them to mitigate their impact. It was the "price" to be paid for the radical reforms (Kili, 2011, pp. 106-107). Along with Suna Kili, Tarik Tunaya (1964, pp. 120-125) perceived this as a "principle of existence" and "critical responsibility" of

Kemalists to eliminate the counter-Revolutionary forces and backwards institutions undermining the civil(ising) agency. Building on Tunaya's "principle of existence" rationale, the first point of ontological insecurity sources is explored below.

As discussed in the analytical framework, traumatic violent encounters shape the state elites' psychological "security border" (Volkan, 2001; 2003; 2004) which informs them about the threatening elements. When the acute phase of a conflict or war-like status quo concludes, this security border stays active for decades (Volkan, 2003), as the catastrophic war memories reflect themselves not only on institutional codes but also collective goals, myths, and symbols of the nation. Echoing Tunaya's "principle of existence" claim, the Republican elites' "security border" securing and stabilising their imagined national agency was built on a set of physical and ontological conditions against "interrupting uncertainty sources". Empirically, these conditions were embodied in Turkey's military actor, the TAF, against the counter-Revolutionary Other(s), namely Sharia supporters (later political Islamists) in general and Kurdish nationalists more specifically. It is important to explore state elites' reasoning that attaches the "direct guardianship role" (Luckham 1971) to the TAF, through which the military was organised as a unique protector of national values in protecting elites' imagined collective identity.

As briefly mentioned above (see Chapter 4.1.1), the local paramilitaries and regular army, being the driving forces of the National Liberation, were restructured as a standing army of the TAF in the Republic to defend the self-proclaimed security-oriented state (TMFA, 2019b). The TAF has since then perceived and designated itself

as the guardian of the Kemalist system, adopting this role in settling conflicts.[39] Thus, the TAF's official roles sit on two pillars. First, like other armies, the TAF's role is "the protection and maintenance of the state's constitutional order, national presence…interests on an international level, and contractual law against any kind of internal and foreign threat" (White Papers, 1998, p. 12). Its second role which has so far been revealed to be more critical than its first assignment is: maintaining the basic identity of a nation (TAF, 1970, pp. 20-45). This normative justification for the political ascendency of the military, therefore, lies behind its role as a custodian of Kemalism – seen as the highest morality of the nation by the TAF (Cizre, 2008, p. 303-306). In turn, it grants the TAF a leverage to stabilise the civil(ising) national agency's coherent narrative about doing, acting, and being. This leverage in making a stable sense of agency put itself into practice through the TAF's vision of direct guardianship against the reactionary Other(s). Then, the second point on ontological insecurity sources can be explored in the following section, which is in parallel with Tunaya's "critical responsibility to eliminate" claim.

The modernisation reforms systematically "buried" the nodes of the archaic structure at the expense of making a civilised agency. This process, predictably, galvanised the traditional-conservative groups' sentiments. Consequently, seven ethnoreligious uprisings (1923-1935) occurred in the young Republic. Four of them had the Kurdish background sharing the same pattern with the pre-Republican revolts. Rather than scrutinising all, it is crucial to explore the *Sheikh Said* Rebellion (1925) which fixed the coercive security agenda of the TAF on resolving the future ethnic

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[39] This guardianship role of the TAF has been seriously challenged after the July 15 coup attempt in 2016. Although the failed coup goes beyond the scope of this research, its impact still dominates the politics and society of Turkey (see Baser and Öztürk, 2017).

conflicts (also see Chapter 4.2). Along with the normative justification empowering the TAF, the task of settling future conflicts was later used to provide master narratives and sources of inspiration for modern Kurdish insurgency, as expressed by the PKK's incarcerated leader Öcalan (1983). Although the rebellion first developed as a counter-Revolutionary movement seeking the restoration of the caliphate (Ahmad, 1993), at its core it involved "a positive desire for Kurdish Independence" (Lewis, 1974, p. 98). As previously explored, the Republican elites' distancing vis-à-vis Kurds had emanated from their traumatic encounters before the rebellion erupted. Informed by these encounters, the existential "rivals" that were 1) physically endangering the nationals and 2) ontologically jeopardising the imagined national agency's subject identifications, being secular and civil(ising), were to be eliminated in light of the elites' psychological "security border". First, adopting the same conflict resolution method used in the pre-Republican context, martial law was declared in thirteen eastern cities. Then, the Independence Tribunals was legislated through the *Law for the Maintenance of Public Order*:

> Any organisations and religious orders assisting the reactionary and insurgent groups…jeopardising the Turkish social order and peace; are then permitted to be controlled by the Turkish government after the President's authorisation. The government [forces] will deliver those acting against the specified actions to the Independence Tribunals (my translation, GNA, 2019c).

This Order quoted above is vital in understanding the interplay between the strong military culture and aspired social matrix of the Republic. It does not only support the elites' imagined social order in agreement with the Western ideals and nonconservatism. It also highlights a framing practice through which the leadership distinguishes "some group(s) of people" who would endanger this social domain.

Therefore, reactionary and rebellious groups are not merely identified as physical security dangers, but also as key sources of ontological insecurity destabilising the autobiographical narratives of the national agency hosted in this aspired domain. In this sense, Kemalists did not explicitly classify the rebellion under the category of Kurdish nationalism. As if Kurds did not exist any longer, it was rather articulated as a "reactionary incident" in order to play down the historically recurring Kurdish issue. The Ministry of Education, being aware of this ever-resonating issue, banned the "use of divisive terms", such as the "Kurd" and "Kurdistan" in the same year (Özerdim, 1974). This official denial of the Kurdish reality and their identity-related assets had until 1991 persisted, while the particular subject identifications, such as Kurds being the "backwards" or a "security threat", historically remained attached to the Kurdish subjectivity and have been consistently reiterated in Turkish politics (Yeğen, 2015a; Adisonmez, 2016) (see Chapter 4.2).

To recap, the particular security language to stabilise the Turkish subjectivity implied "a specific metaphysics of life" (Huysmans, 1998, p. 231). In this sense, Turkey's affect-based reading of security added an emotional dimension to the security-seeking practice in a wider discursive and institutional context (Kinnvall, 2004). Thus, ontological insecurity sources imposing "interrupting uncertainties" against the securitised subjectivity's autobiographical narratives further intensified the quest for single and stable agency. This quest, however, increasingly attached to Kurds a function of "Otherness" in the construction of governance codes and dynamics. In other words, it based national agency on a binary reading as it was narrated through relations of difference with the supposedly backwards Kurdish Other. Perhaps, the paragon of this quest for single and stable agency vis-à-vis the Kurdish Other was the

extensive "Turkification" practices, for example resettling Kurds to the Turkish-dominant Western provinces through the *Law of Settlement* (1925-1950), via which Kurds' feudal social organisation was attempted to be "civilised" to fit the aspired social domain of the Republic.

Set against this background, Atatürk, a leader of the National Liberation and Republic, died in 1938. His opening speech in the 1935 Party Congress powerfully demonstrates the empirical analysis conducted throughout this chapter. First, it shows how the state elites' conflict memories developed from the traumatic events (1918-1935) were consciously articulated through discursive performances and how they in turn narrate their feelings towards particular groups and structures. Second, it illustrates how the state elites' discursive performances facilitated a background for action through a particular collective identity and its in-/out-group boundaries – reminding the Turkish citizens of the "catastrophic events they were exposed to" during the Ottomans and "to whom they were transformed into" in the Republic:

> Now, remembering the Sivas Congress, which was held under the bayonets of the internal and external enemies…would make [our job easier] in reviewing the progress of the past sixteen years. A state on the verge of a cliff…Bloody fights with various enemies…Decades-long war…Then, internally and externally respected new homeland, a new society, new state and constant reforms to achieve them…This is the [summary] of Turkish Revolution (my translation, GNA, 2019d).

Nonetheless, the ways in which to achieve the new society and the new state established the sociopsychological roots for Turkey's intractable conflict with the PKK. In this context, the conflict traumas of the early Turkish elites developed in light of the violent encounters with the external and internal Other(s) from 1918 onwards informed their cognitive and emotional landscape and so does their individual level patterns of actions. These traumas resonated at the state sponsored Turkish agency

126

project and its imagined boundaries through discursively articulated chosen traumas. By extension, according to the ontological position adapted by the founding Republican leadership here, the nation in the making and "citizens" hosted in it were defined by the state elites' sociopsychological properties which had become "known" through the violent encounters with the Other(s) in WWI and subsequent period. Specifically, the traumatic war memories of the Republican elites became their *informative developments* which were discursively performed in their speeches, codified in law, and routinised via social and institutional practices of the young Republic. Thus, the imagined national agency and its particular subject identifications were shaped through a set of affect-centric relations with the selective Other(s) (Campbell, 1998b), while the vacuum produced the traumatic setting was associated with the Ottomans' archaic context.

Building on this background, the counter-Revolutionaries "interrupting" the civil(ising) agency's autobiographical narratives were framed as sources of ontological insecurity and authorised to be suppressed in light of the early Turkish elites' psychological "security border". Accordingly, the *Sheikh Said* rebellion and following Kurdish uprisings not only fixed the strict agenda of the TAF but also the Republican elites' already detached mindset towards the Kurdish Other who had already been alienated from the impending social matrix and seen as a "destructive element against Turkishness and Turkey" during the pre-Republican era. In consequence, the "backwards" Kurdish subjectivity was increasingly taken as an antagonistic signpost against the autobiographical narratives of Turkey's civil(ising) agency.

In this sense, the early Republican elites' positioning practise vis-à-vis the selective Other(s) and harsh security agenda prepared the epistemic basis and nature of Turkey's intractable conflict. These two co-constitutive elements first brought in oppressive policies and complete securitisation of all walks of life in Turkey vis-à-vis the material and ideological identity makers of the Kurdish Other(s). They later influenced the construction of modern Kurdish national consciousness from the 1920s forwards (see Chapter 4.2.1). Seen in this light, the Kurdish nationalists' emotionally moving historical symbols and rebellion narratives framing Turks as "barbarians" make references to these early times of oppression (see Bozarslan, 2008). By extension, these equally essentialist narratives have later been used for the PKK's master narratives behind their insurgency in the 1980s, promoting their would-be hegemonic justifications that furnished their future goals and aspirations for the Kurdish movement (Öcalan, 1983) (see Chapter 4.2.2) – that further intensified the TAF's harsh security agenda.

The critical point is that the binary reading vis-à-vis the Other(s) has been reproduced in various forms in the political context for decades to follow, particularly with the start of the systematic violent mobilisation in the 1980s (see Chapter 4.2.3). This in turn further limited the boundaries of human action as it absorbed the vast majority of people in it, informing their ideas, feelings and behavioural patterns within the increasingly violent setting. In the final analysis, this is crucial because even agency is not stable but reflexively altered in light of major developments (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, 2011); elites' resonating practices, which express the institutionalised feelings, reconstruct the in-/out-group boundaries of Turkishness and Kurdishness through binary lenses. Consequently, although the intensity of Turkey's

intractable conflict has changed over time (see Ünal, 2012a; 2012b), this binary reading which constantly narrates the Kurdish Other as a source of ontological insecurity resituates the two subjectivities into antagonistic places – that ultimately sustains Turkey's decades-long intractable conflict.

4.2. Young Republic No More?: Transition and Violent Mobilisation

> Turkish political development [during Atatürk's presidency] was determined by the modernist group's complete control of Turkish government and elimination from political life of the upholders of traditional society. The reforms of Ottoman Empire had reduced the status, but had not eliminated the role of [these groups] as a factor in Turkish social and political life (Kili, 2011, p. 257).

Chapter 4.1 first explored the Turkish national context in which the state elites' traumatic memories are shaped and in turn articulated through discursive performances. It second showed the interplay between affect-centric processes of security and agency making. Building on these two points which are argued to establish the sociopsychological "roots" of Turkey's intractable conflict to be shaped, Chapter 4.2 analyses its systematic violent eruption. In exploring this transitioning stage, this chapter is divided into three concise sections, each of which focuses on a different period in Turkish politics. Firstly, it explores major changes in Turkish politics vis-à-vis the shifting international and domestic conjunctures as well as the emergence of religious counter-elites after Atatürk (1938-1961). Secondly, it examines the rise of Kurdish national consciousness after three military coups of the TAF (1960, 1971, 1980) where it intervened in civilian rule by means of enacting its custodian role towards the Kemalist Revolution. In light of these colossal transformations, the third and last section focuses on twofold developments: the first being the revival of *Sévresphobia*, which prompted the discussion of the religious turn vis-à-vis the "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" while the second marked the systematic violent eruption of Turkey's intractable conflict (1980-2002).

There are two intertwined reasons behind this genealogical method and historical periodisation rationale. First, it advances the claims of Chapter 4.1 by showing that the early Turkish state elites' traumatic memories inform the state actions and particular collective identity in ways that sustain the "interrupting ontological insecurity" sources as Other. Second, it offers a detailed analysis on the evolution of popular contestation areas and counter-narratives over time. The latter point is important for the discussion on the AKP's Turkey (2002-present) (see Chapter 4.3). These popular contestations and counter-narratives were effectively utilised by the AKP leadership to "self-interrogate" the ontological security network such as particular identity makers, social codes, and performative roles ascribed to the imagined Turkishness. In doing so, the leadership aimed to promote its own version of Turkishness which would align with the neo-Ottomanism counter-narrative based on multicultural mindset and cosmopolitanism. More specifically, this powerful counter-narrative was instrumentalised to contest the strong ontological security-seeking routines of the imagined Turkishness through the "National Unity and Brotherhood Project" (2009-2015), aimed at terminating Turkey's intractable conflict. In this line, the historical periodisation provided here illustrates how the "common victim ground" of the Republic's "two counter-Revolutionary Others", Islamist and Kurdish groups, had been gradually shaped prior to the AKP rule. The development stage of this common ground is crucial to grasp how the two groups, albeit their inner differences, found a unifying motivation to critically reflect on the early Republican elites' particular understanding of the state and society during the peace process.

4.2.1. After Atatürk: Post-WWII, Multiparty System, and First Contestations (1938-1961)

Under the single party rule of the CHP, the Kemalist Revolution was an attempt to break with the Ottomans' archaic system through self-conscious secular nationalist reforms. It was characteristically a social revolution. It did not only aim for radical transformation in governing the social space but also values and mentality in light of the founding Republican elites' subjective interpretation of civilisation. After the death of Atatürk, this intensive modernisation constituted the domestic pillar of the Revolution until the introduction of the multiparty system in 1945. The system provided a strong platform for the "uneliminated groups", or as I call "interrupting" ontological insecurity sources, against the autobiographical narratives of the civil(ising) national identity. These groups interrogated the trajectory of the Kemalist Revolution and its formulation of Turkishness. Prior to examining this, Turkey's Interwar and post-World War II (WWII) foreign policies are merit to be outlined vis-à-vis the leaderships' resonant traumatic memories.

In the foreign pillar, Turkey's manoeuvres were limited during the Republic's early period. The regime consolidation efforts inside the newly founded state curbed Turkey's movements while one could highlight the approaching WWII and subsequent Cold War era on the external side. Regardless of these restraining parameters, Turkish foreign policy became a powerful apparatus in rearticulating Turkey's transnational and domestic autobiographical narratives in agreement with the imagined national agency and its in-/out-group boundaries. Despite the strong security concerns, for instance, Turkey managed to devise a balanced foreign policy towards

the West vis-à-vis the newly established British and French Mandates in the Middle East. Thus, Turkey's diplomatic relations in the Interwar period setting appeared to be a socialisation area in performing the Western-oriented national agency apart from a rational strategy to survive. Accordingly, Turkey preserved its "active neutrality" during the Interwar and WWII periods so as to protect its borders (Deringil, 1982). This later followed by the rapprochement with the West to secure a membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1952 against the increasing Soviet threat.

Nonetheless, under the NATO aegis, Turkey was not able to find a complete remedy for its long attached insecurities concerning the external Others. Echoing *Sévresphobia*, it mainly stemmed from the traumatic war memories of the early Republican elites who vexed the continuing feelings of anxiety and mistrust with regards to the former Ottoman domains and close neighbours such as "Turcophobe" Arab countries (Joobani, 2016). In ensuring of a stable sense of national agency and its continuity, these challenging physical and cognitive settings exacerbated Turkey's *perceived* external enemies alongside the counter-Revolutionary internal Others. In turn, Turkey has been a self-proclaimed security-oriented state whose foremost foreign policy agenda is to attain three goals. These goals are also in line with the TAF's guardianship role to stabilise the civil(ising) national agency's coherent narrative about doing, acting, and being (see Chapter 4.1.4): 1) safeguarding the survival of the nation, 2) defending the territorial integrity, and 3) preserving the basic identity of a nation (TMFA, 2019b). In this vein, the subsequent Turkish leaderships sought to adopt the Western-oriented foreign policy and "noninterventionist"

diplomatic mindset for decades.[40] On the domestic politics pillar, however, the Kemalist program was contested after Atatürk's death.

The liberal world order established in the post-WWII period challenged the early Republican elites' political mindset. A new and less Western-oriented generation emerged in the domestic decision-making circles in Turkey, questioning the transformative values of the Revolution. Heralded by the systemic challenges in the international and domestic conjunctures, "new power groups, new areas of dissent, and therefore new causes for tension" (Sezer, 1981, p. 2) appeared. In other words, the initial ideological polarisation in Turkey was strengthened with the intensified liberal economic activities and the changing sociopolitical profile of the country. Consequently, a right-wing religious middle class emerged in the late 1940s with their contesting demands.

These developments manifested that the main goals of the Revolution, being the creation of a secular-nationalist state and the modern national agency embedded into it, were not embraced by all social enclaves. Although burying the nodes of the archaic Ottomans in achieving these goals was seen as a panacea for the early Republican elites, it further widened the split between the civil(ising) and traditional groups at the sociocultural and historical levels. Thus, elites' political mindset produced an "amnesia" effect for the traditional strata of the society (Kadioğlu, 1996),

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[40] Two points must be mentioned here. First, Turkey's Western-oriented foreign policy has been shifting towards the "multifaceted foreign policy" after the transition to the greater economic liberalism in the 1980s (see Chapter 4.2.3). Second, there were three major deviations from the "noninterventionist" agenda: Turkey's unilateral military intervention in Cyprus (1974) and in northern Iraq (2007-2008) (for a detailed analysis, see Joobani and Adisonmez, 2018). The third case is Turkey's military involvement into the Syrian Civil War since 2011, which is still far from a conclusion as of 2021.

demonstrating that Turkey's realities were not monolithic, especially within the rural context. Two vital dimensions of this issue must be underlined.

Firstly, it caused the estrangement of the laypeople from their alleged defunct Ottoman past and Islamic cultural practices. This radical disassociation of "the present from the future" engendered deep ontological insecurity as their historically shaped traditional way of life and autobiographical narratives telling them who they are was fundamentally based on collective memory and religious rituals that helped them to cope with the cosmology and the eschatology-related existential questions, which Mardin (2008) terms as *Volkislam*.

Secondly, these interruptions towards the premises of *Volkislam* became laypeople's own version of "selected memories" reminding them of the early Republican periods. These two points provided the "uneliminated" traditional-conservative groups a collective repertoire in making their counter-narratives. The critical issue is that these counter-narratives have been transmitted (and modified) across generations and periodically evoked in Turkish politics – that contested the Kemalist agenda. Herein, the introduction of the multiparty system in 1945 and the subsequent election victory of the Democrat Party (DP) in 1950 were critical junctures that enabled these historical counter-narratives to gain ground in the first place, while allowing Kurds to join the political opposition against Kemalists.

4.2.1.1. Alternative Political Consciousness versus Institutionalised Fears

During the 1950 elections, almost all opposition groups, including the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, rallied behind the DP which was the first party to criticise the secularisation and Westernisation projects in Turkey. Although the DP did not

openly express its ideas on religion in the party program (GNA, 2019e), the party leader Adnan Menderes called for a prominent role for Islam in the Republic, proposing that "Turkey is an Islamic country…and will meet the conditions of Islam [which] suffers from the noisy outcry of the Revolutionists' table discussion [specifically referring to Atatürk]" (Büyük Doğu, 1951, p. 7)". The reference to this contestation was also traced to his election slogan "*Enough is Enough! Now Let the Nation Speak* (Artik Yeter! Soz Milletin)".

The DP's election marked a critical watershed for all social groups. Thereafter, party politics has not only become a principal characteristic of Turkish politics through which different identities and their demands are communicated. It has also become an effective platform where competing groups constantly challenge each other's narratives about Turkey's past, present and future, while reclaiming that they are hierarchically and normatively prime candidate to become the nation's "storyteller".[41] Against this background, three interrelated contestation areas appeared vis-à-vis the DP's coming into power after the 1950, 1954, and 1957 elections.

The first area was to diminish the impact of the early Republican elites' strong indoctrination and political legitimacy on the society. Accordingly, the DP closed down the CHP's propaganda agency *People's House* in 1951 and seized the party's newspaper *Ulus* in 1953. This followed by the *Press Law* in 1954, silencing all opposing voices. The second area was the populist application of religion. In this vein, Menderes criticised the Republican reforms, arguing that they will "distinguish between the reforms if they are embraced by the people or not" in light of "freedom

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[41] The identity demands of Turkey's "uneliminated groups" were not evaluated as legitimate for decades. Yet, the "presumed" identities of their political leaders have played a crucial role in communicating their counter-hegemonic demands (see Massicard, 2018).

of thought and faith" (GNA, 2019f). This trajectory manifested itself in the DP's relationship with the Islamist media, particularly with *Sebilürreşad* journal which categorised the 1923-1950 period as the "tyrannical dictatorship", while the CHP leadership was portrayed as the "atheist network" (1951a; 1951b). On the one hand, the Menderes government instrumentally used the Islamist media to draw support from the traditional-conservative groups. In turn, the DP adopted Islamists' proposals to increase the role of religion within the social matrix. For example, the religious radio and Islamic vocational high schools were introduced in this era while the ban against the recitation of the call for prayer in Arabic was lifted (GNA, 2019g). On the other hand, the DP cadres were cautious about their open relationship with Islamists and the TAF's alarmist agenda against the counter-Revolutionary incidents. Accordingly, the DP tried to contain extreme reactions of the Islamists groups through various measures, for example, abolishing their political organisation, the Islamic Democrat Party, in 1952 (Vatan, 1952).

Building on these two points, the third contestation area was associated with the founding Republican elites' imagined national agency, revealing that the "public perceptions of Turkishness can be different from the definition of the state" (Al, 2015, p. 89). As explored above (see Chapter 4.1.1), alongside their traumatic war and conflict experiences, the early Republican elites were aware of the late Ottoman era nationalist thinkers who put emphasis on Turkishness and the values of the "founder" Turkish community as a solution for the Ottomans' weakening. In the same manner, the DP leadership was influenced by the late Ottoman era Islamist intellectuals, such as Halim Sabit Simay (see TDV, 2021), believing that Islam perfectly suits the identity characteristics of Turks. In this sense, the DP's vision was based on the popular

interpretation of Islam that would melt *the political* and *the religious* in the same pot. Against this context that religion would become nationalised while the imagined collective identity and its ontological security network, such as autobiographical narratives and behavioural performances, would be religionised. Thus, the popular reading of Islam was believed to offer a new formative base for political consciousness in this period (Yavuz, 1993). By extension, the DP's challenge against the national-secular Turkishness originated from the "alternative modernity" standpoint that had been debated since the 1920s. Among other interpretations, Nurettin Topcu's "Anatolian nationalism" (1948a; 1948b) well outlines this mindset which advocates the nationalist-Islamist synthesis for the political and social life as opposed to the secularist/modernists master narratives[42] – that challenge the Kemalists' ideology and political authority alike. Then, the DP's sociopolitical lens featuring *Volkislam* was a rupture against the CHP's disassociation attempt of the present from the past.

Consequently, two incompatible readings striving to establish their own social continuity had emerged in this era. At this juncture, Kurds who refused to join the state sponsored Turkification camp expressed their sympathies towards the DP since it was contesting the Kemalist status quo and promised to lessen the oppressive practices in Turkey's southeast (see Van Bruinessen, 1993). Many religious and tribal notables of Kurds, such as Abdulmelik Firat, joined the ranks of the DP while Kurdish nationalism became a rare phenomenon in the wake of extensive military operations (Bozarslan, 2008). This period of silence in terms of violent resistance, however, played a significant role in the coming decades. It informed the rise of contemporary Kurdish

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[42] The synthesis has gained a momentum from the 1980s onwards (see Chapter 4.2.3 and Chapter 4.3)

nationalism and its collective repertoire vis-à-vis Turkey's historically resonating oppressions and discriminations against Kurds. Herein, modern Kurdish nationalists first observed the punitive methods of Turkish nationalism and then articulated their long-held grievances in their memoirs against this pressing atmosphere (see Anter, 1990).

Although the Kemalist principles were criticised and losing their momentum under the DP rule, the normative positions of major Kemalist institutions remained unquestioned in this period. Yet, the steady increase in the DP's undemocratic rule and economic stagnation in the country provoked acute tensions between the TAF (along with the CHP cadres) and the DP government in the late 1950s. Against this setting, the TAF staged its first military intervention, the 1960 Turkish coup, in Republican history by evoking its *Internal Service Law No. 211* to "preserve the Turkish homeland and the Republic". Apart from the DP's policies, there were several deep-seated fears behind the TAF's intervention into the progress of civilian democracy. These fears revealed themselves in two dimensions: the TAF's immediate actions against the counter-Revolutionary groups and the state's constitutional revision in 1961.

Firstly, the DP was closed down by the legal ruling and fifteen high-ranking members of the party, including Menderes, were sentenced to death. In this sense, the TAF resecured the aspired social matrix of the Republic while diminishing the impact of the religious right-wing and their debureaucratisation moves against the Kemalist project. This indicated the continuing impacts of the "chosen traumas": the counter-Revolutionaries and their narratives that contest the imagined Turkishness were to be handled in the same manner with the early Republican rebellions. This aggressive

139

measure was also directly related to the Kurdish community. For Kirisci and Winrow (1997), the TAF feared that their declining power and hierarchical status contributed to the rise of Kurdish national consciousness. Accordingly, 54 Kurdish members of the parliament (MP) from the DP were arrested and sent to exile by the *Mandatory Settlement Law No. 105*.

Secondly, the 1961 Constitution was devised under the guidance of the TAF. In Turkish studies literature, there is a consensus that the new constitution adopted a pluralist and more liberal approach (see Altunisik and Tur, 2018; Finkel and Sirman, 1990). Indeed, it offered a legal basis for the mixed economy and social unions while extending individuals' rights. With that said, it, paradoxically, exacerbated the Kurdish issue by prioritising Turkishness of the Republic. For example, the sovereignty emphasis of Article 4 of the 1924 Constitution was altered. It was recodified as the "sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the Turkish nation" while previously accepted as the "sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the nation" (GNA, 2019h). Furthermore, thousands of Kurdish village names were Turkified in the following four months of the coup (TESEV, 2011), echoing the resettlement policy of Kurds (1925-1950). Lastly, the TAF introduced the National Security Council (NSC – Milli Guvenlik Kurulu) to directly involve in civilian democracy in the future. This has established "*a la Turka*" checks-and-balances system vis-à-vis the Kemalist principles. The major issue here was the categorisation of Kurdishness by certain parameters. It was stuck "between the 'periphery' and the centre; between tradition and modernity; and that between Islam and secularism" (Yeğen, 2006, p. 225). This intuitively reaffirmed the ontological distancing between and binary reading of Turkishness and Kurdishness similar to what was discussed in Chapter 4.1.

4.2.2. Between Three Coups: Polarisation, Political Violence, and Rebirth of Kurdishness (1961-1980)

As explored in the above section, the ruling elites' radical secular-nationalist approach in achieving their civil(ising) collective identity goal did not attract wide support from the "uneliminated groups" in the early period of the Republic. The lack of social engagement strategies and large ontological differences between the civil(ising) and traditional-conservative communities facilitated a background for the rise of the DP and its counter-narratives which challenged the Kemalist status quo until the 1960 coup. In this sense, the 1950-1960 era was a "preliminary test", or as Ahmad (1977) puts the "Turkish experiment", against the young Republic's policies on several counts.

Following this preliminary test, the 1961-1980 period was marked by the most radical shifts and nationwide difficulties experienced in Republican history. The foremost issues being debated in the current Turkish politics were crystallised in this era, starting from the Kurdish Question to the left versus right division, from the secular-religious dichotomy to the role of the TAF. In a nutshell, this era witnessed a rapid demographic shift from rural to urban areas, chronic military interventions towards the progress of civil democracy (1971 and 1980), economic fluctuations and sharp ideological fragmentations in the society which ultimately provoked the mounting wave of political violence from the 1970s onwards.

At the outset, there were various processes –occasionally contradictory– unfolded in the institutional and ideological dimensions in the post-1960 coup era. From the institutional angle, the government was given greater control over the

141

Republic's ideological apparatuses, such as the religious affairs were incorporated into the public administration by Article 633 (see Öztürk, 2018) while the "nationalism" and "secularism" principles of Kemalism were attached higher importance in the new constitution (GNA, 2019h). This followed by the mobilisation of the modernist elites within powerful bodies, particularly universities, judiciary, trade unions and national broadcasting in order to consolidate the Kemalist structure – that promoted a monopoly in the bureaucratic decision-making mechanisms.

From the ideological angle, the post-coup elections in 1965 (and 1969) demonstrated the realignment of political counter-narratives and popular resentments in Turkey as the newly founded Justice Party (AP, established as the continuation of the DP) attracted the majority of votes.[43] Then, in parallel with Turkey's bipolar ideological deadlock in the 1945-1960 period, two major groups with contesting social origins and cultural-behavioural attitudes dominated Turkish politics in this new setting. The first group, which was frequently called as the statist, elitists and Kemalist consisted of the intelligentsia-bureaucracy together with the TAF. As it had emerged as a product of the "modernist philosophy" in the previous decades, it also performed as a symbolic representative or the agent of this mindset in this period. The second group, which could be named as the provincial elite and rising economic class, were comprised of the commercial, traditional-conservative and working circles, challenging the former's hierarchical and normative positions. In this sense, the AP was supported by the majority of the latter group and pursued its predecessor's role as a leading party contesting the strong Kemalist program and institutions (Karpat, 2017),

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[43] There were two coalition government experiences in 1961 and 1962, but they did not last long.

although the party elites were cautious due to the vivid dead penalty case (Hurriyet, 1961). What was interesting in the 1961-1980 era was that the economic aspect of contesting ideologies was strongly included in the sociopolitical equation.

While empowering the traditional Kemalist cluster, the political and economic liberalisations introduced by the 1961 Constitution revitalised the "uneliminated" groups' search for new aspirations – that scaled up to a new height with migration flows to major cities, especially Istanbul and Ankara. These demographic shifts, however, not only created a sociocultural shock for the newcomers from Turkey's periphery, but also galvanised their existing insecurities about the top-down modernisation project and its rigid contents (Mardin, 1994). At this juncture, the state's inability to show substantial social and economic progress could not meet the needs of the rapidly urbanising nation. This situation reflected itself on the arrival of novel political movements with diverse ideological orientations and development models. For instance, new parties, such as the class-based Marxist Worker's Party of Turkey (TIP) and the pan-Turanist National Action Party (MHP), were established. The emergence of these groups also prompted an intense discussion among them concerning what historical, ideological and performative properties constitute the imagined Turkishness.[44] Although the two major groups, i.e., Kemalists and the rising provincial elites, fundamentally determined Turkish politics after 1965, the rise of

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[44] With the 1960 Constitution's reemphasis on nationalism and secularism, a new Turkishness discussion was kindled. The notion of Turkishness and Turks' sociopsychological properties were exposed to chameleon-like permutations. On the one hand, supported by the secular nationalist journals like *Cumhuriyet*, the *Nationalists' Society* (1963) problematised communism as it was projected to undermine the ethnic propellants of Turkey and Turkishness. On the other hand, backed by *Yeni Istiklal* and *Milli Yol* journals, the religious-minded nationalists claimed that Turks should dedicate themselves to Islam but also protect their national identity (also see Sancar, 1963). There was also left-wing nationalist group publishing *Yon* journal. They aligned themselves with the CHP's interpretation of Kemalist nationalism (see Milliyet, 2008).

socialist and Islamist parties with boundary-pushing agendas and a new sense of group identities marked the involvement of underrepresented groups in politics. These "unconventional" parties, particularly the leftist groups, appeared as influential centres of power that did not only advocate the alleged counter-Kemalist ideologies, e.g., communism, but also propose political violence to achieve their ends (see Aydinlik, 1968).

Resulting from the espousal of extreme political methods and deep polarisation in the society, Turkey was moving towards an anarchical environment by the end of the 1960s. This political turmoil brought in routinised violent clashes between the leftist urban guerrilla (Turkish Peoples' Liberation Front, supported by the TIP) and the rightists ultranationalist paramilitaries (Grey Wolves, supported by the MHP), permeating all aspects of the state and society. The immense civil disorder in Turkey followed by the crackdown against the leftist politicians, groups, and publications in March 1971 when the TAF sent a memorandum to PM Suleyman Demirel and forced him to resign. Prior to exploring this case in detail, the 1971 coup and its colossal impact on Turkey's left and Kurds should be captured.

4.2.2.1. Kurdish National Consciousness Under the "State of Total Disorientation"

As explored in the above section, contemporary Kurdish nationalists had commenced articulating their long-held grievances in the 1950s. With the political liberties introduced by the 1961 Constitution, the well-educated and self-conscious Kurdish

intellectual circle became active both in major cities of Turkey and abroad.[45] They primarily exchanged opinions on the Kurds' cultural rights and contested Turkey's strong stance against the Kurdish community through various journals, e.g., *Sark Mecmuasi*, *Dicle Kaynagi*, and *Uyanis*. With that said, there were three points which helped the spread of Kurdish national consciousness in this period.

First, with the diversification in politics, the Kurdish movement gained a strong place in the Marxist TIP which supported the class-based justice and social equality. The TIP attracted many young Kurds who had been subjected to discriminative policies and challenged the Kemalist agenda that persistently undermined the Kurdish existence. Second, Kurds aligned themselves with the left-wing parties against the attacks of the ultranationalist paramilitaries. These attacks were justified by the MHP, claiming that the violent responses against the leftist groups were "Turks' duty [and natural reaction]" (Türkgün, 2019). While reproducing the historical binary reading of Turkishness versus Kurdishness in discursive and performative spaces, these radical attitudes against Kurds situated the Kurdish national consciousness on two self-reinforcing pillars: postcolonial exploitation and nationalism for the oppressed. The third point on the Kurdish national consciousness in fact builds on these two pillars:

> …Marxist-Leninist left offered new universal perspectives for the Kurds…the left in Turkey accepted the legitimacy of the 'national question' (which became a synonym for the Kurdish Question), and 'the rights of the oppressed peoples to determine their own fate' (Bozarslan, 2008, p. 346).

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[45] Although the impact of religious aspirations had relatively lessened in this era, Islam continued to play significant role vis-à-vis the Kurdish communities at social and political levels (see Chapter 4.2.3 and Chapter 4.3). For a detailed research on Kurds and Islam, see Sarigil (2018).

The postcolonial reading of the Kurdish Question was a remarkable development; however, it was not the only factor that propagated the national consciousness among Turkey's Kurds. Herein, the 1961 Barzani rebellion against the Iraqi government also played a crucial role. Following this rebellion in north Iraq, the transterritorial "nationship" idea begun to be discussed among Kurds in the region against which Öcalan (1991) pointed out the oppressive powers of Turkey and Iraq as accountable for decades long exploitation of Kurds and the wider "Kurdistan" region. Coupled with some major signs of progress, modern Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish ethnic consciousness in Turkey were advanced by intellectual efforts such as the development of the Kurdish alphabet and social mobilisations for education in the Kurdish language.

At this juncture, two critical fault lines merit to be explored to capture the ever-suffocating environment of Turkey's Kurds – that motivated many Kurds to join the violent struggle alongside the left-wing urban guerrilla. First, the Turkish government of the time unexpectedly imposed legal actions, such as arbitrary detentions and imprisonments, on the Kurdish notables and politicians in 1968, which followed by the TAF's large-scale military drills and eventual stationing in the southeast region (for all these measures, see Cem, 1971). Second, inspired by the Barzani rebellion and the rise of violent means inside Turkey, the Kurdish left started to form their own organisations. The paragon of this renewed aspiration could be best captured behind the launch of Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey (KDPT) which strived for the "recognition of the Kurdish nation's existence and self-determination right in Turkey's Kurdistan…against the racist-fascist governments" through violent resistance (Yargitay, 2019). Against this tumultuous environment, further political and military

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response to the Kurdish movement came with the 1971 coup in which the TAF reinstated its guardianship role vis-à-vis the Kemalist principles.

According to the TAF, the AP government could not curb the anarchical environment and sheered from Atatürk's "contemporary civilisation" route. Thus, there was a need for a strong and credible government to perform Atatürk's reforms (Milliyet, 1971). The TAF also announced that they would not hesitate to take a direct responsibility to protect the Republic in case of these conditions were not fulfilled in the future (*ibid*). The kernel of the 1971 coup was an attempt to reintroduce the Kemalist vision for the second time in the Republic. In this sense, under the martial law regime, the coup committee firstly suspended the liberal vision of the 1961 Constitution on various fronts, among others, making constitutional amendments by Article 111 to empower the TAF in combating terrorism, closing down the leftist newspapers, Kurdish parties and organisations by Article 141 and 142. Secondly, the committee implemented draconian policies against Turkey's left. Many Kurdish prisoners were subjected to torture during this period (Amnesty International, 1977). These harsh forms of silencing the "uninterrupted" groups redemonstrated the historically resonating institutionalised fears towards them – that put an end to extreme leftism for a brief period. However, it deteriorated the challenging sociopolitical atmosphere in Turkey as explored in the rest of this section and Chapter 4.2.3 to follow.

Despite the main motive of the 1970 coup was to mitigate the anarchical environment through the Kemalist turn, it instead aggravated the social unrest and political violence due to the interruption of liberal provisions. With the transition to the civilian rule in 1973, this existing tension and collective despair was accompanied

by the structural dilemmas at home and abroad, such as the country's relapsing economic performance, the 1973 oil crisis, and Turkey's military intervention in Cyprus a year after. These burdensome developments did not only mark Turkey's diplomatic isolation but also the profound distrust between the state leadership and society. Under this "state of total disorientation" in the country (Groc, 2001, p. 252), two internal splits occurred within the leading political movements.

On the one hand, a new ultraIslamist National Salvation Party (MSP) was established after the increasing discontent against the AP policies. Along with the pan-Turanist MHP, the MSP formed various coalition governments with the vanguard of Kemalism, the CHP, in the 1970s, albeit each advocated opposite mindsets. Unlike the MHP, however, the MSP cadres harshly criticised the secular nature of the Republic and transformed the DP's "alternative modernity" standpoint into the *Sharia*-based ideology called *Milli Gorus* (National Outlook). This ideology was founded on the Islamic brotherhood and communal support vision which were believed to help conservative communities suffering from the uneven economic structure and long-attached civil(ising) agenda of Turkey. The National Outlook influenced the trajectory of the conservative-traditional parties and became a source of inspiration for the AKP's "NUBP" (see Chapter 4.3).

On the other hand, Turkey's left lost its orientation with the emergence of ethnic-based Marxist groups and their diverging approaches towards the Kurdish Question. They split into two groups as the "Turkish Marxists"[46] and "Kurdish Marxists"[47] in the mid-1970s. Following this split, there were two critical driving forces that

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[46] The Socialist Revolutionary Party (SDP) and Turkey's Workers-Villagers Party (TKIP).
[47] The National Liberators of Kurdistan (KUKP) and the PKK.

facilitated the emergence of systematic violence aspect of Turkey's intractable conflict: the first being a short-term and reflexive development, while the second marked a long-term and slow-moving issue.

First, the Kurdish Marxists became radicalised in prison vis-à-vis the TAF's harsh methods of extracting information and pertinently lost their belief in legal means in searching for equal rights. With this justification in mind, they established more than twelve politicomilitary networks after being released from prison in the mid-1970s (Kirisci and Winrow, 1997, p. 110). Among them, the Apocular (later the PKK) was established in 1978 as a Marxist-Leninist organisation seeking to "unify Turkey's left for revolution" (Jongerden and Akkaya, 2016, p. 35). At this juncture, the internal split of Kurds from the "social-chauvinist" Turkish Marxists (*ibid*) was another critical short-term development. Only after this ideological clash that the PKK abandoned its uniting approach and embraced the "Kurdish movement" vision with an ethnic insurgency agenda whose main goal was to realise a "unified and independent Kurdistan" (Öcalan, 1993, p. 86). This shift was also consistent with the revived self-awareness among the Kurdish majority who had long called themselves Turks began to identify themselves as Kurds (Van Bruinessen, 1993).

Second, slow-moving sociopsychological issues which Kurds had been facing for six decades prepared the background for this violent transition. The historical continuity of the Turkification/civil(ising) policies which sustained Kurds as Other, unsuccessful rebellions to confront these policies and collective despair developed after these clashes bridged Kurds' conflict narratives of the past over the present. Coupled with the recent Kurdish sufferings, this collective conflict repertoire motivated the PKK to initiate a systematic armed struggle against the "Turkish

colonialism" which was framed to be shaped and spurred by the "Kemalist nationalism" (Serxwebun, 1982, pp. 1-19).

In this sense, the current violent turn in the Kurdish Question was, at the core, born in a sociopsychological context facilitated by the Turkification/civil(ising) project that took the Kurdish Other as a historical reference point of the imagined Turkishness. This project became challenging to stabilise with the rise of "radical" ideologies in the 1960s and 1970s, gradually disregarding legal frameworks and producing a vicious circle of political violence. The striking point was that the discursive human labels and performative expectations attached to the "uncivilised" and "threatening" Kurdish Other were constantly reproduced in this era. Raising on historically repeating structural and direct violence, Kurdishness rebirthed its "self" and in-/out-group boundaries in this period. It had taken an idiosyncratic form with robust collective goals and secular/nationalist inclination. It opened a new episode against the Turkish-Kurdish intersubjective reading which has been exemplified in the chequered relationship between Turkey and the PKK. In making sense of this episode, the following section begins with the TAF's 1980 coup as the third and last successful coup in the Republic.

