

A Constructivist Approach to Popular Culture and Foreign Policy: The Case of Turkey and *Valley of Wolves: Ambush*

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Abstract

In this thesis, I argue that, as a popular text, *Valley of the Wolves: Ambush* functions as a site for consent production for foreign policies formed by the AKP elites within the last decade, through a process of reproduction of state identities, ideologies, and discourses at the level of narrative. This thesis positions its argument in two fields: Turkish Foreign Policy (TFP) studies and Popular Culture and World Politics (PCWP) within the larger International Relations (IR) context. It is interdisciplinary in nature as it also make use of theories around popular culture. Although scholarship within IR theory and PCWP has done much to explore issues around representations of politics in popular media (Weldes, 1999a; Nexon and Neumann, 2006; Van Veeren, 2009; Kiersey and Neumann, 2013), this has frequently focused on Western examples and narratives such as *24*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Star Trek*, *Harry Potter*, and so on. In this regard this thesis advances these theories by focusing on a particular national context and offer an original analysis on Turkey. While doing so, it employs discourse analysis. It also teases out some of the complexities of the nature and implications of representation of the TFP by using critical reception. This is because this thesis regards critical debates around the television series as tools to explore discourses around consent production. Together with an analysis of the critical reception of the television series, political discourses around foreign policy are examined in line with the ways in which these policies are depicted and reproduced by the series. This leads to an intertextual reading of Turkish state identity and security imaginary and a critical examination of the TFP in the last decade from a Constructivist perspective.

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List of Abbreviations

AKP	Justice and Development Party (<i>Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi</i>)
ANAP	Motherland Party (<i>Anavatan Partisi</i>)
AP	Justice Party (<i>Adalet Partisi</i>)
BND	Federal Intelligence Service (<i>Bundesnachrichtendienst</i>)
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHP	People's Republican Party (<i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i>)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
DHKP-C	People's Revolutionary Liberation Party-Front (<i>Devrimci Halk Kurtulus Partisi-Cephesi</i>)
DP	Democrat Party (<i>Demokrat Parti</i>)
DYP	True Path Party (<i>Dogru Yol Partisi</i>)
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FSA	Free Syrian Army
HDP	Peoples' Democratic Party (<i>Halklarin Demokratik Partisi</i>)
IMDB	Internet Movie Database
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

KG	Organisation of Public Security (<i>Kamu Guvenligi Teskilati</i>)
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party (<i>Milliyetci Hareket Partisi</i>)
MIT	National Intelligence Organisation (<i>Milli Istihbarat Teskilati</i>)
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	National Salvation Party (<i>Milli Selamet Partisi</i>)
MUSIAD	Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (<i>Mustakil Sanayici ve Isadamlari Dernegi</i>)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PCWP	Popular Culture and World Politics
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (<i>Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê</i>)
PYD	Democratic Union Party (<i>Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat</i>)
RP	Welfare Party (<i>Refah Partisi</i>)
RTUK	Radio and Television Supreme Council (<i>Radio ve Televizyon Ust Kurulu</i>)
TESEV	Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (<i>Turkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etudler Vakfi</i>)
TFP	Turkish Foreign Policy
TMSF	Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (<i>Tasarruf Mevduati Sigorta Fonu</i>)
TRT	Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (<i>Turkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu</i>)
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
VoW	Valley of the Wolves

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Introduction

Since 2012, in conjunction with the coming to power for the third time of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP), politicians' speculations about 'evil games' played over Turkey and the Middle East by external powers have intensified.

According to politicians, Turkey has recently become strong enough to deal with and eliminate these scenarios as the AKP government has had a positive impact on Turkey reaching its potential. For instance, Erdogan spoke about these 'evil games' after the crisis between Syria and Turkey in 2012 (Hurriyet, 2012a) and often reiterated the issue in his speeches. At the same time, these discourses started to be reproduced in the media whenever politicians, journalists, academics and experts have discussed Turkey's foreign policy (TFP) in debate/discussion programmes, books and newspapers. As this thesis will demonstrate, the very same discourse was also reproduced by one of the most popular television series in Turkey, *Valley of the Wolves: Ambush* (*VoW: Ambush*) in its two seasons between 2012 and 2014.