4.2.3. Pre-AKP Context: Intensified *Sévresphobia*, Islamic Revival, and Systematic Violence (1980-2002)

As studied throughout this Turkey Part, the Kemalist elites' secular fundamentalist mindset and psychological "security border" embodied in the TAF were the two inseparable columns to achieve their imagined collective identity goal. Against this setting, Toprak (1987, p. 230) claimed that the state's dominance over the traditional-

conservative communities and institutions since the 1920s minimised the mobilisation force of Islam; therefore, the religious "revival" observed in the 1970s' Turkey could only be explained within the context of pluralising society. Herein, understanding the rise of alleged counter-Revolutionary ideologies, e.g., Kurdish self-awareness in general and political Islam more specifically, by overemphasising the pluralist appeals may hinder the readers of Turkey to capture the complete account. By extension, these contesting ideologies and their alternative narratives in reading Turkey's past and present were always integrated into the resistance agenda of the "uninterrupted" groups since the introduction of the multiparty system in 1945. Building on what was discussed in the previous sections, exploring the evolving counter-narratives of these groups in the 1980-2002 period facilitates a fertile platform to grasp the systematic violent eruption of Turkey's intractable conflict and the AKP's peace project in the ensuing decade. In doing so, the 1980 coup may serve as a fulcrum for the following discussion.

In parallel with the 1960 and 1971 coups, the TAF intervened in civilian rule in 1980 to stabilise the "institutional and moral parameters of politics" vis-à-vis the Kemalist principles (Cizre, 2008, p. 307). The anarchical environment was acknowledged as "the worst crisis in Turkish history" against which the TAF had to "safeguard state's survival and strengthen Atatürk's Revolution which was under attack" (TRT, 2021). Until the 1983 national elections, the TAF enacted the martial law regime with the help of the NSC's strengthen role. In this regime, two major institutional adjustments were made: the first being the arrangement of new 1982 Constitution, while the second marked the changes in the Turkish Criminal Code.

There are various issues worth distilling to grasp the implications of these developments on the counter-Revolutionary groups.

Firstly, all NGOs and political parties were suspended. Then, the GNA was dissolved. Following these interruptions, the semi-military jurisdiction body, the State Security Court, was authorised by Article 143 of the 1982 Constitution against "the direct crimes committed to the Republic and its security" (GNA, 2019l). The court interrogated (and used torture to extract information from) more than 200,000 people who were suspected to either support the Marxist (mostly the PKK members) or ultranationalist/religious paramilitaries (GNA, 2019k). Secondly, the new constitution reaffirmed the strong and centralised polity of the Republic in line with the 1961 Constitution's tradition. Echoing the psychological "security border" of the early Republican elites, the 1982 Constitution introduced a new, territory-oriented duty for the subsequent governments: "protecting the 'inseparableness' of Turkey" against the secessionist movements and "enemies of Turkishness" (GNA, 2019h). If ever any political organisation attempts to cooperate with secessionist movements seeking to dissolve Turkey's territorial integrity, these bodies would be outlawed by Article 68.

Along with the State Security Court and new constitutional provisions, historically resonating institutional practices and traumas were echoed as an intensified form of *Sévresphobia* among the TAF cadres. Unlike the strong policies formed in the aftermath of the previous coups, which indicated the lasting impacts of Kemalists' "chosen traumas", *Sévresphobia* begun to operate in a different *way* as Volkan (2001, p. 88) would claim. In other words, the official accounts on the Turkish Independence War and affect-centric fears against the selective Other(s) were reproduced in a perpetuated and reinforced form in the wake of the 1980s' anarchical

environment. Under this condition, the shared values and national cohesion, such as securing the "inseparableness" of the Turkish society, became more prominent than the accurate recollections of history. This trauma-laden anxiety manifested itself vis-à-vis the TAF's alarmist positioning practice towards the rapidly evolving Kurdish Question while the political mayhem was likened to the Turkish Independence War (Pevsner, 1984, p. 10).[48] For example, it was disputed that the Kurdish language was fabricated by the Western intelligence services which had been planning to weaken and ultimately divide Turkey (Giritli, 1989). Accordingly, using the Kurdish language for informative purposes was banned through the Turkish Criminal Law's Penal Code 2932. Moreover, resembling the extensive Turkification practices between 1925-1950 through which Kurds' "feudal" social organisation was attempted to be "civilised", the TAF (1982) sought to prove that Kurds do not exist as they are ethnically Turkish in reality.[49] The head of the Turkish History Society, founded after the 1980 coup, later argued that Kurds are members of Turkoman tribes (see Halaçoğlu, 1996). These points showed that the resurrection of old separation fears was partly related to the revival of idiosyncratic Kurdishness with its robust collective goals and nationalist outlook.

To recap, the discussion above confirms Mackenzie's interview with the TAF leadership claiming that the main aim of the coup was "eliminating terrorism and political bigotry which had disfigured Turkish life during the previous decade"

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[48] There are striking resemblances between the Independence Tribunals (see Chapter 4.1.4) and the State Security Court. As the leaders of the pre- and the early Republican era revolts were sentenced to death for treason by the Independence Tribunals, a similar pattern was observed in the State Security Court's verdicts. This indicated how the institutionalised feelings against the selected Other(s) persisted.

[49] The TAF's "White Book" was first published in 1973, explaining the "communist" terror attacks in Turkey. In 1982, the book was expanded but later decommissioned.

(Mackenzie, 1981, p. 29). There was, however, another dimension which had profound and paradoxical effects on Turkey's sociopolitical life for coming decades. Observing the resurgence of the Islamic parties with watchful alertness, the TAF introduced strict management of religion by banning its political employment via the Turkish Criminal Law's Penal Code 163. The TAF, seen itself as the last bastion of Turkish national unity, also strategically employed popular political tools to strengthen the diminishing national cohesion in the 1980s. The self-contradictory watershed here was the careful instrumentalisation of religious narratives. This trajectory, termed as the "Turkish-Islamic synthesis", would promptly contain the mounting ideological left-right polarisation and separatist waves in the country – that would ensure the "inseparableness" of Turkey and eliminate the "enemies of Turkishness" in the wake of aggravated *Sévresphobia*.

4.2.3.1. Between Identity Relocations and Ontological Crises: "Redrawing" the Boundaries of the National Agency?

Two vital dimensions of the "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" must be underlined. Firstly, within the discursive space, the coup leadership instrumentalised particular religious narratives (*hadiths*), emphasising the necessity of intercommunal unity and tolerance (see TRT, 2021). Secondly, within the performative space, the TAF softened its distanced position towards Islam vis-à-vis the core components of the Republican values, while still strongly emphasising Turkishness of the nation (see Köylü, 2018). In this sense, the Turkish-Islamic agenda was a significant development as it was endorsed by the most powerful Kemalist institution which had historically been stabilising the imagined Turkishness and its civil(ising) autobiographical narratives.

The critical point is that this conjectural Islamic stabilisation attempt to save the state and society had a strong Turkishness element in it – that in turn considered Kurdishness as a "pathology" to be cured (Bozarslan, 2008, p. 350), while aggravating Turkey's clashes with the PKK.[50] Prior to exploring this issue, Turkey's new "multifaceted" foreign policy should be briefly recapped to capture the impact of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis on the major opposition groups in Turkey, providing them a legitimate platform to articulate their contesting agendas louder.

After the reintroduction of civilian rule in 1983, Turgut Ozal's Motherland Party (ANAP) received the majority of votes and formed a single party government, maintaining in power until 1991.[51] Based on the ANAP's conservative domestic agenda, it could be argued to have adopted the role of its predecessors, respectively the DP and JP. However, the ANAP leadership was also a champion of the free-market model and determined to integrate Turkey into the world economy (GNA, 2019m, p. 25). As described in the ANAP's foreign policy manifesto:

> Turkey needs to establish bilateral relations with the Middle East and other Islamic countries in light of its geographical and historical connections. Alongside the economic development, we believe that Turkey, as a natural bridge and a member of the two clubs [the East and the West], will significantly contribute to preserving regional peace…(my translation, *ibid*, p. 48).

The critical point in the ANAP's challenger vision was the way in which to integrate Turkey into the world. With the renewal of *Sévresphobia* and anti-Westernism in the 1980s' Turkey, countries in the Middle East, particularly the former

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[50] The state's treatment of some religious minorities, e.g., Alawites, also deteriorated during this period.
[51] The ANAP and its impact on the neo-Ottomanism narrative will also be discussed in Chapter 4.3.

Ottoman realms, became key targets for the "multifaceted" foreign policy. This "multifaceted" outlook would firstly redraw the transnational in-/out-group boundaries of the imagined national agency against the impetus of circulating Turkish-Islamic synthesis, providing Turkishness with alternative ideational boundaries and a new framework for future performances. Pertinently, it would secondly challenge the subject identifications and behavioural codes of the imagined Turkishness formed in light of the Kemalists' sociopsychological fabric – that strongly avoided associating Turkey and the Turkish society as a member of the "Eastern club".

Seen in this light, it is accurate to claim that "no matter how hard Turkey tried to escape from its imperial legacy, it [came back] to haunt it" (Kösebalaban, 2008, p. 14). However, the ANAP's reading of Turkey's multispatial characteristic as a member of the "two clubs" and historical connections with its close geography was a selective remembering practice. As memories are not merely "records of the past but are interpretive reconstructions" (Antze and Lambek 1996, p. 7), the ANAP elites subjectively remembered Turkey's imperial legacy in relocating its place in the world. With this in mind, there are two ontologically clashing readings merit be unpacking.

In order to create a secular nation state, the founding cadres of the Republic advocated particular memories of Turkey's imperial legacy, which would deliberately bury the defunct Ottoman past with its archaic structure. This radical "forgetting" practice created the "amnesia" effect for the traditional-conservative strata of the society. Yet, these interruptions became their own version of "selected memories" through which they contested the early Republican elites' mindset since 1945. Therefore, their collective memory and counter-narratives were the products of a chronic domestic contest between the central power and periphery over remembering

and forgetting Turkey's past. These selective memories and narratives were not only being articulated by the competing groups to dictate a particular ontological security network which represents their "own" sociopsychological fabric, not the "Other's". They were also being articulated in a way to reclaim that they were hierarchically and normatively a prime candidate to become the nation's "storyteller". Consequently, it became an effective political practice for the ANAP to remember particular aspects of the Ottoman past, not its archaic governance model perpetuating wars and conflicts in the early 20th century. Karpat (2002) depicted what was experienced in this period as the psychological malaise that originated from the unsettled issues over the position of the Ottoman past and Islam in the nation's historical and cultural persona. Nonetheless, the ANAP's breaks with the Republic's long-pursued policies provoked identity-related reorientations in the society. Several competing "selves" and "Others" emerged to guide the nation in this period (Yavuz, 1998, p. 41), informed by their fantasised beliefs vis-à-vis how citizens are expected to perform in Turkey's sociopolitical domain.[52]

This identity crisis unfolding at various levels was also valid for the TAF which had been experiencing an existential dilemma in the 1980s. On the one hand, during the religious stabilisation of Turkishness, it conjecturally deviated from its "progressive tradition" to stabilise the autobiographical narratives of the imagined Turkishness vis-à-vis the sources of ontological insecurity. On the other hand, it

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[52] Competing "selves" and "Others" as well as their counter-narratives had been evolving since 1945 (see Chapter 4.2.1). They only started to occupy a prominent place in the 1980s' political sphere with the Turkish-Islamic turn which followed by the ANAP's challenger agenda. The rising conservative counter-elites' major obstacle was to translate their selective narratives and memories into specific group behaviours. Herein, neo-Ottomanism was their most powerful counter-narrative through which they challenged the Kemalist notions and imagined new state and society (see Chapter 4.3).

attached importance to restoring the damaged Kemalist project and intervening in "anti-Kemalist reactionaries" with the new 1982 Constitution. In other words, the TAF unilaterally attempted to consolidate the Republic's ability to cancel out cultural, ethnic, and economic divergences in Turkey (i.e., its plural identities) in a way to restore the fractured national unity. In doing so, the TAF cadres carefully employed particular religious narratives while stressing the secular and "Turkish" structure of the Republic at the same time. It had two major implications on the counter-Revolutionary groups.

Firstly, the Islamic groups and their counter-narratives being produced in the slums of rapidly urbanising metropoles made considerable inroads in the Republic's official ideology. In other words, their place, in a hierarchical sense, had not only begun to shift from the periphery to the centre from this era onwards but also challenged the strong government tradition. Secondly, it situated the Kurdish Question in a more complex place. In the wake of the intensified *Sévresphobia*, the Turkish-Islamic synthesis challenged the identity makers of both Turkishness and Kurdishness. This development added a religious layer to the ever-reproducing binary reading of the Kurdish Other.[53] In this vein, new "human labels" were attached to the Kurdish subjectivity and "counter-Revolutionaries" at large, such as "atheist", "Godless", and later "Armenian"[54] in the 1990s to differentiate competing understanding(s) of Turkishness from its historical reference point, the Kurdish Other. Therefore, this

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[53] The Islamic groups' approach towards the Kurdish Question was different from the official narratives. This was one of the key points making the AKP's NUBP possible (see Chapter 4.3).

[54] "Armenian" label can be read two-fold: the first was to differentiate Kurds from Turks in ethnic and religious aspects while the second marked the *Sévresphobia*-related memories after the creation of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), raising Armenia's claims over Turkey's east (for *Milliyet* newspaper reviews, see Balci, 2011; see also Çelik, 2014).

detached mindset renarrated the "Kurd" label through relations of difference, reaffirming its function of Otherness to govern the sociopolitical matrix of Turkishness.

4.2.3.2. Transferal of Collective Grievances: Eruption of Systematic Violence

These recent developments further radicalised the PKK in terms of its philosophy and violent methods with the start of the systematic violent aspect of Turkey's intractable conflict in 1984. In this sense, coupled with the initial split from Turkey's left, the continuing harsh measurements against Kurds in the post-1980 coup era set the ripe conditions for the violent turn. Consequently, relatively small but well-organised PKK rebels first engaged "guerrilla war" against Turkey, its officials and infrastructure as well as the "collaborators" among Kurds themselves in the Kurdish-majority southeast. Then, the PKK managed to draw popular support from the region, reaching its peak point by the mid-1990s (Ünal, 2012a).

On the one hand, it was directly related to the TAF's military efforts to eliminate the PKK through the "Field Dominance" strategy which was intensified by the implementation of the *State of Emergency Law* (Article 122 of the 1982 Constitution). In this vein, unlike temporary martial law regimes declared to combat the counter-Revolutionary rebellions since 1922, the *Regional State of Emergency Governorate* was established in 1987. The governorate ruled the Kurdish regions for more than two decades,[55] allowing the TAF to establish numerous outposts and to control entire social mobility and economic life in and near the Kurdish settlements. This mindset

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[55] It was abolished by the AKP in 2002 though the TAF's authority had continued in designating particular areas as "security zones" by Article 413 legislated in 1989.

did not only bring in complete securitisation of all walks of life but also intensify the collective grievances and traumas of unsuccessful Kurdish rebellions; and pertinently, motivated people to join the PKK. As Van Bruinessen (2000, pp. 237-240) argue "the PKK [offered] them a simple and appropriate theory, and lots of opportunities for action, heroism and martyrdom" in resisting Turkey's control over Kurds' sociopolitical matrix.

On the other hand, the violent turn and growing support of the PKK could also be explained by the ideological contestations in Turkey. At this juncture, the Turkish-Islamic synthesis going hand in hand with the religion-based marginalisation had a major impact. This political trajectory did not only provide the TAF a new moral justification to defend the "Turkish-Islam synthesis" against the "atheist Kurdish Other" but also motivated the PKK to stick with the secular and Marxists narratives. It later prompted Öcalan to release a pamphlet called "A Revolutionary Approach to the Religion Question" (1989), in which he saw Islam as an impediment against the construction of Kurdishness with a nationalistic face.

These developments became learning moments for the PKK, improving its survival skills and ideological sophistication. For instance, it started to use various nonviolent tools actively from this period onwards, such as diaspora activism in Europe (e.g., the Kurdistan National Congress in Belgium and the UK-based Kurdish channel MED-TV) and civil obedience campaigns in Turkey that aimed at increasing the national awareness among the young Kurds. These diverse civil society efforts consolidated the Kurdish community around national goals while providing them alternative forms of resistance – that not only paved the way for the lifting of the Kurdish language ban and "Kurdish democratisation" debate among Turkey's

conventional parties in 1991,[56] but also empowered the legal pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP) to join the national elections in 1995 after fifty years of the introduction of the multiparty system.[57]

With that said, combined with regional dynamics, such as the diminishing impact of the leftist ideology after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the TAF's harsh security methods, the PKK failed to scale up its "guerrilla war" to "people's war" in a Maoist sense. Having lacked enough popular support, the PKK declared several ceasefires in the 1990s (1993, 1995 and 1998). It, however, adapted itself to the changing conjecture. For example, the PKK first shifted its "unified and independent Kurdistan" discourse to the possibility of living in a "confederation within the national borders of Turkey" (Serxwebun, 1995, p. 14). Following these, the PKK later abandoned its antagonistic stance towards religion and acknowledged the prominent role of Islam. This strategic relocation was articulated by Öcalan who claimed that:

> There were atheists, reactionists, and impostors during the rise of Islam. You know how they were fought against back then. Now, it must be done so, too. There is no difference between Islam and the PKK – they are the same. I should tell you: the more Muslim you become, the more PKK supporter you are (my translation, 1998, p. 112).

As interlocked as they may seem, Kurdishness experienced the same identity-related disorientation in this era that the imagined Turkishness faced in the 1980s. Several competing Kurdish "selves" and "Others" not only made the nationalist/secular Kurdish identity difficult to stabilise but also challenged the

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[56] Following this ban, however, the Anti-Terror Law (Article 8) passed, forbidding all sorts of gatherings against Turkey's "inseparableness".
[57] There were other legal Kurdish parties in the early 1990s but were banned by the *State Security Court*.

autobiographical continuity of the renewed Kurdishness with its collective goals.[58]

Some scholars claim that the PKK cadres could not grasp the mutually constitutive relationship between Islam and the Kurdish identity, emphasising on the former could motivate the Turkish officials to open political space for Kurdishness (Yavuz, 2001; Barkey and Fuller, 1998). Others, however, argue that the religious notions empowering the Kurdish identity obliged the PKK to undergo this ideological transformation in the 1990s (Aras, 2013).

Within the changing context of Kurdishness, both scholarly angles are worth considering as the PKK's internal relocations challenged the *totality* characteristic of Turkey's intractable conflict in which the unique self-images of the two "antagonistic" sides had increasingly been homogenising, becoming an existential factor for their group survival. In the long run, this religious "tuning" of Öcalan, however may be entirely strategic, would play a significant role in shaping up the ripe conditions for the AKP to extend the influence of the "NUBP" among the Kurdish citizens of Turkey. In the short run, however, this did not significantly help to alter the strong security discourse in the country. The latter point manifested itself in the aftermath of Öcalan's capture and incarceration by Turkey in 1999. During his trials, Öcalan claimed that:

> The uniqueness of the Turkish-Kurdish relations, the inviolability of the national pact borders and current political and military situation in Turkey necessitate a solution [of the Kurdish Question] within a democratic system…[This is] not only historically correct choice but also the only alternative…(my translation, 1999, pp. 18-19).

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[58] The impact of this religious turn can be read in two examples. First, most Kurdish neighbourhoods in Turkey's West voted for the Islamic Welfare Party (RP) in 1995 elections even though the coalition government in 1991 promised to extend Kurds' cultural rights (GNA, 2019n). Second, the increasing impact of fundamentalist Hezbollah, which aimed at creating "Islamic Republic of Kurdistan", on the Kurdish communities can be mentioned (see Human Rights Watch, 2000).

After decades of violent clashes which claimed thousands of lives, Öcalan's capture and promising message above was supposed to mark a turning moment for all social groups in Turkey. Nevertheless, it was taken as a sign of major weakness and the clear defeat of the PKK, against which the position of the Turkish government and military remained unchanged – rejecting negotiations with terrorists (Yeğen, 2015b). Assessing Öcalan's concession as a unique chance, the left-wing government devised a democratisation agenda to initiate Turkey's candidateship to become an EU member in 1999. In light of the Copenhagen Criteria's minority rights emphasis, the program led to a partial relaxation towards the centralised policies and strong security mindset which all Turkish governments until then had to comply with. In this vein, for example, Vice PM Mesut Yilmaz argued that the "way of the EU passes through Diyarbakir" (Yenisafak, 1999). This discursive shift also facilitated the reconciliation agenda whose main purpose was to start wider democratisation moves, such as the Kurdish education reform.

These moves, however, were shortly interrupted by the TAF leadership, arguing that the reconciliation agenda would "destroy Turkey's mosaic structure" (New York Times, 2000a). Following the TAF's alarmist reaction, the HADEP leadership, the only remaining legal representatives of Kurds, was arrested while the party was outlawed on account of its "separationist actions against Turkey's unity" by Article 68 of the 1982 Constitution. These interventions redemonstrated that the nature of Turkey's evolving intractable conflict was not understood and/or constantly disregarded by the TAF. The PKK was a limited but most catastrophic dimension of this intractable conflict. In this sense, the PKK can metaphorically be likened to the tip of an iceberg which can empirically be observed against the violent clashes

163

between the rebels and army. Underwater this iceberg, however, there were slow-moving sociopsychological issues spreading into a large spectrum, from the binary reading of Kurds to their exclusion from the Republic's value system – that were constantly reproducing since the 1920s. Therefore, evaluating Öcalan's capture as the PKK's military defeat could not capture the entire picture behind the political violence, especially considering the PKK's adoptive agenda since the 1980s. Against this backdrop, the PKK was in fact able to regenerate itself in 2005.

In such a promising era, where the wide-ranging peaceful solutions towards the century-long Kurdish Question might be considered, Turkey again faced with structural dilemmas at home and abroad, the most serious being the country's economic hardship and rising unemployment rate. Charging the weak coalition governments for these crises, the majority of Turkey voted for the newly founded AKP in the 2002 elections. The following chapter analyses the rise of the AKP and its neo-Ottomanism counter-narrative. It was not only employed to redefine the Turkish state and society but also settle Turkey's decades-long intractable conflict with Kurds.

4.3. Rise of New Hegemon and Its Transformation: Interrogating Past, Making of Alternative Agency, and Collapsed Peace

> Turkey is more like a tree, with roots in many different cultures and ethnicities. In its early years, it was pruned and trained to grow strictly in one direction: Turkish. Now, in its maturity, its branches tend to go their own way, seeking their own kind of light (The Economist, 1996).
>
> If there is a master key to the code of the New Turkey, it is a reimagined Ottoman-Islamic identity (Yavuz, 2018).

The previous chapters on Turkey investigated two intertwined issues. First, Chapter 4.1 analysed the Turkish national context in which the traumatic remembrances of the Kemalist elites at the time of state formation developed into informative reference points for their future practices and discursive performances. These memories were instrumentally chosen and used to construct the social and institutional policies of the young Republic, exemplified as the imagined Turkish national agency with a secular-nationalist outlook and the TAF ensuring the survival of this imagined agency. Along this line, the counter-Revolutionists who "interrupted" the civil(ising) agency's autobiographical narratives, were perceived as sources of ontological insecurity and authorised to be suppressed by the TAF. These affect-centric processes of security and agency making were argued to establish the sociopsychological roots of Turkey's intractable conflict. Second, Chapter 4.2 adopted a genealogical periodisation rationale in analysing the colossal sociopolitical transformations Turkey experienced in decades. Adopting this method not only shed light on the violent eruption of the

conflict but also on the evolution of popular contestation areas and counter-narratives raised against the political trajectory of the Kemalist Revolution.

Building on these chapters, Chapter 4.3 first explores the political evolution of the neo-Ottomanism counter-narrative from the 1980s onwards. This counter-narrative became a powerful tool for the alienated traditional-conservative groups and their political representatives to externalise their fantasised/idealised mirror-image. This mirror-image reinterpreted the Turkish "self" with the help of the Ottoman-inspired identity makers and selected memories, such as multicultural mindset and cosmopolitanism, clashing with the monotype secularising and nationalist principles of Kemalism. It also advances the claims of Chapter 4.2 vis-à-vis the rapprochement stage between the Islamist and Kurdish groups, exploring the ideas of Islamists towards the Kurdish Question, which differed from the Kemalist establishment. Then, this chapter briefly explores the AKP's first term (2002-2007) when the party was portrayed as an "emancipator" of Turkey's suppressed citizens against the Kemalist intelligentsia and bureaucracy. Following this, it moves on to the third section which expands the discussion by focusing on how the AKP elites scaled up the neo-Ottomanism counter-narrative and instrumentally employed it to challenge the hierarchical and normative positions of Kemalists and their subjective nationhood objective. Specifically, it examines the ways in which the AKP "self-interrogated" the ontological security network, such as particular identity makers, social codes and performative roles, ascribed to the imagined Turkishness. It argues that the AKP elites aimed to promote their own version of Turkishness which would align with the neo-Ottomanism counter-narrative. This chapter lastly explores how this counter-narrative was used to solve Turkey's intractable conflict within the NUBP context (2009-2015).

4.3.1. Between Nostalgia and Fantasised Self-Image: Neo-Ottomanism

The dislocatory modernisation attempts of the Kemalist Revolution caused the traditional communities to retreat into their conservative identities, provoking a decades-long ontological crisis about defining the autobiographical narratives and behavioural codes of the Turkish state and society with reference to doing, acting, and being. Consequently, the two major groups –Kemalist intelligentsia-bureaucracy versus provincial elite comprising of the traditional-conservative and marginalised communities– dominated the social and political life of the Republic as explored throughout this Turkey Part. With contesting social origins and cultural-behavioural attitudes, both groups competed with each other to reclaim that they are hierarchically and normatively prime (and legitimate) candidates not only to become the nation's "storyteller", but also to promote a particular ontological security network which represents their own sociopsychological fabric. Echoing the Kemalists elites' fantasised beliefs vis-à-vis how citizens are expected to adopt certain roles and performances in Turkey, the latter group subjectively remembered and reconstructed Turkey's imperial past. It was a sociopolitical response to the radical forgetting practice of the Republican elites vis-à-vis the defunct Ottoman past and its archaic structure. In this sense, they criticised the *present* structure of the Turkish state and society and then fantasised about their *future* trajectories. In other words, the social and institutional structure of the Turkish state and society, which were defined (and sustained for decades albeit being challenged) by the collective experiences of the Kemalists elites, has become a major source of contestation for the political Islamists who sought to counter them with their neo-Ottomanism narrative.

167

Drawing on Lacan, Zizek argues that "fantasies are not just a private matter of individuals. Fantasies are the central stuff of what our ideologies are made of…[because] fantasies cover a certain gap in consistency. When things are blurred, when we really cannot get to know things, fantasies provide an easy answer" (Fiennes, 2012). I interpret Zizek's lines in two ways in reading the above-given narrative clash in Turkey. Firstly, fantasies are the sources of ideologies that agents can use to imagine their future selves. Secondly, when agents find themselves in an ontologically insecure environment, fantasies fill their cognitive gap –inability to experience a stable narrative of doing, acting, and being– through this imagined self in order to cope with existential questions. This imagined self, as argued below, can be founded on historical narratives telling agents *who they are* and *who they want to be* in the future. Then, how can we decode the political Islamists' "imagined self" and "imagined Turkey" narratives raised against the Kemalist establishment? In exploring this, the evolution of the neo-Ottomanism idea is explored first. This later helps us to grasp the AKP's questioning practice (self-interrogative reflexivity) towards Kemalism in making of their imagined state and society during the NUBP.

Various Ottoman intellectuals offered alternative paradigms in the late 19th century to solve the rising nationalist separatism and dysfunctional structure of the Ottomans as discussed in Chapter 4.1 Among these paradigms, Ottomanism was offered as a unifying ideology to establish a sense of Ottoman nationhood which would not only foster a new supra-religious and supra-national identity for the cosmopolitan Ottoman Empire but also grant the Ottoman subjects citizenship based on equal rights (Akcura, 1976). Thus, the question is: how was Ottomanism reconstructed a century later? For a prominent neo-Ottomanist, Aydin Menderes [son of Adnan Menderes

establishing the DP], the contemporary interpretation of Ottomanism encompasses three major points: first, reshaping of Turkish nationalism [with Islamic sensitivity] while nurturing cultural and political tolerance to the Ottoman past and diversity; second, eliminating economic boundaries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Balkans and Caucasus regions; and third, respecting the territorial integrity of Turkey's neighbours (Yavuz, 1998, p. 40). Thus, Ottomanism was reframed around the themes of pluralism and Islamic stance which was projected to empower Turkey to tackle its domestic struggles while providing its leadership alternative foreign policy directions.

Three components of the neo-Ottomanism counter-narrative were crystallised under the AKP rule (2002-present) as explored in the section to follow. However, they were not pioneered by the AKP cadres. The counter-narrative has begun to gradually evolve since the ANAP period under Ozal (1983-1993).[59] Although Mardin (1971) underlined the increasing influence of religious cults (such as Naqshbandis, Suleymanites, and the Gülen [Nur] movement) and their contesting counter-narratives being produced in Turkey's periphery, they only made considerable inroads in Turkey's political centre from the late 1980s onwards. As explored previously, the rise of the political Islamist movements in Turkey seems to have been the result of both global developments shaped in the 1980s and 1990s, such as the worldwide resurgence of the Islamic movements and the ideological vacuum left by the collapse of major

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[59] There were nostalgic references to the Ottoman history among other political elites against the Kemalist vision of nationhood (see Chapter 4.2.1.1). These references were scaled up and combined with the deep ideological polarisation during the Cold War. For example, the MHP leadership claimed that Turkey [and its national flag with the Islamic crescent] will return to its former Ottoman provinces (Devlet Dergisi, 1969). Yet, these narratives embodied irredentist claims rather than the neo-Ottomanist imagination of the political Islamists as explored in this chapter.

communist powers, and national factors, such as the rapid demographic and social changes culminating in ghettoisation in Turkey's metropoles. Intersecting with these phenomena, introduction of the "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" after the 1980 coup and Ozal's choice to employ the Islamist cadres in government bureaucracy provided the political Islamists a large manoeuvre area for the first time in Republican history. Against this background, Ozal, a Naqshbandi Sufi, believed that the Ottoman heritage of the Republic was the formative component of the historical, social and cultural persona of Turkey (Yavuz, 2005). In the foreign domain, Ozal first opened the debate over Turkey's self-image vis-à-vis the state's "multifaceted" foreign policy route. He highlighted Turkey's historical and moral responsibility towards its Muslim neighbours while trying to fill the vacuum in the Balkans and Central Asian Turkic states after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the domestic domain, Ozal reinterpreted the Ottoman social structure as a cosmopolitan and tolerant system against the uniformly secular and nationalist society. Along this line, he attempted to include various ethnic identities, particularly Kurds, into Turkey's social matrix, albeit largely remained at the discursive level as explored below.

Resuming Ozal's project, Turkey's changing outlook was heightened under the rule of Turkey's first self-proclaimed Islamist PM (1996-1997), Necmettin Erbakan of the Welfare Party (RP, established as the continuation of the MSP banned after the 1972 coup). Erbakan developed a *Sharia*-based ideology called *Milli Gorus* (National Outlook) which was built on the Islamic brotherhood vision (see Chapter 4.2.2.1). It would solve the social disharmony in Turkey, and help conservative communities suffering from extensive ghettoisation and the Kemalists' civil(ising)

agenda. In this sense, Erbakan disseminated the *Milli Gorus* ideology before and after the 1994 local elections:

> The RP sides with God and justice. We are here for [defending the rights of] 60 million Muslims in Turkey and all Muslims of the world…We will solve the terrorism issue in Turkey with the Islamic brotherhood vision when we come to power (*Before the local elections*, Genclik, 1994, p. 39).

> Conquering Istanbul a second time, we are giving a start for the holy march…You are the grandchildren of Mehmed the Conqueror…You will shout the gloriousness of Sultanahmet to the whole world (*After the local elections*, Erken, 2013, p. 183).

> Following Erbakan's speeches, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the AKP's founder and Turkey's current president, was then elected as the mayor of Istanbul under the RP. Along with the RP leadership, Erdogan expressed that:

> Before 541 years, Mehmed the Conqueror ended Byzantine Empire's dark world with his great passion…What we need to do now is to transform Istanbul in light of its historical spirit and identity while strengthening the notions that reconnect our past to our future (my translation, Yorunge, 1994, p. 10).

There are several points worth distilling about the RP's neo-Ottomanism in general and Turkey's shifting power dynamics between Islamists and Kemalists more specifically. First, the RP elites chose to remember the Islamist reminiscences of the pre-Republican era vis-à-vis the contestation between Kemalists and political Islamists to become the nation's overarching knowledge producer and storyteller. They set the Islamic imperial era as an example of the superior achievements of their "ancestors", interpreting the election gain as "conquering Istanbul" a second time while representing themselves as living fictive descendants of Mehmed the Conqueror who captured the city from *Christian* Byzantium Empire in 1453. Then, the case of Istanbul shows that Islamists not only framed the Republican Westernisation and

secular mindset as outsider elements to their own sociopsychological fabric but also symbolically "unrecognised" Ankara, the capital of secular nationalist Republic, in their imagined Turkey.

Second, the RP's neo-Ottomanism adopted stronger discursive counter-narratives than the Ozal era within the foreign policy context. For example, Erbakan was interested in shifting Turkey's Western-oriented foreign policy route to the former Ottoman provinces. Under his short-lived term, Turkey not only backed various political Islamists in the MENA region, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Hamas in the Palestinian Authority, but also established politicomilitary relations with Iran and Iraq. Geographically speaking, Erbakan also sought to expand Turkey's foreign policy scope, organising diplomatic visits to Muslim-majoritarian countries, e.g., Libya, Egypt and Malaysia. Among these examples, the most striking narrative contestation was Erbakan's proposal to form a trading platform called "the Developing Eight", or the *Muslim Eight*. It was imagined to be an alternative to the Western G-8, but the project failed to come true.

Third, the neo-Ottomanism counter-narrative, whether it represented the interpretation of Ozal or Erbakan, offered the Islamic elites and suburbanised religious-conservative groups alternative stories in imagining ethnically and religiously diverse social matrix in Turkey. The critical point for Islamists' political claim-making and social imaginary here was the ways in which the Ottoman era were perceived. The source of inspiration for this counter-narrative was built on their fantasised interpretation of religious and civilisational traditions of Islam – that reminded of Atatürk's vision towards the European society referred to as "the standard of contemporary civilisation". In this sense, echoing the Kemalist perceptions against

the "interrupting ontological insecurity sources", neo-Ottomanism was Occidentalising and essentialising narrative as it placed the Kemalist Revolution/Western civilisation/secular Turkish nation state as "Other." These reference points offered antitheses to the political Islamists in self-consolidating, reinterpreting and feeling their unique sense of self, which could be termed as the Ottoman-Islamic agency. Therefore, the neo-Ottomanism nostalgia cannot simply be seen as a political ideology, but a way of redesigning Turkey's social and political matrix in present and the future. In other words, this nostalgic remembrance of the past is a creative and symbolic practice – a "presentists act that reconfigures contemporary, rather than past, relations and structures of power" while making the past a platform for the struggle over political legitimacy and domination (Özyürek, 2006, p. 154). Thus, the Ozal and Erbakan era contestations against the Kemalist agenda were the prominent signs beckoning major sociopolitical change in Turkey and raising competing demands of the periphery.

Four, against these seismic developments gripping the Turkish state and society alike, the Kurdish Question had increasingly been framed through the lens of democracy and rule of law than the problem of terrorism and national security – that was a key narrative shift. Various NGOs and political parties released politically "sensitive" reports in this period. For instance, the well-known TOBB report (1995, p. 6) noted that Turkey should replace its ethnicised citizenship notion with social contract-based consensus. Among these reports, Ozal's ANAP argued that Turkey must accept the Kurdish identity and language while adopting a democratic system that would enable Kurds to freely express themselves (Aljazeera, 2019). Along this line, the RP's Erdogan, delivered a report to Erbakan, proposing that:

This is an [ethnic] Kurdish issue. Turkey's southeast was known as Kurdistan in the Ottoman Empire…This is the issue produced by the Kemalist state and its militaristic method [referring to the TAF]…'full democracy' and 'multiculturalism' will solve the Kurdish Question" (my translation, Yenicag, 2013).

At this critical juncture, the Islamist thinkers divided in three groups with regards to the Kurdish Question. The first group, such as Abdurrahman Dilipak, Mehmet Pamak and Selami Camci, questioned the passive stance of Islamists against the historically developed Kurdish issue. For example, Pamak (1992) argued that Muslims, as the most disadvantaged group in Turkey [implying that this was politically imposed], could not grasp how Kurds were oppressed by Turkey and suffered from human rights abuses. The second group, such as Abdurrahman Aslan (1996), adopted a normative position founded on the social contract-based cosmopolitanism, proposing a supra-national identity formula to solve the Kurdish issue. The last group, such as Ahmet Tasgetiren, embraced a narrative empathy, claiming that Turkey's Muslims suffer from the sociopolitically imposed policies as much as Kurds because Muslims' alphabet, history, religion and Islamic canon law were systematically buried by Kemalists (*ibid*).

While these boundary-pushing developments were unfolding at various levels, the TAF intervened in politics after the NSC meeting in 1997 and forced the RP cadres to resign (known as the 1997 Turkish Military Memorandum). In doing so, the TAF released a report after the meeting, evoking Article 4 of 1982 Constitution to protect the secular and national nature of Republic. This report sits on two main pillars. First, this intervention was staged to control "the counter-Republican religious orders and reactionaries" (T24, 2013a). Second, it was against "the legal attempts aiming to replace the nation notion in Turkey with the religious community mindset to solve the

separatist terrorism" (*ibid*). Based on these two points, the intervention powerfully demonstrated the empirical analysis conducted in this section. On the one hand, it manifested that the neo-Ottomanism counter-narrative is not merely a social imagination of the Ottoman past. It is also an influential tool to reconstruct the present structure of the Turkish state and society and fantasise about their future directions in light of the sociopsychological fabric of the political Islamists whose aspired social matrix clashed with the Kemalist elites. On the other hand, the intervention was a reaction against the narrative shift towards the Kurdish Question and its mounting visibility both in the public and political spaces – that rehighlighted the binary reading role of the Kurdish Other as a historical reference point of the imagined Turkishness.

What merits to underline here is that the AKP elites later adopted the same Ottoman-inspired cosmopolitan society mindset to settle Turkey's intractable conflict. In doing so, the AKP's neo-Ottomanism bridged the points of the three Islamist thinker groups and involved some notions of Ozal's and Erbakan's reimagined Ottoman-Islamic agency. However, the party did not pursue this agenda immediately after they came to power as the TAF and Kemalist bureaucracy were reunited around their institutionalised fears and anxieties to protect the secular-nationalist codes of the Turkish state and society. Cognizant of the RP's closure in 1998, the AKP first adopted a less religious and liberal outlook in its first term (2002-2007). The following section briefly explores this period when the party was portrayed as an "emancipator" of Turkey's suppressed citizens against the statist Kemalism.

4.3.2. AKP as the "Emancipator of Subordinated Individuals"

There are two vital points that must be explored prior to the AKP analysis. First, to recap, Kemalists' imagined collective identity project was seen as a holistic development which had crystallized and become fixed into certain behavioural codes and social practices extending into capillaries of the newly born state's society and political institutions since the 1920s. This project went hand in hand with the exclusionist policies towards the ethnic and religious minorities in Turkey, particularly against the Kurdish Other, which did not fit the Kemalists' social imaginary and were perceived as potential threats undermining it. In this sense, the norm of Turkishness – a "homeostatic tendency" of Kemalism– was carefully protected by the Kemalist practices and state apparatuses, the TAF being the most powerful. Second, the Turkish nation, which was supposed to be protected under this strong and centralised state aegis, was paradoxically reduced into collectives of "subordinated individuals", as Aydin claims (2009, p. 8), due to the resonating impact of institutionalised fears and traumatic conflict memories. The foremost duty of these individuals was to serve the state and/or sacrifice themselves in order to ensure the survival of Turkey that has been depicted to be surrounded by enemies. These two points were perceived as taken-for-granted notions in Turkish politics until the colossal developments unfolding from the late 1990s onwards that were the capture of Öcalan, Turkey's EU membership application and the following democratisation program to improve the sociopolitical conditions of Kurds. It was then –that is, the political relaxation coincided with the rise of the AKP– that promoted the discussions on democratic and pluralist society models based not on the strong security/survival politics but the civil rights of Turkey's citizens.

Against this background, the AKP came to power in 2002 when the Kemalists' strong security mindset and homogenous community outlook had been losing their momentum. The AKP, unlike the previous political Islamists, well calculated their initial steps in order to avoid any intervention of the TAF before introducing their own neo-Ottomanism philosophy into the country's bureaucratic and social structure. In doing so, firstly, Erdogan attempted to disassociate the AKP from its predecessor, the RP, stating that "we forget the past; we [the AKP] are a new party" (Milliyet, 2003). This self-declared novel image did not only echo on the AKP's agenda to liberate the backwards Muslim masses but also its "party of progress" role (Göksel, 2015, p. 281). In this sense, the EU officials were excited by the AKP's unparalleled enthusiasms compared to the previous Turkish governments in terms of its submission to multiculturalism and religious freedom (Goff-Taylor, 2017). Secondly, the AKP's government program aimed at "reconnecting the society with the state", while situating the people at the heart of Turkey (GNA, 2019o, p. 7999). In turn, this program not only challenged the normative position of strong statism embedded in Turkish political culture. It also diminished the bureaucratic leverage of the TAF through, for example, lifting the requirement of the NSC secretary to be the TAF general (2003) and banning the secretary's unconstrained power to supervise civilian bodies and the Court of Accounts (2003). Among these, most remarkable moves were the abolishment of the *State of Emergency Rule* in southeast Turkey (2002) which followed by the *Return to the Village and Rehabilitation Project*, seeking to assist people who escaped from the violent conflict (predominantly the Kurdish citizens) to resettle in their hometowns (TMFA, 2019c).

Like the early Republican cadres' employment of national education to disseminate their sociopolitical vision, the AKP's multiculturalism was reflected in the school curricula, contesting both the Kemalists' monolithic reading of social structure and radical forgetting practice towards Ottoman history. For example, textbooks were revised to be more individual-oriented but also providing a sense of being part of the broader community, including chapters such as "I am Learning About My Past", "All Together", "I am Learning About My Rights" and "Getting to Know the Region We Live in" (Kancı, 2009). On the one hand, for the AKP liberals, such as Dagi (2004), these democratisation steps were perceived as opportunities to evolve Turkey into a broader society and abandon the Kemalist state and social structure which stands as the main issue against the solution of the Kurdish Question. On the other hand, for critical scholars like Türkeş (2016), the AKP found a refuge under the EU aegis to undercut the legitimacy of the Kemalist establishment by selectively applying the Copenhagen Criterion of religious freedom and individual liberties. Above all else, the change in school curricula and ideational contestations against Kemalism brought back the Ottoman nostalgia discussion in public. Furthermore, it did not stay at the knowledge-production point but extended into popular cultural productions, such as television series, reminding the Turkish society of the "glorious" Ottoman times. As Grigoriadis (2007, p. 432) notes, two separate readings of the AKP's Ottoman nostalgia revealed in this era:

> …liberal political ideology which advocated a civic understanding of Ottoman national identity, embracing all Ottoman subjects regardless of religious and ethnic affiliation…[versus] the nostalgia for Ottoman grandeur…[which] attempts to reintroduce Islam into Turkish politics.

Following the AKP's first term, the increase in public reception of the neo-Ottoman nostalgia helped the party in two ways. First, it offered the AKP leadership an epistemic basis to instrumentalise the Ottoman past as a means to mobilise the society. With the unprecedented electoral support they received in the 2007 general elections, the party leadership adopted more revisionist orientation over the key issues they used to question, such as the Republican Westernisation project and homogenous community mindset. Second, it helped the AKP to challenge the long-attached autobiographical narratives and behavioural codes of the Turkish national agency in a systematic manner. In doing so, they sought to challenge these identity makers with their Ottoman nostalgia-based social imaginary.

4.3.3. Challenging the National Agency: AKP's Neo-Ottomanism and Its Cosmopolitan Society

The AKP's revisionist approach manifested itself as discursive and practical shifts from the party's champion of individual rights position to the Ottoman-inspired cosmopolitan society goal with Islam at its centre. Then, how are we to systematically analyse the AKP's employment of neo-Ottomanism? What were the ways in which this powerful counter-narrative was sought to challenge the sociopsychological fabric of the early Republican elites? How did this challenge against the Kemalist mindset support the AKP elites to disseminate their own imagined national agency which was used to solve Turkey's intractable conflict? In exploring these questions, we must shed light on how the historical reference points of neo-Ottomanism are employed by the AKP – that first challenged the Kemalist understanding of state and society, and then offered an alternative cognitive framework for action.

179

From this vantage point, the Kemalist agenda of making a new nation and new society raised fundamental existential questions among different social groups throughout Republican history. It prepared a historical context for these groups to develop their own counter-narratives which question particular ontological security codes ascribed to the Turkish state and society. This domestic narrative contestation practice is recognised as self-interrogative reflexivity (Steele, 2008b), which not only functions as a prominent mechanism for social change (Innes and Steele, 2013) but also force agents to rethink their autobiographical narratives and performative roles. In this sense, powerful opposition groups, i.e., the AKP, which question long-attached self-image and behavioural routines of state and society, nurture a strong interest to consolidate their own version of these set of ontological security makers (Steele, 2008b). This alternative version usually aligns with "rival" groups' fantasised mirror-image which reveals itself in diverse ways, for example, via the neo-Ottomanism phenomenon.

There are two intertwined conceptual points worth distilling. First, these contending groups can express their grievances by challenging states' historically attached autobiographical narratives and routinised practices as they establish a basis for contestation, providing these movements a "comparison device" (*ibid*, p. 152) in reimagining past, present and future. Therefore, the self-interrogation act towards particular ontological security-seeking routines and practices is linked to knowledge production and the ways in which the confrontation of meta-narratives permeates both domestic and foreign agendas. In this sense, the "value in telling a different story is in the telling, in illustrating the ways in which these stories are constructed and could be constructed differently" (Steele, 2008b, p. 163). Second, self-interrogative reflexivity

180

involves critical narratives that challenge the legitimacy of states' traditionally strong institutions and their modus operandi. In practice, these narratives provide the ruling powers with the political and normative leverage to pursue their promised social change and eliminate check-and-balance mechanisms associated with the old/previous state structure that they challenge.

Raising on these two points, long-attached autobiographical narratives of state and society can be transformed by being altered and reflexively sustained through influential mechanisms such as internal debates and contestations (Giddens, 1991). Then, parties which manage to mobilise the masses with their powerful counter-narratives can attempt to reshape national biographies and reconstruct traditionally strong institutions in light of their own domestic agenda. As a paragon of the domestic narrative clashes in Turkey, Erdogan articulated that Ottoman history does not represent something traumatic and non-civilised which should be deliberately buried as Kemalist aimed. On the contrary, it represents a source of national pride as Turkey owes its existence to this glorious Empire:

> We take pride in our history without making any discrimination...without making the mistake of squeezing the thousands of years into just one century…The Republic of Turkey…is a continuation of Ottomans. Of course, the borders have changed. Forms of government have changed. But the essence is the same, soul is the same, even many institutions are the same. In this regard, we see [the stamp of] Sultan Albulhamid II [Pan-Islamist ruler encountered the 'Sickman of Europe' discussions during his reign] on the last 150 years of our state (TCCB, 2019).

Prior to exploring the discourse above, it must be noted that the AKP's self-interrogative reflexivity established a clear historical line with other parties which had been challenging the Kemalist state and society project since the introduction of the multiparty system in 1945. In this sense, the AKP not only portrayed itself as the

inheritor of Menderes' DP and Ozal's ANAP (Hurriyet, 2003) but also recognised Turkey as an entity on which the philosophy of Sultan Abulhamid II can still be traced. Against this background, Erdogan's discursive performance firstly served as an integrative mechanism of neo-Ottomanism to decentralise the Kemalist legacy that disregarded the Ottoman "soul" and institutions. In this sense, neo-Ottomanism, coupled with its integrative role, emotionally moved the traditional-conservative communities and united them around Erdogan, while motivating them to remember their proud Ottoman past.

Secondly, Erdogan's references to the era of Sultan Abulhamid II and his pan-Islamism, which was seen as the symbol of the Ottomans' archaic system by the West, echoed the lines of Ahmet Davutoglu – the mastermind of the AKP's neo-Ottomanism.[60] Davutoglu, quite interestingly, was involved in the ontological security literature himself, arguing that the civil(ising) project of the Kemalist cadres produced a "divided self" depression in Turkey. Therefore, there had been an ontological crisis between the Kemalists' "embodied self" versus the traditional-conservative communities' "inner self" (Davutoglu, 2001, pp. 55-70). In order to solve this syndrome, he continued, Turkey's "real self", namely its historical and geographical realities, must be acknowledged. In recognising so, the AKP cadres not only idealised the Ottoman era as one of the grandeurs of and zenith points in the Islamic civilisation but also attempted to restore it inside Turkey and abroad. Along this line, the Ottoman past was imagined to be restored on the "ancient values [Turkey] have lost" (Yavuz, 2020, p. 213) – which would in turn help Turkey to reimagine its past, present and future "real" self. Against this mindset, the AKP advocated particular memories

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[60] He served as Turkey's former foreign minister (2009-2014) and then PM (2014-2016).

empowered by the neo-Ottomanism counter-narrative and sought to translate them into specific group behaviours vis-à-vis their own imagined national agency:

> In 12 years, from the Italo-Turkish War in 1911 to 1923, the state [Ottomans] which was the epicentre of the perennial civilisation was torn in small pieces… constitutive features of this state were psychologically and historically alienated from each other with the introduction of a nation state in 1923 [Turkey]…the inheritances of this [collapsed] state took the task of *nizam* [pax-Ottomana] to deliver its set of values to the world, and now we need to reunify the elements of this fragmented nation…We are either on the verge of historical unity or a great pain. That is why, the question is, how do we unite this broken geography? How do we create a new generation shaping the future? Thereof, 'Towards the Great Turkey' is a proper [direction] (my translation, Davutoglu, cited in TMFA, 2019d).

The following paragraphs analyse how this alternative national agency was imagined by the AKP elites. I evaluate the AKP's agenda as a "reverse" transition from the early Republican cadres' secular and homogenous nationhood into the Ottoman-inspired Turkish-Muslim society. Within this realm, they, at the core, aimed at resituating the secular symbols and autobiographical narratives of the imagined Turkishness with religious components. This religious turn had several objectives in redelineating the in-/out-group boundaries of Turkishness.

It would first offer an official platform for the AKP elites to adopt an Ottoman-Islamic justification for the alternative national agency rather than reaffirming the Kemalist definition of *millet* which had been seen as the cornerstone of the secular-nationalist Turkish nationhood. In imaginatively "reunifying" the elements of the fragmented Ottomans, the AKP promoted a non-territorially defined collective identity with a strong emphasis on outward-looking society. Then, the AKP's collective identity vision *ipso facto* encompasses the "Turkish" element but transcends it, reminding of the Ottomans' shallow border concept. This mindset would help Turkey to discover its *historic* and *geographic* depth (Davutoglu, 2001) both

domestically and internationally. In this sense, Islam, the common value ensuring the social and political bonds between and among communities, would challenge the psychological and spiritual limitations forced by the unitary nation objective of Kemalists. Then, the AKP simultaneously aimed at destabilising the checks-and-balances roles of strong Kemalist institutions. For example, they intervened in the Military Court of Appeals and the TAF's internal code of conduct (see Aljazeera, 2016; Bianet, 2016) as well as modified the organisational scheme of the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (see Evrensel, 2017), a strong Kemalist body shaped after the 1981 coup. They also scaled up their knowledge production process in the education field along with empowering numerous pro-government thinktanks, the *SETA Foundation* being the most prominent to promote the AKP's Turkish state and society vision at home and abroad.[61]

Seen in this light, the AKP's neo-Ottomanism reimagined a new society as multicultural and multiethnic. Yet, this society, at the same time, was expected to develop pro-Islamic sensitivities as its fictive shared history with the Ottoman realms was based on the Islamic "solidarity/brotherhood" concept. Thus, the AKP aimed at fulfilling Turkey's Islamic duty and historic mission (Davutoglu, 2001) over the former Ottoman provinces rather than relying on the Republican understanding of "territorial-national" political agency confined to the Anatolian homeland. Secondly, this change in foreign policy pattern would redraw the transnational in-/out-group boundaries of changing Turkish collective identity. In this sense, this shift would not only curb antagonistic tendencies/insecurities of the Kemalist structure towards the

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[61] For a detailed research on the role of pro-government NGOs, e.g., *Yunus Emre Institute*, at abroad, particularly in the Balkans, see Öztürk (2021).

former Ottoman territories, particularly "Turcophobe" Arabs. It would also transform Turkey from a regular medium-sized power to a major regional power in the MENA. In other words, Turkey would be the leader of "its" Ottoman religious community (*ummah*) again, realising the "Great Turkey" agenda of Davutoglu and Erdogan. The way in which the AKP elites remembered the Ottoman "Golden Age" in articulating their fantasised expectations with regards to imagined national agency and its future projection informed their third and last objective: rebirthing Turkishness with the Ottoman-Islamic cognitive framework.

Then, the AKP's neo-Ottomanism project can be evaluated as an anti-Kemalist agenda operating in domestic and foreign spheres. While self-interrogating the structural and normative position of Kemalism, the AKP sought to create its imagined society with comfortable religious nationalism that would peacefully coexist with the marginalised communities in Turkey and beyond. This pluralist rationale behind neo-Ottomanism was believed to establish a shared, inclusive and supra-national identity uniting all communities under the same Islamic consciousness. Therefore, it would offer an alternative cognitive framework for the Turkish society to adopt new political routines and mentality/ies, while integrating the previously alienated social groups into the Republic's value system. Along these lines, for instance, the AKP lifted the ban of wearing a headscarf, a central element of Islamic clothing, in schools and government bodies, claiming that it is a historical and political symbol for resistance (Cumhuriyet, 2008). This Islamic resistance mindset further reflected on the government-sponsored NGOs such as the *Humanitarian Relief Foundation* (IHH) and *Light House Association* (LHA). These bodies not only strived to help Muslims in Turkey but also Muslims of the world, particularly of Palestine and Balkans,

promoting outward-looking Turkishness with its inherited "Islamic responsibilities". The most remarkable case among these was perhaps the AKP's utilisation of Diyanet. Under the AKP rule, Diyanet has not only taken a mission to disseminate the Ottoman-Islamic agency in Turkey, by, for example, its television channel, *Diyanet TV*. It has also been commissioned to restore the fading Ottoman memory by renovating religious sites and monuments in the former Ottoman provinces (see, Öztürk, 2016; 2019).

To recap, neo-Ottomanists believed that the Ottoman soul is deeply entrenched in every section of the Turkish historical consciousness and psyche, considering their "compatriots and coreligionists as both Ottomans and Turks" (Yavuz, 2018). Therefore, the neo-Ottomanist self-interrogation vis-à-vis the Kemalist norms, institutions and subject identifications of "civilisation" first aimed to contest the rigid ontological security-seeking routines of the imagined Turkishness, and then reform its singular and ethnicised understanding with the Ottoman-inspired multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism. In this sense, neo-Ottomanism appeared as a powerful instrument to solve Turkey's intractable conflict and reach a social peace with the Kurdish Other.

4.3.4. Brotherhood and "New Turkey": Solving Turkey's Intractable Conflict

During the sociopolitical relaxation brought by the AKP rule, the PKK aimed to transform itself into a non-violent body, reclaiming its goal of achieving the democratic self-governance model in Turkey's national borders (Öcalan, cited in Serxwebun, 2005). However, it restored to violent means shortly after Öcalan's claim. Some scholars, such as Ünal (2016a; 2016b), argued that this was due to material

motivations of the two "antagonistic" parties, for example, Turkey's diplomatic campaign to classify the PKK as a terrorist body and reluctance to further lessen the hawkish security measures of the TAF. Others, such as Bacik and Coşkun (2011), paid attention to the power politics between the AKP and PKK, attributing this violent turn to the AKP's rising electoral approval in the Kurdish-majority towns. Considering Iraqi Kurdistan's recent territorial gains, this was taken as an alarming development by the PKK, weakening its self-nominated position of being the rightful representative of the Kurdish Other.

That being said, there were two sociopsychological motives behind the reescalation of the intractable conflict in Turkey. First, although some milestones were crossed towards the Kurdish Question, the AKP party program promising to extend Kurds' politicocultural rights mostly stayed at the discursive level. This political hesitation was in line with what the majority of the Turkish society (65%) defended: Turkey should not broadcast in Kurdish and grant Kurds right to study in their mother tongue although the Kurdish language ban was already lifted after Turkey's EU candidateship (KONDA, 2006, p. 48). Then, the "no to the Kurdish identity makers" message ran the majority's explicit caveat to the AKP leadership, leading the party to strategically tone down its democratisation agenda towards the Kurdish Question. Second, the widespread social antagonism against the Kurdish Other was not given attention. Reaffirming the former point, the same KONDA survey also showed that half of the people polled (52%) believed that Kurds work with external powers to destroy Turkey (*ibid*, p. 51). These two points highlighted that the institutionalised anxieties and traumatic memories of the early Republican elites were still highly resonant within the society. Notwithstanding these "normalised" anxieties attached to

the Kurdish Other, the majority of Turkey's Kurds were supportive towards the AKP's neo-Ottomanism and Islamic brotherhood vision (Yavuz and Özcan, 2006), as they promised some degree of solidarity and inclusiveness, providing space for both Kurds and the political Islamists in exercising their sense of "self".

Against this setting, the 2007 NSC meeting reports revealed that the AKP was facilitating a legal basis to adopt more comprehensive policy routes to solve the Kurdish Question, i.e., arranging secret negotiations with the PKK (known as the Oslo Talks). Confirming these negotiations on the practical domain, the state-owned Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) launched its Kurdish-speaking channel at the beginning of 2009 while the Higher Education Council announced the founding of the Kurdish literature departments at universities. In March 2009, President Abdullah Gül expressed that "there will be good things about the Kurdish Question in the following days" (T24, 2009), vowing to expand these promising developments. Indeed, after the local elections in March, the PKK announced a ceasefire with an emphasis on eventual disarmament (Milliyet, 2009). This was followed by the AKP's announcement of the "Kurdish Opening" (later renamed as the National Unity and Brotherhood Project). According to Erdogan, this project was designed to achieve several goals simultaneously:

> We [Turks and Kurds] are bond together regardless of our different ethnicities. Our shared history goes back to a thousand years ago [to the Ottoman times]. We fought shoulder to shoulder and were martyred [referring to WWI clashes against the Christian powers]. This is why this project is called the 'National Unity and Brotherhood' (NUBP, 2010, pp. 4-5)…We aim to improve the friendship bounds between the communities; establish trust environment in Turkey; break the alienation and the feeling of [Kurds'] Otherness (*ibid*, p. 62). In so doing, Turkey will become a powerful [Muslim] actor in the world as the general secretary of the Islamic Conference Organisation (*ibid*, p. 64)…CHP does not approve our project [as] it was responsible for Dersim Operation [in

1937 against Kurds] which remains as a painful reminiscence in our collective memory (my translation, *ibid*, p. 84).

Decoding the above text, I argue that Erdogan not only self-interrogated Republican history but also renarrated it to modify the strict ontological security-seeking routines of Turkishness and remove its binary reading of the Kurdish Other. Specifically, he sought to offer an Islamic-historic collective identity based on shared emotions, values, religion, and history between the two communities. In doing so, a retrospective agenda was followed. First, the NUBP attached an implicit "Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood" reference, echoing Atatürk's discourses to mobilise the Muslim communities of Anatolia at the time of the Ottomans' collapse. It reminded the society of Kurds, Turks and other marginalised religious groups in today's Turkey, such as Alawites, are bond together with the Islamic ties as they were historically part of the Muslim community (*ummah*) of the Ottoman *millet* system, reversing the secular-nationalist propellant of the nation. Second, it highlighted that they not only fought together but also were martyred in the name of Islam during the clashes against the Christian powers in WWI. Together with the Dersim Operation reference, it therefore challenged the justification of the early Republican interventions in the Kurdish uprisings during the pre- and post-Sevres periods, implying that Kurds did not betray Turks but in fact were upholding their Islamic duty with them. Third, this project aimed to develop the existing solidarity between the two communities and break the isolation of the Kurdish Other from the Republican value system. The significant point was that Erdogan established a clear line from the Ottoman era to the present-day while discrediting the period in between. In this sense, he took the Ottoman era as a "frozen moment in time and space" only to be reenacted with the neo-Ottomanism

counter-narrative which would in turn help the AKP to realise Turkey's historic mission and find its "real" self in a wider geographical context.

In order to promote this narrative and its "democratising" and "liberating" aspect both for Turkey and its neighbours, for example, then-interior minister Besir Atalay attended several national TV shows and organised meetings with various NGOs (NTV, 2009). The NUBP initiative, however, produced heated debates in the Turkish society and politics rather than mitigating fundamental ontological insecurities attached to the Kurdish Other. The NUBP's unclear agenda was harshly criticised in the absence of a culture of dialogue between major sociopolitical groups and their representatives in the parliament, i.e., the CHP and MHP. While the former accused the AKP leadership of disintegrating the state and society, the latter blamed them for destroying the Turkish identity and national unity (see Pusane, 2014). Against this anxious environment, more than thirty PKK members dressed in traditional rebel outfits entered Turkey through the Habur Border Gate as a sign of disarmament and were welcomed by thousands of people carrying the PKK flags and Öcalan banners. Rehighlighting the opposite ontological positions between the two communities, Kurds observed this as a "positive move for peace" after decades of clashes, while the Turkish majority saw it as a "PKK's achievement" against Turkey (KONDA, 2010). Thus, the majority of the Turkish society established a direct reference between their historically traumas and ontological insecurity (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, 2011) – that undermined the momentum for peace and aggravated nationalist feelings inside Turkey. Accordingly, the AKP reattached traditional security methods and banned the major legal Kurdish party of the time, the Democratic Society Party (DTP), whereas

the PKK halt its ceasefire following this critical juncture – that marked one of the most violent periods (2010-2012) in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict (see ICG, 2012).

The first leg of the NUBP failed in 2010 –later marked as the "road accident"– but it helped Turkey to break its psychological barrier of "no negotiation with terrorists". In this sense, the road accident did not restrain the communication between the AKP and PKK. On the contrary, the AKP started direct talks with Öcalan instead of pursuing its secret negotiations with the PKK, conversing potential ways for the solution, such as the "democratic republic model" (Öcalan, 2011). Along this line, the NUBP was officially reinitiated by early 2013. In this turn, coordinating with Öcalan, the AKP cadres employed more direct and implicit Islamic brotherhood references in comparison with their symbolic usage of religion in the previous attempt as explored below. In order to understand this rationale, the AKP's evolving foreign policy agenda must be briefly explored.

The outbreak of popular resistance movements, the Arab Spring (2011-present), in the MENA region was seen as a unique opportunity by the AKP elites to reverse the status quo in the region on their behalf and boost their neo-Ottomanist agenda. As the uprisings quickly spread, the decades-old dictatorial regimes in Algeria, Libya, and Egypt were replaced by the Sunni Brotherhood-linked groups with which Turkey's political Islamists had been cooperating since the Erbakan era. Unlike the North Saharan cases, however, the uprisings in Syria did not produce the desired outcome for the AKP, namely overthrowing the Assad government. Thus, the AKP cadres first attempted to force Assad to give up power voluntarily. Then, they sought assistance from Turkey's strategic ally, the US. They expected that the US would side with Turkey and lead another NATO-led intervention in the region, evoking the

NATO-led operation toppling Libya's Qaddafi in 2011. However, Turkey in turn received the US' hesitant position to involve in the Syrian civil war. In response to Turkey's assertive agenda, the Syrian army withdrew from the country's northern part in the late-2012, creating a power vacuum in the Kurdish-populated areas to be filled by the PKK-linked Democratic Union Party (PYD). While these game-changing developments were unfolding in Syria, massive anti-government movements unexpectedly erupted inside Turkey, the Gezi Park Protest in 2013,[62] which further complicated the turbulent environment.

These were critical issues for the AKP in two dimensions. First, they would trigger a Kurdish nationalist movement inside Turkey and then collapse the reconciliation process, albeit paused in 2011, resurrecting Turkey's existential fears of a "Kurdish statehood project" in the region. Second, they would end the AKP's ultimate goal to become a major regional power. At this juncture, the NUBP was reinitiated in 2013 to create a "*new* Turkey" where Kurds are integrated into the Republican value system and a "*new* MENA" where Turkey acts as an Islamic leader of Sunni states under Erdogan. This mindset can be best captured by the letter of Öcalan which was broadcasted live by all TV channels during the 2013 Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakir:

> For the past 200 years, conquest wars, Western imperialists interventions and oppressive mentalities have urged Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Kurdish entities to form artificial states, borderlines, problems. The era of exploiting, oppressive ignoring mentalities is over…Today though, we are waking up to a 'new' Turkey, Middle East and future…Turkish people who know ancient Anatolia as Turkey should know that their coexistence

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[62] For Yavuz (2020), Erdogan's reading of neo-Ottomanism through the Abdulhamid II reference scaled up during the Gezi. He even impersonated the Sultan, protecting the interest of *ummah* against external enemies of the nation and Islam. This echoed on the NUBP's second round as explored.

with Kurdish people dates back to a historical agreement of fraternity and solidarity under the flag of Islam…The prophecies uttered by Moses, Jesus and Mohammed are becoming true now, the humanity is regaining its dignity again (Euronews, 2013).

Öcalan and the AKP, the "main partners" of the NUBP project with a newly established legal Kurdish party, the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), (T24, 2013b) seemed to find a common ground of using the neo-Ottoman nostalgia to terminate the PKK activities in Turkey and beyond. [63] Along this line, Öcalan's letter emphasised two points. First, Turkey's intractable conflict can be solved with the help of the Islamic brotherhood vision and centuries-old collective culture between the two communities, associated with Turkey's mosaic feature. Second, the restart of the NUBP was fundamentally a transnational project that would redraw the in-/out-group boundaries of Turkishness under the AKP's cosmopolitan Islamism, enabling to establish the "new Turkey" and "new MENA". For the AKP, the project was initiated in need of a new paradigm which would not only unify people under the AKP rule but also define the "acceptable people" and "nationhood" with a top-down promotion of neo-Ottomanism (Yabanci and Taleski, 2017, p. 11). It was widely promoted by the AKP elites, such as Etyen Mahcupyan, a senior advisor to Davutoglu and a leading figure in explaining and disseminating the "new Turkey" project to the public. He summarised the "new Turkey" model in three points: 1) It is built on the Ottoman-model majoritarianism versus the monotype secular community; 2) it is based on the

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[63] This accompanied with two major initiatives which were opposed by the CHP and MHP (see Çelikkan et al., 2015). The first was the introduction of the "Akil Adamlar Heyeti" (Committee of Wisemen) consisted of 63 leading public figures in Turkey. The committee would travel in Turkey and listed to peoples' grievances and issues and report them back to Ankara. The second was the establishment of an official committee called the "Çözüm Komisyonu" (Solution Committee) which would assist the AKP and BDP during the NUBP. However, these initiatives both remained short-lived.

AKP's democratisation agenda aiming to resolve the Kurdish conflict; and 3) it aims to replace the "modest and passive" citizens of the Republic with the "new" citizens who are "active public-defender" and "supporting the AKP government" (Mahcupyan, 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2015e). In light of this Orwellian-like political community design, Mahcupyan further claimed that the AKP would make "the old Turkey" obsolete through "rebirthing itself" because the hierarchical settings of Turkey are collapsed. If these reforms are to be implemented, the Republic's "featureless" institutions would be reconstructed, then the "return to the old state will be impossible" (*ibid*). Following Mahcupyan's article series, however, the "new Turkey" project collapsed in June 2015 along with the NUBP, leaving several question marks behind.

4.3.5. Intractable Conflict Reescalates: Limits of the New "*Self*" and Its Implications

On the material basis, there were two major self-reinforcing explanations behind the collapse of the NUBP. On the one hand, another Habur-like incident occurred in the late 2014 that Turkey's Kurds protested the AKP government for turning a blind eye to the atrocities occurring in Syrian Kurdish city, Kobane, which was under the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) siege for months. The violent clashes in Kobane were so intense that the struggle was likened to a bloody battle accelerating the collapse of the Ottomans – called as "Kurd's Çanakkale" by the Kurdish MPs (Milliyet, 2015). Turkey's indifferent approach towards Kobane case marked the mental collapse of the NUBP which was already losing its momentum. By extension, it not only motivated many Kurds in Turkey to join the PYD resistance against the ISIS, but also to question

the sincerity and nature of the peace process. After a series of transnational crises, Öcalan proposed a new negotiation draft to rejuvenate the volatile NUBP while the AKP repeatedly demanded the PKK to announce its decisive disarmament (Radikal, 2015). This bilateral communication later reduced into unproductive shuttle diplomacy between Erdogan and Öcalan, leading to mutual scepticism on both sides. On the other hand, the AKP lost its majority position in the parliament for the first time in the June 2015 national elections. The elections also marked a major success for the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the successor of the BDP, which managed to go beyond its "Kurdish" party label and attracted wider support from various ethnic and religious enslaves in Turkey alongside other marginalised communities, e.g., the LGBT groups (receiving 13% of votes). Nevertheless, the major opposition parties in Turkey could not form a coalition government, which followed by Erdogan's call for the snap election in November 2015. At this juncture, it is critical to recap what happened during this short period in making sense of the AKP's changing lens in reading Turkey's Kurdish Question.

Firstly, the AKP used the Syrian civil war context as a legitimate background to "defrost" and instrumentalise the TAF's strong security methods vis-à-vis the Kurdish Other, that, for example, revealed itself in constant shelling of the PKK-affiliated groups in North Syria (still continues as of 2021). This change in the mindset also brought in complete securitisation of Turkey's sociopolitical matrix from media and NGO sectors to academia and all sorts of opposition that exists within the political sphere and beyond. In this sense, the AKP, with the help of pro-AKP mainstream media, e.g., *Sabah*, constantly framed the PKK, the PYD and the Assad government as being a part of the "Devil's Triangle" cooperating with the foreign powers – that

not only echoed *Sevresphobia* but also resituated the Turkish-Kurdish subjectivities into antagonistic places (see Adisonmez, 2016). This hyper-securitisation later paved the way for the AKP to dominate the domestic politics, perpetually increasing its political pressure on the opposition parties and marginalising their solution agenda (of any kind) by referring to the "immediate security threats" against the Turkish state and society. Building on the former, the AKP secondly exploited the political vacuum that occurred in the aftermath of the June 2015 elections. Cognizant of the rising HDP votes in southeast Turkey, the party elites adopted a punitive agenda in the Kurdish-majority towns, such as Sur and Nusaybin, with an implication that its scope would extend in the region under the guise of combating the PKK (further explored below). The massive fear and anxiety sparked after these two points reaffirmed the AKP's single-party position in the November 2015 elections, while enabling the party to resort *the politics of fear* on a daily basis. These critical developments, more than the AKP's temporary political gains, manifested the party's abandonment of its cosmopolitan society goal along with the NUBP.

On the sociopsychological basis, there was a four-layered sociopsychological issue which sheds light on two relevant developments. It first explores why the AKP's Ottoman-inspired brotherhood vision remained ineffective to bring social peace in Turkey. It second analyses sociopolitical shifts unfolded after the collapse of the NUBP (2015-present). The first layer highlights that although the AKP seemed dedicated to remove the binary reading of the Kurdish Other vis-à-vis the imagined Turkishness, there were some core questions on the table that remained unaddressed before and during the peace process. Among others, there had never been a mutually accepted agreement between the PKK leadership and the AKP with regards to the full

recognition and enhancement of Kurds' democratic rights as well as the ways in which to integrate the Kurdish Other into the Republic's centre (or granting Kurds of the democratic self-administration in the AKP's "new Turkey"). In other words, the AKP's brotherhood vision adhered to the party's specific (and occasionally unconditional) application of the neo-Ottoman nostalgia in criticising Turkey's *past* and fantasising of its *future*. By extension, the AKP elites invested much less efforts to empower and disseminate the central components of their multicultural and cosmopolitan nationhood project, e.g., building intercommunal trust, solidarity and tolerance between Turks and Kurds, than self-interrogating the normative and structural propellants of the Kemalist state and society. Manifesting this narrow mindset, the AKP sought to shift its public image from *the emancipator party negotiated with the PKK* to *the strong party determined to eradicate the PKK terrorism* (Yeğen, 2015b) after the NUBP – that marked the return to the "terrorism" lexicon in the state mind.

The second layer is related to the AKP's Ottoman-inspired collective existence project and its objective to settle Turkey's intractable conflict under the NUBP – that aimed to formulate the "new Turkey" and "new society" by modifying the singular and ethnicised understanding of Turkishness with multiculturalism and cosmopolitan mindset. In doing so, however, the NUBP could not facilitate a suitable cognitive environment where the historically shaped intersubjective reading between self and antagonistic Other can be reconstructed and then reflected into everyday practices. Having lacked a detailed execution agenda and a sustainable dialogue environment, which would pay attention to various anxiety-laden voices, e.g., the CHP and MHP cases, the intercommunal scepticism and untrustworthiness between Kurds and Turks

197

have gradually increased during the NUBP (see KONDA, 2012; 2014) and then skyrocketed after its collapse (see KONDA, 2015). Against this setting, the NUBP failed to "remove some existential questions" (Mitzen, 2006b, p. 273) in people's minds. Ensuring so would foster a sociopsychological platform where the anxiety-laden narratives destabilising the sense of self vis-à-vis the Other are mitigated "through the formulation of alternative narratives and [ontological] routines" (Rumelili, 2015, p. 194). In this sense, the NUBP framework remained ineffective to promote an ontological common ground where "the majority of a society's members…form new beliefs about the former adversary, about their own society, and about the relationship between the two groups" (Bar-Tal, 2000, p. 356). Thus, it reaffirmed the Kemalist era fixations and antagonistic "human signposts" attached to the Kurdish subjectivity, helping agents to distinguish their "self" from the Other(s). Against this mental background, vast majority of Kurds had gradually evaluated the NUBP as the AKP's failure, especially after 2015 (Rethink Institute, 2016, pp. 22-24) – that should be read together with the party's harsh ways to tackle the PKK after June 2015. In this nexus, the AKP cadres enacted a new plan called the "National Action and Rehabilitation Plan to Combat Terrorism" (Yenisafak, 2016). It authorised the TAF to declare curfew during the violent clashes in southeast Turkey, which soon scaled the conflict into a destructive urban warfare. Consequently, more than 3,000 people –civilians and combatants– lost their lives in months while 200,000 people were internally displaced (Çiçek and Coşkun, 2016, pp. 11-12). These measures not only paralysed Kurds' living matrix and produced an economic breakdown in the region. They also reminded them of the routinised discriminations and state violence at their peak point in the 1990s' Turkey. In turn, these measures reversed the relative

optimism among Kurds towards the NUBP together with the long historical discriminations and sufferings of Kurds that were not addressed by the project.

Seen in this light, the AKP neither fully captured the dynamic "life cycle" of Turkey's intractable conflict nor the separate ontological world(s) of Turkishness and Kurdishness. Specifically, the party elites failed to grasp the power of traumatic conflict memories developed in the context of the Ottomans' collapse – that not only became instrumental elements to formulate a particular collective identity but also informed its psychological "security border" vis-à-vis the Kurdish subjectivity. Furthermore, the AKP cadres also failed to draw lessons from Turkey's recurring oppressive policies against the material and ideological identity makers of the Kurdish Other – that had left the "ghostly presence of cruel events and haunting memories [in the Kurdish] past" (Aras, 2013, p. 204). As a result of these opposite ontological positions, an alternative cognitive framework where memory, agency and reconciliation intersect did not develop in Turkey – in which the two ethnic groups would empathise with their deep-seated fears and grievances, and in turn deconstruct the negative fixations they attached to each other, realising that the ontological security-seeking is an interactive and "social practice" (Mitzen, 2006a, p. 341). Let alone pondering these sociopsychological issues which aggravated the violent intractable conflict, the alternative proposals for ontological change were categorically challenged, as echoed on two opinion polls: the majority of Turkey (52%) not only rejected the official recognition of the Kurdish identity, but also evaluated (57%) returning to the strong security measures as the only solution towards the Kurdish Question (KONDA, 2015) – that heralded the Turkish majority's *dynamic stickiness* to its historically shaped national agency and autobiographical narratives vis-à-vis the

199

Kurdish Other. Following the collapse of the NUBP, this particular ontological security resonance had remarkable implications over Turkish politics and society, starting from the AKP itself (2015-present).

Failing to rebirth imagined Turkishness with the Ottoman-inspired collective identity valuing multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, within the third layer, the party has pushed its Islamic brotherhood vision with Kurds into the background. It was powerfully manifested in three close events. Firstly, the mastermind of neo-Ottomanism, Davutoglu, was framed as the main source of Turkey's struggling foreign and domestic policy with a particular reference to his lenient approach towards the PKK (see Evrensel, 2016). This incident was later acknowledged as the "Pelican Files" case following which Davutoglu was replaced by Erdogan's compliant cadre, namely Binali Yildirim (2016-2018). Secondly, the Kurdish-controlled areas in North Syria were occupied and/or shelled by the TAF during Operation Euphroes Shield (2016-2017) and Operation Olive Branch (2018-present), not to mention the ever-challenging situation of Turkey's Kurds who were once referred to as the "oppressed Muslim brothers" by the AKP leadership, e.g., the recent crackdown against the HDP and the imprisonment of its leader, Selahattin Demirtas. Thirdly, Turkey survived a coup attempt in 2016 which has left deep marks in Turkish politics and society. It was orchestrated by the Islamist Nur movement (later called the Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation – FETÖ), which had until 2016 been seen as the AKP's strongest ally in undermining the Kemalist structure (see DW, 2018). In light of these major developments, it can be argued that the AKP's neo-Ottomanism started as an imperial imagination in reconfiguring the Turkish state and society but it gradually evolved into

a self-destructive fantasy, failing at home to solve Turkey's intractable conflict and abroad to make Turkey a major regional power.

The fourth layer builds on the former that although the AKP cadres had long systematically chosen to "bury" the Kemalist codes by confronting the past and sought to replace them with the neo-Ottomanist narratives, they remarkably attached to them after the NUBP. The main rationale behind the AKP's "U-turn" was to mitigate the powerful atmosphere of deep insecurity, mistrust, and anxiety inside Turkey by sticking to historical narratives and performative routines that help agents to navigate their "self" in the turbulent context. In other words, the AKP leadership pragmatically remembered the *banal nationalism* codes of Kemalist Turkey, or "the old Turkey" as Mahcupyan claimed above.[64] These banal nationalism codes represented ontological continuity by unconsciously penetrating the daily routines of individual agents (Billig, 1995), for example, by extensive usage of Atatürk posters, logos and so on. Herein, the most noteworthy case was that the solution for ontological insecurity was articulated as the unification of the Turkish society in the national space which would be governed under the AKP's strong authority. Against this rationale, the AKP rediscovered the power of already-existing hegemonic narratives (e.g., ethnonationalism, militarism, and masculinity) in Turkish politics and instrumentalised them to initiate the "Domestic and National Turkey" project (2016-present – *Yerli ve Milli Turkiye*) in alliance with the ultranationalist MHP, which had previously perceived each other as ideological "rivals". This particular narrative on ontological security has attempted to reaffirm a homogenous collective entity ("tek

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[64] Although mainly relies on the ethnonationalist codes, Erdogan's rhetoric carried "Islamo-nationalistic" characteristics at times, echoing the AKP's Islamic roots (see Yavuz, 2020).

millet" – one nation) around an inseparable unity ("tek devlet" – one state), a single space ("tek vatan" – one homeland) and an ever-present symbol ("tek bayrak" – one flag) – that powerfully echoed the early Republican approach to organise the state and its imagined society. In the search for ontological security and a stable cognitive environment, this articulation has cancelled out the political, social, and cultural differences as well as demands within the society. With this regard, on multiple occasions, Erdogan called all citizens to unite around a common goal against the internal and external security threats towards the Turkish state and society, arguing that "we are all in the same boat" (Hurriyet, 2019).

The essential dynamic of the "Domestic and National Turkey" project was to fix the ideational boundaries between an "'inside' from an 'outside', a 'self' from an 'other', a 'domestic' from 'a foreign'" (Campbell, 1998a, p. 9) in a hawkish and authoritarian way – that further escalated with Turkey's transition from the parliamentary democracy to the presidential system in 2017, empowering the current AKP leader and President Erdogan to extend his executive powers. Seen in this light, the AKP's hegemonic discourse has led to the formation of an antagonistic frontier in strengthening the particular collective identity. This frontier appeared as an imaginary chain that links the common enemies inside Turkey and abroad. In this sense, the FETÖ and its associates, i.e., the PKK and ISIS, are constantly framed to work against the "Domestic and National" project led by the AKP and MHP. The interesting point here is that the FETÖ, PKK and ISIS are being expressed as substitutes for each other with a reference to a common threat against Turkey and Turkishness despite their wide ideological differences (see Sabah, 2017). In other words, these "aggressive Others" transcending the AKP's new political frontier are evaluated as a source of ontological

insecurity jeopardising the imagined Turkish social matrix and Turkishness, showing that "history does not repeat itself, but it rhymes" as Mark Twain said.

5. Israel Part

5.1. "Reinventing" the Jewish *Self*: From Exiled Community to Isolated Nation

> At the age of three I knew that I would not live in [Poland]...And that is how all the Jews were. We knew that our land would not be the place we were living, but in the Land of Israel (Ben-Gurion, the founder of Israel, cited in Baffler, 2020).

In the mid-19th century, the Jewish communities who used to live in the Western and Eastern Europe for centuries were aimed to be homogenised within the early forms of the European nation states. This is recognised as the "Jewish Question", motivating the Jewish intellectuals to seek alternative ways of *being* under the Zionist program. The emergence of the Jewish Question is explored at the outset of this chapter which has threefold aims. Firstly, it explores the macro-structural anti-Semitism context in the West. This context gradually shaped the initial survival agenda of the Jewish collectives in a way of "rediscovering" their national aspiration and attachment to their "historical homeland", the Ottoman Palestine. Raising on this point, it secondly demonstrates how these anti-Semitic elements developed into a "continual phenomenon" in the minds of founding Israeli leadership (Labour Zionists/Ashkenazim) vis-à-vis their traumatic war experiences with the external and internal Others during the World War(s) and following Israeli Independence War. These catastrophic encounters not only reproduced Jews' centuries-old annihilation fears but also transformed them into modern context. Thirdly, these historical developments help this work to trace the ways in which the early Israeli cadres' traumatic conflict memories crystallised in their agent level patterns of actions and

then resonated at their imagined national agency. This in turn prepared the epistemic basis and nature of Israel's intractable conflict to be shaped.

Seen in this light, this chapter first demonstrates that the traumatic conflict memories of the early Israeli elites (1920-1964) acquired before and during the state formation period became their psychological cornerstone, informing their social reality and individual level practices. These memories were instrumentally employed by the leadership in reshaping the traditional Jewishness notion rooted in the religion with a secular and nationalist outlook in Israel. Specifically, this particular national agency and its psychologically defining properties, such as its autobiographical narratives, were consciously consolidated through the state elites' discursive performances. Second, it shows that the Israeli leadership perceived "anti-Semitic Arabs", particularly their Palestinian "protégé" inside Israel, as physical and ontological insecurity sources against the young state setting. These groups were violently encountered by the leadership from the pre-nation state period onwards, informing it about modern-day-representation of anti-Semitic genocidal forces which produced (and believed to continue reproducing) the recent Jewish sufferings. In this sense, these "tyrannical forces" are not only framed as the "threatening non-Jewish Other(s)" against Israeliness and public order but also "uncivilised elements" destabilising the subject identifications of the leadership's imagined national agency in the making. This is vital to grasp the sociopsychological driving forces establishing the "roots" of Israel's intractable conflict with Palestinians since Israel's military apparatus is organised to mitigate these ontological insecurity sources in order to stabilise the autobiographical narratives of the Ashkenazi elites' imagined collective identity.

5.1.1. Context of the "Jewish Question": Anti-Semitism, *Kibbutzim,* and Violent Encounters

Around the mid-19th century, in his essay "On the Jewish Question", Marx (1843) argued that the Jewish communities were always portrayed as "Other" independent from which state they lived in. Recognising this issue as the Jewish Question, he claimed that the question takes different shapes in each place. For example, it takes a religious form in Germany as a result of the distinction between the Christian and Jewish theologies in the state organisation. On the other side of the Atlantic, however, the question loses its religious feature and emerges as a concern of secularism as the US constitution is distant to all forms of religious beliefs. This "unfitness" case of Jews was not a unique development to the Marx's era. It had a deep sociopsychological background which sat on two pillars. First, it was related to the historically shaped unique self-image of Jewish community. This was largely informed through numerous religious references emphasising on the "holiness" of the "divine Jewish nation". Among these references, *Genesis* 12: 1-2, whose revealance created the Jewish community in the Old Testament sense, could serve as a central section informing the cognitive basis behind their unique self-image:

> The Lord had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you [today's Israel and the PA]. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing' (Biblegateway, 2020).