Moreover, when I visited Turkey in 2014, my mother told me that some external powers do not want Turkey to become a powerful country. She stated that 'the West' is making plans to divide Turkey, so Turkey has both internal and external problems. My mother has no affiliations with the AKP, she has never watched *VoW: Ambush* once and she does not like politics. But she is a fan of the television programme *The Other Agenda* (*Oteki Gündem*, 2014-15, Haberturk) in which political issues are covered in a 'softer' way and presented as conspiracies most of the time.

This is a seemingly trivial anecdote, but what strikes me as important here is that an ordinary individual who does not have an academic background, does not share the same ideology as the AKP and is not interested in politics can use the same discourse as an AKP politician because of a programme she has watched on television. However trivial, this makes it possible to say that television is a site where common understandings - norms, meanings, ideologies or representations - are produced, circulated, reproduced and recirculated with a significant impact on the production of consent. Messages around TFP, created or reproduced by a politician in a speech, are reproduced by newspapers, on television, on the internet and in daily practices and experiences including conversations with friends. All of these can lead to

the transformation of one representation of TFP into an intersubjective understanding. In this anecdote, my mother, as an ordinary individual, reproduced the very same discourse as an AKP politician although she has no interest in the ideology of the AKP, and she shares the same representation that external powers have evil plans for Turkey. This, in itself, is an issue worthy of academic scrutiny.

It is for this reason that particular discourses become crucial. Here, I use the term discourse to mean: “the space where intersubjective meaning is created, sustained, transformed and, accordingly, becomes constitutive of social reality” (Holzscheiter, 2014: 144). It is through discursive practices that politicians communicate their ideas and it is through the reproduction of the discourse that these ideas become intersubjective. Social Constructivism in IR explains that intersubjective understandings – “norms, rules, meanings, languages, cultures, and ideologies are social phenomena that create identities and guide actions” (Klotz and Lynch, 2007: 7). These identities, understandings, meanings and representations define a state’s behaviours and its and other countries’ positions in the international structure. Jutta Weldes’s (1999b) theoretical framework is the kernel of this study. She explained that “national interests are social constructions created as meaningful objects out of the intersubjective and culturally established meanings within which the world, particularly the international system and the place of the state in it, is understood”. It is for this reason that these intersubjective meanings and representations create the ‘security imaginary’ of one country, “a structure of well-established meanings and social relations out of which representations of the world of international relations are created” (Weldes, 1999b: 10). State identities emerge out of this security imaginary and it is therefore vital that these should be examined.

I argue in this thesis that the state officials who conduct foreign policy have ideas about the security imaginary of the state and that their ideas are represented by intersubjective and culturally established meanings through discursive practices. The ideas of these officials are part of the common understandings of their era and of previous eras. They act according to the security imaginary of the current era, but there can be different security imaginaries of different ideologies and one of the questions to which this study seeks to find an answer is this: what happens to the security imaginary of a country if the hegemony in that country changes? The findings of this study demonstrate that if there is a hegemony change in a

country, its security imaginary can also change. As a result of this counter-hegemonic movement, the state identities related to foreign policy differ from the previous identities. The new hegemony's ideas, meanings and representations about international politics are different from those of the previous hegemony. The new hegemony articulates meanings and representations into new ones, creates new positions and attempts to interpellate or draw people to these new positions by using discursive practices. Because of these practices, new intersubjective meanings lead to new state identities in the foreign policy of a country and they can produce consent for foreign policies if they successfully interpellate individuals to the new positions, and successfully articulate representations and meanings.

Popular culture is a domain in which political representations can be found. I shall claim in this thesis that these discursive processes can also be reproduced in popular culture. The products of popular culture are useful tools for understanding and examining the ways in which consent for specific policies occurs, particularly if they reproduce the discursive practices of politicians. As Weldes (1999a: 119) claimed, "Popular culture ... helps to construct reality of international politics for officials and non-officials alike and, to the extent that it reproduces the content and structure of the dominant foreign policy discourse, it helps to produce consent for foreign policy and state action". Similarly, Elspeth Van Veeren (2009: 364) showed that a television series "can be considered an important and useful example in the production of intertextual meaning ... By both (re)constituting and drawing on the same (re)presentations of 'reality', the intertextuality of popular culture and world politics helps to make the world intelligible". This intertextual meaning created by popular culture products and politicians then becomes important in the process of consent production. The focus in this study is a closer examination of televisual texts in relation to discourses on foreign policy. By doing this, an intertextual analysis will be provided in an attempt to tease out the complexities within the process of consent creation within the Turkish context.