This discursively expressed God's "chosen people" understanding, which has a direct reference to a particular territory, ethnicity, and belonging, was eventually developed into a preservation awareness as a homogenous group. Thus, Jewishness,

from a religious perspective,[65] was (and still is) built on two central columns, namely religion and ethnicity. Second, the Jewish Question could be seen as a forced "unfitness" issue starting with the collapse of the Hasmonean Kingdom (BCE 37) in today's Israel by the Roman Empire. This collapse did not only mark the centuries-long exodus of Jews into various geographies from Poland to Ethiopia where they were exposed to anti-Semitism and othering policies. It also imprinted into the Jewish collective memory and in-group ethos vis-à-vis their continuous sufferings from direct (genocidal actions, forced migrations, and pogroms) and structural (religious taxes and forced conversions) violence throughout the centuries. From a sociopsychological angle, communicating these traumatic experiences across the generations provided a suitable landscape for the making of a reserved Jewish self – that can be powerfully traced in major Jewish holidays, such as *Purim*, which observe Jews' successful uprisings against ancient tyrants (Goren, 2009). Thus, the Jewish social matrix had long been in a dense "emotional dialogue" with its surroundings, as Grosbard (2003, p. 12) would argue, and carried the heritage of the isolated victim self-image. This alarmist perception, however, entailed that there were constant threat(s) outside the Jewish inner circle, jeopardising their physical and ontological existence.

Against this background, it became clear in the late 19th century context, particularly after the Dreyfus affair, that Jews' physical and ontological "unfitness" was related to the rise of modern nation states and their ethnic homogenisation policies in Europe. In other words, what Marx coined as the Jewish Question lost its religious and social characteristics. Instead, it developed into a "national question" as the

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[65] It is specified as such because Jewishness could not be evaluated unattached from its religious roots until the 19th century. The political Zionism challenged this view as explored in this chapter.

visionary of the political Zionism, Theodor Herzl (1896, p. 5), argued in his work "The Jewish State". In this challenging setting, the Jewish community had two options: 1) be voluntarily assimilated within the European prototypes of nation states, which would safeguard their physical existence but interrupt their behavioural practices and historically attached Jewish self-image, or 2) opposing these anti-Semitic policies. Following the latter point, Herzl offered a comprehensive solution at the First Zionist Congress in 1897. The plan was to establish a new state, a "legally secured homeland" (JVL, 2020a) which would serve as a protective umbrella embracing all Jewish communities.

There are four points worth distilling with regards to this plan. First, he aimed to prevent all theological tendencies in this new state by confining the role of religion within the border of "priests' temples" (Herzl, 1986, p. 38). Second, he was critical to communicate in the languages of different nations where the Jewish societies had been residing in for centuries. Third, the Ottoman Palestine was portrayed as the "ever-memorable historic home" (*ibid*, p. 13) where the imaginary state would be established. Fourth and last, he proposed to create well-structured private and state-owned enterprises which would determine the financial soundness and self-reliance of the impending Jewish nation state.

Apart from its reactive nature vis-à-vis the ethnic homogenisation policies, Herzl's plan was influenced by the universal self-rule demands in the post-French Revolution Europe where the new middle class emerged with their "rediscovered" nationalist aspirations. Nonetheless, these did not restrain Herzl to employ particular religiocultural references such as founding the imagined state on Jews' "promised land" of Palestine. The critical point here was to design this prospective state

homogenously Jewish in terms of its inhabitants. In this vein, Herzl (1960, p. 88) acknowledged the existence of the Palestinian Arabs in the Ottoman Palestine, but aimed at a possible displacement of the locals into the neighbouring ("transit") countries once the Jewish state was founded.

In the practical dimension, the Zionist proposal was criticised as being a utopian national independence plan. It would be artificial to carry out and would contradict the historical evolution of any organic nation (Arendt, 1945). In the ideological dimension, it was unprecedented in Jewish history as the religious identity makers of the Jewish self were pushed into the background in imagining this nation. With this regard, many Orthodox Jewish leaders in Europe and Palestine, such as Rabbi Menahem and Rabbi Hirsch, challenged Zionism. The religious opposition was firstly raised to the Zionist objective to separate traditional Jewish way of life from its divine duties for the sake of establishing a nation state which denied the fact that "the Torah and only the Torah binds the Jewish people together" (Hirsch, 2002, p. 461). Secondly, the religious leadership criticised the Zionists' "unholy restoration" of their ancient homeland which clashed with the cultural-Biblical "return to Zion" narrative as it was believed to be organised under the leadership of Messiah to arrive.

Aside from these objections, the Zionist movement, especially their immigration proposal, was evaluated as a beacon of survival during the devastating WWI era. In the wake of the heightened anti-Semitism in Europe, the Zionist migration flows (*Alliyah*) had already started to the Ottoman Palestine prior to WWI. Nevertheless, new Jewish settlers were not particularly welcomed by the Palestinian locals (Rabkin, 2006). Moreover, the ways in which the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and Jewish Colonisation Association (JCA) possessed the land were criticised by

Palestinians, echoing at their local press such as *al-Karmil* and *La Palestine* (1914). While shaping the early form of the Palestinian national consciousness, these newspapers recognised, for the first time, that the Zionist agenda aimed of eventual replacement of Palestinian polity with the Jewish one (Khalidi, 1997). These practical and moral difficulties compelled the early Israeli leadership to-be to justify the status of new settlers in two points.

The first point was built on the logic of denial, meaning that Palestinians did not exist (Weizmann, 1983). The thesis of Weizmann, who later became the first president of Israel, was partly supported by the Ottoman *millet* system, ruling different groups in the Empire vis-à-vis their various religious beliefs. In this sense, it was argued to have no particular group characterised as Palestinians, or else they were not recognised in the same way with other Ottoman minorities such as Jews and Armenians. Therefore, Palestinians would not have any jurisdiction right on Palestine as they did not exist and/or were not recognised (*ibid*). The second point was centred on the rationale that Palestine was an uninhabited territory. It can be best traced between the lines of Zangwill, a close cadre of Herzl, where he argued that the Jewish people must "restore the country [Palestine] without a people to the people without a country" (Zangwill, 1901, p. 615). Motivated by these two justifications, a number of agricultural settlements (*kibbutzim* or *moshav*) were established in various parts of Palestine from North Jordan Valley to Negev Desert – that is coined as the *Yishuv* period.[66]

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[66] There were also other communities contributed to the Zionist struggle. For example, *Irgun* and *Lehi* were the Zionist urban movements which offered alternative roads towards the Jewish existence, contesting the socialist agenda of the dominant *Haganah* movement during the *Yishuv* period. With the creation of the Israeli nation state in 1948, the cadres organising

There are several characteristics of *kibbutzim* which must be explored. To begin with, *kibbutzim* were self-reliant and egalitarian labour communities founded in geographically isolated areas. They collectively arranged their economic structure and social consciousness which in turn incorporated various elements of the political Zionism. In this sense, *kibbutzim* were raised on two main columns: 1) collective ownership based on self-labour and direct democracy, and 2) pioneering labour activities aiming to foster a moral bond between settlers and the land (Rayman, 1981). From the 1920s onwards, these two features were also echoed on the institutional structure of the Zionist bodies such as the General Federation of Labour (*Histadrut*) which not only became the most powerful economic instrument in the pre-nation state context but also acted as an ad-hoc Zionist parliament in Palestine.

A third column with regards to the Zionist agricultural communities could also be added to this equation. Following the Balfour Declaration (1917) and subsequent British Mandate in Palestine (1920), the Palestinian opposition against the Zionist colonialism changed both in nature and intensity. It transitioned into a violent peasant movement led by Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam, sparking series of armed rebellions.[67] In this setting, people living in *kibbutzim* were expected to adopt strong military responsibility to defy the mounting intergroup clashes. Most of them participated in newly formed local paramilitary resistance groups, such as *Haganah* and *Palmah*

these movements played vital roles in the right-wing Revisionist Zionist parties (see Chapter 5.2).

[67] These uprisings were firstly organised to counter the British forces as both the Declaration and the Mandate regime did not recognise the existence of Palestinians but described them as "non-Jewish communities" (JVL, 2020b). Secondly, they were related to the Zionist dispossession of the land which mostly followed by the replacement of Palestinian labours with Jews (for these evictions between 1920-1948, see Kamen, 1991). These popular revolts were transmitted across generations, becoming a master narrative behind the Palestinian armed resistance under the PLO, while inspiring Hamas to name its military wing after Izz al-Din al-Qassam.

whose politicomilitary cluster became key politicians in Israel including Yaakov Dori and Moshe Dayan, the two prominent chiefs of staffs of the IDF, and David Ben-Gurion, the first general secretariat of *Histadrut* and founder of Israel. In this sense, the Zionist settlements were transformed into politicomilitary structures, while adjusting themselves to the adjusted *Haganah* strategy which aimed at attaining utmost "independence of any non-Jewish factor" (*Haganah*, 2007, p. 202). Another noteworthy development is that close *kibbutzim* had been combined into physical monoblocs. Their limited social space was further isolated by concrete walls during the noted *Al-Thawra al-Kubra* revolt (1936-1939 Great Arab Uprising). For Yigal Allon,[68] the founder of *Palmah* who clashed with Palestinians during the pre- and the post-Independence War period:

> Pioneering [Zionist] settlements were from the start at least partly determined by the politico-strategic needs. [Their locations] were influenced not only by consideration of economic viability but also and even chiefly by the needs of local defence…Accordingly, land was purchased, or more often reclaimed, in remote parts of the country…Consequently, every Jewish settlement had to be also a Haganah fortress [during the Palestinian revolts] (1971, pp. 18-19).

At this critical juncture, the early *kibbutzim* experiment in the *Yishuv* period not only played a crucial role in Jews' struggle for existence at the beginning of the 20th century. It also became a model projection of the Zionist mind in the pre-Israeli space. Physically speaking, it provided a well-protected social matrix for the Jewish existence as a unique ethnic group which was increasingly exposed to insecurities

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[68] Allon was a founding member of *Ahdut HaAvoda* (Labour Unity) established during the British Mandate. Cooperating with Ben-Gurion's *Poale Zion* (Workers of Zion), it evolved into *Mapai* (Workers' Party of the Land of Israel), becoming the leading Labour Zionist party until the 1960s as explored below.

under the European nationalism. In this vein, the self-feeding structure of *kibbutzim* and locally organised paramilitary forces constituted the backbone of their "survival" vis-à-vis the Palestinian uprisings. Ideologically speaking, it implanted the seeds of independent Zionist utopia with the creation of their own social, political, and military organisations – that collectively offered a preliminary platform to practice the main propellants of Herzl's nation state idea.

The early Zionist colonies also became physical manifestations of historical insecurities and fears shared by the settlers. These deep-seated anxieties were powerfully echoed themselves on the ways in which most *kibbutzim* isolated themselves from the alien cultures in Palestine, while being transformed into strong the "fortified" structures. These anxieties reached at a peak level in the ensuing phase which had a prominent impact on the social and institutional practices adopted in the early period of Israel. In making sense of this phenomenon, two co-constitute critical junctures must be explored. They not only transformed the local resistance in *Yishuv* into a full-scale war but also became *informative developments* for the subsequent Israeli state elites: the emergence of Arab anti-Semitism and the genocidal act of Holocaust.

5.1.2. Between "Chosen People" and "Chosen Trauma": Holocaust, Independence War, and Otherness

In the 1930s' turbulent period, Ben-Gurion became extra watchful about the future of the Zionist project. He firstly demanded the British Mandate to train the Jewish paramilitaries against the rising Palestinian incursions. Then, he proposed revising of the controlled defensive strategy of *Haganah* with aggressive self-defence (Ben-

Gurion, 1963). The first co-constitutive critical juncture facilitating this alertness was the emergence of Arab anti-Semitism. Unlike its European counterpart, which framed the Jewish Question as the social "unfitness" case, Jewishness was seen as the categorically "incompatible" element in the Arab anti-Semitism context. In other words, European anti-Semitism evaluated Jewishness as a "psychosomatic illness" that weakens the body, while its Arab equivalent approached it as a "toxic allergic reaction" imposing fatal conditions (Penslar, 2006, p. 6). The sociopsychological infrastructure of this intolerance had been grounded on the cultural-Qur'anic references, such as *Nisa 46*, *Maide 64*, and *Baccarat 89* cursing the heretical Jews who occupied the Holy Land (of Palestine), and historical narratives about their intergroup clashes during the early period of Islam.[69] Nevertheless, only after the Zionist colonisation that these narratives started to dominate the Palestinian cognitive landscapes, bridging their conflictual past with the "evil Jews" over the present.

It is not a surprise that the rise of nationalism in the MENA region and Zionist hegemonic project in Palestine informed changing Arab attitudes towards the Jewish communities. Beside these, international anti-Semitic atmosphere also echoed on Arab minds, triggering a radical semantic shift in the reading of the Jewish Other. This could be best captured by the espousal of notorious conspiracy theories, such as *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* – an alleged Jewish plot to conquer the world. *Protocols* was promoted by both Muhammad Nimr Al-Khatib (1951), the leader of Palestinians and Arab Higher Committee, and primary figures in neighbouring Arab states. For

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[69] These negative projections of Jews in the Islamic sources did not evolve into obsessive intergroup hatred during the Ottoman times that can also be traced in the reputed Islamic scholars' works (see Webman, 2010).

example, Egypt's Nasser referred to it as a "useful guide to understand Jewish mind" during this period (Lewis 1999, p. 208).

In this setting, Ben-Gurion was mindful of the fact that Arab anti-Semitism had been exacerbated under the Nazi propaganda. In 1936, he wrote in his memoir that "…destruction await us…Mussolini has declared himself the protector of Islam, and in his Nuremberg speech Hitler shed crocodile tears over the plight of the Arabs" (Ben Gurion, 1936; translated by Segev, 2019, p. 143). These deep insecurities were soon to scale up as the Nazi Germany regime aimed to spread its racist ideology in the region by exploiting anti-Semitic references in Qur'an and emphasising the imagined common enemies of "Germans and Arabs–Jews and British" (Flores, 2012, p. 455). Some of these fascist propagandas not only resonated on the discourses of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and strengthened their militant approach as the self-appointed leader of *ummah* against Jewry, as read in the lines of its ideologue Sayyid Qutb (1964). They also gained ground in Palestine vis-à-vis the highest religious authority in Jerusalem, Mufti Amin Al-Huseyni, who had been cooperating with the Brotherhood (Herf, 2011). Although the degree of the Nazi impact on Arab societies is an arguable topic,[70] Ben-Gurion (1963, p. 16) was convinced that "Arab rulers sided with the Nazis, contentedly recognizing in Hitler the most bloodthirsty and brutal enemy of the Jews in the pages of history". Notwithstanding both accounts, Palestine became a focal spot where the heightened Arab anti-Semitism and Jewry clashed with each other during and after WWII.

In exploring the contingent impact of these violent encounters, the second co-constitutive critical juncture, which scaled up Jews' insecurities to the peak point, must

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[70] See, Flores (2012) for opposing views in the literature.

be explored: the Holocaust. The rise of fascism in the 1930s' Europe heralded that another disastrous war was on its way. In this setting, the social space of Jews had been worsening in each European country, but the large-scale anti-Semitic actions in the Nazi Germany, such as the *Kristallnacht* pogrom, were producing the most damage while triggering massive migration flows to *Yishuv*.[71] These hostile actions evolved into unprecedented ways in history after the Nazi officials decided to annihilate all Jews (and some other minorities, e.g., the Roma people) by the *Action 15f13*. One third of the Jewish community (6 million) were systematically killed in concertation camps between 1941 and 1945, while many others were massacred in woods and suburban areas across the Eastern Europe with the *Babi Yar* massacre being a representative example.

Against this background, three major *informative* developments, intertwined at many levels, are worth distilling. These psychologically defining moments gradually fixated the feelings of the early Israeli politicomilitary cluster vis-à-vis Palestinians while informing their future performances – that prepared the sociopsychological roots of Israel's intractable conflict to be shaped. First, with the intensified anti-Semitism elsewhere, the Holocaust, which destroyed the "select part of the [future] nation" and "subverted Jewish national rebirth" (Ben-Gurion, 1936; translated by Segev, 2019, p. 183), became an extreme traumatic experience. It transformed Jews' historical anxieties and chronic fears into an ontological insecurity complex in the coming period, crystallising their isolated victim self-image (explored

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[71] In this period, Britain issued the *White Paper* in 1939. It reversed their approach of "non-existing" Palestinians, while restricting the Jewish migrations to Palestine. Some offshoot Jewish paramilitaries, such as *Etzel* and *Irgun*, organised several attacks against the British officials in Palestine to protest this decision.

below). Second, ongoing violent encounters with Palestinians and Arabs at large, such as the 1947 Aden Riots, kept the traumatic Holocaust memories alive. During the *Haganah* meeting in the same year, Ben-Gurion (1963, pp. 23-25) argued that:

> The Arab threat is back, and on a much larger scale. This time there await us not only 'disturbances' stirred up by the Arab leadership in Palestine, but also aggression led by the rulers of the Arab states…We must expect openly or covertly hostile acts by the armed forces of…Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Trans-Jordan.

These threats not only reproduced the constant "suffering" narrative and the worst-case annihilation scenario in Jews' cognitive landscapes (*ibid*, p. 26). They also prepared a background for the Israeli Independence War (1948-1949) which would erupt soon. In 1947, the UN Special Committee on Palestine prepared a resolution draft –Resolution 181(II)– aimed to divide Palestine into two separate states, being Israel and Palestine, after the termination of the British Mandate. The majority of the member states (33 versus 10) approved the resolution in the following months. After the centuries-long exodus, the Israeli side considered it as a "wonder" and the greatest gain in the nation's history in "the last 2000 years" (Ben-Gurion, 1936; translated by Segev, 2019, p. 205). Nevertheless, the Palestinian side boycotted the partition plan, claiming that the UN Committee persistently avoided to hear Palestinians' self-determination quests and favoured Zionism as a tool of foreign powers (UN 2020a; 2020b). This rejection was spurred by the massive anti-Zionist protests in Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon led by the Brotherhood, transforming the local conflict in Palestine into a full-scale war between Israel and the *Arab League* in May 1948, hours after Israel was founded. On the first day of the war, al-Rahman Azzam, the general secretariat of the *Arab League*, argued that their sudden offensive will be "a war of [Israeli] annihilation and lead to a terrible massacre…[similar to]…the massacres of

the Mongols or Crusaders" (Küntzel, 2007, p. 15). Seen in this light, the *Arab League* military advancement was not only a show of aggression against the Zionist colonisation but also aimed to destroy the newly founded Israel.

On the one side, the war would result in the Holocaust-like scenario, leading to the annihilation of the Israeli Jews as feared by Ben-Gurion (1963, pp. 47-49). Nevertheless, the Jewish paramilitaries were organised under a single body (IDF) with the compulsory *kibbutzim* involvement which suppressed the joint Arab-Palestinian army. On the other side, it marked the Palestinian exodus of 1948 ("al-Nakba" or "catastrophe" in English), leaving significant impacts on future generations. Half of the Palestinian population (nearly a million) was driven from their homes by the Israeli forces or voluntarily left during the violent clashes into neighbouring territories, such as the *Arab League* occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank which was occupied by Jordan during the war. The critical point is that this ad-hoc displacement from the land, whether systematic expulsion or voluntary flee, developed into the biopolitics of the Palestinian "containment" in order to secure homogenous Israeli social matrix under the *State of Emergency* in Israel, which is permanent ever since (explored in the section to follow).[72,73]

These traumatic encounters during the Israeli Independence War marked the third *informative* development. Following the fragmenting impact of the Holocaust, in which past-present-future division disappeared in the Jewish mind (Varvin, 2003),

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[72] For Morris (2007), the first phase of the Palestinian exodus started with *Haganah*'s Operation Hiram. After the war, the *Law and Administration Ordinance of 1948* and subsequent *Law of Return* (1950) were passed. The latter refers to the government-supported immigrations to Israel – "Aliyah Right". The law discriminates against the non-Jewish immigration flows, hardening the Palestinian expatriates' position to reclaim their right upon the land (JVL, 2020c).
[73] This "containment" politics has extended into the Palestinian Territories in Gaza and the West Bank after the Six Day War in 1967 (see Chapter 5.2.2)

these heavy clashes served as an integrative mechanism of the above-mentioned Israeli ontological insecurity complex and historically informed siege mentality. In other words, the recent catastrophic memories began to operate in a distinct way vis-à-vis the recent affect-centric experiences with the Other. They firstly dominated the early Israeli leadership's cognitive setting via which their historical fears and anxieties were channelled towards Palestinians who had long been cooperating with various "genocidal powers" from Hitler to anti-Semitic Arab army. In this sense, the Palestinian subjectivity had been increasingly developed into an antagonistic signpost – a historical *continuation* of "threatening non-Jewish Other" which constantly interrupts its ontological and physical existence, if not aims to exercise its tyrannical intentions with other external enemies.[74] Building on the latter point, the traumatic memories secondly were articulated by the early Israeli state leadership as "chosen traumas" in 1) consolidating the sociopsychological propellants of the imagined Israeli collective identity, and 2) transforming the IDF to protect the assigned physical and ideational boundaries of the Israeli self in the young state setting.

5.1.3. "Collective Mode of *Being*": Quest of Making and Stabilising the National Agency

Israel's national anthem begins with anxieties and fears –"as long as the Jewish heart yearns"– says Grosbard (2003, p. 64); and then it continues with "toward the East, the eye beholds [mountain] Zion" where Jews were reunited in 1948 after two thousand

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[74] The first phase of the Palestinian exodus was a manifestation of this aggravated intersubjective reading. It resembles to Turkey's *Sevresphobia* vis-à-vis the Kurdish Other (see Chapter 4.1).

years of exile. The section above shed light on some historical cornerstones unfolded until this long-awaited reunion was ensured. Respectively, it first examined the ethnic homogenisation policies in the West which triggered the emergence of the Jewish Question. These policies later imposed two opposite routes for the future of the Jewish community: voluntary assimilation or finding alternative survival agenda. In line with Herzl's vision, the section analysed the initial Zionist migrations to the Ottoman Palestine which provoked the early intergroup clashes between Jews and Palestinians. This investigation does not only show the ways in which the Jewish communities organised their own social and military structure in the *Yishuv* period. It also illustrated how their deep-seated insecurities vis-à-vis the alien groups were echoed on their social matrix, i.e., the fortified *kibbutzim*. Then, the section explored the changing nature of the Jewish-Palestinian clashes which were intensified with the rise of Arab anti-Semitism and the genocidal act of Holocaust, as manifested in the discursive and practical actions of both groups' politicomilitary elites.

Then, how can we trace the contingencies of these sociopsychological developments in the young Israel? How were the traumatic experiences with the external and internal Other(s) used through chosen traumas as "reference points" to consolidate an imagined national agency? How can we decode the ideological properties of the new state's military apparatuses vis-à-vis their officially and normatively assigned roles? Lastly, how have these various practices established the background for the slow-moving Palestinian Question in Israel? In order to answer these questions, key changes in the post-1948 Middle East must be briefly explored.

The full-scale Israeli Independence War (or the 1948 Arab-Israeli War) marked a defining moment for the whole region. On the one hand, it secured the

existence of newly founded Israel. For some Orthodox Jews, it was a fulfillment of the messianic prophecy that "a remnant of them shall return" (*Isaiah 10:20-22*), while the political Zionists perceived it as a "miracle" by which they eventually returned to their national homeland.[75] On the other hand, the war resulted in a major defeat for the Arab camp. It did not only develop into a source for humiliation considering their Palestinian "brothers" whom they failed to protect. It also offered a suitable platform for revengeful nationalism intersecting with the rise of liberation movements from the 1940s onwards.[76] Israel's acute tensions with its Arab neighbours, which had already been seen as demonised tyrants, scaled up with their indifference to the Jewish sufferings during WWII. This lack of empathy was entrenched in two points. Firstly, unlike its European equivalent whose prominence began to diminish after the collapse of fascist regimes, Arab anti-Semitism went to the opposite route. Anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic (or anti-Israelite at large) works in Arab states increased in number, dominating the mainstream media and at times printed under state sponsorships (Webman, 2010). Building on the former, this anti-Israelite vision secondly took a radical attitude after many Arab states denied the Holocaust (or belittled Jewish losses),[77] whose sociopsychological infrastructure could be traced back to the heavy intergroup clashes during the *Yishuv* era.

There are two vital points worth distilling with regards to the impact of the continuing Arab hostility. First, the early Israeli cadres' traumatic memories

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[75] Based on the Chapter 2 of UN Resolution 181(II), which set the central lines with regards to the religious groups in the impending Israeli state, Ben-Gurion (1963, pp. 55-56) ensured that Orthodox Jews' religious rituals and law will not be altered in the secular state. This is termed as the religious-secular status quo in Israel (or the Status Quo Agreement).

[76] For example, Iraq under Rashid Ali el-Kailani, the Istiqlal movement in Morocco and Egypt's Nasr.

[77] See MEMRI (2000).

developed before and during the Independence War had already begun to define their social reality and individual level practices en route to the establishment of Israel. The fragmenting effect of the Holocaust added another layer to this structural anxiety, serving as an integrative trauma that bridged Israelis' historical fears and anxieties over the present. Specifically, the Holocaust trauma was transformed into a powerful ontological insecurity complex that gradually fixed the elites' feelings towards the Palestinian subjectivity which was taken as an antagonistic reference point – a present-day symbol and apprentice of "threatening non-Jewish Other" as explored above. Against this alarmist background, the mounting Arab hostility in the post-1948 period had increasingly dominated the cognitive landscape of the early Israeli elites vis-à-vis the continuous resurgence of traumatic memories and their possible repetition under the growing leverage of the Arab nationalism, instrumentalising Israel's mistreatment towards Palestinians to destabilise the Zionist project. This siege mentality became a critical phenomenon that influenced the early Israeli leadership's boundaries of actions. Seen in this light, the elites' conflict traumas and Holocaust-related catastrophic memories were instrumentally chosen and articulated by their discursive performances to consolidate a particular collective identity as investigated below. In doing so, political employment of chosen traumas initially narrated their feelings towards the dangerous Other(s) by remembering the catastrophes (and their plausible recurrence) experienced by the leadership. In this vein, Ben-Gurion argued in 1950:

> Let us not be intoxicated with victory…it would appear to be a miracle: a small nation of 700,000 stood up against six nations numbering 30 million. However, none of us knows whether the trial by bloodshed has yet ended. The enemy forces in the neighbouring countries and in the world at large have not yet despaired of their scheme to annihilate Israel…and we do not yet know whether the recent war…is the last battle or not (IMFA, 2020a).

Second, Ben-Gurion's deep-seated anxiety about the future of Israel, which reiterated Jew's centuries-old "unfitness" case in general and the fear of annihilation more specifically, was a reflection of the shared narrative and affective bonds among his early cadres. This politicomilitary cluster had not only practised the key tenets of Zionism in the pre-nation state labour communities and defence organisations but also knew each other and clashed together during the *Yishuv* period and Israeli Independence War. This homogenous mindset was also echoed on the organisation of the leading Labour Zionist party, namely Mapai (or simply Labour). It was dominated by the Ashkenazi elites who were born and trained in the post-French Revolution Europe like Herzl.[78] Ben-Gurion's extinction distress and future resuffering caveat was also resonant among the Israeli society. They had been directly experienced these traumatic memories and were already forming a strong degree of group level awareness during the *kibbutzim* experiment. Moreover, more than 650,000 Holocaust survivors with vivid genocide memories were transferred to Israel during this period, making up 30% of its total population in the formative years (Rozin, 2016). Thus, the rising Arab antagonism towards the Israeli existence intensified the sociopsychological impact of the Labour elites' chosen traumas as it deepened the quest for new ways of ontological security seeking in this anxiety-laden environment (Kinnvall, 2004). In this sense, the chosen traumas did not only narrate the elites' feelings towards the dangerous Other(s). They were also instrumentalised to provide

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[78] As briefly covered above, Mapai was a merger of strong Labour Zionist parties in the *Yishuv* period. Its cadres were also senior military personnel. Some of them disagreed with Ben-Gurion, particularly on the creation of the IDF and its centralising agenda. He later managed to control divergent voices in military that consolidated Mapai's position until the 1960s (Peri, 1983). This is similar to how Atatürk confronted his companions during the single part period of the CHP (1923-1950) (see Chapter 4.1).

individuals with a cognitive platform in shaping their autobiographical narratives and performative roles vis-à-vis the elites' imagined national agency. Seen in this light, the Israeli leadership's selective memories were translated into "specific group behaviors" (Sasley, 2013, p. 139), telling the newly formed Israeli society who they are in light of the elites' "fantasised expectations, intense feelings, and defence mechanisms against unacceptable thought" (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 755). Echoing his alarmist feelings above, Ben-Gurion underlined the necessity to consolidate a "collective mode of *being*" in 1950. This would in turn protect the Israeli self and mitigate its constant sufferings against the relentless internal and external enemies:

> We are still not a nation…[we have] a population in which one person does not understand the language of his neighbour, a population which is not aware of the culture of the nation and has no knowledge of the land, and is not attached and committed to the nation's culture and outlook…[thus, we are not] a nation capable of facing its enemies and its problems in time of need (Ben-Gurion, 2015, p. 35).

The lines below explore how the imagined collective identity was consolidated in the young Israel, and will shed light on how its military tool was shaped to stabilise the autobiographical narratives of this national agency. I assess Israel's transition from the isolated cultural-religious community into a secular nation state as the state sponsored homogenisation process under the dominant voice of the Labour party (1948-1964). In doing so, the Labour Zionist (or Ashkenazi) Revolution aimed to reshape traditional Jewishness notion rooted in the religion with five major steps.

During the formative years of Israel, population growth was seen as critical both for the survival of Jews and "*small* nation" in the making. In this vein, a myriad of exiled Jews (largely Mizrahi Jews or Oriental Jews), were evacuated to Israel from the neighbouring geographies with the help of the JNF. This, however, raised a

224

national unity issue culminating in thousand years of separation that "we [Ashkenazim] are alien to them [Mizrahim], and they are alien to us", claimed Ben-Gurion (1952; translated by Segev, 2019, p. 231). Against this backdrop, the imagined national agency was step-by-step constructed by the Labour cadres to transform this "human debris" (*ibid*) into a self-conscious Israeli nation. In the first step, they emphasised on a particular common denominator shared by all exiled Jewish communities. In doing so, Ben-Gurion articulated their unbroken historical links and shared sufferings (Knesset, 2020a), which echoed the continuity of cultural Judaism and the fundamental sameness among all Jewish ethnicities. Departing from this point, the Labour cadres adopted an overarching doctrine called the "melting pot", penetrating into all aspect of sociopolitical life in the young Israel. This agenda would enable them proceeding to the second step – an institutional background which would forge and fuse the imagined nation by interlocking Jewishness and nationality. Thus, the "melting pot" logic would integrate the non-territorial existence of various Jewish cultures and ethnicities, which seemed alien to each other, into a well-defined and homogenous collective existence, namely Israeliness (or Israeli Jewishness). In this sense, it would powerfully draw the in-/out-group boundaries of Jews' new collective mode of *being* under the authority of the Israeli state.

Building on the previous two steps, the imagined collective existence in the making was aimed to be consolidated vis-à-vis the Zionist principle of establishing a sovereign state based on shared sociopolitical values. At the third step, the Labour leadership then drew on particular secularising and nationalising narratives. In doing so, they promoted national culture and symbols based on the selective Jewish past which established a categorical link between Jews' heritage rooted in the land of

ancient Israel and their current efforts that made the national reawakening possible, such as the early *kibbutzim* experiences and the impending struggle for independence. The most influential reform which knitted all these narratives together was the revival of the forgotten "Rabbinical Hebrew" language. Interestingly, this historical Jewish language was carefully separated from its religious roots and attached to a national value. This rebirthing project of Hebrew would not only subsidise nationalised myths attached to the ancient homeland but also transform the language as a transethnic and transreligious communication tool among different Jewish sub-cultures. The national language was used to disseminate the main tenets of the Revolution via the "Zionist citizenship" program which was institutionalised with the *State Education Law* in 1953. Furthermore, the development of modern Hebrew was promoted with the establishment of the *Academy of the Hebrew Language* in the same year (Safran, 2005).[79]

From this vantage point, the Labour's nationalising reforms had a broader agenda which was to scale up the narrative of mythological bonds among the Jewish groups by means of tangible civilising/modernising reforms. Practically speaking, these reforms would level up the traditional-religious, "primitive Eastern Jews" (Ben Gurion, 1955; translated by Segev, 2019, p. 232) to the nation-conscious, educated Western Ashkenazi elite, echoing the latter's social imagination on how the state and society should be organised. On the one hand, this rational-bureaucratic state logic

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[79] Although the Ashkenazi leadership distanced itself from the religious community mindset, teaching the Bible to a new generation was seen vital. The main objective was to make the youngsters aware of the historical roots of the nation (Ichilov et al., 2005). This approach was echoed on Ben-Gurion's lines: "since I invoke Torah so often, let me state that I don't personally believe in God it postulates. I am not religious, nor were the majority of the early builders of Israel believers. Yet their passion for this land stemmed from [the Bible]" (JVL, 2020d).

would further strengthen the Labour Zionist tenets practised during the *Yishuv* era. On the other hand, it would help the new Israeli self to "rejoin the history of civilized peoples" (Piterberg, 2008, p. 95). In this sense, at the fourth step, the modernisation trajectory of the "egalitarian" state of Israel (JVL, 2020c) would delineate the transnational in-/out-group boundaries of elite's imagined agency which would be recognised and accepted as a member of the Western camp. This desire for belonging to the West would break Israel's regional isolation against its constant annihilation dreads while destabilising the impact of Arab (un)recognition and intolerance towards Israel's existence. Seen in this light, while communicating the Labour cadres' fantasised expectations vis-à-vis the unique Israeli agency and its future projection, this international reference for recognition rearticulated the ruling elites' fixed feelings towards the imminent Arab threat. It leads us to the final step of the Ashkenazi Revolution: making of an army-nation – or more like a "family-in-arms" (Handelman, 2004, p. 12). This strong unity between the public and military spaces was believed to secure the physical and ontological being of both the national agency and state against the threatening non-Jewish elements as explored below.

5.1.4. "Arab Goliath versus Israeli David": Nature of the Intractable Conflict

In light of the four steps explored above, the Ashkenazi elites' learned emotions reflecting into the social and institutional structure had crystallised around particular nationalising norms and policies in the young Israel. Overall, these reforms were founded on a specific framework of belonging, meaning that the national self-identity would be based on the fusion of homogenous society with the Labour Zionist tenets.

In the final step, this framework would save the state and secure its being by uniting the state with its people under a common reference of belonging and a singular social imaginary of the Labour elites. This powerful sense of Israeli collective existence would not only ensure the national consciousness among the problematised "human debris". It would also ensure the existence of the state and society in countering imminent threats as projected by Ben-Gurion in 1950.

This alarmist understanding is recognised as the "national security exceptionalism" which emanates from the "uniqueness" of Israeli case (Merom, 1999). I argue that this sense of uniqueness, which involves a degree of alertness, was mainly established on two intertwined cultural-Biblical narratives,[80] the first being God's "chosen tribe" (*Genesis* 12: 1-2) understanding. This logic draws a linear historical line between the ancient Jewish collectives and new Israeliness that not only demonstrates the holy rights of this distinct nation on the "promised land" but also transform these claims into modern context. Building on the former, the second narrative claiming that Jews are the people who "dwell alone" (*Numbers* 23: 9) gains importance. It consolidates the uniqueness logic and its modern interpretation, while making sense of the catastrophic developments experienced by this "small and isolated" nation, e.g., the recent Holocaust. This siege mentality aggravated the ontological insecurity complex in Israel since this *small* nation is believed to be under the continual extermination threats of *powerful* genocidal actors, reproducing a modern-day version of the David versus Goliath narrative. Seen in this light, the Israeli

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[80] As argued above, these narratives were actively disseminated to construct a homogenous national consciousness. However, this is not to say that the new Israeli self was only based on the cultural-Biblical narratives. It was also informed by Jews' centuries-long persecutions along with their interactions with other ethnic groups and ideologies as explored at the beginning of this chapter.

nation had to be always prepared against the future hostilities of Arab states in general and their Palestinian "protégé" in particular. In this setting, these two "non-Jewish elements" providing constant reminders of the traumatic annihilation memories were evaluated as sources of ontological insecurity interrupting the autobiographical narratives of the unique Israeli agency. At this juncture, the Labour cadres designed the military apparatus, the IDF, in a way to further consolidate the common reference of belonging among various Jewish collectives in the young Israel to silence these dangerous forces.

As briefly explored above, Jews' deep-seated existential insecurities and fears embodied themselves on the ways in which *kibbutzim* were transformed into the "fortified" structures against the Palestinian incursions in *Yishuv*. These anxious feelings later reached at peak level en route to the foundation of Israel vis-à-vis the violent encounters with the Others. In this sense, these repeatedly experienced traumatic encounters shaped the Israeli politicomilitary elites' psychological "security border" (Volkan, 2001; 2003; 2004) against "non-Jewish elements" that could potentially harm the community (Giddens, 1991, p. 39). After the acute phase of these violent encounters, however, the security border stayed active as can be traced in the social and institutional practices adopted in the young Israeli setting. I claim that the early Israeli cadres' "security border" in securing and stabilising their imagined national agency was built on a set of physical and ontological conditions against the "interrupting uncertainty sources". Empirically, these conditions manifested themselves in Israel's military actor, the IDF, which is seen as an "existential instrument" (Sucharov, 2005, p. 73) to safeguard the state's territorial integrity and

Zionist characteristics. Moreover, these conditions were also extended over the entire social structure with the help of the IDF's institutional organisation as explored below.

As mentioned in Chapter 5.1.2, the local paramilitaries, being the driving forces of the Jewish existence in *Yishuv*, were united under the single body of the IDF during the Independence War. With the establishment of Israel, it was restructured as a national army. According to Yigael Yadin, the second general staff of the IDF who laid the bedrocks of Israel's politicostrategic doctrine today (Creveld, 2002), there were four dynamics considering Israel's demographic disadvantages: the morale of the nation, effective mobilisation, surprise offensives and utmost usage of the nation's war potential (Yadin, 1950). Echoing the significance of the last dynamic, the compulsory *Military Service Law* was passed from Knesset in 1949. Two points are worth distilling to grasp why marrying this law with the IDF was the Cartesian principle of the Ashkenazi Revolution's final step.

Firstly, the military was evaluated as a powerful educational tool along with schools that would indoctrinate new immigrants with the Labour Zionists' sociocultural values, developing them into the constructive forces and pioneers of the imagined nation (Ben-Gurion, 2015).[81] Thus, the IDF has been formed as a normative space in which the Israeli Jews would practice the autobiographical narratives of the new Israeli self and so does fulfil the coherent narrative about doing, acting, and being vis-à-vis the modernisation agenda. Seen in this light, the IDF has secondly become a natural extension of the "melting pot" logic. In other words, it would further

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[81] Two important points must be recognised here. First, Israel provides pre-military trainings to high school students under the GADNA program since 1949, which normalises the army-nation psyche. Second, the ultrareligious Jews and Palestinian citizens of Israel are exempt from the service.

homogenise the "human debris" under the single collective mode of being with the help of affect-centric ethos and normative duty feeling built on brotherhood and voluntarism. Consequently, the IDF has developed into a national focal point where the state logic and social matrix are mutually embedded under the broader family-in-arms framework.

This framework, however, demonstrated two imperative points about the role of the IDF regarding the imagined national agency. First, the homogenisation of various Jewish collectives was pursued in an ontologically opposite way versus the non-Jewish Palestinian Other which was seen as "wild, subversive and threatening [irrational, oriental, nomadic]" (Handelman, 2004, p. 34). In this sense, the existence of the Palestinian Other would not only cancel out the major differences between various Jewish collectives and ensure the imagined bonds among them. The logic of difference attached to the "uncivilised" Palestinian Other would also stabilise the secular-national autobiographical narratives of the new Israeli self in the making. Second, the Israeli elites' physical distancing vis-à-vis Palestinians had emanated from their traumatic encounters during and after the *Yishuv* period as manifested in the ways in which *kibbutzim* were transformed into the "Haganah fortresses". Informed by these encounters, Palestinians, who cooperated with the genocidal enemies, were not recognised as a separate collective identity in Israel but as a part of the broader Arab community. It reaffirmed the alarmist logic by submitting the inequality between the enemy Arab Goliath surrounding Israeli David, while attaching Palestinians a "transnational" enemy label as the historical continuation of anti-Jewish forces. Therefore, the enemy "Arabs" in Israel who were 1) physically endangering the nationals, and 2) ontologically jeopardising the imagined national agency's subject

identifications were to be silenced in light of the elites' psychological "security border". In doing so, the *State of Emergency* rule was declared in Israel. Two specific laws were passed under this military rule, the first being the *Emergency Regulations (Security) Zones Law (5709-1949)* whose Regulation No 1. articulated that:

> A strip of land, of a width as stated hereunder, extending within the territory of Israel all along the boundary of that territory is a protected area. For the purposes of these regulations: a) north of the 31st parallel – ten kilometres; b) south of the 31st parallel – twenty-five kilometres (Knesset, 1949a, p. 57).

Following this, the *Emergency Land Requisition (Regulation) Law* (5710-1949) was authorised, whose Article 3(b) granted that:

> A competent authority shall [declare] a land requisition order or housing order... for the defence of the state, public security, the maintenance of essential supplies or essential public services, the absorption of immigrants or the rehabilitation of ex-soldiers or war invalids (Knesset, 1949b, p. 3).

Based on the Articles cited above, there are various points that need to be distilled in understanding the interplay between the military culture and aspired social matrix of Israel. Prior to doing so, the plain meanings of these legal frameworks should be spelled out. The first law, *Emergency Regulations Zones Law,* imposes a military governance on the specific areas populated by the Palestinian Other, such as the "Little Triangle", Galilee and Negev, while the second law, *Emergency Land Requisition (Regulation) Law*, grants the military authorities permission to transform any "protected territories" into "public spaces" under the *State of Emergency*.[82] These frameworks demonstrate a particular framing practice of the Israeli elite which

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[82] This was also in line with the *Absentee's Property Law*, another framework easing the requisition of the Palestinian lands (Knesset, 1949b).

attaches an enemy label to the Palestinian Other in two dimensions. Firstly, it directly portrays them as the physically threatening elements which must be kept under the military control in these "protected areas" and rationalise the exclusion of the Palestinian minority from the Israeli social domain. Secondly, these laws legalise *future* requisition(s) of the Palestinian land by means of declaring these areas as the security zone for public benefit. Then, these confiscated areas would be given to, for example, new Israeli migrants who would secure the survival of the "small nation" and society. Seen in this light, the dispossession of the land would not only provide the new Israeliness a homogenous social space which is secured from the "uncivilised" Palestinian Other. It would also firmly isolate the already delimited living matrix of the "threatening" Palestinian Other, who is depicted as a potential "public security" danger, in a way to mitigate recurring annihilation fears.

To reiterate, the specific security language employed in "de-Otherisation" of the land is justified to provide a living space for "the family-in-arms" by "the family-in-arms" in order to preserve the assigned physical and ideational boundaries of the Israeli self. Therefore, the Ashkenazi cadres' affect-based reading of security included an emotional layer to the security-seeking practice in a wider and institutional setting (Kinnvall, 2004), intensifying the quest for a homogenous and stable agency. In turn, Palestinianness was gradually ascribed to a function of "Otherness" in multiple dimensions in making the governance codes. Put differently, it based the national agency on a binary reading as it was narrated through relations of difference with the allegedly uncivilised and threatening Palestinian Other. The paragon of this quest for homogenous and stable agency was the extensive "biopolitical containment" policy towards the Palestinian Other. In this regard, "de-Otherisation" of the land has been

instrumentalised as a major apparatus of the IDF and fixed its coercive security agenda vis-à-vis the Palestinian Other on resolving the future ethnic conflicts (see Chapter 5.2). For example, the *State of Emergency* rule in the "protected areas" was constantly extended until 1966[83] while its compass was enlarged (for example, *the Law of Prescription* of 1958) – that would in turn physically and ontologically distance the Other from the Ashkenazi elites' aspired public domain.

Against this backdrop, the following excerpt from the IDF manual issued under Ben-Gurion's leadership powerfully captures the empirical analysis conducted in this chapter. Firstly, it demonstrates the sociopsychological infrastructure of their long sufferings by referring to the "Jewish unfitness" case and the Holocaust trauma. Then, it secondly illustrates how the state elites' recent violent memories were consciously articulated through discursive performances. Departing from these two points, it finally shows how the state elites' discursive performances facilitated a background for action through a particular imagined identity and its in-/out-group boundaries. In this sense, these performances do not only remind Israelis of the recent catastrophic events they had to endure. They also narrate the Labour elites' feelings towards certain failing solutions for the Jewish survival and present the Ashkenazi Revolution as the ultimate stage to overcome the survival-related anxieties provoked by the enemy Other:

> Zionist solution establishing the state of Israel was intended to provide an answer to the problem of the existence of the Jewish people, in view of the fact that all other solutions [referring to traditional-religious mode of being] had failed. The Holocaust [and other conflict-related sufferings] proved, in all its horror, that in the 20th century, the survival of the Jews is

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[83] The military government regulations on the Palestinian minority were lifted in 1966. However, the bureaucratic logic vis-à-vis the "ontological othering" has continued, for example, *the Agricultural Settlement Law* (1967). See, also, Chapter 5.3.

not assured as long as they are not masters of their fate and as long as they do not have the power to defend their [national] survival (cited in Rabkin 2006, p. 95).

In this sense, the violent memories of the Israeli leadership developed after the catastrophic encounters with the external and internal Other(s) from the *Yishuv* period onwards dominated their cognitive landscape and so does informing their individual level patterns of actions. These traumatic reminiscences echoed on the state sponsored Israeli national agency project and its imagined boundaries through discursively articulated chosen traumas with the Holocaust being the most powerful one. Based on the ontological position adapted by the Ashkenazi cadres, the nation in the making and the new Israeliness hosted in it were formulated by their sociopsychological properties which had become "known" through the recent violent encounters with the Other(s). By extension, the traumatic war memories of the Israeli elites became their *informative developments* which were discursively performed in their public talks, legalised in legal frameworks and routinised via social and institutional practices of the young Israel. Thus, the imagined Israeliness and its particular subject identifications were formed through a set of affect-centric relations with the selective "non-Jewish" Other(s).

In this context, the "enemy" Palestinians are not only seen as physically threatening elements cooperating with the genocidal Arabs but also as sources of ontological insecurity "interrupting" Israeliness' ideational and behavioural codes. Thus, the IDF –representation of the family-in-arms rationale which both homogenises the Labour Zionist collective mode of being and consolidates its autobiographical narratives– is authorised to mitigate the Other vis-à-vis the early state elites' psychological "security border". Therefore, the rise of Arab anti-Semitism and its

Palestinian "protégé" inside Israel first settled the Labour elites' disconnectedness towards the "non-Jewish" Other who had already been seen as a potential threat in *Yishuv*. Then, they secondly fixed the IDF's strict "biopolitical containment" agenda in "de-Otherising" the land to provide safe and isolated living spaces for Israeliness. Thus, the "uncivilised" and "threatening" Palestinian Other was increasingly evaluated as a hostile element against the imagined physical and ideational boundaries of the Israeli self.

In this setting, the early Israeli elites' efforts to formulate the new Israeliness and strong security agenda prepared the sociopsychological roots of Israel's intractable conflict to be shaped. These two mutually reinforcing elements not only established the symbolic and ideational control over the unintegretable "Arab citizens" of Israel via, for example, the separation of the public spaces, e.g., schools. They also ensured the material-territorial dominance over the Palestinian minority, severely limiting their freedom of movement and increasing their dependency on the Israeli core. This controlling agenda has attracted a wide public consensus in Israel, even the Orthodox Jews criticising the Labour's position seemed to welcome their fixation of the Palestinian Other (Peleg and Waxman, 2007). These practices later informed the construction of modern Palestinian national consciousness from the 1950s forwards (see Chapter 5.2.1). From this vantage point, the Palestinian nationalists' affect-centric rebellion narratives which portray Israelis as "illegal/imperialist occupiers of Palestine" make references to these early times of oppression, starting from the challenging Jewish-Palestinian relations in the *Yishuv* period (Khalidi, 1997). These emotionally moving accounts have later been utilised as the PLO's master narratives and source of inspiration for the Palestinian insurgency from the 1970s onwards (see

Chapter 5.2.2). This in turn aggravated the IDF's "biopolitical containment" agenda vis-à-vis the transnational nature of the Palestinian insurgency as can be traced in its various cross-border operations which reiterated the "united Arab forces" versus the "small nation" narrative.

The noteworthy aspect is that the binary reading of the Palestinian Other has been repeated in the sociopolitical context of Israel in subsequent periods, especially after the start of chronic Arab-Israeli wars with the 1967 Six Day War (see Chapter 5.2.3). Along with these catastrophic wars, the rise of Palestinian insurgency further restricted the boundaries of human actions as these violent developments constantly reaffirmed the historical extermination memories, dominating Israelis' feelings and behavioural patterns. Consequently, even agency is not a fixed notion but reflexively changed vis-à-vis major developments transpiring around it (Kinnvall, 2011); the particular in-/out-group boundaries of the imagined Israeliness and Palestinianness have been renarrated through the Israeli leaderships' binary lenses echoing the institutionalised fears. This practice which constantly frames the Palestinian Other as a source of ontological insecurity repositions the two subjectivities into antagonistic pillars under the recurrent violent setting. In turn, it does not only aggravate Israel's non-accommodationist position towards Palestinians but also suspend Israel's intractable conflict.

5.2. Decline in the Labour Zionist Hegemony?: Transition and Violent Mobilisation

> In addition to the anxiety over loss of control…over all populations, the [Labour] establishment was also frightened by the prospect of being removed from its position of political, ideological, and cultural dominance. The new immigrants from Europe were suspected of sympathizing with communism, and the Jews from Arab lands of sympathizing with the right-wing Revisionists, the historical rivals of the dominant 'Labour Society' establishment and political culture (Kimmerling, 2001, p. 96).

Chapter 5.1 first explored the Israeli national context in which the early state elites' traumatic memories are shaped and in turn expressed through discursive performances. It second demonstrated the interaction between affect-centric processes of security and agency making. In light of these two points which are argued to establish the sociopsychological "roots" of Israel's intractable conflict to be shaped, Chapter 5.2 analyses its violent eruption. In exploring this transitioning stage, this chapter is split into three sections. Firstly, it examines the issues with the "melting pot" doctrine vis-à-vis various Jewish sub-cultures and the early paradigms shifts in Israel, i.e., the "Judaisation" case (1950-1964). Secondly, it analyses two major Arab-Israeli wars, Six Day War (1967) and Yom Kippur War (1973). These wars had colossal impacts at national and regional levels that not only catalysed the bipartisan secular-religious shift in Israeli politics but also the revival of Palestinian national consciousness (1964-1973). Raising on these, the last section focuses on twofold developments: the first being the resurgence of the Holocaust memories which were instrumentally used by the right-wing Likud party to consolidate the messianic (and hawkish) turn in Israel, while the second marked transferal of collective grievances and goals into the systematic violent mobilisation which had in fact gradually taking

shape in the post-1967 setting (1973-1989). These sections advance the claims of Chapter 5.1 by showing that the early Israeli elites' traumatic conflict memories inform the state actions and particular collective identity in ways that sustain the "ontological insecurity" sources as Other.

There are two reasons behind this historical periodisation method. First, this chapter does not only provide a detailed analysis of the systematic violent eruption of Israel's intractable conflict. It also explores the evolution of popular counter-narratives and their transformative power in diverse sociopsychological camps in Israel. The latter is significant to grasp the undergoing ideological changes in the Zionist left (see Chapter 5.3). By extension, the rise of Revisionist and conservative-religious parties from the 1970s onwards –Herut and Likud– and their hawkish stance towards Palestinians dialectically shaped the trajectory of the Labour Zionist movement. Following the 1977 elections, Israel's left was split into two camps and began to question the state's past and present practices. They not only facilitated a democratisation debate in Israel but also opened up a normative space which articulated the demands of non-Jewish identities. Second, this periodisation rationale gains gravity because the extensive critiques coming from different polar of society motivated the Labour to revise its agenda with multiculturalism and intercommunal tolerance. It was promoted under the "peaceful coexistence" framework from the mid-1980s onwards. Along with the promising atmosphere facilitated by the PLO's denouncing of terrorism in the first *intifada* (1989) and Labour's coming to power (1992), the coexistence programme prepared the ripe sociopsychological conditions for the Oslo I and II Accords (1993 and 1995).

5.2.1. Challenges towards the "Labour Society": Mizrahi Question, Intergroup Contestations, and Palestinian "Protégé" (1950s-1964)

Under the dominant voice of Mapai (1948-1964),[84] the Ashkenazi Revolution aimed to transform the isolated cultural-religious Jewish community into a secular nation state. In doing so, the Labour cadres strived to reshape the traditional Jewishness notion rooted in the religion via the state sponsored homogenisation process. It would not only radically transform the religious values and mentality of the traditional-conservative strata within the new sociopolitical space of Israel. It would also offer a unique collective existence in light of the fantasised expectations of the early Israeli leadership. Moreover, this specific framework of belonging and its attached governance codes would save the state and secure its being by uniting the state with its people under a common reference of belonging and a singular social imaginary of the Labour elites. As explored above, this powerful sense of Israeli collective existence problematised the "human debris" in Israel –consisting predominantly of Mizrahim– to secure the "small nation" in the making against the future hostilities of Arabs and their Palestinian "protégé".

This national homogenisation via modernisation mindset continued in the 1950s and 1960s at the height of regime consolidation efforts in the young Israel. That being said, the Ashkenazi Revolution and its trajectory had received various domestic contestations during this period, questioning the autobiographical narratives of the imagined Israeli subjectivity. This is merit to be distilled as these intergroup

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[84] Mapai and its left-wing descendants played central roles in coalition governments even after 1960. It lasted until 1977 when the right-wing Likud attracted the majority of votes for the first time in Israel.

contestations led to two-fold developments with short-term and long-term implications. In the short run, these early counter-hegemonic voices forced the early Israeli elites to incorporate some traditional elements into the new Israeli self-identity during the 1960s, albeit in a limited and symbolic way. The legislation of the Israeli Holocaust Remembrance Day and subsequent rapprochement with the diaspora Jews also played vital roles vis-à-vis this turn as explored below. In the long run, they had informed the ways in which the religious-settler right-wing movement was formed in Israel.

As discussed in Chapter 5.1.1, the political Zionists' nationhood proposal was criticised by the Orthodox Jewish leaders since the religious identity makers and traditional elements of the Jewish self were assigned a peripheral position in imagining this future nation. These religio-conservative critiques, which were initially sidelined during and after the catastrophic WWI period, were rejuvenated in the context of young Israel. Several factors contributed to this revival, however, exploring two points of the overarching "melting pot" doctrine can serve as a fulcrum for the following discussion. The "melting pot" logic primarily aimed to cancel out cultural, ethnic, and economic barriers among various Jewish sub-cultures by institutional and educational reforms, including compulsory military training. Nonetheless, it faced ideational and practical difficulties.

Firstly, the doctrine operated in paradoxical ways in terms of societal integration. The vast majority of new immigrants were systematically settled in abandoned and/or occupied Palestinian villages and agricultural settlements situating at border towns (Swirski, 1989). Secondly, these small agricultural frontier towns had later been transformed into larger public housing areas, known as the "development

towns", to meet the accommodation needs of the newcomers (Peled, 1990). This peasantisation rationale towards the Oriental Jews remained until the late 1960s which provided cheap labour for the Israeli economy regulated by *Histadrut*. Reflecting this mindset, the prevalent approach among the state elites and media cycles towards Mizrahim was centred on three points: their 1) lack of sociocultural capital, 2) agricultural orientations, and 3) technological-instrumental backwardness (Fischer, 2016, p. 73).

This spatial separation imposed harsh conditions on the Mizrahi immigrants, preventing them to enjoy agent-level material and social development. Furthermore, this arrangement did not only distinguish the normative positions between the group who "governs the state" and the group who "engages with *pioneering* activities" such as agricultural production. It also reaffirmed the existing hierarchical differences between the traditional-conservative and Western Jewish camps at the sociocultural and historical levels. In other words, it highlighted the major ideological and cultural differences between the Israeli core and periphery –educated Ashkenazi leadership and "primitive" Mizrahim– while indicating the limits of national homogenisation. Thus, the Oriental Jews were assigned a marginal position in contributing to the state building experience of the newly born Israel and its collective identity building process.

These points demonstrated that the sociopolitical imaginations of the Labour elites and their nationalised master narratives had certain cognitive and emotional barriers in a transformative sense. On the contrary, these notions at times provoked an unstable environment for the reserved communities, motivating them to further withdraw into their traditional-conservative cycles. In this vein, the "spiritual

alienation" of Mizrahim was equally critical to the structural inequalities they were exposed to. According to Shenhav (2006), the Oriental Jews voluntarily migrated to the "holy land" from the neighbouring Arab states to seek religious redemptions alongside the socioeconomic motives. Nonetheless, the Labour Zionist program to create a secular nation state and a particular collective identity embedded into it marginalised the Mizrahim way of religiocultural practices. The most powerful example of this case was Mizrahims' rejection of secular education in the border town schools where "prayer was not permitted, nor was the wearing of skullcaps" (Kimmerling, 2001, p. 104) – that later provoked riots in Wadi Salib in 1959 (Haaretz, 2020). Therefore, one of the underlying reasons behind Mizrahims' discontent was related to their spiritual estrangement in the young Israel. It provoked the condition of deep ontological insecurity since their historically shaped traditional way of life and autobiographical narratives were largely based on collective memory and religiocultural ethos. These notions provided Mizrahim a stable narrative of doing, acting, and being, while guiding them to deal with the eschatology-related existential questions.

Against the rising traditional-conservative contestations, the Labour elites did fear from the possibility that the massive migration flows from the MENA region would disproportionately strengthen the position of religious parties, such as Herut being the major precursor of Likud (Picard, 2017). In this light, two intertwined critical junctures must be explored which practically forced the early Israeli elites to limitedly incorporate some traditional notions into their imagined Israeliness: the first being the official memorialisation of the Holocaust, which tightened the emotional gap between the religious and secular camps, while the second marked the subsequent transnational

rapprochement between the diaspora Jews and Israeli Jews after the trial of Adolf Eichmann, a former Nazi general.

5.2.1.1. Memorialising the Foundational Trauma and the Early "Judaisation" Case

According to Handelman (2004, p. 159), the Ashkenazi founders of Israel imagined the new Jewish homeland as the "antithesis" of traditional-conservative Jewish life in the European diaspora and beyond. During the formative years of the state, this ontologically challenging approach towards "Jewishness" also echoed itself on two complicated perceptions attributed to the Holocaust. Although the mental production stage of these varying views was nuanced, from the religious sense, millions of Jews were "martyred" during the Holocaust. Some of them even interpreted the Holocaust as the divine judgement of God since it reiterated their cultural-Biblical loneliness (Grosbard, 2003, p. 12). From the secular angle, it was yet another anti-Semitic plan orchestrated against Jews, albeit immense in scope.

In the following period, the Holocaust had increasingly begun to be understood as "national death" (Handelman, 2004, p. 160), partly related to the discursive articulation of it as a chosen trauma in making of the in-/out-group boundaries of Israeliness. The critical issue here was to devise a fixed, common narrative of the Holocaust which would be emotionally acceptable by all segments of the Israeli society. With this rationale in mind, the "Israeli Holocaust Remembrance Day" was legislated in 1959 which also made its observance mandatory. The specific meaning(s) of the Memorial Day was carefully constructed starting from its name to its date, from the surrounding setting of the commemoration to the official speeches being delivered

during the day – that blended the Jewish "heroism" with "martyrdom", reproducing the family-in-arms logic vis-à-vis the cultural continuation of Judaism.[85]

In addition to the domestic significance of the Memorial Day in terms of creating a shared Holocaust narrative, it was attached to an international aspect. The particular reference to "Israel" in the name of the Memorial Day indicated that the country was the "only safest place for the Jews" (Oren, 2019, p. 8). Thus, the universalist agenda behind the Memorial Day was influential in a way to strengthen the ties between the diaspora Jews –mostly living in the Americas– and Israeli Jews, providing an affect-centric platform which would symbolically break down the ineffectiveness label ascribed to Jews living abroad.[86] Against this setting, the trial of Eichmann strengthened this transnational rapprochement between the diaspora Jews and Israelis, while engendering identity-related questions.

Eichmann organised the deportation of the European Jews to the Nazi concentration camps. He was captured in Argentina in 1961 and publicly trialled – lasted almost a year– in Israel for his crimes against humanity. During his trial, the testimonies of genocide survivors were collected by the Israeli court, attracting extensive international coverage. In this sense, Eichmann's trial process produced an intermediator impact towards the diverging Holocaust memories, while stressing the fact that this genocidal action was directed towards the world Jewry no matter they were secular, or religious, or non-believer. It then shifted the Israeli Jews' attitude

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[85] The Independence Day of Israel is being held in the same week with the Memorial Day. It demonstrates the careful planning behind the reaching of a common ideological and emotional platform vis-à-vis the Jewish sufferings and heroism during the creation of Israel.

[86] This was important because Ben-Gurion (1949; translated by Segev, 2019) criticised the diaspora Jews due to their disinterest towards creating of a national homeland, especially at the height of the Holocaust.

towards the diaspora Jews from "one of alienation, if not contempt, to increased identification" (Waxman, 2006, p. 36). This "increased identification" phenomenon among the transnational Jewish collectives, however, challenged the fixed position of the Labour elites towards the traditional-conservative Jewish life due to the nature of their emotional rapprochement. Pertinently, it brought back the discussions on what set of historical, ideological and performative properties constitute the notion of Jewishness – that gradually triggered what was later coined as the "Judaisation"[87] of the Israeli collective identity.

This early "Judaisation" case best manifested itself in the Labour's revision in primary school syllabus, i.e., the inauguration of the "Jewish Consciousness" programme. Evaluated as "Jewish inoculation" by the educator Zalmane Aranne, this program would provide key knowledge on the past Jewish customs and traditions (Peled and Peled, 2018, p. 104), and increase the popular votes of the new Mizrahi generation towards the Zionist left. Then, the Ashkenazi cadres' "silent expansion" of the public role of traditional elements did not only show that the society's perceptions of Israeliness can be different from their definition. It also demonstrated the emotional-ideological limits towards the consolidation of the imagined Israeliness and its secularist/modernists autobiographical narratives. Nonetheless, this marked a particular and careful reading of traditional codes through the early Israeli leadership lens, not a *complete* return of Judaism. In other words, this reading was built on all-encompassing symbols and practices that would reach the world Jewry and generate

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[87] Israel was founded as a Jewish state, however, the "Judaisation" phenomenon situated the traditional dimension of the Israeli collective identity into more noticeable place, challenging its secular outlook.

sympathy towards Israel (Ohana et. al., 2017), subverting the delegitimisation efforts of its Arab neighbours.

Informed by the analysis above, two vital conclusions can be drawn on the traditional-conservative communities in Israel. On the one hand, the initial state-led interventions towards Mizrahim had gradually dominated their collective repertoire vis-à-vis their selected memories. Although the conservative groups had later been granted to open religious schools and institutions, the continuing social disconnection between the Israeli core and periphery had increasingly motivated Mizrahim to align with the Orthodox enclaves, as demonstrated in various opinion polls (see Arian, 1990). On the other hand, the Labour's "limited" incorporation of traditional elements into the national agency provided the manoeuvre area for the hawkish right-wing parties and their counter-hegemonic narratives. These contesting narratives have been communicated across generations and become the main challengers of the Labour agenda from the 1970s onwards (see Chapter 5.2.3).

By the mid-1960s, against all these normative and ideological clashes, competing parties and groups appeared to reach a status quo in Israel over various pressing questions, for example, the state's pro-Western orientation and security concerns such as its *de facto* border ("Green Line") formed after the 1949 Armistice Agreement (Dowty, 2001). This society-wide consensus, however, excluded the Palestinian minority inside Israel in any constructive manner, rehighlighting the limits of narrow political mindset "in dealing with those outside the community" (*ibid*, p. 72). At this stage, Dowty's claim was critical because the continuing discriminations against Palestinians were going to contribute to their "violent turn" after the Six Day

247

War in 1967. Thus, the challenging position of the Palestinian minority must be explored before shedding light on the war and its gripping implications on Israel.

The two decades following the creation of Israel –between the al-Nakba and the Six Day War– marked a period of silence for the Palestinian minority. Although Palestinians were given most of the civil rights granted to all Israeli citizens, at least *de jure* (Kimmerling, 1989), their mobilisation was controlled by the IDF to ensure the aspired social matrix of Israel. This strict arrangement surveilling the Palestinian "infiltrators" did not seem to mitigate the deep-seated security dreads of the Israeli leadership. On the contrary, they were intensified as early as the late 1950s following the 1956 Suez Crisis with Egypt's Nasser who sought to nationalise the Suez Canal and restrict the navigation of the Israeli ships through the Straits of Tiran. The short-held clashes with Egypt resurrected the fears stemming from the "Israeli David" versus "Arab Goliath" fixation as manifested in two major cases.

The first case marked an aggressive self-defence reflex as exemplified by the *Kafr Qasim* massacre where 48 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli border forces since they were suspected of cooperating with foreign Arab powers. In fact, they were unaware of the curfew declared on that day and were on the way to their village (Peleg and Waxman, 2011, p. 52). The second case embodied structural adjustments vis-à-vis self-defence, echoing at the protocol agreed by the state's *Arab Affairs Committee* in 1958. Following the war, the committee reached a consensus on three issues: 1) the transfer of the remnant Palestinian minority was not feasible, 2) their integration into the Israeli society and polity as equal citizens were not possible, and under these circumstances, 3) the state's security concerns towards them must be the priority (cited in Sa'di, 2016, p. 37). This continuing impact of the institutionalised fears was

reflected on the subsequent legal rulings, the *Penal Revision* (State Security Law) (5717-1957) and *Law of Prescription* (5718-1958). These frameworks not only enhanced the IDF's existing "biopolitical containment" agenda on those living in the "protected areas". They also prohibited the Palestinian minority to make contact with the "foreign agents", being the broader Arab community. It resecured the Israeli land, or at least provided the *feeling* of extra security, against possible dangers of the "threatening Other", such as espionage and terrorism activities.[88]

This arrangement left limited room for the Palestinian minority to show any progress both in political and social senses. They lacked political leadership during this period, not to mention that the majority of Palestinians became refugees in the neighbouring territories following the 1948 War. This political vacuum was filled by the religious and tribal notables, taking advantage of the "national fragmentation" of Palestinians in general and the competitions between their divided clans (*hamula* in Arabic) in particular. Interestingly, these intergroup competitions were closely watched by the Israeli governments of the time, providing aids to those who cooperated with the state forces (Segev, 1986). This strategy would not only strengthen the dependency (and loyalty) of the Palestinian minority to the Israeli state. It would also preserve the existing disintegration among the *hamulas*, while avoiding the growing feelings of group solidarity and pertinent rise of Palestinian nationalism.[89]

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[88] The Israeli secret service *Shin Bet* constantly monitored the Palestinian minority during this period. See, the documentary called *The Gatekeepers* (Moreh, 2012).

[89] Even under these pressing circumstances, the Palestinian minority managed to organise small nationalist networks, such as *Al-Ard* criticising the military governance. It was immediately outlawed by the Israeli High Court in 1964 for identifying itself with the enemy Arabs (Kimmerling and Migal, 2003). In addition to *Al-Ard*, two parties, the Labour-affiliated *Shituf VeAhva* and communist *Maki*, provided political venues to verbalise the Palestinian demands in this era, albeit remaining ineffective in Knesset.

To recap, during this period of silence, the Palestinian minority inside Israel lacked leadership and struggled to organise strong collective movements due to the increasing security measures of the state. Already left desperate, traumatised and nationally fragmented after the al-Nakba, the violent actions orchestrated towards them continued in the wake of the Suez Crisis. On the one hand, this coercive agenda intuitively reaffirmed the ontological distancing between and binary reading of Israeliness and Palestinianness similar to what was discussed in Chapter 5.1 On the other hand, the condition of constant fear and anxiety among the Palestinian minority (and the wider community in the West Bank, Gaza and close Arab states as explored below) later informed modern Palestinian nationalism and its collective repertoire vis-à-vis the historically repetitive oppression and discrimination against them. These long-held grievances lent themselves to the violent resistance following the Six Day War in 1967.

5.2.2. Between Two Wars: Sociospatial Expansion, Resurgence of Palestinianness, and Political Violence (1964-1973)

In the context of young Israel, the Labour cadres' secular-national vision in achieving the imagined Israeliness objective did not widely appeal to the Mizrahi newcomers as explored above. The ineffective social engagement strategies motivated Mizrahim to align with the religious enclaves questioning the Labour agenda. The increasing leverage of these counter-hegemonic voices pushed the Ashkenazi elites to "limitedly" incorporate some traditional elements and all-encompassing symbols into the Israeli collective identity in the wake of diaspora rapprochement. Although these developments contested the Labour's status quo until the late 1960s, the "hegemonic

secular nationalist Zionist culture" was able to flexibly encompass various challenger elements into its interpretation of Israeliness as long as they did not completely question the supremacy of the "[Ashkenazi] ruling class" (Kimmerling, 2001, p. 128).

This hegemonic structure which could flexibly assign the ontological properties of the Israeli state and society became hard to sustain in the following period (1964-1973) which was marked by tectonic shifts unfolded at national and regional levels. The most pressing issues being discussed in the contemporary Israeli politics were crystallised in this decade, starting from the Palestinian Question to the bipartisan secular-religious politics as reflected in the division between the dovish Alignment/Labour and hawkish Herut/Likud.[90] In brief, this period witnessed the creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), two major Arab-Israeli wars with different psychological outcomes (1967 and 1973), rise of new socioeconomic groups occupying the state bureaucracy, increasing autonomy of the IDF, and lastly, large changes in Israel's *de facto* borders which would ultimately provoke the mounting wave of terrorism from the 1970s onwards. In making sense of these colossal transformations, the causes and effects of the Six Day War in 1967 must be analysed.

As discussed in the previous section, one of the major driving forces behind the emergence of identity-related questions in Israel was the memorialisation of the Holocaust trauma and subsequent trial of Eichmann. In the national dimension, these developments did not only influence the early "Judaisation" process of the Israeli self-image. They also provided an emotional background for the revival of annihilation

[90] This competition lasted until the "liberal" Kadima party received the majority of votes in 2006.

memories which at times violently asserted themselves, i.e., the *Kafr Qasim* massacre. Herein, the current regional developments had also played a major role in resurrecting these traumatic reminisces. In this vein, Ben-Gurion (1963, p. 66) articulated three major issues: 1) the constant territorial clashes with Syria and Jordan to control the water sources in Lake Galilee and River Jordan, 2) the Suez Crisis with Egypt's Nasser, and 3) his support to the Palestinian militias (*fedayeen* in Arabic) based in Gaza, who "were ordered to cross Israel's borders to commit acts of terrorism and sabotage".

The last point shortly marked a critical watershed in the region. The increasing relationship between Egypt and the Palestinian militias provided an ideological background for the creation of the *Arab League*-backed PLO in 1964. Established in Jerusalem, the PLO was going to be the most influential Palestinian body in a decade, struggling for the Palestinian "national unity, national mobilisation; and liberation" through pursuing an armed struggle against Israel (IMFA, 2020b).[91] In that period, the PLO and its military section, Fatah, were in embryonic stages. Their cadres were nationally fragmented in the neighbouring Arab states like the Palestinian community itself. Nonetheless, the PLO elites managed to develop strong political objectives and a clear execution agenda, which, however imaginary at that period, exceptionally alarmed the IDF to take "disciplinary actions" against the suspected PLO-backing villages inside Israel and beyond. The most destructive among them was Operation

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[91] The original PLO charter underwent several changes. These will be analysed in respective chapters.

Shredder in which 4,000 soldiers raided as-Samu village near Hebron and demolished hundreds of houses (Creveld, 2002).[92]

With the early national awakening signs of the Palestinian *protégé* under the PLO influence, Israel's desire for "security belonging" reached its peak point (Goren, 2009, p. 101). In this sense, the Israeli leadership strived to arrange security pacts with the West and non-Arab neighbours, exemplified as the *Periphery Doctrine*, while the IDF chief-of-staff Dayan warned for another war which could explode soon, claiming that "a sea of hatred and desire for revenge is swelling…and filling the lives of hundreds of thousands of Arabs who live around us" (JVL, 2020e). Beyond the government and military cycles, the social reflection of this dominant siege psyche could be best located behind the Israeli song "The Whole World Is Against Us" which became popular during this period. Against the 1960s' perplexing psychological setting, on the day before the Six Day War, Israel's first national unity government was formed.

This was a critical development with two implications that heralded the early hegemonic shifts in Israeli politics and security bureaucracy. First, although the Labour won the majority seats in the 1966 elections, PM Levi Eshkol could not resist the rising public pressure coming from the Orthodox and Mizrahi communities. Accordingly, he announced a new cabinet which encompassed the major conservative and hawkish parties such as Gahal and Herut with Dayan becoming the defence minister. Second, the appointment of Dayan was noteworthy. It did not only mark the "Knesset projection" of the current regional developments facilitating the hawkish

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[92] More than 200 Palestinian villages (half of the total) were ravaged between the Suez Crisis and the Six Day War (Sitta, 2002).

turn in Israeli politics. It also implied ongoing structural changes in the IDF and its increasing autonomy in the civil-military relations after Ben-Gurion's retirement in 1963. As articulated by Yitzchak Rabin,[93] the IDF took sole control of the state's security strategies in this period, suggesting to influence the cabinet's military decisions (cited in interview with Perlmutter, 1978). Accordingly, the IDF's High Command had long been working on rapid war plans under the guidance of Dayan who could not foresee any long-term political settlement with Arabs on various critical issues, including the *fedayeen* case (Stephens, 1973). Dayan (1977) later noted that this war with Arabs would bring total defeat to enemy armies both materially and psychologically, while breaking Israel's geographical isolation. Then, the new cabinet implemented Dayan's strategy and launched a pre-emptive strike against Egypt, resulting in a massive Israeli victory.

On June 5, 1967, the Israeli jets almost completely destroyed the Egyptian airbases in hours, while the IDF entered the Egypt-controlled Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip. This rapid invasion carried symbolic importance because Egypt was not only the self-proclaimed leader of Arab world but also the flagship country promoting the pan-Arabism ideology under Nasser's rule. In this sense, the Jordanian and Syrian forces evoked "the right of collective self-defence" granted by Article 51 of the UN Charter and retaliated Israel by shelling Jerusalem.[94] Although Israel did not initially aim to clash with Jordan and Syria (Quigley, 2005), the Israeli jets struck the Jordanian and Syrian airbases due to the shelling. The critical point is that the IDF decided to go

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[93] Rabin occupied various official positions: the IDF chief-of-staff (1964-1968), the first PM term from the Labour (1974-1977), the minister of defence (1990-1992), and the second PM term from the Labour (1992-1995). Together with Shimon Peres, he facilitated the Oslo peace process (see Chapter 5.3).

[94] See O'Brien (1967) for all evoked international law articles during the Six Day War.

further and occupied Syria's Golan Heights and the West Bank which was under the Jordanian rule since 1948. These final manoeuvres in the Six Day War redrew Israel's *de facto* administrative borders since the Israeli elites refused to accept various UN Security Council Resolutions, such as Resolution 242 (UN, 1967), asking Israel to withdraw from the Golan Heights and Occupied Territories (the OT). In response to these calls, the Six Day War was presented as a direct result of Arab aggression and the continuation of the 1948 War by the IDF (Haaretz, 1972). Taking the military's point to the next level, FM Abba Eban associated returning to the "Green Line" with "insecurity and danger" and even compared the withdraw proposal to "something of a memory of Auschwitz" (Der Spiegel, 1969).

There are several far-reaching impacts of the 1967 War on Israeli politics in general and the Palestinian community in Israel and beyond more specifically. To begin with, Israel occupied the entire colonial Palestine region along with the Golan Heights in six days. This was a powerful demonstration of its military might and "family-in-arms" logic against "Arab Goliath" whose *perceived* annihilation threats dominated Israeli politics and society since 1948. The outcome of the war not only strengthened the national pride among Israelis and provided them a sense of enhanced physical and ontological security against Arab "Other(s)". It also scaled up the political and social legitimacy of the non-hegemonic strata in the decision-making cycles as the pre-emptive strike decision was taken by the revised cabinet encompassing members from the outsider conservative and religious parties. The clear manifestation of this case could be traced behind the mounting visibility of Mafdal (National Religious Party) which played active roles in various coalition governments until 1992. Although the party was founded in 1956 by the new religious Zionist

generation, it actively expressed its messianic agenda following the Six Day War, seeking for the "de-compartmentalisation of religious life" in all aspects of Israeli politics, culture and military (Fischer, 2013, p. 351).

Building on the discussion above, the occupation of the "holy lands", i.e., the Old City (in East Jerusalem) and Judea and Samaria (West Bank), fulfilled the cultural-Biblical narrative – returning to "historical Zion" (*Eretz Israel*). In this sense, the post-1967 territorial occupations promoted messianic feelings among Jews in Israel and abroad, while producing an impact parallel to Eichmann's trial case.[95] Against the changing Zionist rubric, the diaspora Jews, especially the US residents, did not recognise it as an "Israeli" battle but a collective "Jewish" resistance against the genocidal *Arab League* armies (Navon, 2015, p. 355). This emotional reading going hand in hand with the historical anti-Semitic anxieties had in turn skyrocketed their cultural, political, and material support to Israel. For example, the "American Aliyah" to Israel increased by five times following the war (1969-1974) (Rebhun and Waxman, 2000, pp. 68-69)

The results of the Six Day War, which led to deep sociopolitical developments in Israel, were also the harbinger of imminent changes towards the Palestinian community living in Israel and its administrative area, the OT. Prior to exploring this case, I first touch upon the emergence of new and educated Palestinian intellectuals in the pre-1967 War context.

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[95] The Jerusalem Day (legislated after the 1967 War) is a powerful reflection of this case. It celebrates the reconquering of the "holy capital" and takes place in front of the Western Wall destroyed by the Romans. Then, this official ceremony melts nationalism, Jewishness and victimhood self-narratives together.

5.2.2.1. Palestinian National Revival Under the Growing Israeli Control

As explored above, the Palestinian nationalist groups, such as *Al-Ard*, had in the 1950s begun to express their grievances towards the IDF's "biopolitical containment" agenda which worsened their living matrix, especially after the 1956 Suez Crisis. The group was outlawed by the Israeli Hight Court shortly after initiating its activities. Yet, these pressing developments were accompanied by a parallel story revealing itself during this period that well-educated and self-conscious Palestinian intellectuals emerged in Israel and beyond. On the outside, influential student unions were formed in various institutions, such as *Ittihad Talabat Filastin* in Cairo University, exchanging ideas about the struggle against Israel. These student unions were later transformed into a "network of Palestinian national organisations" (Khalidi, 1997, p. 180), eventually merging into the PLO. Although the PLO could not scale up its resistance agenda due to various structural issues at that period, its strong emphasis on shared national history, culture and suffering appealed to vast Palestinian communities, planting the seeds of national reawakening. Inside Israel, the reflection of this agenda was two-fold. First, several PLO-inspired nationalist bodies began to rise. For example, *Abnaa al-Balad* appeared in different names across Israel, advocating a single Palestinian identity surpassing national boundaries.[96] Second, the national agenda echoed on local politics among the Palestinian *hamulas* in Israel, such as Hashashibis and Huseynis. Their new leaders espoused an increasingly nationalist position which in turn decreased the gap between the competing *hamulas*, if not reversed the existing disintegration pattern among them (Robinson, 2008). With these developments in

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[96] See Cobban (2010) for all nationalist Palestinian bodies inside Israel.

mind, there were two major points which helped the spread of Palestinian national consciousness in the post-1967 period.

First, Israel's 1948 border –"Green Line"– was practically eliminated with the start of Israel's control over the OT. The change in the 1948 borders not only brought the free movement of goods and labour between the OT and Israel, i.e., Gaza and the West Bank offered cheap products and a workforce for Israel (UN, 1989a). It also eased the freedom of movement in a demographic sense that the daily interaction between once fragmented Palestinian communities increased substantially.[97] These in-group contracts cultivated the "national unification" feeling across the community. For example, the Palestinian minority in Israel increasingly rejected the Israeli-Arab identity assigned to them by the state and supported the transnational and transregional community idea – termed as the re-Palestinianisation phenomenon (Rouhana, 1989).

This heightened interaction was not the only factor that propagated the national consciousness among the transnational Palestinian groups. The decline in pan-Arabism also played a crucial role. The Palestinian cause was an integral part of the pan-Arabism agenda in achieving its united Arab community objective. In a sense, it was a mutually reinforcing instrument through which Arab states would destabilise the Zionist project in the region, while the Palestinian resistance groups would operate under their aegis to make their voice heard by Israel. The impact of pan-Arabism rapidly diminished after the defeat of Nasser and other major Arab forces in the region. This ideological shift was critical because the PLO leadership not only embraced a complete "Palestinian movement" vision after the humiliating result of the Six Day War (termed as the "al-Naksa" or the "defeat" in English) but also purged the *Arab-*

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[97] The ban on the Palestinian minority's free movement was removed by PM Eshkol in 1966.

league representatives inside the organisation (Diab, 1971). This split was mirrored in the PLO's adjusted 1968 Covenant with increasing self-reliance and militancy under the new Yasser Arafat leadership as explored below. Israel's expanding military-administrative structure is worth distilling to understand the PLO's revised agenda since it deteriorated the challenging sociopolitical atmosphere vis-à-vis the Palestinian Question.

Following Israel's post-1967 territorial expansion, the IDF issued a military framework, *Proclamation No. 3.* (IDF, 1967). It granted all legislative, executive, and judicial powers in the OT to its military commanders. This imposed a highly complex system of the Israeli control over these areas where each military verdict, such as the *Military Order No. 329*,[98] was consistently supported by the Israeli High Court on the basis of safeguarding the Israeli collective existence and national security (Kretzmer, 2002) – that redemonstrated the historically resonating institutionalised fears and the IDF's continuing guardianship role against the Palestinian "Other(s)". In this sense, controlling the OT had several implications for Israel's intractable conflict. Firstly, the military laws enacted in the OT were simply the extension of the existing military governance framework imposed on the Palestinian minority since 1948. Thus, the OT emerged as a particular spatial context where the national conflict and Otherisation policies were reproduced and "externalised" in a stronger form. For example, the national *Land Acquisition Law* (1953) was extended over the OT. It would provide a living space for the Israeli migrants after dispossessing confiscated Palestinian villages (due to suspected activities, e.g., terrorism) (UN, 2020a) – that echoed what was

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[98] The law sought to control the Palestinian "infiltration", reproducing the internal *Penal Revision* (State Security Law) (5717-1957) logic. See NLF (2020) for all orders.

discussed in Chapter 5.1.4. Secondly, the increasing transnational solidarity among the Palestinian collectives sparked an "internal" alarm which can be located behind two legal rulings subsequently arranged in the post-1967 period. The first law, *Agricultural Settlement Law* (1967),[99] banned the Palestinian minority to possess any share in the Israeli-owned land, while the second marked *Amendment No. 2* and *No. 3* to the *Law of Return* (1950) (Knesset, 1971), aiming to absorb more Jewish migrants. Then, the bureaucratic logic in Israel not only reaffirmed the historically recurring self-Other binary reading towards the Palestinian minority. It also reiterated the Israeli elites' long-attached ontological anxieties vis-à-vis the preservation of homogenous sociopolitical matrix.

Building on these two short-term developments, the slow-moving sociopsychological issues which Palestinians had been facing for decades prepared the background for the violent turn. The continuity and expansion of the IDF's "biopolitical containment" policy which sustained Palestinian(s) as Other, *Arab-league*-backed failed insurgencies to confront these policies and collective despair developed after these violent encounters bridged Palestinians' past conflict narratives over the present – the "al-Nakba" ("catastrophe") of 1948 over the "al-Naksa" ("defeat") of 1967. Coupled with the recent Palestinian sufferings, these collective conflict ethos motivated the PLO to revise its 1964 Covenant with independent Palestinian national identity at the core and initiate guerrilla warfare against the "colonialist" Israel "illegally" occupying the sacred "homeland of the Arab Palestinian people" (PLO, 1970). In line with the adjusted Covenant, the PLO's military wing, Fatah, denied both the Jewish communities' and Israel's "right to exist". Upon a closer

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[99] For a detailed Knesset debate on this law, see Jiryis (1971).

inspection, it mirrored the Israeli leaderships' historically attached binary reading of Palestinians during and after the *Yishuv* era:

> The liberation action is not only the wiping out of an Imperialist base but, what is more important, the extinction of [Israeli] society…Military defeat is not the sole goal in the Palestinian Liberation War, but it is the blotting out of the Zionist character of the occupied land, be it human or social…there is no alternative but to wipe out the existential trace of this artificial phenomenon (Fatah's Doctrine, 1968, p. 11).

In the final analysis, the violent turn in the Palestinian Question was born in a sociopsychological context facilitated by Israel's multifaceted "Otherising" agenda towards Palestinians. It not only labelled them as physical and geographical threats cooperating with the genocidal Arabs but also as sources of ontological insecurity jeopardising the quest for the homogenous and stable agency of the imagined Israeliness. This agenda became challenging to stabilise in the post-1967 setting that catalysed an ontological relocation in the Palestinian psyche vis-à-vis the transnationalising "self" and its changing in-/out-group boundaries. Thus, the existing binary reading that underwrites the Israeli security practices and elite discourses towards the Palestinian minority was instrumentally used to formulate a broadened "Othering" framework in the post-1967 era. This practice highlighted that Israel's boundaries did not simply enlarge in a physical sense, but rather in a sociospatial sense (Houtum, 2005). The most striking implication of this sociospatial development reflected itself on the changing nature and broadening actors of the Palestinian Question. In order to fully capture this case, the following section begins with the Yom Kippur War in 1973. This war facilitated a fertile background for the rise of religious counter-hegemonic movement in Israel and its hawkish stance towards "non-Jewish" Other(s).

5.2.3. Seismic Shift in Israel: Religious Resurgence, Intensified Holocaust Traumas, and Systematic Violence (1973-1989)

The small-scale aggressions between Egypt-Syria and Israel continued after the 1967 War, i.e., shelling each other's military positions. To prevent another collision in the region, the US President Nixon called the two sides for arranging a peace agreement which conditioned Israel to withdraw from its post-1967 occupations. PM Golda Meir, who succeeded Eshkol in 1969, not only rejected this proposal but also expanded the range of the Israeli shelling into Egypt and Syria which caused more than 1.5 million internally displaced people and sparked riots in both Arab states (Thomas, 2011). Against their presumably vulnerable military condition after the 1967 War and ongoing internal disorder, on October 6, 1973, the Egyptian and Syrian forces first pretended to conduct a regular drill, but then were quickly mobilised into their territories lost to Israel in 1967. Regaining these territories with a surprise attack during the Jewish religious holiday Yom Kippur (hence the name of the war) would reverse the humiliating results of the Six Day War and alleviate the rising domestic discontent. Although Egypt and Syria initially managed to advance towards these territories, the IDF halted Arab coalition in the following week and then restored Israel's post-1967 borders.

This unexpected war erupted after the Israeli victory in 1967 which bolstered the national pride. In a sense, the Israeli society's pathological annihilation anxiety was replaced by extreme self-confidence following the 1967 War. For Grosbard (2003, p. 53), this black-and-white state of mind provoked a deeply distorted mood within the society, yielding the belief that Israel's all "troubles are gone". Then, the

Yom Kippur War produced opposite sociopsychological outcomes than the Six Day War. Firstly, it caused a "U-turn" towards Israel's omnipresent self-esteem as the IDF was caught unprepared by the Arab coalition advance. On the one hand, the IDF's military intelligence was supposed to provide a warning of the attack, however, it assessed that there was a "low probability of war" on October 1, 1973 (Haaretz, 2012). On the other, Israel's national intelligence, Mossad, was confident that any Arab attack would be futile against the "Israeli *concept*" of military superiority in the air and on the ground; thus, Arabs would not dare to engage in offensive for decades (Riedel, 2017). Consequently, the IDF endured its heaviest loses since the 1948 War. In this sense, the feeling of insecurity reached up to 90% among the Israeli Jews in 1973 and the following years (Stone, 1982). Secondly, notwithstanding the IDF's eventual restoration of the post-1967 territories, the swift mobilisation of Arab armies and the clash of the Israeli elites' *conceptions* on the ground revived the "insurmountable inferiority" complex in the state (Yaniv, 1993, p. 88) – in other words, the "Arab Goliath" versus "Israeli David" fear. In parallel with this historical siege mentality, the Holocaust traumas were resonant at the Israeli elite speeches during and after the war. For example, Meir (1973; 1974) articulated that the Yom Kippur War was another example of chronic wars against Israel's existence, while Dayan highlighted the possibility of national collapse and even pushed the Labour-dominated cabinet to consider "nuclear" options (Haaretz, 2018a).

Building on these, the third point could be located behind the harsh critiques of Menachem Begin, the leader of the major conservative alliance called Likud. Against the traumatic outcome of the 1973 War, Begin accused the Labour government of "omission" of duty with regards to safeguarding the Israeli existence

(Hechter, 2003. p. 439). Following his misconduct rhetoric, Begin achieved Knesset backing for the creation of an official body which would investigate the actions of high-ranked officials before and during the war. On the one hand, the Likud leadership used this case to question the credibility of the "reckless" Meir government together with other counter-hegemonic parties, such as messianic Mafdal.[100] The society-wide impact of Begin's condemnations was notable that the word omission was circulated in media and turned into a public symbol in criticising Meir (Haaretz, 1974). On the other hand, Likud effectively utilised this momentum and challenged the Labour's position towards the heated debates in Israel, such as the alienation of the Jewish religiocultural beliefs. This effort led to the emergence of various protest groups demanding a stronger position of Jewishness in public and political domains, such as Yisrael Shelanu (Our Israel) and the Mafdal-linked movement called Gush Emunim (Bloc of Faithful). The latter was particularly influential in expressing the counter-hegemonic narratives, advocating for the Jewish divine right to rule the "Land of Israel" (Knesset, 2020b), i.e., entire colonial Palestine. Along this line, the rising right-wing parties claimed that the Ashkenazi elites and their representatives, being the Labour circles, were "disloyal" to the traditional, historical and ethnoreligious values of the Israeli majority (Fischer, 2016, p. 74).

The large contestations sparked in the post-Yom Kippur War context were the projection of *kulturkampf* between the Labour and traditional-conservative enclaves. Its background could be traced back to the first Mizrahi settlements into Israel's border towns. Thus, the 1973 War created a seismic shift, an earthquake occurred after the series of foreshocks unfolding since 1948. These foreshocks were marked by the

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[100] For a detailed Knesset debate on the Yom Kippur War, see Hechter (2003).

traditional groups' (later included the diaspora) mounting challenge towards the ontological properties of the Israeli state and sociopolitical matrix imagined by the Ashkenazi elites. Against this background, if I adhere to geographical metaphors in explaining the colossal changes in the 1970s' Israel, the 1977 national elections then produced a volcano effect with several multi-layered and long-term implications.

5.2.3.1. Primordial Turn in Israel: Ontological Crises and "Redrawing" the Self?

For Abulof (2014), the Labour has since the foundation of Israel responded to internal de-legitimation efforts by constantly expanding the public role of all-encompassing traditional symbols and practices. In time, it provided a social basis for the "Judaisation" phenomenon as previously explored. This phenomenon reached its emotional peak point after the post-1967 War territorial occupations, fulfilling the cultural-Biblical return to the "historical Zion" narrative. Only after the public disorientation caused by the 1973 War, however, Judaisation was developed into a political mobilisation force. In this sense, the 1977 national elections became a suitable platform where Likud attained the majority of votes for the first time in Israel.

Likud's victory marked a radical change for all social groups. It broke down the electoral hegemony of the Labour Zionism and demonstrated a shift towards more bipartisan politics. From this period onwards, this bipolar shift has become a prime factor in Israeli politics via which the "rival" camps constantly reclaim that they are the leading candidate to become the nation's "storyteller", challenging each other's narratives about Israel' past, present and future. Pertinently, Likud's coming to the power marked a political alignment of the two manifestly distinct groups with

contesting social origins and cultural-behavioural attitudes. In this setting, the first group, which could be named as the statist, Labour Zionist and Israeli "core", encompassed by the Ashkenazi elites dominating the intelligentsia-bureaucracy such as the Israeli High Court and national trade union, *Histadrut*. As the Ashkenazi group had emerged as an outcome of the modernist and secular-national philosophy, it also performed as a symbolic representative of this mindset since the *Yishuv* era. The second group, which could be referred to as the Israeli "periphery", were consisted of the traditional-conservative Mizrahi and Orthodox Haredi majority, contesting the Ashkenazi leadership's hierarchical and normative positions.

For three decades, the latter group not only felt spiritually alienated from their traditional way of life vis-à-vis the Labour policies, i.e., the Israelification project, though they forced the Israeli core to increase the public role of traditional/religious elements after each major development. They also felt materially alienated from the state building experience due to the "internal" governance logic imposed on them. It was after two generations that Mizrahim were able to convert their collective discontent "into points of anger against veteran Israelis and state institutions and values" (Kimmerling, 2001, p. 229). In this sense, Begin's Likud emerged as a champion of traditional Jewish values and received the Oriental Jews' disproportionate support in 1977.

Following his election as the PM, Begin coined his political leadership motto as "the usual-style – a Jewish style" (translated in Shilon, 2013, p. 259). This powerful motto accompanied by his extensive usage of the words "God" and "providence" in the public and political domains (Grosbard, 2007, p. 249). His religious references shortly led to vibrant discussions in Israel, portraying Begin as the "first Jewish" PM

of Israel who reminded the country of "its Jewish soul" (Haaretz, 2018b; Gordis, 2014, p. 228). Begin's usage of religious symbols and narratives were not only articulated in a populistic sense. He also sought to empower traditional Jewish institutions and ideologies to diminish the strong indoctrination and political legitimacy of the Labour Zionism on the society.

At the party level, for example, Likud actively supported the Israeli settlements in the OT spearheaded by Gush Emunim (Knesset, 2020b), while coordinating with Mafdal and its conservative rabbi cycle to revise the "Jewish Consciousness" education programme introduced in the 1960s. It was replaced by a religious-oriented curriculum called the TALI ("Enhanced Jewish Studies") (TALI, 2020). At the personal level, Begin terminated the national charter flights on Fridays and Saturdays, being the Jewish Sabbaths, by virtue of the state's Jewish persona (Knesset, 2020c). Furthermore, he criticised the politicoeconomic dominance of *Histadrut* as "tyranny" along with the Ashkenazi control over the Israeli judiciary and media (translated in Grosbard, 2007, p. 143; Aizakson, 2003, p. 78), initiating a neoliberal program to lessen its influence. In short, Begin believed that his election would lead to economic, political and spiritual "turn" in the "history of the Jewish people and the Zionist movement" (translated in Shilon, 2013, p. 258). Together with these developments, the sociopsychological driving force for this "turn" was powerfully expressed in his following speech:

> …we have the question of whether it is possible for Jews to separate between their nationality and their religion. My conscience tells me: we do not need this separation. [It] is not possible, [it] is forbidden, it is impossible…The rabbis of Israel made the Torah a source of life because they knew how to make amendments that suited the spirit of each generation. This is the demand that we can and maybe even must make, and it will also surely change the atmosphere that has existed until

now…[to reconnect the bond] between our people and the God of our forefathers (Grosbard, 2007, p. 186; translated in Aizakson, 2003, p. 121).

Three points are worth distilling about Begin's lines. First, he recognises Judaism as a core component of Israeliness. In doing so, Begin not only draws on the popular debates in Israel and reaffirms the pre-*Yishuv* era Jewish traditions and practices. He also contests the secular(ising) and modern(ising) master narratives and their representative political authority. Second, Likud's primordial turn with the help of rabbis is believed to impose a rupture towards the existing national "atmosphere" which was facilitated by these master narratives. After this step, the nation is lastly projected to reconnect with its ethnoreligious bonds and its forefathers' God after suffering from the secular-national block for decades. Then, Begin melts the strong nationalist worldview of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the founding figure of the Revisionist Zionism and leader of Irgun, with the religious Zionism and its conservative reading of Jewishness.

In this sense, Begin's speech is a selective remembering practice with the Judaism counter-narrative at its core. It not only subjectively reinterprets the pre-*Yishuv* way of life to promote a formative base for Likud's political consciousness which could be termed as the Jewish Israeli outlook, or simply *Jewishness* over *Israeliness*. It also prioritises the Jewish character of Israel which would in turn legitimise the Likud cadres' "own" sociopsychological fabric and fantasised beliefs regarding how citizens are expected to perform in Likud's Israel. Practically speaking, this particular remembering/forgetting practice aimed to integrate Mizrahim into the centre, psychologically addressing their "desire to belong" to the nation (Waxman, 2006, p. 41).

Begin's agenda to redraw the Israeli self as opposed to the Ashkenazi elites' imagination was not restrained to the domestic sphere. In line with the Likud's Revisionism going hand in hand with the messianic worldview of its ideological partner, Mafdal, he frequently employed traditional-religious narratives and symbols to boost Israel's increasing relationship with the diaspora Jews. This was most evident in Begin's active usage of diasporic Yiddish language in his foreign visits (Shilon, 2016), which was disregarded by the Labour cadres and replaced by Hebrew. Begin also utilised the Holocaust traumas as an affect-centric bounding element between worldwide Jewry. Among others, he underlined that the Holocaust "extermination was humiliation. The enemy [turned] our people into ash…Jews in Israel and Diaspora should [know] that the world will never pity slaughtered Jews, but the world will always respect fighting Jews" (Grosbard, 2007, p. 130; translated in Aizakson, 2003, p. 114) – combining the Jewish victimhood with nationalistic aspiration. Herein, Begin's applications of the Holocaust memories are merit to be further explored as the scope of these articulations went well beyond the diaspora.

In making sense of this case, it must be rehighlighted that Likud's coming to the power was not only facilitated by the upsurge of religionationalistic feelings. The resurgence of the annihilation anxieties following the rise of PLO and the Yom Kippur War also played an integral role in this hegemonic shift. The perpetual hostile environment in general and the demoralising impact of the 1973 War more specifically echoed on the dominant siege mentality as explored above, underpinning that "Arab threat was still well and alive". These reactivated fears were not only instrumentalised by Begin to reinforce the primordial turn in Israel. They were also carefully expressed

at particular times and occasions to justify Likud's ultrahawkish stance towards the non-Jewish "threatening" Other(s).

In doing so, Begin relied on his personal narratives articulated through emotional performances. This trend started on his first day in the office. The considerable part of his opening speech was devoted to the micro (his family sufferings), meso (national helplessness) and macro (world Jewry) levels of the Holocaust stories, claiming that "no one came to our rescue, not from the East and not from the West" (JVL, 2020f) during and after the Nazi genocide. In his visit to the US, Begin also mentioned the pressing security issues faced by the *small Israel* and then shared his painful Holocaust memories at the official reception, making a mist appear in President Carter's eyes, according to Begin's advisor Hurwitz (1977). Thus, Begin sought to sustain the historical Holocaust trauma narrative, emphasising that the fundamental source of their sufferings has not changed – "evil forces" versus "world Jewry". These evil forces persist whether at Israel's most vulnerable period of its state formation, or the height of its politicomilitary might in the 1970s. Moreover, Begin aimed to expand the temporal reference points of the Holocaust narrative and situate it on a more linear contour. In this vein, he advocated for the unification of the Holocaust Remembrance Day with "Tisha B'Av" (the day commemorating the destruction of both Jewish Temples) (Haaretz, 2010). Then, Begin attempted to bridge the ancient sufferings over the present – connecting the Jewish exodus from Zion (BCE 37) with modern era atrocities unfolding since the 1940s.

The historical and contemporary enemy forces of Jewishness also appeared to have a linear connection in the eyes of the Likud leadership. In this sense, Begin first drew on the existing analogy and compared Arabs with the Nazis as Ben-Gurion did

in WWII. Then, he revised this symbolic comparison vis-à-vis the recent developments. He equated "pan-Arabism" with "pan-Germanism" and argued that "there will be no more Holocaust [as] the Western Land of Israel is in our hands" (Naor, 2003, p. 138). This enemy equation via the Holocaust reading was continued to be articulated even after pan-Arabism lost its gravity in the 1970s. For example, Begin wrote a poignant letter to President Reagan, who succeeded Carter, expressing that: "A million and a half children were killed by Zyklon B gas during the Holocaust. This time, it was Israeli children who were about to be poisoned by radioactivity [referring to the nuclear reactor in Iraq ruled by pan-Arab Ba'ath party]…It could have been a new Holocaust" (translated in Shilon, 2013, p. 346). The reactor was later destroyed by the Israeli jets with Begin's order in 1981.

Seen in this light, the institutionalised annihilation traumas seemed to have transformed under the Likud leadership. The lasting impacts of the "chosen" Holocaust traumas of the Ashkenazi cadres begun to operate in a different *way* (Volkan, 2001). On the one hand, the mythological stories and affect-centric fears against the selective Other(s) were reproduced in a perpetuated and reinforced form in the wake of the revitalised Holocaust traumas in the 1970s. On the other, the official Holocaust memories became highly nuanced. They were articulated in a way to establish a linear connection between the trauma provoked by ancient Romans, Hitler and Arab nations of the 1940s and beyond. This linear connection indicated that the institutionalised annihilation anxieties do not vaporise in time. On the contrary, they last in the state elites' cognitive space and are instrumentally reproduced via their selective remembering practices which can modify the accurate recollections of history in the state mind. Then, as Navon (2019, p. 74) would argue, the Israeli

leadership embraced a mind-occupying paranoia that the "Jewish victimhood is an endemic – something to be warded off by the [state] rather than solving with national rebirth", contrasting two leading political Zionists, Hertz and Ben-Gurion.

Building on the analysis conducted in this section, two points must be spelt out considering Israel's intractable conflict. First, the conservative-religious groups and their counter-narratives being produced in the border towns of Israel made considerable inroads into the official state ideology. Their hierarchical position has begun to shift from the "periphery" to the "centre" from this era onwards, enabling them to challenge the sociopolitical marks of the Labour on the state and society. This shift was also a byproduct of Israel's control over the OT which had been influencing the ethnoreligious shift towards Israeliness (analysed below). Due to this primordial turn, Jewishness notion became the "common denominator between Ashkenazim and Orientals" (Kimmerling, 2001) during that period. Second, the increasing significance of Jewishness situated the Palestinian Question in a more complex place. With the aggravated Holocaust traumas and following primordial turn, the Likud elites acted as a fierce guardian of Jewishness against the "non-Jewish" threatening Other(s). For example, Begin often likened "Hitler" to "Arafat" –calling him "Arab SS"– (Haaretz, 2018c; Independent, 2006), while declaring Israel as the saviour of the Christian minority in Lebanon to contain the PLO's growing influence in the region. He claimed that "in light of what it experienced in the Holocaust, the Jewish people [could not] stand by in silence when minorities are being mistreated" (translated in Shilon, 2013,

p. 278).[101] This detached mindset towards Palestinians had two direct aims with ontological and material implications.

From the ontological perspective, it would consolidate the ethnoreligious identity makers of Israeliness through relations of difference from its reference point, Palestinian Other(s), and reaffirm the historic fight of "world Jewry" against "anti-Semitic" forces. From the material perspective, this trajectory had two-fold goals. First, it would legitimise Israel's post-1967 sociospatial expansions at home and abroad. Second, it would justify the Likud's ultrahawkish position towards the state's "constant and real" enemies. In light of these juxtaposed concerns, the Palestinian Question has developed into a unique, transnational case sitting on two columns: Palestinian "protégé" inside Israel and non-citizen Palestinians in the OT. This phenomenon did not only open up a new episode against the Israeli-Palestinian intersubjective reading but also facilitate a background for the Israeli leadership to adopt a "double logic" in managing this complex conflict. In exploring the "double logic" argument, the following section starts with Kimmerling (2001)'s thought-provoking analysis on the division within the Israeli sociopolitical matrix.

5.2.3.2. Transferal of Collective Grievances: Eruption of Systematic Violence

For Kimmerling (2001, pp. 78-92), Israel is transformed into a *de facto* "binational Jewish-Arab state" after its post-1967 expansions. It consists of two symbolic groups. The "first" encompasses the ethnic Jewish community, albeit their inner differences.

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[101] Voller (2015) reads this proactive involvement with the emergence of the *moderate axis conception* in Israeli foreign policy. Accordingly, Israel began to see the moderate regimes in the region as potential allies against hostile forces. He argues that it was a revision of Israel's *Periphery Doctrine*.

It is protected by the state and granted full access to cultural, political, and economic resources. The "second" entails two-layered Palestinian groups: the minority in Israel and non-citizen residents of the OT. In this equation, the minority is given some basic rights but excluded from the national goals and political centre, while the latter is strictly controlled. I claim that this "symbolic grouping" argument might be advanced by the incorporation of two sociopsychological factors. In this sense, Israeli versus Palestinian(s) hierarchical ordering in the post-1967 setting was facilitated by two developments of the time: 1) the recent ontological relocation in the Palestinian psyche vis-à-vis its transnationalising "self", and 2) the rising profile of the PLO among the Palestinian community. Under these circumstances, Israel's double logic of controlling the intractable conflict had gradually evolved after 1967. This approach not only further radicalised the PLO in terms of its philosophy and systematic violent methods. It also offered diverse learning moments for its leadership, helping the PLO to advance its survival skills and ideological sophistication.

On the "internal" side of this double logic, the Israeli politicomilitary elites adopted alternative strategies, aiming to diminish the Palestinian minority's escalating sympathy towards guerrilla warfare. For example, various democratic bodies were allowed to operate for the representation of the Palestinian minority, e.g., the High Follow-up Committee. Additionally, the National Committee for the Defence of Arab Land was created by the pro-Palestinian Rakah party, advocating that "the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Arab-Palestinian nation, to which the local [Palestinian] population belonged" (Rekhess, 2007, p. 8).[102] In light of the heightened

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[102] Rakah candidate Tawfiq Zayyad was elected as Nazareth mayor in 1975. It alarmed the Israeli officials, criticising Palestinians in Nazareth due to their anti-Zionist approach (Haaretz, 1975).

emotional bonds among the Palestinian communities, this symbolic "permission" logic could not thwart to spread of violent networks in Israel. For instance, *'Abna' Al-Balad*, a descendent of *Al-Ard*, operated as a "substitute for the PLO", according to their leader Muhammed Kiwan (cited in interview with Smith, 1978, p. 169). In turn, the "collaborator" Palestinians who were not obedient to the "first" group and cooperating with the PLO were subjected to various control methods, e.g., loss of citizenship,[103] alongside the recently passed legal frameworks aspiring to preserve the homogenous sociopolitical matrix of Israel (see Chapter 5.2.2.1).

As Rouhana (1989) claimed, it imposed a behavioural/ideological dilemma on the Palestinian minority, fearing that they were going to be severely punished due to their support for the PLO. Yet, with the recent methodological openings uncovering the production process of oral history and material documents from transnational and transtemporal angles –called "multiple audiences" (Nassar, 2017, pp. 9-10)– we have a better understanding today about the varying roles of the Palestinian minority in the PLO's resistance agenda. For Nassar (*ibid*, pp. 141-169), the Palestinian intellectuals in Israel had become increasingly cognizant of their *relatively* privileged position within the broader Palestinian community. Then, they carefully developed a national-revolutionary discourse under the "allowed" Palestinian bodies. For example, the "resistance literature" (*Adab Al-muqawamah*) expressing thematic scopes like self-sacrifice, anticolonial struggle, and national revolutionism was produced by those intellectuals among the minority such as Mahmoud Darwish and Samih Al-Qasim. These moving works were widely circulated in the Palestinian communities through *Abna' Al-Balad* channel.

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[103] For all these methods, see Bhabha (2011).

This trajectory would 1) empower the PLO's guerrilla strategy, 2) raise its profile on the regional and global levels, and 3) help the Palestinian minority to operate under the IDF radar. Accordingly, the PLO leadership did not aim to rely on the Palestinian minority as the main human source for the guerrilla warfare, although it recruited some famous guerrilla figures such as Fawzi Nimr and paid extra attention to appoint the Israeli Palestinian expats to key positions, e.g., Sabri Jiryis was assigned as a head of the PLO Research Center (Pappe, 2011). Instead, the PLO evaluated the Palestinian minority as a valuable anchor, or an ideological "bridge", located inside the colonialist Israel (Amara, 2000, p. 39). It would put pressure on the Israeli leadership with regards to the Palestinian Question in general and recognition of the PLO as a legitimate actor more specifically. Broadly speaking, this strategy should be read in light of the Labour Zionism's declining hegemony. After the bi-partisan shift in 1977, the Labour circles underwent major transformation and sought electoral and/or coalitional support from the Palestinian minority. It could be best captured behind the Labour-linked social movement (Peace Now), advocating for the full and equal rights of the Palestinian minority and Israel's withdrawal from the OT (PNM, 2020) – that reflected the agenda of Hadash, the successor of Rakah (Hadash, 2020) (further explored in Chapter 5.3). Likud harshly delegitimised the Labour circles and Peace Now movement, labelling them as "communists", "PLO members" and "enemies of Israel" against the Likud's "nationalist camp" (Fischer, 2016, p. 75).

On the "external" side of the double logic, another story was revealing. The IDF's historically attached "biopolitical containment" agenda gained momentum in the OT. Its "de-Otherisation" of the land method was strengthened by constructing small security walls and barriers to control the *fedayeens'* operations and

Palestinian(s) social movements alike. This increased alarmist logic did not only bring in complete securitisation of all walks of life but also intensify the collective grievances and traumas of unsuccessful rebellions, motivating people to join the clandestine and regionally separated PLO camps, spreading from Jordan[104] to East Jerusalem, albeit the latter remain limited due to *Shin Bet* operations. Relying on small but well-trained *fedayeens*, the PLO raided into Israel's borders, ambushed military and civilian targets,[105] engaged in shelling and mining activities in the OT and beyond.

At this escalating phase of the intractable conflict, recently passed UN Resolutions, the Resolution 2535 (UN, 2020b) and Resolution 2672 (UN, 2020c), must be borne in mind to make better sense of the IDF's harsh measurements against the PLO. Respectively, the first resolution reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, while the second expanded this scope and recognised their national self-determination, sovereignty and right to return to their abandoned villages. The last point was particularly worrisome for the Israeli leadership. It specifically referred to the forced dislocations of Palestinian(s) by the Israeli paramilitaries (and the IDF) since the *Yishuv* period. Thus, it not only problematised Israel's material-territorial expansion over the colonial Palestine. It also clashed with Israel's *raison d'etat* of providing a homogenous living space against which the Palestinian Other had been perceived as the "public security" danger since the 1940s. Intersecting with these international pressures questioning Israel's historical practices, the PLO discursively

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[104] It led to a clash between the PLO and Jordan in 1970. Then, the PLO headquarter was moved to Lebanon. Following this, the PLO found stable institutional background and begun to recruit more *fedayeens*.

[105] The Avivim Bombings in 1970 and Ben-Gurion Airport Killings in 1972 can be given as two major PLO attacks at that time. It also conducted several international attacks, e.g., the Hijacking of Sabena Flight 571 in 1972 and Munich Massacre in 1972.

altered its antagonistic "wiping out Israeli state and society" stance. In 1974, Arafat claimed that:

> Let us work together that my dream may be fulfilled, that I may return with my people out of exile, there in Palestine to live…We invite [Israelis] to emerge from their moral isolation into a more open realm of free choice, far from their present leadership's efforts to implant in them a Masada complex [referring to a historical myth where the Jewish rebels committed suicide rather than surrendering to the Romans in 73 CE]…Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom-fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand (UN, 2020d).

The PLO's major shift in its ultimate goal challenged the *totality* characteristic of Israel's intractable conflict, in which the two "antagonistic" sides' unique self-images not only had been homogenising but also had become an existential factor for their group survival. This promising shift was followed by another critical decision of the UN, Resolution 3379. It acknowledged Zionism as a form of "racism and racial discrimination" (UN, 1975), comparing Israel with the South African apartheid.[106] Thus, Arafat's move did not drag much attention because the resolution was interpreted as the "first organised attack" on Jewishness after the middle ages and linked to the wider anti-Semitic campaign of the Soviet-Arab Coalition by Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Chaim Herzog (1975). This anti-Semitism driven siege mentality was shortly perpetuated due to the self-feeding relationship between the rising PLO violence and Likud's Revisionist agenda clashing with the Palestinians' sovereign rights.[107] This trajectory reflected on the mounting tit-for-tat attacks of both sides, e.g., the PLO's Coastal Road Massacre in 1978 versus the IDF's cross border

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[106] The PLO was accepted as an "observer" to the UN General Assembly in the same year.
[107] That being said, Begin signed the Camp David Agreement with Egypt in 1979, resulted in Israel's withdrawal from Sinai. It marked a critical watershed that Israel's primary security focus shifted from "Arabs" to "Palestinian(s)" vis-à-vis the double logic of controlling the intractable conflict.

operation into south Lebanon which sparked the 1982 Lebanon War. This critical war marked the second expulsion of the PLO headquarter (to Tunisia) from the only remaining ground near the Israeli border where its guerrillas could easily operate. It also marked another traumatic event for Palestinians, the *Shabra-Shatila* massacre. Backed by the IDF, the Christian militias in Lebanon killed "estimated from 300 to 3500" Palestinian refugees (Quigley, 2005, p. 200). Following the massacre, Begin articulated that "Goyim [non-Jewish] kill goyim and they blame the Jews" (Waxman, 2006, p. 57) – reaffirming the siege mentality by drawing on predominant anti-Semitism narratives.

At this moment of Palestinian emotional downfall, the first *intifada* erupted in 1987. Commenced in the OT, it was initially depicted as a temporary rebellion, according to Shlomo Gazit who coordinated the IDF operations in the OT (1998). Then, it unexpectedly developed into a massive grassroots protest which spread from civil disobedience campaigns and public rallies to roadblocks and minor armed clashes with the IDF. It lasted five years and also extended into Israel.[108] The first *intifada* was a direct outcome of Israel's evolving intractable conflict which produced and sustained the unsettled issues weighing down on the Palestinian(s)' living matrix for decades. In a sense, it was the only alternative to express their constant sufferings and trauma aloud. But above all, it was to express their dismissal and non-existence in the eyes of Israel (Sen, 2017) – or their present-absenteeism in an ontological sense. There are

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[108] The National Committee for the Defence of Arab Land supported the first *intifada* by calling for non-violent boycott and provided material support to the OT. Several members of the Committee and Palestinian minority were accused to support terrorism, e.g., acts of sabotage and throwing bombs (Al-Haj, 1993).

several points that merit to be explored vis-à-vis the first *intifada* and its profound consequences.

First, the IDF could not contain the first *intifada* despite its enhanced security policy (Iron Fist) which sought to "recreate the barrier of fear between Palestinians and the Israeli military", according to the new Likud leader and PM Yitzhak Shamir (Washington Report, 1997). On the one hand, it marked a novel case where the Palestinian collectives successfully repelled the IDF, ironically without the extensive support of the *fedayeens* and Arab states. On the other hand, it was a backlash against the Likud's Revisionism. The imagined boundaries of the "historical Zion" could not be fully secured, showing the limits of the messianic-religious utopia. Second, the first *intifada* attracted high international coverage, criticising Israel's military misconduct in dealing with the popular uprisings (Washington Post, 1988; Human Rights Watch, 1990). The press also highlighted the rise of a new "Jihadist" group called Hamas as a substitute for the "secular" PLO (New York Times, 1987; 1988). En route to the first *intifada*, the PLO leadership was cognizant of its flagging capacity to pursue a full-scale guerrilla warfare, especially after the 1982 War. Thus, the first *intifada* was a unique development for it to reinstate Palestinian politics at "the inside" rather than struggling for it on "the outside" (Khalidi, 1997, p. 200). Building on the two points above, the PLO initially accepted the UN Resolutions 242 and 338 (UN, 1988a). In this sense, it shifted its focus to "the two state solution" based on the coexistence of the Palestinian and Israeli states in the pre-1967 borders. After a month, Arafat denounced terrorism and reiterated his desire for a peaceful settlement. This would not only legitimise the first *intifada* but also the PLO's position as the non-violent representative of Palestinians (UN, 1988b). Eventually, the PLO unilaterally declared

a sovereign Palestinian state in the OT which was recognised by the UN and more than 70 states in 1989 (UN, 1989b).[109]

Consequently, the first *intifada* not only redefined the Palestinian activism, solidarity and sense of collective self after the disastrous 1982 War. It also showed that the recognition of the Palestinian homeland, albeit *terra incognita* from the Israeli perspective, and their inalienable rights require a collectively resisting society to exist and peaceful methods to articulate this existence at local, regional, and global levels. In turn, this massive effort verbalising the Palestinian sufferings imposed a moral dilemma on the Israeli society, creating the US military in Vietnam experience.[110] The majority of the society evaluated the first *intifada* as the final outcome of Israel's physical and psychological control over Palestinians (Bar-On, 1996) (further discussed in Chapter 5.3). In this line, then-defence minister Rabin articulated in 1988 that the solution [for the Palestinian Question] would have to be "political – through negotiation leading to a political settlement, rather than military means" (Morris, 2001, p. 587).

Intersecting with key developments unfolding at regional and global levels, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, start of the Gulf War and rise of Jihadists rebels in the region, Rabin's discourse was critical as it acknowledged the obsoleteness of the military program towards the century-long Palestinian Question. Complementing these developments, I argue that Rabin's reconciliatory position was also a product of complex sociopsychological openings revealing at the national level. The following

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[109] It marked that the Palestinian Question would be solved in "next door, not at home" (Rouhana, 1990, p. 72), suggesting the future divergences to unfold between the Palestinian collectives (see Chapter 5.3.5).
[110] This public questioning started after the Lebanon War. For example, the Peace Now organised a rally which attracted 400,000 people in 1982, being the largest in Israeli history.

chapter explores these noteworthy openings beginning with the critiques coming from different camps of Israel's left since the 1970s. Together with the Likud's strong traditional-communitarian agenda, they catalysed normative revisions within the Labour based on multiculturalism and intercommunal tolerance, underpinning the universalist-liberal structure of the Israeli state and society. This unique agenda was actively promoted by the "peaceful coexistence" framework from the mid-1980s onwards. Following the promising atmosphere facilitated by the PLO's denouncing of terrorism and Labour's coming to power (1992), the peaceful coexistence framework prepared the ripe sociopsychological conditions for the Oslo I and II Accords (1993 and 1995).

5.3. Imagining Alternative Ways of *Being*: Renarrating Hegemonic Past, Dreaming of "Peaceful Coexistence", and Failure of Change

> Israeli Left [gradually starting with the Six Day War], did not exchange one form of liberal democracy for another, but rather carried out a silent revolution, a reversal...It exchanged the outdated Labour Party approach…for the democratic faith, which was designed to constitute a total, absolute alternative to any conceivable sort of Jewish identity (Epstein, 2003).

The previous chapters on Israel explored two related issues. First, Chapter 5.1 examined the Israeli national context in which the traumatic remembrances of the Ashkenazi elites at the time of state formation developed into informative reference points for their future practices and discourses. These memories were instrumentally chosen and utilised to formulate the social and institutional policies of the young Israel, represented as the imagined Israeli national agency and the IDF ensuring the survival of this imagined collective identity. In this vein, "anti-Semitic Arabs", particularly their Palestinian "protégé" inside Israel, were not only framed as the "threatening non-Jewish Other(s)" against Israeliness and public order but also the "uncivilised elements" destabilising the subject identifications of the imagined Israeliness. These affect-centric processes of security and agency making were argued to establish the sociopsychological roots of Israel's intractable conflict. Second, Chapter 5.2 adopted a genealogical periodisation rationale in analysing the massive sociopolitical transformations and sociospatial expansion of Israel over decades. Following this method not only explored the violent eruption of the conflict but also the evolution of popular counter-narratives raised against the political trajectory of the Ashkenazi Revolution.

283

Raising on these analyses, Chapter 5.3 first places these society-wide contestations into a broader context by incorporating the critiques coming from different camps of Israel's left since the 1970s. Their extensive criticisms not only fostered the democratisation debate in the 1980s' transitioning Israel that challenged the state's strong security mindset, official conflict ethos and ontological properties with reference to doing, acting, and being. They also provided political venues for non-Jewish identities and highlighted the need for inclusive and alternative frameworks for collective existence. This endeavour facilitated ideological relocation within the Labour which was already facing extensive de-legitimisation efforts vis-à-vis the Likud's primordial policies. Then, this chapter second investigates how the Labour modified its political agenda with normative claims, aiming to reformulate Israeliness as a universal-liberal collective identity. Specifically, this fantasised self-image was promoted by the "peaceful coexistence" framework which self-interrogated the network of ontological security system, such as particular identity makers, social codes and performative roles, ascribed to the monolithic understanding of Israeliness. The framework was initially introduced to include the Palestinian minority "Other" to the nation's expanding "centre" from the mid-1980s onwards. With the changing sociopolitical atmosphere, the Labour cadres scaled up the "peaceful coexistence" framework and then instrumentally employed it to attain their subjective nationhood and geography objectives – that were, "New Israel" and "New Middle East". The last section explores this multifaceted process, achieving of which was believed to eradicate Israel's intractable conflict via the Oslo peace process (1993-2000).

5.3.1. Critiques "from within" and "without"[111]: Different Shades of Israel's Left

The radical modernisation trajectory of the Ashkenazi Revolution alienated various Jewish sub-cultures in Israel both spiritually and materially, provoking them to withdraw into their traditional-conservative identities. In the long term, it not only generated an ontological crisis about defining the Israeli state and society's autobiographical narratives and performative roles regarding historical, religious, and ideological properties that were debated to constitute Jewishness. It also prepared a background for the bipartisan secular-religious shift in Israeli politics from the late 1970s onwards with two major groups: Ashkenazi "core" dominating the dovish Alignment/Labour versus Mizrahi and ultraorthodox "periphery" leading the hawkish Herut/Likud. They constantly questioned each other's narratives about the Jewish *past*, *present* and *future*, while aiming to impose a network of ontological security system representing their own sociopsychological fabric. In line with the Ashkenazi veterans' fantasised expectations in the young Israeli setting, the latter group subjectively reconstructed Jews' pre-*Yishuv* past. Thus, the Herut/Likud leaderships idealised Judaism as a core component of collective values and practices in Israel. This idealisation prioritised the traditional ethnoreligious connotations in reimagining the Israeli state and society, which further aggravated Israel's historically reproducing alarmist position towards "non-Jewish" Other(s) as explored in the previous chapter.

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[111] The title was inspired by Chapter 2 of Lauren Silberstein's book *The Postzionism Debates* (1999).

At this watershed, especially after Israel's sociospatial expansion after 1967, an extensive debate was kindled on Israel's left. These critiques not only empowered various peace movements, becoming a vital part of Israeli political life (Hermann, 2003). Together with the rising influence of the Revisionist-messianic parties, they also triggered an ideological reorientation in the Labour. Then, how and why does this inner debate arise and resonate at the Israeli society? How can we make sense of the relationship between these critiques and various peace movements in Israel? How do these critical lenses question the master narratives of both the Ashkenazi elites and Revisionist-messianic camp? Lastly, how does the Labour respond to the various critiques coming from different poles of the society and then imagine the alternative ways of *being*? In exploring these questions, I will first investigate the focal points of this transformative debate with the work of Nahum Goldmann, the first chairman of the World Zionist Organisation.

In 1970, Goldmann published a controversial article in *Foreign Affairs*. He articulated that "I am beginning to have doubts as to whether the establishment of the state of Israel as it is today…was the fullest accomplishment of the Zionist idea" (Goldmann, 1970), criticising Israel's strong position towards Palestinians. He was concerned that this agenda, if sustained, would jeopardise Israel's existence. Although Goldmann's anchoring would seem to base on the practical concerns related to Israel's "physical" survival in the post-1967 War context, there was a deeper layer of analysis in it. In this vein, Goldmann added that "the tremendous effort which Israel had to make in order to maintain its military strength…naturally defects a large part of its creative resources from cultural and spiritual endeavours" (*ibid*). Upon a closer inspection, it was criticism towards Israel's perpetuating militaristic approach which

was not only overshadowing the principles of Herzl's statehood vision, i.e., reaching the "Jewish cultural renaissance" (Taylor, 1974, p. 172). It was also diverging from the progressive *Yishuv* era practices, such as egalitarian social program and direct democracy – that once set a revolutionary example for communal survival (Chomsky, 1972).

Goldmann powerfully captured the ontological clash between the initially imagined Zionist agenda and reality on the ground. Yet, it was not the only critique of the time. Many scholars and politicians from Israel's left also problematised the state's continuous sociospatial expansion and social unease it brought. By the mid-1970s, they reached a consensus: political Zionism reached an impasse. They sought to reform the political Zionism which would in turn solve the country's Palestinian Question in general and reductionist traditional-communitarian logic in particular. Driven by the assumption that the Zionist utopia was originally rooted in normative goals such as emancipation and enlightenment, a group of scholars –recognised as the liberal Zionists–[112] claimed that the political Zionism needed to be revisited to answer Israel's enigmas.

For instance, Amos Elon strongly criticised the Israeli leaderships for being short visioned as they separated the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian communities from each other in the post-*Yishuv* context, which was argued to facilitate the current tragedy. Consequently, he proposed liberalisation of the Zionist thought, albeit

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[112] Preceding the liberal Zionists, there was a small non-Zionist group called the "Canaanites". It was active during the *Yishuv* and Israel's early periods. The Canaanites rejected the concepts of secular-national Israeliness and nationhood, embracing a *boundaryless* community vision (see Diamond, 1986). Their influence resonated at the minds of 1970s' intellectuals who neither aligned with the Zionist left nor the right. Among them, Jacob Talmon (1975) articulated his criticisms towards the rising ethnoreligious nationalism in Israel and the country's reliance on the IDF as a main instrument to attain its national interests. Like Talmon, George Tamarin (1973) also expressed his critical points as explored below.

remained unclear about its extent (Elon, 1971). Another point was raised by Amos Oz (1983; 1989), pointing out the incompatibility of the Ashkenazi cadres' fantasised conceptions of the Israeli society and statehood in the contemporary context. For Oz (1983), these fixed notions impose sharp contrasts to various communities in Israel; thus, adopting of humanism-oriented Zionism would offer an effective paradigm in terms of state ruling practices as well as establishing an intergroup dialogue platform and mitigating the detrimental impacts of inflammatory movements, i.e., Gush Emunim. Here, it is vital to remember that the policies in the 1970s' Israel were going hand in hand with the heightened Judaisation process and Revisionist-messianic settler movements. The interaction between these two phenomena was believed to further intensify the conundrum in Israel and seen as, by Oz's words, "ethno-centric, 'redemptionist', and apocalyptic – quite simply inhuman. And un-Jewish" (*ibid*, p. 133).

Oz's final account was particularly absorbing because the surfacing of Gush Emunim and hawkish parties in Israel was an alarming event for many Israelis (Oz, 1983). Then, these developments motivated the left-wing communities in Israel to organise various peace groups in the following period such as the Labour-linked Peace Now. Similar to the Peace Now, some prominent scholars and former IDF generals, such as Ya'akov Arnon and Matti Peled, founded the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (ICIPP) in 1976. The ICIPP (2000) 1) affirmed that this land –Israel and the OT– was the homeland of both Israelis and Palestinians, 2) recognised the PLO as a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and 3) called for bilateral negotiations. In this sense, the Peace Now emerged as an influential grassroots movement which raised the profile of the Palestinian Question, while the ICIPP acted

as a niche initiative since it engaged private dialogues with the PLO leadership and then reported these meetings to the top Labour leadership, including then-PM Rabin (Hermann, 2003).

There are three points worth distilling about the liberal Zionism debate. It was the first critique that appeared in the close Labour cycles, exploring the divergences from the initial Zionist programme. In doing so, they travelled back in time and questioned the dysfunctional state practices and group-level attitudes that were promoted during and after Israel's formative years, including the monolithic understanding of Israeliness vis-à-vis the Other(s). Following their critiques, they offered various solution agendas such as embracing liberal guidelines.

Second, the liberal Zionists were in a dynamic relationship with various peace groups. Like the critiques themselves, they also appeared for the first time in Israel, if one does not count the short-lived Israeli Peace Committee in the 1950s. In parallel with the PLO's revision of its "wiping out Israeli state and society" stance in 1974 and Israel's signing of Camp David agreement with Egypt in 1979, these peace movements framed the Palestinian Question through lenses of equality and rule of law at the core, albeit referencing national security concerns. Thus, they offered a preliminary platform which promoted peaceful repertoire and accommodative approaches towards the solution of the intractable conflict – that was a key narrative shift in the Israeli psyche. Equally important, they established an indirect communication line between the Labour cadres and the PLO, although the latter was regarded as a terrorist body in the state mind. Then, the peace groups also helped to remove the "talking with terrorists" taboo at least at the leadership level.

Third, the liberal Zionist accounts remained limited in scope and were somehow addressed within the boundaries of the political Zionism. They mostly avoided clashing with the core Zionist narratives, e.g., national myths. Nonetheless, these early critiques would pioneer a comprehensive debate in Israel that would go beyond the Zionist scholarship and polity. Intersecting with the conjectural factors explored below, they created a momentum for diverse critical groups emanated from Israel's left but located outside the Zionist cycles, i.e., the emerging post-Zionist movement led by the "Critical Sociologists" and "New Historians". This phenomenon deserves attention in making better sense of the Israeli society's partial transition into a pluralistic and liberal outlook in the 1980s, which also echoed on the Labour programmes.

Against Israel's turbulent political environment which disproportionately intensified from the mid-1970s onwards, military laws and historical archives were declassified in Israel and the UK in the 1980s (Blomeley, 2005). A new and sceptical generation of intellectuals and practitioners, who were socialised at the height of Israel's ontological crisis and intergroup conflict between the 1960s-1970s, began to conduct in-depth studies by utilising these unearthed materials which later constituted the backbone of the post-Zionist accounts. Specifically, they deconstructed the documents focusing on Israel's political and military history, e.g., the practices of the Ashkenazi leadership and Jewish paramilitaries (later the IDF) during and after the *Yishuv* period. Then, they established strong links between, for example, Zionism and European colonialism, i.e., the policies imposed on the Mizrahim and Palestinian Other(s) (Kimmerling, 1983; Bernstein and Swirski, 1982); the Zionist ethos formulating the Israeli collective identity and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Shafir,

1989); the ethnocentric mindset of the Israeli leadership and the al-Nakba, e.g., the dispossession of the Palestinian lands (Morris, 1987). These unorthodox accounts not only challenged the prevailing volume of scholarship based on their one-sided analysis of Israeli history. As put by Simha Flapan (1988, p. 6), they also opened "Pandora's box" as they questioned the core principles of the Israeli state and society, seeking to critically approach the Zionist collective ethos empowering individual, group and national levels of actions.[113] In doing so, they problematised the now-defunct "progressive" stance and national narratives of the Labour Zionism. These narratives were believed to cancel out the individual agency and push Palestinians and Mizrahim to the margins of the society, motivating them to adopt extreme positions. In a sense, they echoed the lines of Tamarin who lost his position at Tel Aviv University after questioning the cultural-Biblical narratives of Zionism (Independent, 1997). He argued that:

> [There is an] opposition between 'Israeli creed' –the ideal of a democratic, egalitarian, progressive and enlightened society– and theocratic-racist laws, a chauvinistic atmosphere…This contradiction…namely –whether the direction of development of the country progresses towards a harmonious integration in contemporary civilization, or towards enclosement– is the *Israeli* problem (Tamarin, 1973, p. 9).

After a decade, the post-Zionist accounts then begun deepening Tamarin's analysis on the paradox of values that shaped the *Israeli* problem. Segev (1986), for example, argued that questioning the Zionist imaginations would demonstrate that the

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[113] Not all post-Zionists directly aim at negating the official ethos. Ben-Moshe (2004) places them into two categories: positive and negative post-Zionists. The "positive" group, such as Ben Morris, claims that although its wrongdoings, Zionism accomplished its historical objective of founding a national homeland. Then, Israel must proceed to the post-Zionist era to avoid any ideological clashes. The "negative" group, such as Ilan Pappe, argues that Zionism embodies racist and colonialist nature. Therefore, it must be questioned, and then abandoned for peaceful collective existence.

official myths and narratives contradict with historical reality, e.g., the peaceful-loving image of the IDF versus Israel's unending wars with "non-Jewish" Other(s). Another paradox was described by Shafir (1989) who focused on the nationalist and exclusionist modernisation trajectory in Israel that opposed the much-promoted egalitarian inspirations of the state, e.g., the "melting pot" doctrine. He argued that these counterproductive practices must be decolonised to arrange social peace in Israel. Pappe (1992; 1995) would carry these critical accounts to a new level en route to the Oslo process and problematise the Zionist characteristic of Israel that propagates threat discourses and impose a barrier against achieving of a democratic and harmonious society.

Three striking points of the emerging post-Zionist accounts must be explored. First, they focused on taken for granted narratives that were not previously challenged within scholarly and public cycles. In doing so, they not only interrogated the Zionist fabric of Israel and its future projection. They also problematised the relationship between Israel's collective narratives and intractable conflict from a historically informed way, which also nuanced the original analysis conducted in this very thesis. Here, their critical lens flourished during the zeitgeist of the Likud era practices that aimed to delegitimise and "forget" the Labour's network of ontological security system. This hegemonic clash offered post-Zionists a laboratory environment. In this environment that they explored the knotty official practices and sophisticated their accounts on how the in-/out-group dynamics were configured and reconfigured in Israel and then played themselves out vis-à-vis the social, political, and security relations.

Second, the post-Zionist movement sought to distance itself from the two hegemonic forms of Zionism in deconstructing the Israeli leaderships' practices. Adopting this neutral position was a conscious choice. By drawing critical lines between Israel's past and present, it powerfully expressed that there was *alternative* trajectory(ies) to imagine Israel's future which should not necessarily represent the ontological properties of either the Ashkenazi or Likud elites. The ontological reference points empowering both Zionist camps' political claim-making provided the post-Zionist accounts antitheses in dreaming of ethnically and religiously diverse collective existence in Israel against uniformly national-secular or Judaist society. In other words, their symbolic positioning practice was a creative act. It did not only help them imagining the alternative way(s) of collective *being* in Israel. It also offered them an inclusive and equal way of restructuring Israel's future sociopolitical matrix.

Third, their progressive outlook inspired the emergence of the non-Zionist peace groups which recognised the Palestinian political party, e.g., Hadash, as their central partners.[114] For Uri Avnery, a prominent peace activist, this would help Israelis to grasp the "Palestinian feelings, political realities, psychological realities, and emotional realities which are absolutely essential to any struggle for a solution" (Hall-Cathala, 1990, p. 79). Resonant with Avnery's insight, "There is a Limit" (see Yesh-Gvul, 2020) called for civil disobedience concerning the IDF operations in the Lebanon War. Alongside antimilitaristic programs, two patterns of peace activism emerged in this period, women's movements and Mizrahi-led groups. The latter, such as "Women in Black" (*Nashim BeShahor*), organised mass protests during the first

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[114] They coordinated with the Labour-led movements, such as the Peace Now, albeit their divergences.

intifada and criticised the male dominance in public and security sectors (see JWA, 2020), while the former led "East for Peace" (*HaMizrach LeShalom*), seeking to remove stigmas being attached to Mizrahim and promote peaceful integration with Palestinians (Benvenisti et al., 2019). Thus, these novel movements not only advocated for the peaceful transition of the conflict but also aimed to challenge strict boundaries imposed on various ethnicities, religions, and genders in Israel – that problematised asymmetrical power relations in the society from the Israeli-Palestinian inequality to the Orientalising approaches towards Mizrahim.

The key debates distilled above on the puzzle of modernity, secularism, Judaisation, and the Israeliness-Palestinianness binary reading were prominent testaments that Israel's long-held ontological crisis about defining the state and society's autobiographical narratives and behavioural codes was far from being mitigated. The revival of these questions with reference to doing, acting, and being seems to have been the product of both national and global developments of the 1980s, such as the sharp increase in Israel's population after new migration flows from the stagnating Soviet space whose emigration decision was not driven by the Zionist ideals (Leshem and Shuval, 1998), and domestic factors, such as the Likud's assertive free-market model, aiming to dismantle *Histadrut* and its collectivist philosophy. These colossal developments did not only bring unprecedented heterogeneity to the Israeli life from civil society and private media to the educational and cultural fields (see Lehman–Wilzig, 1991).[115] They also challenged the top-down disseminated, trauma-laden and monolithic social imaginaries occupying the Israeli mind, pushing the

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[115] For Pappe (2011), non-Zionist cultural products, such as movies and newspapers (e.g., *Hadashot*), became mainstream in this era. They promoted anti-war and anti-occupation mindset.

society to isolate itself in this "dangerous" geography. Against this backdrop, an increasing number of Israelis, particularly the young generation, began to embrace more individualistic values than collectivist ethos, e.g., showing less interest to serve in the military (Sharabi, 2015), while gradually starting to consider the Zionist narratives as the "product of late nineteenth century nationalism, as ineffective, irrelevant, or obsolete" (Silberstein, 1999, p. 96).

These cognitive relocations unfolding in intellectual and public spaces highlighted a new, emerging Israeli collective mode of being which was struggling to find its own voice. Seen in this light, the fundamental critiques discussed in this section firstly reflected about "the ways in which [Israeli and Jewish] identities are understood and lived in the future" (*ibid*, p. 10). Via powerful channels, e.g., peace movements, they secondly expressed the diversifying public's demands on the future social and political trajectory(ies) of Israel. This search for a peaceful state and society facilitated the background for an emerging notion, namely peaceful coexistence. The next section will trace how various critics echoed at the Labour cadres' discursive and practical performances and then explore the main bones of this notion.

5.3.2. Labour in Flux: Hearing Critiques and Dreaming of "Pragmatic Peace"

The growing demand for a pluralistic and egalitarian society in the 1980s was a beacon that "the object agenda of the state and the subjective preoccupation of significant segments of the population [were] shifting from Zionist to post-Zionist concerns" (Kelman, 1998, p. 47). In this sense, the above section shed light on how the society's subjective needs were gravitating around alternative ways of collective existence.

Then, how can we make sense of the shifts taking place within the state domain in general and the Labour cycles more specifically? In exploring these developments, the intense contestations that the Labour received from opposite polar of the political spectrum must be briefly recapped.

On the one end of this spectrum, there was a Likud-led camp. They contested the secular-national Israeliness norm –a "homeostatic tendency" of the Ashkenazi elites– and instrumentalised the Judaism counter-narrative as a new formative basis to reimagine collective existence in Israel which would represent their own sociopsychological fabric. In doing so, the Likud elites selectively remembered the pre-*Yishuv* era Jewish traditions and practices which were believed to represent something else than traumatic legacies and non-civilised way of life against the Ashkenazi's subjective interpretations. This would not only undercut the social legitimacy of the early Israeli leadership but also help reconnecting the nation with its ethnoreligious bonds and ancestor's God.

On the other end, there was Israel's left which had until the 1970s been upholding the Labour's hegemonic establishment. Driven by the tectonic shifts in the society, the left was split into two major groups and questioned the practices of both Zionist schools. Here, the liberal Zionist left sought to trace the "original sin" causing the social disharmony in Israel (Masalha, 2011, p. 17). With this regard, most of them expressed their grievances towards the sociospatial expansion of Israel after the Six Day War and promoted humanism-oriented Zionism as a solution. The post-Zionists, however, went back to the nation building period to locate that *sin* and systematically questioned 1) the modus operandi and political ascendency of the strong state institutions, e.g., the IDF, and 2) the ways in which different hegemons imposed their

296

community mindset on the society. Then, they fantasised about alternative ways for sociopolitical revival in the contemporary Israel.

Cognizant of these decentred contestations –or more of collective catharsis– and society-wide changes, the Labour/Alignment programmes of the late 1970s and 1980s were inclined to accept the inconsistencies between Israel's discriminative position towards Palestinians and the Israeli democratic values that could not "coexist" (Oren, 2019, p. 10). In this nexus, the strong dovish relocations in the high-profile Labour cycles began to unfold as early as 1982. Following the IDF's invasion of Lebanon, leading peace movements, including the Peace Now, organised huge demonstrations across Israel. The activists concluded one of their largest protests, "March for a Sane Zionism", in Tel-Aviv Museum where Israel's Declaration of Independence was ratified (Hall-Cathala, 1990, p. 57). This event was significant not only because it embodied symbolic meaning(s). For example, the museum was carefully selected to "remind the nation of the forgotten principles of the Declaration of Independence" upon which Israel was founded to ensure "complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants" (*ibid*). It was also important because the campaigns emphasising on justice and universal civil rights for the Palestinian minority and calling for withdrawal from the OT were supported by all dovish parties in Knesset. Accompanying these developments, Shimon Peres, the Labour party chairman between 1977-1992 and a prominent politician who would play an active role in the Oslo process, harshly criticised the war in Lebanon. More importantly, he

went beyond this recent invasion context and stressed the urgent need for accommodative means to solve the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict:[116]

> Israeli Labour Party, which I represent, understood long ago that in negotiations and in peace, in contrast to war, there does not exist a sole and crushing decision. Negotiations for peace are built on patience, on discussion and also on compromise, including territorial compromise…(Peres, 1982, p. 281).

There are two points in Peres' lines that discursively signalled major sociopsychological transformations. First, it marks an ontological shift in the reading of Palestinians – a shift from the "threatening" Other to the "partner" Other, undermining the reproducing binary reading. Second, it indicates a rupture towards the routinised conflict management method, namely the IDF's "biopolitical containment" agenda aiming to "de-Otherise" the land. Following this, Peres underscored that he was "dream[ing] of a democratic, but also Jewish, state" (DW, 2016) – vowing latent changes with regards to the ethnic Jewishness emphasis of the state's characteristics as defined in the *Basic Laws of Israel* as explored below. Upon a closer look, Peres' *dream* was articulated as a self-criticism towards the narrow-minded and traditional-communitarian logic which Israel was trapped in. As a paragon of this outlook, a year before the national elections, Peres argued that there were two camps in Israel:

> …the grandiose school [referring to Likud]…which is blinded by its own rhetoric and which fills the people with a spirit of fanaticism and intolerance...Opposite that school [referring to the new Labour] is the more difficult school of true policies, and one which knows *what is wanted*, but which also recognizes *what is possible*. It is the school that is

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[116] Some scholars (e.g., Ben-Porat, 2005) read Peres' agenda as neoliberal vision to peace. His agenda certainly benefited from neoliberal concepts, e.g., regional cooperation. However, it also adopted a broader social and historical lens in settling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (explored below).

true to the *generations-old dream of our people*…[Israel's current] tragedy is the result of [Likud's] pipe dreams. (emphasis added, Rowland and Frank, 2002, p. 181).

The speech cited above is vital in understanding Peres' early accounts indicating major revisions in social, military, and legal fields. In this sense, he first recognised the current divergences from the initial Zionist programme which was depicted as the generations-old dream – solving the centuries-old Jewish Question. Then, he acknowledged the subjective wants/needs of the transitioning Israeli society against the singularity logic imposed on them, albeit with a pinch of caution. In other words, the Labour elites adopted a pragmatic position in dreaming of the future sociopolitical matrix of Israel. It would be free from divisive, primordial and sectarian connotations, and yet seeking to attain what is "doable". This new community imagination would transform the Israeli Jews' trauma-driven and self-isolationist way of life by offering an alternative, pluralist mode of existence encompassing the Palestinian Other – recognised as peaceful coexistence.

For Bar-Tal (2004, p. 253), peaceful coexistence refers to a "state of mind shared by society members who recognize the rights of another group to exist peacefully as a legitimate, equal partner with whom disagreements have to be resolved in nonviolent ways". Reaching this ontological category not only requires profound social changes grounded on, among others, multiculturalism, mutual trust, and understanding. Within the context of intractable conflicts, it also intrinsically suggests deep psychological and emotional reconfigurations towards long-attached group-level goals, narratives and self-images so that two conflicting parties reach a joint platform, e.g., developing "harmonious intergroup relations" (*ibid*, p. 256) and progressing towards lasting and equitable coexistence (Kriesberg, 1998). Thus, promoting

peaceful coexistence mindset would facilitate a reconciliatory environment where Palestinians and Israelis could learn to share the common space and normalise their intercommunal relations. I argue that the core principles represented in the peaceful coexistence framework begun to reflect over the practical field following the 1984 national elections in Israel.

5.3.3. Evolving Framework: Towards a Democratic and Multicultural Israel?

Set against the Lebanon War's bewildering setting, the Labour managed to win more seats than Likud in 1984. However, the party could not establish a left-wing coalition which resulted in Israel's fourth national unity government. The new government involved in an "unprecedented" power sharing agreement where the Labour and Likud decided to rotate the high-profile positions in two years, PM and FM positions, while equally dividing cabinet seats (Moskowitz, 2001). Although this outcome did not exactly symbolise another hegemonic shift, it powerfully articulated the demands of the transforming society; and pertinently provided political space for the Labour to effectively disseminate the peaceful coexistence mindset through two major channels: new national education programme and intercommunal meetings. These are explored below starting with the former.

Following the election, the Labour MP Yitzhak Navon was appointed as the minister of education. Shortly after his employment, the Ministry declared a new programme called the Education for Coexistence. It officially recognised the "relations between Jews and Arabs inside Israel as an issue of civil equality and way of life in a multicultural country and relations of Israel and its Arab neighbours as an

issue of relations between nations" (Hochman, 1986, p. 3). In this sense, the programme placed the domestic challenges of the Palestinian minority at its core but also acknowledged the bigger picture, Israel's tumultuous interactions with its close geography, like Peres himself. As a major step ahead to address Israel's struggle to evolve into a democratic and pluralistic society, this novel agenda integrated Palestinian (and Arab at large) history, culture as well as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into the school curriculums. For instance, educational textbooks and extra curriculum activities, e.g., national commemorations, were revised to negate the isolated state myth of Israel and combat stereotypical descriptions of Palestinians, while the glorification of the IDF somewhat declined (Podeh, 2001). In this vein, new courses, such as the "Education for Coexistence and Democracy" and the "Arab-Israeli Conflict" (Oren, 2019, p. 175), were introduced to inoculate optimistic visions about peace both at national and regional levels. These extensive activities did not only stay within the knowledge-making field. They were also extended into a public space which constituted another prominent leg of the peaceful coexistence framework.[117]

According to Abu-Nimer (2004), intercommunal meetings, e.g., the "Humus and Labneh" gatherings, between the Palestinian minority and Israeli Jews gradually started in the late 1970s after the burgeoning cultural awakening in the society. Only after the mid-1980 that these programmes providing Israelis an opportunity to learn

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[117] In 1985, the *Basic Law: The Knesset* (ILO, 2021) was amended to prevent the election of candidates if they imply/express one of the following: 1) "negation of the existence of the State of Israel as the state of Jewish people", 2) "negation of democratic character of the State", and 3) "incitement of racism" (*ibid*). It was for the first time that Israel emphasised on its "democratic" nature. The scope of this amendment specifically dealt with the MP elections. It would soon to be expanded en route the Oslo process as explored below.

about the *missing* Palestinians begun to focus on mutual recognition and coexistence, promoting Navon's maxim, "[Palestinians] and Jews are destined to live together" (cited in Abu-Nimer, 2001, p. 237). United under the "Intervention Programmes" umbrella, a number of NGOs and state-sponsored bodies, such as *Beit Hagefen* (2020), incorporated the coexistence framework into their activities. They highlighted the integral roles of the Palestinian minority and Israeli Jews contributing towards their conflict and offered a dialogue platform between the two communities. For example, *Wahat al-Salam*/*Neve Shalom* (2020) was one of the most effective body advocating for justice and equality between the two communities based on its ethnic and interfaith coexistence agenda. Together with other prominent bodies, such as *Givat Haviva* (2020) and *Van Leer Institute* which was defined as a key institute promoting the post-Zionist ideas and assisted the government to implement the revised curriculum (Gutwein, 2001), *Wahat al-Salam*/*Neve Shalom* organised several joint projects and encounter meetings in its *School for Peace* and *Pluralistic Spiritual Center* in the 1980s. These organisations enabled thousands of people to gather, while tackling with the perpetual impact of Israel's sociospatial expansions and the current conflict in Lebanon.

The peaceful coexistence framework represented a dramatic break towards the heavy emphasis on the trauma-laden national survival and threat narratives informing the discourses and behaviours of the Israeli leadership and society since 1948. In the knowledge-making field, the framework endorsed a multicultural mindset as opposed to the singular community logic disseminated after the legislation of the *State Education Law* in 1953. It was for the first time that the Israeli education system sought to emancipate individuals from their duties of defending the "*small*" nation.

This paragraph was spearheaded by the key ministries, such as the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture and Sport, which attributed great value to the "citizen's rights" and "universalistic aspect of citizenship while allotting national values a much more minor role" (Ichilov et al., 2005, p. 308). The trading of imagined national symbols with the universal-liberal outlook not only promoted psychological and performative changes with the help of synchronous encounter programmes. It also promoted "a total reversal of the pre-eminence of Zionist values during the Yishuv period and first years of statehood" (*ibid*).

In other words, the peaceful coexistence agenda aimed to redelineate the in-/out-group boundaries of Israeliness and reshaping national biographies in a way to provide an alternative cognitive framework for action based on human rights, a sense of equality, multiculturalism and intercommunal tolerance. In doing so, it forced agents to self-interrogate their long-attached self-images and behavioural routines (Innes and Steele, 2013), which would in turn catalyse projected sociopsychological transformations through internal "debates" (Giddens, 1991). Then, the early statehood practices and Likud's traditional-communitarian mindset provided the new Labour a fertile basis for meta-narrative comparisons for these dislocatory debates "in the process of deconstructing of [Israel's] monolithic identity" (Maoz et al., 2002, p. 934).

Consequently, this broadening social contract would help the Israeli majority to adopt new political routines and mentaliy/ies that would remove psychological barriers obstructing peace with the previously alienated Other. Quite remarkably, the Israeli majority's beliefs towards the peaceful solution of the intractable conflict demonstrated a sharp increase from 57% in 1986 to 77% in 1991, while the overwhelming majority (74%) preferred peace talks with the PLO over military

engagement in 1991 (Arian, 1992, p. 122), two years after Arafat's denouncing of terrorism. What is vital to be reckoned here was the ongoing first *intifada* (1987-1992) that intersected with Arian's research period. For Waxman (2006), Israel's coercive practices during the first *intifada* contradicted with the universalistic values in Israel, while Sucharov (2005, p. 41) claimed that the violent encounters provoked "cognitive dissonance" between Israel's embraced identity and behavioural performances, specifically referring to the inconsistencies with the IDF's "defensive warrior" narrative. Both scholars agreed that these narrative clashes were the main factors paving Israel's way to the Oslo Accords. In light of Arian's poll data, the analysis conducted throughout this chapter might complement these accounts.

In this sense, the prevalent peaceful coexistence mindset which 1) was framed around the themes of social harmony and democratic stance to cope with Israel's worsening intractable conflict, and 2) provided Israelis alternative cognitive framework for action was the product of major sociopsychological transformations taking place at many domains of the Israeli state and society since the mid-1970s. Thus, the first *intifada* can be seen as a push factor that forced Israelis to deeply reconsider their mistreatment of the Palestinian Other in general and their plural(ising) and democrat(ising) self-image in particular. This can be powerfully traced in the policy revisions unfolded across Israel and in the OT, aiming to contain the destructive leverage of the first *intifada* against the progress made towards the Other. As reflected in Peres' memoir (1995), these interventions included, for example, 1) the restructuring of the IDF's regulations vis-à-vis the employment of cohesive power, and 2) loosening the authoritative *Emergency Regulations (Security) Zones Law* (5709-1949) and *Land Requisition Law* (5710-1949). If nothing else, the "no more

Occupation" message ran the first *intifada*'s explicit caveat to all segments of the Israeli society, forcing the narrow Likud government (1990-1992)[118] to join the US-sponsored peace talks with the Palestinian delegation at the Madrid Conference (1991) which sought to restructure the Middle East after the Gulf War. It was a symbolic watershed demonstrating that even the hawkish parties began to recognise the Palestinian reality, albeit unwillingly.

This short-lived government followed by the Labour coalition's victory in 1992 which also included members of the Peace Now represented by the Meretz Party. The new Israeli leadership revitalised the momentum of peaceful coexistence framework which would soon penetrate all venues of the Israeli sociopolitical life and be incorporated as an instrument to solve Israel's intractable conflict with the Palestinian Other in particular and Arabs in general through the Oslo I and II Accords (1993 and 1995).

5.3.4. "New Israel" and "New Middle East": Settling Israel's Intractable Conflict

The new venues to advance this accommodative mindset were reflected on the practical domain immediately after the establishment of the Labour government in 1992 where Rabin acted as the PM, while Peres became the FM– the two architects of the Oslo Accords along with Arafat. In line with the democrat(ising) angle of the modified *Knesset Law* (1985), the parliament passed the *Basic Law* called the *Human*

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[118] This brief power shift to Likud is frequently explained as the Labour's involvement to a political scandal in an attempt to form a left-wing government in 1990 – recognised as the "dirty trick" (Jewish Ledger, 2016).

Dignity and Liberty. This new code pursued a constitutional revision to redefine the state's self-image, amending Israel's ethnic "Jewish" characteristic as "Jewish and Democratic" (Knesset, 2020d).[119] The law also articulated major changes towards the modus operandi of strong state apparatuses, echoing Peres' policy revisions above. In this sense, it aimed to "protect human dignity and liberty", while highlighting that "all government authorities are bound to respect" these rights which were driven by "the principles set forth in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel" (*ibid*) – anchoring the peace movements' long-standing efforts.[120] In agreement with the expanding boundaries of the Israeli sociopolitical matrix, it officially declared to safeguard the forgotten rights of "Other" inhabitants of Israel notwithstanding their background, destabilising the undeclared status quo of the Israeli Jewish majority. In the same year, Rabin's Knesset speeches heralded that the government was ready to *export* the peaceful coexistence framework:

> No longer are we necessarily 'a people that dwells alone,' and no longer is it true that 'the whole world is against us.' We must overcome the sense of isolation that has held us in its thrall for almost half a century. We must join the international movement toward peace, reconciliation and cooperation that is spreading over the entire globe…(IMFA, 2020c).

Against this backdrop, the early 1993 Knesset discussions revealed that the Labour was preparing a legal basis to engage behind-the-scenes talks with the PLO,

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[119] For the Israel Democracy Institute report (IDI, 2007, p. 185), Jewishness of the state was framed in a way that does not contradict with the introduction of the democrat(ising) mindset. The law strongly emphasised that "[Israel's] sovereignty lies in its community of citizens, including the non-Jewish community".

[120] In this sense, the powers of the Israeli High Court were enhanced. It announced itself as the "constitutional court" to ensure the protection of liberal and universalistic values, while establishing a checks-and-balances system to hinder actions against "enlightenment" and "democracy" – that sparked tensions in the religio-conservative cycle, seeing it as "non-Jewish" (Kimmerling, 2001, p. 77). Also, for the first time in Israel, two Israeli Palestinians, Nawaf Massalha and Walid Yahia, were appointed in ministerial roles.

i.e., revoking the law that prohibited liaising with it (New York Times, 1993a). Shortly after this development, the PLO adjusted its 1968 Covenant and recognised "the right of Israel to exist" and in turn Israel declared the PLO as "the representative of Palestinians" – exclusively referred to those in the OT (IMFA, 2020d).[121] Then, the secret negotiations with the PLO were announced which followed by the signing of the Oslo I Accord. In light of these rapidly unfolding developments, on 13 September 1993, Israelis awakened to a new reality in which Israel would adopt the UN Security Council Resolutions, Resolution 242 (UN, 1967) and Resolution 388 (UN, 1973), and withdraw from the West Bank (except for some Israeli settlements) and Gaza Strip in five years. This would not only ensure the peaceful transferal of the Israeli military government's powers in the OT to the Palestinian self-government (hereafter the Palestinian Authority, or the PA). It would also serve to attain the overarching aim of the agreement:

> Put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict, recognize their mutual legitimate and political rights, and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation…(IMFA, 2020e).

This long-awaited reconciliation endeavour symbolised something more than a territorial agreement for Israel. The projected impact of the peace process should be read together with the following lines of Peres who published his "The New Middle East" book shortly after the signing of the Oslo I:

> [We have] witnessed the emergence of two contradictory trends: particularist nationalism and ultranational development of regional communities. In every area in which the first has staked a claim, the social order has been subverted and hostility and violence have taken

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[121] This representation case is explored in Chapter 5.3.5.

root…In contrast, everywhere the ultranational trend predominates, there is sensitivity to human needs…leading to a more lasting international order that strives for prosperity, development, and human rights. Western Europe is a shining example of this (Peres, 1993, p, 73).

Developing his argument above, Peres highlighted the outdatedness of nationalist ideas and institutions to address the society's contemporary needs (*ibid*, p. 81). It would, however, harvest its own solution: eventually facilitating for a new sense of self ("self-awareness" and "personal identity") stepping "outside the national arena" (*ibid*). Raising on this new self-image case, he lastly added:

> …a new type of citizenship is catching on, with a new personal identity, for Europeans as members of a European society. The 'mother continent', on which most of the documented wars in history have been conducted, stands at the threshold of a new international reality based on peace and economic competition…We can enter into this type of partnership immediately. Even at the autonomy stage, Israel can form a real partnership with [the PA], based on wisdom and fairness…This will be the political significance of the passage from an economy of confrontation to an economy of peace, particularly at this most sensitive juncture in the complex relationship with Arabs and Israelis (*ibid*, pp. 98-99).

Cognizant of Rabin's breaking of trauma-laden self-image speech and the Oslo I's peaceful coexistence philosophy, there are several points worth decoding in Peres' insights cited above. Echoing the critiques of Israel's left, Peres first employed a retrospective agenda and traced the original *sin* causing the current conflicts and intercommunal antagonism in the region. Accordingly, he self-interrogated the past practices driven by rigid nationalistic aspirations at home and abroad, which were believed to facilitate the violent developments and turbulent social order. Peres claimed that this particular identity maker employed to organise the state and society became irrelevant in delivering the contemporary human needs, contesting the strong nationalistic propellants and collective ethos of the imagined Israeliness. Second,

Peres imagined a sociopolitical matrix to address the present-day wants/needs following his subjective catharsis. In this sense, the alternative to the existing self-isolationist and divisive way of being was to foster a new sense of self. This new self would not only strive for peace and partnership in today's setting. It would also have the vision to go beyond the national boundaries in the near future, leaning towards a new type of citizenship with a cosmopolitan outlook.

The remarkable point is that Peres attempted to scale up the peaceful coexistence framework, which initially started as a domestic agenda, to a regional phenomenon. In doing so, he was inspired by the emerging EU project and its universal-liberal principles which were in line with the gradual changes unfolding in the Israeli state and society since the mid-1980s. Thus, the new self was imagined in a way to exceed the traditional-communitarian boundaries and embrace supranational values based on, for example, human rights and regional prosperity. With Israel's initiative, this normative formula would eliminate the long-attached confrontational mindset and promote peaceful relations both with the PA and Arabs. Thus, the Oslo peace process was "*the raison d'etre*" of Peres' holistic dream to the making of a new Israel and new Middle East (Wurmser, 1999, p. 12). In other words, it was inherently a transnational project. In the domestic dimension, it would powerfully consolidate the ongoing institutional attempts of formulating the *new* Israeliness with universal-civic notions at the core, while offering an operational platform to externalise this unique sense of self. In the foreign dimension, it would foster a *new* Middle East built on collective goals and values as well as neoliberal peace mindset as observed in Peres' "economy of peace" reference vis-à-vis the EU example. The latter component would "capitalise on new [economic and technological] opportunities" in the

globalising Middle East and consolidate the ongoing peace process (Ben-Porat, 2005, p. 59). In turn, this approach would not only mitigate antagonistic tendencies/insecurities, but also mark "a new era of international brotherhood in which national distinctions are trivialized and borders eliminated" (Elbaum, 1998). This found an immediate resonance. For example, Jordan proposed to establish a free-trade zone encompassing itself, Israel and the PA "similar to that which exists between Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg" (Clawson, 1994).

Thus, the Oslo peace process appeared as a master key to catalyse major sociopsychological transformations at national and regional levels – that would terminate the Israeli-Arab tensions in general and Israeli-Palestinian intractable conflict in particular. That being said, it also appeared as a "rupture or revision" moment (Innes and Steele, 2013, p. 20) between the disputed *past* and peaceful *future* – a transitional stage between the traumatic memories provoking ontological insecurity and the formulation of alternative ways of doing, acting and being. Here, Peres offered two opposite affective frames in describing the trajectory(ies) of the region: horrific and beatific scenarios. The former scenario referred to his description of the pre-Oslo period dominated by traditional-communitarian notions which provoked the intractable conflicts. The latter scenario fantasised about the future, the post-Oslo era, foregrounded on the new sense of self with universal-liberal and supranational outlook. By criticising the nationalist past and fantasising of the EU-like future, Peres suggested that only working towards to instil this new sense of self would ensure the beatific scenario where the ethnocentric ontological security-seeking routines are modified and in turn peaceful coexistence thrives both at home and abroad.

In order to progress towards the beatific side of this equation, peaceful coexistence was further promoted inside Israel. On the practical field, for example, a new committee was founded to introduce a citizenship education in spreading the democratic values and promoting the idea of citizenship as "a common value and behavioral framework for all Israeli citizens", while the main school theme of 1994-1995 was dedicated to "the peace process" (Ichilov et al., 2005, p. 309). Moreover, TV shows in Israel started to host the PLO leaders and humanely interview them, mitigating the binary reading of the Other (Bar-Tal, 2004). This was accompanied by increasing intercommunal activities organised by various NGOs, such as the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. The gravity of these practical developments could also be traced in the discursive field. For example, "27 percent of Rabin's speeches between 1993-1995 referred to peace", while he claimed that ensuring peace depended on transformations vis-à-vis "Israel's thinking and behaviour" (Oren, 2019, p. 172). Reflecting Rabin's transformation rationale, the deputy minister of education, Micha Goldman, first quoted the peace process in his *Haaretz* article and then offered to adjust Israel's national anthem and flag "in order to give expression to citizens who are not Jews" (cited in Hazony, 1996, p. 5). These lines powerfully demonstrated the multilevelness of the peaceful coexistence agenda in terms of cultivating a new Israeli sense of self and set of relations with Palestinians at home and in the newly founded PA.

These reconciliatory efforts engendered twofold developments. On the "bright" side of the coin, the major shifts unfolding in the Israeli leadership's discourses and practices accompanied by the parallel mindfulness that there was no single Israeli but *many* with whom Palestinians could work for a common cause both

inside Israel and abroad. In this sense, the democratic openings taking place since the mid-1980s drew the Palestinian minority closer to the Israeli Jewish majority, which reached a peak point between 1993-1996 – referred to as a "golden age" of the Palestinian citizens of Israel (Peleg and Waxman, 2011, p. 89). Furthermore, 74% of Palestinians polled in the PA were optimistic about the ongoing peace process (JVL, 2020g) – a promising sign facilitated by the ratification of the Oslo II Accords in 1995. It reaffirmed the principles of the first agreement and divided the OT into three zones:[122] Area A, B, and C. In Area A and B (40% of entire OT), the PA would act like a semi-state, e.g., organising its economy and education, while the IDF would have temporal security control until the permanent settlement. It was due to the Israeli settlements which begun to occupy the area in the post-1967 period (IMFA, 2020f). Area C (60% of the West Bank) would gradually be given to the PA's total control. Accordingly, the Oslo II introduced a new concept called the "Confidence Building Measures" which would safeguard the above points by fostering mutual respect and trust (*ibid*). The momentum of the Oslo II would be best captured behind Rabin's following lines. They not only revoked the Ashkenazi leaderships' denial of the Palestinian existence in the Ottoman Palestine but also outspokenly described the status quo:

> Here, in the land of Israel, we returned and built a nation…However, we did not return to an empty land. There were Palestinians here who struggled against us for a hundred wild and bloody years…Today, after innumerable wars and bloody incidents, we rule more than two million Palestinians through the IDF...We can continue to fight…But we can also try to put a stop to this never-ending cycle of blood. We can also give peace a chance (IMFA, 2020g).

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[122] As a follow-up agreement of the Oslo I, the Gaza-Jericho Agreement was signed in 1994. Then, the IDF withdrew from the Gaza Strip (excluding some Israeli settlements) and Jericho region in the West Bank.

A month after this notable speech, Rabin was assassinated by an ultranationalist Israeli, Yigal Amir, during a peace rally. This earthshattering event marked the mental collapse of the Oslo peace process. It step-by-step lost its momentum due to the zigzagging policies of subsequent Israeli governments. Prior to explaining this downfall, the "dark" side of the coin must be explored. In this sense, the Labour's comprehensive de-Judaisation and de-nationalisation efforts towards the Israeli collective existence provoked deep ontological insecurity among the other Israeli "half" endorsing the traditional-conservative values. The Labour not only utilised their subjective beliefs and ideas as negative reference points to devise a new sense of self but also actively silenced their voice during the resolution process. This suffocation was so intense that they even protested the Labour's peace rallies by carrying posters that depicted Rabin in the SS leader Himmler's uniform, while Peres was called as "the successor of Hitler the Nazi" (*Haaretz*, 2018d). The Oslo process was also attacked by the Likud's new leader Benjamin Netanyahu on the grounds that it depended on the votes of the Palestinian minority (Peled and Shafir, 2002), echoing the sidelined "half" rationale while discrediting the minority's political position. These psychologically challenging points were accompanied by the latest violent reality, the pro-Palestinian Islamist Hamas.[123] Applying historical anti-Semitic conspiracy theories (Hamas, 2020), Hamas rejected the peace process and organised several terror attacks in Israel and the PA, claiming dozens of lives between 1993-1995 (Kydd and Walter, 2002).

Seen in this light, Rabin's suicide marked the agent-level expression of these pressing developments in an extreme form. After his attack, Amir articulated that

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[123] It was in the formation stage during the first *intifada* as explored in Chapter 5.2.3.2.

Rabin denied Jewishness of the state and the commands of God during the Oslo peace process (CNN, 1995). Explaining his mental condition of that time, Amir's wife claimed that he was desperate during the resolution, thinking that "Rabin went against the wishes of at least half of the people. He disregarded all of the protests and voices that opposed him…There were constant horrific terrorist attacks. There was a feeling that this country was in imminent danger" (CJN, 2019). The anxious feelings of the "other half" were shortly manifested in the Likud's election victory in 1996, which instrumentalised the off-shot terror attacks by disseminating a powerful slogan: "Netanyahu – Making a Secure Peace".

The Oslo process and its projected gains represented the antitheses of the Likud's Revisionism. In this vein, Netanyahu, on the one hand, contested the post-Zionist revisions, e.g., emphasising more on the Jewish values of Israel in the school curriculum (Feldman, 2017), and denounced the peace process as "incompatible" with the historic right of Jews (Guardian, 2013). He also permitted the establishment of new Israeli settlements in the PA, which was "frozen" under the Rabin leadership, with Har Homa and Menora being the landmark cases. These developments raised serious questions in the Palestinian minds about the nature of the Oslo process – that was, for example, portrayed as Israel's "neo-colonialism" project operating under the guise of peace (see Nakhleh, 2014). Yet, Netanyahu was aware of new Palestinian reality, albeit disinterestedly. Then, he, on the other hand, reluctantly pursued the implementation of the Oslo, e.g., the Wye River Memorandum (1998) which would mean the withdrawal of the IDF from some parts of the Area C. Netanyahu's self-contradictory policies sparked another furious outburst among the traditional-religious strata, particularly after the signing of the Memorandum that clashed with the *Eretz*

Israel narrative. Fearing to lose the popular support, Netanyahu shortly made a radical turn, claiming to suspend the Oslo process and the IDF withdrawals (New York Times, 1998a). In a dialectic manner, Arafat signalled a return to the *intifada*-like violence in the same year (New York Times, 1998b). As a result of its vague trajectory, Likud was neither able to contribute to the Oslo process nor please its voters, which led to the party's temporal fragmentation into small Revisionist-messianic fractions until the 2001 realignment. Then, Knesset passed no confidence motion for Likud, prompting another national election in 1999 where the Labour was reelected with its new leader Ehud Barak, the shortest serving PM in Israel.

In his brief term, Barak promised to resume the Oslo process. He also recognised the urgent need to unite this deeply tormented society. In this sense, the Labour has seemed to quickly move towards the political centre. This reorientation did not only echo in its election platform "One Israel" but also the party leadership's populist appeal. It can best be located behind Barak's approach towards the historical "Others" of Israel, Mizrahim and Palestinian(s). For example, he initially pragmatically recognised the historical grievances of Mizrahim. According to veteran Israeli journalist Ben Simon (2016), Barak sought his advice to "steal the oriental [Mizrahim] votes" before elections. Then, he asked them to "forgive" the Ashkenazi leadership's policies in the 1950s, e.g., the "melting pot" doctrine and its secular(ising) trajectory. However, he abandoned this approach after the election (*ibid*). One difference of this could be Barak's extensive usage of the cultural-Biblical narratives. As he was neither involved in the *Eretz Israel* narrative nor the messianic feelings sustaining it, he employed these narratives in the same vein with Ben-Gurion in uniting the ontologically segregated nation (see IMFA, 2020j). Thus, his articulations stayed

within the rhetorical boundaries, unable to facilitating practical developments to advance the Mizrahi situation. Another paradox could be traced in his inaugural speech where Barak declared himself as the leader of "all Israeli citizens" but also expressed the need to "strengthen the components of [Israel's] national and Jewish identity…with the historical collective memory of all Jewish ethnic groups" (*ibid*).[124] Lastly, Barak seemed to read the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a hawkish lens. Mindful of the off-shoot Hamas attacks, he highlighted the need to develop the Israeli security policy which would involve strong "physical separation between [Israel] and Palestinians" (cited in Rowland and Frank, 2002, pp. 259-260).

If nothing else, Barak's trajectory demonstrated strong divergences from Rabin and Peres' "New Israel" and "New Middle East" project. It also sent mixed signals to the society both ideologically and emotionally, not to mention that it challenged the expanding boundaries of the Israeli sociopolitical matrix. Against this set of policies, which were at times inconsistent and did too little to unite the shattered Israeli society, Barak and Arafat met in the Camp David Summit (2000) to discuss the final terms of the Oslo process. Nonetheless, they failed to reach a permanent settlement, leaving various questions behind.

5.3.5. Return to the Intractable Conflict: Limits of the Universal-Liberal Outlook

On the material level, there were several points behind the failure of the peaceful coexistence project. To begin with, the Oslo Accords kept delaying discussions over

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[124] Unlike the Rabin and Peres leadership, Barak did not appoint any Israeli Palestinian in his cabinet.

the key issues, such as the final shape of the Israeli-Palestinian borders, the statue of Jerusalem and the Palestinian refugee issue. These unaddressed challenges became clearer following the Camp David Summit. They embodied themselves in two polarised camps that appeared immediately after the collapse of this unrecorded meeting. For the Israeli observers of the talks, Barak proposed Israel's most generous offer to the PA. It addressed some core questions, if not all, including the creation of a "demilitarised Palestinian state" on 92% of the West Bank and entire Gaza, granting the Palestinian refugees of right to return to the PA and dismantling the majority of the post-1967 Israeli settlements (Guardian, 2002). Other attendants, however, argued that Barak's territorial offers were "imprecise" (FMEP, 2000, p. 7), some implying Israel's annexation of "10.5% of the West Bank and Israeli security control over an additional 8.5% to 12% (the 'green areas') with no provision for making reciprocal land trades" (*ibid*). More critical audiences, like Edward Said (2000), even argued that the PA was offered only half of the West Bank as disconnected cantons. It would mean that the PA would exist as a non-contiguous entity operating under the IDF's watch. Among other critical divergences, there also seemed to have issues with the future of the Israeli settlements and the refugee question. For the Palestinian side, neither of these pressing subjects were addressed during the talks (Mendes, 2004).

Aside from these opposite camps' "blame game", there were two vital issues on the ground that destabilised the peaceful coexistence rationale which was agreed to be advanced by the "Confidence Building Measures" in 1995. On the one hand, Hamas terrorism continued with a mounting scale. The PA, as the self-proclaimed speaker of Palestinians, failed to take strong initiatives in terminating these attacks. In this sense, Arafat was unable to contain these attacks at best or ordered these violent moves to

push Israel pursuing the negotiations at worst. On the other hand, the Likud government (1996-1999) authorised the establishment of new settlements in the PA, deepening the presence of the Israeli settlers and the IDF. The critical issue here was that these expansions did not halt under Barak's short term. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the Barak leadership permitted the constriction of nearly 3,000 housing units in the PA (PIJ, 2000). Let alone endorsing peaceful coexistence, these developments provoked mutual scepticism and hostility in both camps long before the summit. In this volatile setting, Barak's proposal was a take-it-or-leave-it deal, insisting the PA to agree on the permanent status of Palestine. It was, however, seen as "surrendering" by Arafat (New York Times, 2000b).

Against these critical issues which could not facilitate material motivations to scale up peaceful coexistence, there was a four-layered sociopsychological issue. It explores two intertwined developments: the first examines why the peaceful coexistence framework could not foster social peace, while the second analyses sociopolitical shifts revealed following the failed peace process (2000-present). The first layer highlights Rabin's and Peres' failure to convince the Israeli majority about the peaceful coexistence framework that self-interrogated the behavioural routines and ethnicised narratives of the imagined Israeliness and sought to modify these rigid ontological security-seeking routines by embracing the post-Zionism-influenced agenda and its universal-liberal content. Although the society initially demonstrated its enthusiasm towards this pluralistic agenda, various opinion polls showed that the sociopolitical matrix does not move "schematically between inclusion and exclusion" (Pappe, 2011, p. 142). Before the Camp David talks, less than 46% of the Israeli Jews supported the Palestinian minority's integration into the society (e.g., having equal

rights), while 66% perceived that the minority was sympathetic towards the off-shot terror attacks (JVL, 2020k). Another timely survey indicated that half of the Israeli Jews supported the settlements in the West Bank (see McDowall, 1998), so does the IDF presence. Thus, having lacked a detailed execution agenda which would actively listen to the anxiety-laden voices during the peace process, e.g., the Amir case, and then "remove some existential questions from the table" (Mitzen, 2006b, p. 273), the peaceful coexistence framework could not foster a suitable cognitive platform where the historically shaped dichotomised reading between the self and "public threat" Other(s) can be reframed and echoed in everyday practices. In other words, the framework remained unproductive in facilitating an ontological common ground where "the majority of a society's members…form new beliefs about the former adversary, about their own society, and about the relationship between the two groups" (Bar-Tal, 2000, p. 356).

Building on the above point, the second layer is related to the ultimate objective of the framework – that is to formulate a "new Israel" and "new Middle East" where decades-long ethnic conflicts are eradicated by embracing multicultural and universal-liberal outlook valuing intercommunal trust, solidarity, and tolerance. In imagining so, however, Peres and Rabin invested less efforts to address the challenging issues provoking Israel's intractable conflict than attaining the beatific scenario. As articulated by Anton Shammas (New York Times, 1993b), a notable Palestinian writer, it required them to "master the art of forgetting", forcibly disremembering the Palestinians' abandoned villages and exposure to the discriminatory policies in Israel and the OT. Thus, the key question was to imagine the *future* peaceful coexistence without remembering the *past* of the Palestinian

communities and why they were psychologically shattered and physically dispersed in the first place. With these ignored historical injustices, sufferings and fears that facilitated and sustained the intractable conflict, the Palestinian minority had gradually evaluated the framework as a new method to pursue the Jewish domination (Maoz, 2000) and neo-colonial project (Nakhleh, 2014), especially after Likud's coming to the power in 1996, while only 20% of the PA residents believed that Israel would adopt the peace agreement in 1998 (JVL, 2020h). Herein, the Palestinian minority's sceptical stance towards the framework is merit to be further analysed.

As discussed in Chapter 5.2, the Palestinian minority was leaning towards transnational and transregional Palestinianness idea after the post-1967 sociospatial expansion of Israel – termed as re-Palestinianisation. Although they supported the first *intifada*, its conclusion by the Oslo Accords marked a critical watershed for them. The PLO, as the representative of all Palestinians, and the PA to be formed, as their higher political authority, neither made any reference to the Palestinian minority's past and present concerns, nor their future statue in Israel or beyond. For Said (1996, p. 29), it was accepting of "the division of our [Palestinian] people–whose unity we had fought for as a national movement since 1948". At this juncture, an opposite trend of re-Palestinianisation was observed among the minority – that is, Israelisation based on equal citizenship and rights (see Rekhess, 2002). Thus, the Labour's sociopsychological openings (1984-1996) towards the Palestinian minority which "remembered" their present-absenteeism in an ontological sense and aimed to integrate them to the centre of the Israeli state and society had a noteworthy impact. However, this Israelisation process was withdrawn in the post-Rabin era. Likud first revoked the democratic revisions which followed the Barak leadership's departure

from the peaceful coexistence mindset. Consequently, the Palestinian minority found itself in *limbo* – not only forgotten by the PA but also by the Israeli leadership once again.

Seen in this light, the peaceful coexistence engineered by Peres and Rabin sought to promote a new sense of collective existence, first catalysing national changes with the internal Palestinian "Other" in a way to include it into the expanding nation's centre. Raising on this national level changes, the framework, via the Oslo process, aimed at reconciling Israel's disputed trajectory with its Arab neighbours in general and the non-citizen Palestinian "Other" more specifically. These ontological shifts in the Israeli psyche in reformulating of its national and regional level relations would not only help them to destabilise their traumatic "us versus them" narrative – ensuring to eliminate their "psychological" ghetto. They would also mitigate their "Israeli David" surrounded by "Arab Goliath" anxiety – helping to escape from their "physical" ghetto. Nonetheless, Peres and Rabin (and particularly the following Israeli governments succeeding them) failed to grasp the dynamic "life cycle" of Israel's intractable conflict and the opposite ontological positions of Israeliness and Palestinianness. In other words, the Israeli leaderships neither fully understood the leverage of traumatic conflict memories acquired during the state formation period – that not only became instrumental elements to consolidate a particular collective identity but also shaped its psychological "security border" against the Palestinian Other(s). Nor did it gain experience from Israel's routinised discriminations against the material and ideological identity makers of the Palestinian Other(s). Culminating in these separate ontological worlds, an alternative cognitive framework where memory, agency and reconciliation interplay did not progress – in which groups would

not only grasp each other's existential fears and traumas, e.g., the al-Nakba and Holocaust, but also "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). On the contrary, these alternative proposals for ontological change were categorically challenged, marking the Israeli majority's *dynamic stickiness* to its historically shaped national agency and autobiographical narratives vis-à-vis the Palestinian Other(s). The magnitude of this particular ontological security resonance, however, intensified after the collapse of the peace process (2000-present).

In the wake of the Labour's failure to rebirth Israeliness as a universal-liberal collective identity rather than an ethnic one, the collapsed Camp David talks followed by four close events. First, Ariel Sharon, the new leader of Likud, made a controversial visit to the Temple Mount where the al-Aqsa mosque stands in September 2000, suggesting Israel's claim over East Jerusalem. Second, the IDF killed thirteen Palestinians protesting Sharon's visit. Third, Arafat called for the al-Aqsa *intifada* (or the second *intifada*) on the day of the killings. Four and last, Sharon came to the power in 2001 (receiving 62% of votes) with an ultrahawkish and ethnocentric programme – that not only marked the official collapse of the Oslo peace process. It also heralded Israel's relapsing into the pre-Oslo sociopolitical context, the horrific scenario.

As opposed to Rabin and Peres who had chosen to self-interrogate and replace the strong nationalist codes, within the third layer, Sharon heavily attached to the ethnic Jewishness narratives starting with his inauguration speech which praised Begin as a "national pride" (IMFA, 2020k). In governing the atmosphere of deep insecurity, mistrust and anxiety inside Israel, Likud embraced the historically-resonating

narratives and performative routines that represented ontological continuity.[125] In doing so, the Likud elites reaffirmed the antagonistic signposts attached to the Palestinian subjectivity, guiding agents to navigate their "self" in the world and distinguish from the "threatening" Others(s). For example, Sharon called Arafat as "murderer", "liar", and "bitter enemy" (Guardian, 2001), while the Palestinian minority was labelled as "disloyal" to the state (cited in Quigley, 2005, p. 223). Later, Sharon articulated that "we have been facing Arab –that later turned to be Palestinian– terror for over 120 years…we will continue to fight anyone who tries to destroy our people…As in the past, we shall stand united together…" (JTA, 2002), revitalising the family-in-arms logic in Israel.

This antagonistic stance did not only stay in the discursive space but also transcend to the practical field with the reapplication of the "double logic" in controlling the actions of the two-layered Palestinian(s). In this vein, the second *intifada* (2000-2005) and its destabilising impact on the Israeli state elites and society must be recapped in two dimensions. First, after the long and violent conflict with Palestinians, the Oslo process, albeit with its ups and downs, nurtured a belief that "the peace is within reach" (Grosbard, 2003, p. 182). This optimistic mood was revoked with the second *intifada*, powerfully reminding the Israeli leadership of the delayed/ignored Palestinian demands vis-à-vis the peace. Second, unlike the non-violent pattern of the first *intifada*, Palestinians employed firearms and organised regular suicide bombings in the second *intifada* both in Israel and the PA – that "paralyse[d] Israeli routines and economic and social life" (Kimmerling and Migdal,

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[125] E.g., the school textbooks evaluated to reflect the post-Zionist agenda were banned (Pappe, 2011).

2003, p. 393). These major developments coincided with the shocking 9/11 attacks after which Sharon claimed that they will join the "war on terrorism" alongside the US in this era where "Israel's national strength" was tested by "Arafat's policy of terrorism" (IMFA, 2020l). On the "internal" side of the double logic, the Palestinian minority who joined the second *intifada* to articulate their chronic present-absenteeism against the "ethnocratic" turn in Israel (Al-Ahram, 2006) was harshly suppressed by the IDF. They also faced systemic discrimination, such as losing citizenship, house demolitions, and arbitrary detention. On the "external" side, the non-citizen Palestinian Other was again exposed to the "biopolitical containment" agenda. The West Bank and Gaza were reoccupied by the IDF during Operation Defensive Shield, destructing the infrastructure and human mobility in the PA. Consequently, the second *intifada* marked the bloodiest clash between Israelis and Palestinians since 1948.

Alongside the IDF's strong measures against Palestinians, the return to Israel's trauma-laden isolationist mindset was manifested in a controversial development: the construction of a "security fence/wall" segregating Israel from the West Bank. It was considered as a temporary method to stop Hamas' attacks by Barak, but first implemented by Sharon. The latter has evolved it into a structural policy that remarkably echoes how the *Yishuv* era settlements were developed into a "fortress" to establish a well-protected social matrix for the Jewish existence. The wall not only physically connects the Israeli settlements to the "main" land. It also provides the IDF a deepening presence around these settlements and beyond through continuous de-Otherisation of the land. In this sense, it imposes a "Foucauldian disciplinary mechanism" on the non-citizen Palestinian Other with its tall towers and numerous IDF checkpoints (Gandolfo, 2016, p. 264). This policy was consolidated with the

rejuvenation of once loosened *Emergency Regulations (Security) Zones Law* (5709-1949) – projected to turn Israel into "the largest ghetto in modern Jewish history" by James Bennett of *New York Times* (2004). In making sense of this, two vital developments must be born in mind: the first being the mounting support towards the hardliner parties in the PA following Arafat's death (2004), while the second refers to the split between the Gaza (Hamas) and West Bank authorities (PLO) (2007-present).[126] Sharon's successor in Likud, Netanyahu, who holds the PM position since his return in 2009, instrumentalised these instabilities to consolidate Israel's sociospatial expansion. For example, he permitted the construction of new settlements in the West Bank at a record rate, while rejecting to discuss peace agreements if they condition the freezing of settlements (Guardian, 2013). Thus, the wave of violence continues after two decades of the Oslo Accords, either by suicide bombings and rockets triggered by the Palestinian side or by the IDF's tanks and aircraft.[127]

As the fourth layer, Israel's relapsing into the pre-Oslo era traditional-communitarian agenda have seemed to be permeating in the contemporary context. The most powerful example of this case can be located behind the recently passed code, the *Basic Law – Israel the Nation State of the Jewish People*, that "synergize[d] bureaucratic logic and emotions of the national" as Handelman would argue (2004, p. 202). In 2018, the code determined that Israel is 1) "the historical homeland of the Jewish People", 2) "the nation state of the Jewish People which it realizes its natural,

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[126] Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza due to security concerns in 2005. It still controls the borders and coastal space of Gaza. This disengagement forced Sharon to leave Likud to establish a new party, Kadima, managing to win the 2006 elections. In its one-term rule, Kadima promised to restart the peace talks, but engaged two massive operations: Second Lebanon War (2006) and Gaza War (2008).

[127] The most recent peace attempt was in 2020, the Trump administration's "Peace to Prosperity" plan. It was rejected by the PA due to the Jerusalem and Israeli settlement issues (CFR, 2020).

cultural, religious and historical right to self-determination", and 3) "the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish People" (Knesset, 2020e). It also attached a special reference to the Israeli settlements, seeing them as "a national value, and shall act to encourage and promote its establishment" (*ibid*). Upon a closer look, the law not only *de facto* dismantled the last remaining democratisation bits from the Peres and Rabin era towards the Palestinian minority, e.g., the *Knesset Law – Human Dignity and Liberty* (1985). It also articulated that the Israeli settlements will be the official philosophy, so does the de-Otherisation of the land. In the end, the leverage of the failed peaceful coexistence framework and its ontologically challenging content could still be traced between Netanyahu's lines: "This is our state – the Jewish state. In recent years there have been some who have attempted to put this in doubt, to undercut the core of our being. Today we made it law: this is our nation, language and flag" (Independent, 2018). Drawing on the already-existing hegemonic narratives, such as nationalism, culture and militarism in Israeli politics, Likud imaginatively united the Israeli majority within a single space and under a single authority against the "threatening" Others as projected at the state building era. The "Others" that lie beyond this visionary political frontier and homogenous collective entity are not only considered as physical security threats but also threats towards the "core of our being", as Netanyahu argued – a source of ontological insecurity jeopardising the Israeli state and social order.

6. Conclusion

As a nation, we [Israel] had a traumatic childhood, laden with catastrophes and disasters. Working through this difficult past and understanding it would be enough to qualify us for therapy, so we do not carry our anxieties, defences, and ambitions, which are sometimes unrealistic, into the present (Grosbard, 2003, p. 2).

When selective silences about individuals, groups and emotionally traumatic events are courageously confronted; and when the past thus retold with its faults, bruises and injuries…only then will Turkish fear and anxiety finally be eliminated (Gocek, 2011, p. 100).

6.1. Revisiting Ontological Security Lens in Reading the Intractable Conflicts

This research seeks to reach internally consistent and inclusive explanations towards Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts through the sociopsychological lens. Building on the trauma literature in ontological security studies, it has developed a novel framework to make sense of the slow-moving and complex sociopsychological mechanisms that shaped and reshaped Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts in a longitudinal sense.

In order to capture the holistic nature of the intractable conflicts of both countries, this work bridges "the traditional dichotomies of actor and structure, individual and society, the micro and the macro levels" (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, 2011, p. 187). Then, it has discovered a direct relationship between traumatic experiences, memory making (and narrating), collective identity, making of (and securitising) selective Other, and the propensity to shape and spur the intractable conflict which informs the cognitive and emotional structures of human beings. In this sense, drawing on the concepts of trauma, memory, and agency making in ontological

security, it has explored various neglected issues in the current theoretical literatures in IR on memory and trauma, and Turkish and Israeli studies.

Firstly, it investigates the interplay between psychological and sociohistorical processes of security and collective identity making. Raising on the previous works on the Turkish and Israeli cases, but going beyond their claims, it explores that the Turkish and Israeli national agencies were defined by the early Turkish (1918-1938) and Israeli (1936-1964) leaderships' sociopsychological properties which had become "known" through the violent encounters with the external and internal Other(s) during the catastrophic wars and subsequent internal conflicts. The traumatic remembrances of the Turkish and Israeli elites, respectively Kemalists and Ashkenazim, became their psychological cornerstone, and so defined their social reality and individual level patterns of actions – becoming informative reference points for their future practices. At the time of state formation, these traumatic experiences were not only "chosen" and discursively performed in their speeches, codified in law, and routinised via social and institutional practices of the young Turkey and Israel. They were also instrumentally used by the leaderships to consolidate a particular collective identity, namely Turkishness and Israeliness, and its in-/out-group boundaries. More precisely, these imagined (and hegemonic) collective identities and their particular subject identifications were shaped through a set of affect-centric relations with the selective Other(s) –Kurds and Palestinians– while the vacuum producing this traumatic context was instrumentally associated with the Ottomans' archaic context and the resurrecting Jewish Question in the early 20th century.

Secondly, the project shows the importance of macro-structural and historical context in which individuals' particular emotions are shaped and in turn become

constitutive elements of politics, security, and conflict in a given nation. In other words, it advances the niche theoretical discussion on the "origin points" of sociopsychological mechanisms that have established and entrenched the Turkish-Kurdish and Israeli-Palestinian intractable conflicts. In this sense, the project attached importance to the "counterforces" who were perceived by the state leaderships to pose ontological threats towards the imagined collective identity projects in Turkey and Israel. These counterforces were not only suppressed by both countries' military apparatuses, namely the TAF and IDF. They were also seen as, for example, "backwards", "uncivilised", and "dangerous", and were increasingly taken as an antagonistic element to sharpen the imagined boundaries of Turkishness and Israeliness. The empirical analyses show that this binary reading of the selective Other(s) established Turkey's and Israel's harsh security agenda coupled with the destructive conflict memories. Interestingly, the turn to trauma also illustrates that even identity, whether collective or individual, is not stable but reflexively altered in light of major developments transpiring around us (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, 2011); institutionalised traumatic memories can resonate on certain political discourses, legal articles, and military practices over decades, and be activated by the politicomilitary elites at times of sociopolitical turmoil – that yielded an ideological and emotional platform which reconstructs the in-/out-group boundaries of Turkishness–Kurdishness and Israeliness–Palestinianness through the binary lenses even generations later.

Building on these two points, the research project thirdly establishes a historical line showing that the slow-moving but persistent sociopsychological issues, such as the binary reading of the selective Other(s), have in turn prepared the epistemic basis

and nature of the intractable conflicts of Turkey and Israel – informing the construction of the PKK's and PLO's (later Hamas') narratives of rebellion against the historically repeating (and aggravating) discriminative practices of both states. After two decades of systematic violence, these intergroup conflicts were sought to be settled. Herein, there are two points nuancing the empirical discussion. First, the Kemalist and Ashkenazi elites' authoritative making of imagined collective identities and their nationalising narratives directly contributed to the evolution of challenger sociopolitical groups as well as the emergence of popular contestation areas and alternative stories in Turkey and Israel. Some of these powerful stories, i.e., the neo-Ottoman nostalgia and peaceful coexistence, were instrumentalised by the subsequent leaderships to reimage the past, present, and future "self" of both countries via the NUBP in Turkey (2009-2015) and the peaceful coexistence project in Israel (1984-2000). Second, these projects would not only have settled the intractable conflicts by substituting the singular and ethnicised understanding of the imagined Turkishness and Israeliness with multicultural and cosmopolitan mindset at the centre – promoting a broader collective mode of existence and alternative cognitive framework for doing, acting, and being than following the exclusionist ontological security-seeking routines. They would also have facilitated the politically and normatively ripe conditions for "New Turkey" and "New Israel" – in which the old state routines alienating the minority Other(s) would be removed. However, these peace plans neither managed to settle their conflicts nor evolve the two states into "new" sociopolitical structures.

Against these core arguments, this work offers one of the earlier efforts to employ ontological security theory in exploring two particular phenomena –being

methodological and empirical– which have not received sufficient scholarly attention in the bourgeoning ontological security literature. Firstly, the majority of ontological security studies explore the "freezing moment in an ongoing process" (Mitzen and Larson, 2017, p. 13), e.g., revising self-image and group level ontological security-seeking routines during major foreign policy change. In turn, this methodological approach leaves a causal analysis gap in grasping how and why a particular version of collective identity becomes a key constituent of politics, security, and conflict from a longitudinal lens. In addressing this phenomenon, this work goes beyond the methodological scope of the extant ontological security works. Thus, it first contextualises the early Turkish and Israeli policymakers' historical traumatic conflict experiences with the significant Others. Departing from this contextualisation where the conflict memories are developed, it then traces how the Kemalist and Ashkenazi leaderships' subjective conflict experiences were resonated at a group level ontological security formation vis-à-vis the selective Other(s). This approach has enabled this work to systematically track the sociopsychological mechanisms that shaped and spurred the intractable conflicts of Turkey and Israel, and the society-wide contestations raised towards these imagined collective identity making projects over decades, making their peace processes possible in the future period.

Empirically speaking, the recent ontological security works provided nuanced perspectives on the top-down elite interventions in reshaping the existing national agency. That being said, these studies do not offer a broad analysis of two particular issues: 1) how various counter-hegemonic stories and narratives are used by the state elites to self-interrogate the rigid sociopsychological boundaries of societies in order to settle intergroup conflicts, and 2) why societies stick to their long-attached ethnic

identity makers and violent conflict trajectories when these interventions remain unproductive. Put differently, the "particularity of ontological security resonance" (Mitzen and Larson, 2017, p. 14) remained unexplored within the developing field. Uncovering this case would help us to better understand the sociopsychological mechanisms behind "why particular discourses and policies resonate" in a certain national context over decades (*ibid*, p. 19). Raising on its methodological approach, this work has aimed to bridge this empirical gap behind the *dynamic stickiness* of societies to their deep-seated political and sociopsychological routines by analysing the collapsed peace projects in Turkey and Israel. Along with the robust material explanations, it shows that these peace efforts could not foster a shared cognitive environment between the "antagonistic" groups. In this light, they remained ineffective to facilitate the projected sociopsychological change at the society level, which promptly marked the reapplication of the binary reading of selective Other(s) and intractable conflict pattern of both states, remaining valid as of 2021.

Consequently, employing Bar-Tal's intractable conflict framework has demonstrated the added value of ontological security in studying the protracted conflicts of Turkey and Israel. Initially, it is claimed that Turkey and Israel have significantly different social, political, and economic structures from each other. Their evolution as a modern nation state is also different – the bureaucratic decision-making circles of the former had chronically been controlled and intervened by the TAF (in 1960, 1971, 1980 until the 2000s), while the latter has had relatively stable progress of civilian democracy, albeit its discriminative approach towards the Palestinian minority. In this sense, Bar-Tal's sociopsychological approach to conflict has substantiated my reasoning: both countries' large variations in economic, political,

and social structures do not fully capture their shared outcomes, namely their emotion-laden intractable conflicts and failure to settle them with the peace projects. Furthermore, it has provided this research an operational framework to locate the situational-temporal events in the Turkish and Israeli cases, such as series of wars and conflicts with the external and internal Others, and then trace their sociopsychological impacts on individuals' ideas, feelings, behavioural patterns and particular institutions' design vis-à-vis the traumatic settings. Thus, the turn to trauma advances our understanding of intractable conflict in two co-constitutive steps. First, it shows how traumas facilitate a background for individuals to form a psychological security border (Volkan, 2004) in light of their violent experiences. In this vein, it demonstrates how this imaginary border, or cognitive cocoon as Giddens (1991, pp. 39-40) termed, serves as a protective mechanism which informs individuals about the threatening elements that could potentially harm them, both physically and psychologically. Building on the former, it second explores how the security border can be embedded into military apparatuses, not only empowering their harsh methods vis-à-vis the selective Other(s), but also reproducing "conflict practices" (Rumelili, 2015, p. 199). Conceptually speaking, future ontological security studies could directly engage with Gidden's cognitive cocoon concept by using other sociopsychological approaches, such as "ethos of conflict" (Bar-Tal et al., 2012), to theorise further how structuralised fears and traumas legitimises securitisation and de-securitisation of minority groups at different stages of intractable conflict. Empirically speaking, these studies could further apply the theory to decode sociopsychological mechanisms informing the security border of majorities in other intractable conflicts, and then offer country-

specific agendas to sustainably alter it during peace processes, by drawing on, for example, the "narrative mediation method" (Winslade and Monk, 2000).

A few years ago, Kinnvall and Mitzen claimed that "the range of work and diversity among ontological security scholars [have been] exceptionally productive, leading already to cross-fertilisation and the deepening of our own approaches while also inspiring new collaborations" (2017, p. 3). I believe that this interdisciplinary work stands as a testament to these novel studies with its effort to uncover the sociopsychological dynamics behind Turkey's and Israel's intractable conflicts in general and its strong engagement with the trauma literature in ontological security more specifically.

6.2. Self-Reflection and Future Directions in Turkey and Israel

Throughout this work, I have employed the ontological security lens in exploring the power of traumatic conflict memories and their articulation as stories or self-narratives that nations, groups, and agents tell themselves about themselves and their intersubjective relations with the Others. In doing so, it has uncovered some fundamental "cognitive and affective reasons why individuals, groups and even states experience insecurity and existential anxiety" (Kinnvall and Mitzen, 2017, p. 5), while exploring the ontological resonance of these insecurities over the sociopolitical structures and conflict patterns of Turkey and Israel. At this juncture, I want to return to my epistemic position expressed in the introduction chapter: this thesis has raised on Schwartz-Shea and Yanow's (2012, p. 26) assertion that our daily experiences and observations not only inform our "local knowledge of the settings and their modes of interaction", but also our research projects. In line with my initial motivations that

drove me to embark this intellectual journey, I would first like to take the opportunity in this concluding section to articulate my self-reflection about this research and then imagine about future directions in Turkey and Israel vis-à-vis their intractable conflicts.

Drawing on Bourdieu's *habitus* concept, Toros claims that we, as critical scholars, can challenge the perceptive dispositions and practices in society that share the same "visual, political, emotional, and professional landscape" about particular temporal ruptures, e.g., the "9/11" and its rigid narrativisation which silences the critical voices towards the US policies (Toros, 2017, p. 209). In doing so, *internalised* (and imposed) schemes of thoughts, assigned meanings, and ideologies that penetrate each of our lives can be challenged and transformed thought moments of self-reflection (*ibid*, p. 212). In this sense, the reading, researching, and writing process of this thesis has been an invaluable, but highly challenging journey. It has constantly pushed me to acknowledge the boundaries of my scholarly thinking and conceptual understanding. More than anything else, however, it has pushed me to recognise the traumatic feelings, sufferings, and disappointments within both countries' intractable conflict contexts. Then, empathising with and decoding of the anxiety-laden memories of Turks–Kurds and Israelis–Palestinians was at times an emotionally demanding practice; and yet, it has enabled me to shape my concluding thoughts about the decades-old intractable conflicts and their peaceful solution in the future.

Seen in this light, I believe there are two opposite points worth articulating. Let me begin with the negative side of the coin within the Israeli context. As I mentioned above, the failure of the Oslo Accords and the eruption of the second *intifada* were accompanied by the US' "war on terror" campaign. These turbulent

developments at home and the MENA reversed the hopeful atmosphere in the 1990s' Israel into the period of darkness in the 2000s, reproducing existential fears once again. In this dangerous setting, the strong state apparatuses and their modus operandi "no longer seem like obsolete remnants of a dangerous age of totalitarianism" (Kaplan, 2013, p. 147), but as crucial tools to secure the Israeli state and social order in the increasingly volatile period. Under Netanyahu's guidance since 2009, these structural instabilities and society-wide anxieties have been constantly instrumentalised to consolidate Israel's sociospatial expansion over the PA and grip its control over the Palestinian minority inside. Consequently, it paved the way for Israel to shift its *de facto* distanced position vis-à-vis the Palestinian communities to a *self-declared ethnocracy* stance as evidenced in the much-debated constitutional revision in 2018 called the *Basic Law – Israel the Nation State of the Jewish People*. Today, the hopes for peace remain low considering Netanyahu's recently announced formal "annexation" plan of the West Bank (BBC, 2020) – followed by the position paper of B'Tselem (2021), the leading human rights NGO in Israel, claiming that the "prolonged conflict" term is no longer adequate to describe the situation as it is being guided under Netanyahu's "supremacist ideology" in the contemporary context.

As of 2021, Turkey appears to have shared the same fate with Israel. Initially, the series of politically relaxing developments unfolding in the late 1990s such as the incarceration of the PKK leader Öcalan and Turkey's EU membership application provided a suitable background for the subsequent rise of the AKP in 2002 with its democratising and emancipatory agenda. This agenda, which would catalyse major changes at the state and society levels, however, remained a short-lived euphoria. Within a decade, the AKP's "liberating" approach had gradually become obsolete as

evidenced by its undemocratic turn which has intensified after each critical juncture at home and abroad, among others, the Arab Spring (2011-present), the Gezi Park Protest in 2013, the June 2015 national elections, the collapse of the NUBP in 2015, and the July 15 coup attempt in 2016. In this line, the AKP has eventually abandoned its "party of progress" role and pushed its Ottoman-inspired brotherhood vision with Kurds into the background. Then, the party elites powerfully embraced the *banal nationalism* codes of the "old Turkey", enabling the AKP to rule the state and society under draconian measures echoing the early Republican era. With the heightened Turkish nationalism inside, the AKP's return to the strong statism and survival codes is best evidenced in the introduction of the "Domestic and National Turkey" project with the ultranationalist MHP (2016-present) – which would rally the state and society together against the internal and external enemies aiming to destroy Turkey and Turkishness. Furthermore, the magnitude of this ethnonationalist (and at times Islamo-nationalist) project has continuously been expanding, which should be read together with Turkey's transition to the presidential system in 2017, empowering Erdogan to suppress his political opponents in general and the ethnic and religious minorities more specifically, Kurds being the major target. The final consequence of these suffocating developments could be captured by the 2021 Freedom House Report that ranked Turkey as the second-worst country after Mali to have revoked the *granted* human rights and freedoms in the past decade (Euronews, 2021).

These chains of dramatic and intense developments in Turkey and Israel, which provoke an acute sense of physical fear and existential insecurity within the society, are currently accompanied by the pressing structural trends dominating the West and the East alike such as the rise of nationalist populist authorities and

inflammatory nativist (and xenophobic) political agendas. Against these challenging settings at home and abroad, designing and initiating another peace process in both countries does not seem to be on the table in the short run. On the positive side of the coin, however, breaking the vicious cycle of the intractable conflicts could be possible in the long run. In this sense, it should not be forgotten that the societies now being governed via the *routinised fear* and *chaos politics* under the Erdogan and Netanyahu regimes managed to "suspend" their violent cycle once. Then, the question arises: How is it possible to restore a common sociopsychological platform in the near future, and develop it to achieve a sustainable social peace in Turkey and Israel?

In light of the above question, I believe we can draw two powerful lessons from the failed peace processes in Turkey and Israel, which might be useful for their future attempts. Firstly, the collapsed peace projects strongly highlighted the separate ontological world(s) of Turks–Israelis and Kurds–Palestinians even though they expressed their aspirations for reconciliation at first. In this sense, the future peace initiatives in both countries require a democratic and interactive platform with a strong engagement of and collaboration between diverse civil society actors, NGOs, and official political organisations. This overarching platform would first reestablish the fragmented intercommunal trust, respect and dignity, and restore the desire to live peacefully. Then, it would carefully listen to anxious voices, historical grievances, traumatic memories, and collective injustices/sufferings of both majority and minority groups, including the families of deceased PKK and PLO/Hamas rebels and the Turkish and Israeli soldiers. In other words, this vibrant platform would offer a previously missing dialogue and empathy environment in which the "antagonistic" groups not only express their anxiety-laden feelings, but also collectively deconstruct

the strict sociopsychological boundaries and master narratives imposed on them. This would in turn help them to peacefully reframe the historically shaped and structuralised dichotomous (and dehumanising) reading between the self and the Other, and then practice their mutual construction of new readings, values, and narratives in everyday routines. Ontologically speaking, this society-wide dialogue process would initially help various groups to mitigate their existential questions and reshape their trauma-driven psychological security border, pertinently catalysing the process to reach an ontological common ground at the society level, i.e., bridging the existing mental gap articulated above. In doing so, it would inherently locate the deep-seated fears inhibiting the intergroup reconciliation as well as the aspirations and dreams for peaceful collective existence in a *bottom-up* manner. This leads us to my second point.

The previous peace processes in Turkey and Israel, which aggressively silenced the dissent voices/ideas/feelings, demonstrated the political and normative limits of the top-down elite interventions in making of "new state" and "new society" – no matter how boundary-pushing these interventions were aspired to be. Then, founding the future peace projects on broad bottom-up demands as explored in the first point would not only empower the Turkish and Israeli leaderships to remember the challenging past, including the systematic state violence and discrimination shaping the Kurdish and Palestinian Questions, and then "*re-reimagine*" the collective self. They would also navigate their ways in which designing and executing long-term and sustainable peace frameworks with trauma and anxiety sensitive approach against which memory, agency, and reconciliation could interplay during and after the projects. Herein, I want to emphasise the post-peace process periods because the

resolution of these intractable conflicts would mean the beginning of a new era for Turkey and Israel. By extension, it would mark their historical transition from the ethnonationalist settings into the "post-post-Kemalist" (see Ayturk, 2020) and "post-post-Zionist" (see Kaplan, 2013) structures. In this sense, these novel political organisations would neither strongly follow the hegemonic foundational ideologies, i.e., Kemalism and Zionism(s), nor their counter-hegemonic antitheses problematising the former. Instead, the "post-post-" paradigm(s) moves beyond these dichotomies and their incompatible political and moral compasses, and orients itself to address the agents' everyday struggle, concrete needs, and desires.

Then, this new utopic setting would stand on two intertwined pillars. First, it requires a "political normalcy" through coalition-based constitutional and political reforms that grant the Kurdish and Palestinian minorities full and equal civil rights – not *de facto*– and recognise their identity, language, and status as founding people in both states.[128] These revisions would then be consolidated by 1) the democratic structures that promote open-mindedness and collective well-being and dignity, 2) the civilian check-and-balances mechanisms which guarantee human rights, freedom of expression, rule of law, and justice, and 3) the strong civil society-state dialogue to monitor and strengthen the post-traumatic healing process in a societal sense. Building on the first point, the new setting secondly entails "radical pluralism" in the post-

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[128] This revision would be in line with Israel's Declaration of Independence, claiming to ensure the "complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants" (IMFA, 2021) (see Chapter 5.3.2). In terms of the Israel-PA relations, however, it would reveal three scenarios. In the first scenario, Israel would withdraw to its pre-1967 territories, dismantle the Israeli settlements in the OT, and cooperate with the Palestinian state to tackle the Palestinian refugee issue. The second scenario would be the establishment of the federal Israeli-Palestinian state based on the innovative "decentralized federal system" proposed by Loizides (2016). The last scenario would be the binational Israeli-Palestinian state based on equal rights and citizenship, which could initiate the "true processes of justice and reconciliation" (Hussein, 2015, p. 531).

conflict Turkey and Israel, which open cultural and individual space for hybrid identities to freely operate and engage with each other without under or overestimating the imagined boundaries that are often constructed between them. In a sense, this post-identity-politics mindset fosters the subjects to shape their own sustainable ways to feel their sense of self as *equals* at the collective level and *unique agents* at the individual level – building the "mutual political society of diversity within unity" (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking, 2011, p. 193).

In the final analysis, creating new and viable peaceful relations requires "changing repertoire, abolishing old fears, mistrust, hatred, animosity, delegitimisation of the enemy, and often also adjusting the group's long-standing dreams and aspirations" (Bar-Tal, 2013, p. 432). Seen in this light, this complex societal transformation entails a new cognitive framework for doing, acting, and being, and strong democratic institutions upholding and encouraging this major transition which sometimes takes decades to achieve. Then, it can be accomplished if and only if people honestly and relentlessly work together to make this reconciliatory change at sociopolitical and sociopsychological levels – that would then "break" the violent cycle in Turkey and Israel. Before I conclude, as a young social scientist whose family and himself had long suffered from the conflict in Turkey, I believe we can have a better understanding of and capacity to solve the violent conflicts of both countries if we continue to scrutinise the sociopsychological dynamics making and sustaining these human-made phenomena. As of 2021, it may appear to be a utopian agenda to transform these intractable conflicts. Yet, this imagination gives me the courage to work for and hope for peace in the long run. I end my thesis with Yannis Ritsos' poem called *Peace* (Poetry Planetariat, 2019, p. 34):

The dreams of a child are peace
The dreams of a mother are peace
The words of love under the trees are peace

The father who returns at dusk with a wide smile in his eyes
with a basket in hands full of fruit
and the drops of sweat on his brow
are like drops on a jug as it cools its water on the windowsill,
are peace

When wounds heal on the world's face
and in the pits dug by shellfire we have planted trees
and in hearts scorched by conflagration hope sprouts its first buds
and the dead can turn over on their side and sleep without complaining
knowing their blood was not spilled in vain,
this is peace.

7. Bibliography

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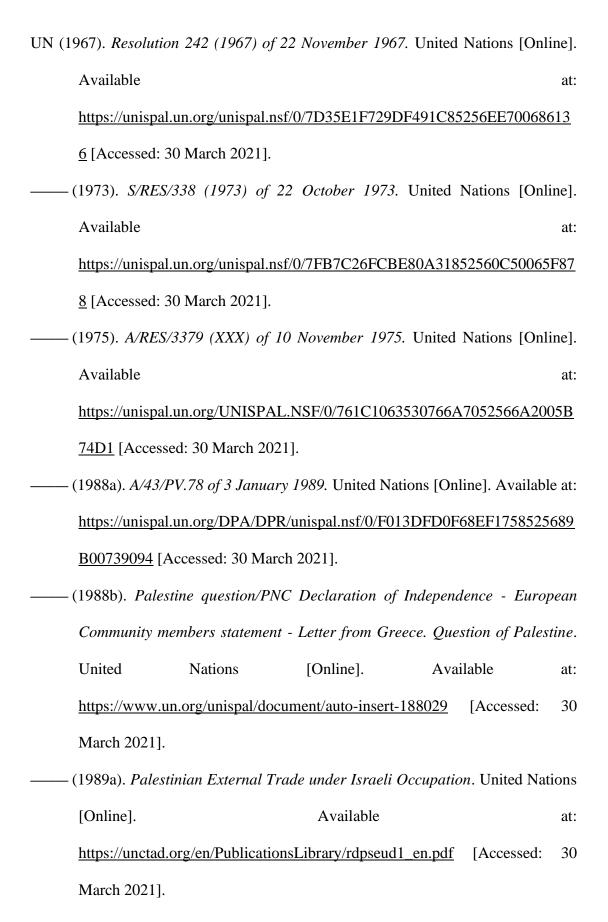Simon, B. (2016). *Daniel Ben Simon on the Rift between Mizrahim and the Israeli Left*. Partners For Progressive Israel [Online]. Available at: https://www.progressiveisrael.org/daniel-ben-simon-on-the-rift-between-mizrahim-and-the-israeli-left/ [Accessed: 30 March 2021].

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