The central argument of this thesis speaks to two academic fields of study: TFP studies and PCWP within the larger IR context. It is interdisciplinary in nature as it makes use of theories around popular culture. Although scholarship within IR theory and PCWP has done much to explore issues around representations of politics in the popular media (Weldes, 1999a, 2003; Weber, 1999, 2001; Philpott and Mutimer, 2005; Sarantakes, 2005; Nexon and Neumann, 2006; Rowley, 2007; Dodds, 2008; Shapiro, 2008; Grayson, Davies and Philpott, 2009; Van

Veeran, 2009; Kiersey and Neumann, 2013; Grayson, 2013), this has frequently focused on western examples and narratives such as *24*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Star Trek*, *Harry Potter*, *The West Wing* and so on. In this regard, this current study advances these theories by focusing on a particular national context and developing an original analysis of the Turkish case. I shall argue that, as a popular text, *VoW: Ambush* functions as a site for consent production for the foreign policies formed by the AKP elites within the last decade, through a process of reproduction of state identities, ideologies and discourses at the level of narrative.

I shall claim that the AKP, as part of the hegemony of political Islam, established its hegemony in Turkey and reduced the role of Kemalist ideology in Turkish politics. The party has become a hegemonic political force and its neo-Ottomanist identity has influenced the political (domestic and international) and social spheres (culture, media, religion and education). This hegemony has also been reflected in both TFP and popular culture. The rise of political Islam under the AKP has changed the perception of national interests and Turkey has started to be more proactive in the regions where the Ottoman Empire previously ruled for centuries. As I shall show, three representations of the neo-Ottomanist identity can be found in the discursive practices of the AKP elites. These representations/features are

1. as the leader of the Middle East,
2. as the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East,
3. as self-confident Turkey.

These representations/features constitute the security imaginary of the AKP elites and define the positions of Turkey and other states in international politics. These representations have nationalist, Islamic and Ottomanist characteristics which have been formed since the 1980s within the political Islam ideology and the AKP elites have gradually articulated them and attempted to interpellate individuals to the positions which they have created in their speeches. So it can be said that whereas these features are a part of the intersubjective understandings of political Islamists, after the AKP constructed its hegemony, these features became a part of broader intersubjective understandings because they have a broader terrain. In the early years of the current century, these understandings could reach more people after the political Islamist ideology became a hegemonic power. To understand this transformation in the state identities, representations and discursive practices, I shall focus

on the TFP during the AKP era with an emphasis on the period between 2009 and 2014 during which Ahmet Davutoglu was the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I shall show that these representations occupy a place in popular culture. Constituting a huge part of Turkish popular culture, *VoW: Ambush* is one of the sites where these representations are reproduced discursively and visually. *VoW: Ambush* is one of the longest-running productions in Turkish television history. It started as *VoW* in 2003 and has continued to grow to become one of the most watched television series since then. Although reproduction of the AKP discourse in the series shows that this series is important for the consent creation for some policies in the TFP, the belief/myth that the series is representing real events, and even predicting future events in Turkish politics, increases its relevancy to this study. Audiences, columnists and even politicians themselves believe this myth about the series and make it possible to argue that this feature of *VoW* creates an intertextual meaning which is that *VoW* is representing the reality, and this blurs the line between fiction and reality. This feature of *VoW*, therefore, increases its ability to create consent for specific policies since it reproduces state identity and security imaginary during the AKP era. Three representations related to TFP are reproduced in two seasons of the series, Season 7 and Season 8. I shall examine these two seasons because in these two seasons there was a focus on foreign policy in the series. These seasons will be investigated under four themes: knowledge, ideology, articulation and identification. This will enable us to understand how discourses around foreign policy are represented and reproduced by the series.

In this context, the key aims of this study are to investigate a popular culture product, *VoW: Ambush*, to explore how it functions as a site for the reproduction of the discursive practices of politicians; how it creates an intertextual meaning; and how it can produce consent for Turkish foreign policies. To achieve these aims, I shall focus on articles and speeches of the AKP elites and on *VoW: Ambush* as individual texts, and then show the intertextual meaning which they create together. To be able to interpret this intertextual meaning, I shall also address the critical reception of *VoW: Ambush*.

Of course, it cannot be claimed that this is the first and only study related to *VoW* (see Erdogan, 2006; Gultekin, 2006; Selcuk, 2006; Yaşın, 2006; Al-Rawi, 2009; Yanik, 2009; Anaz and Purcell, 2010, Smets, 2014) or to examine TFP from the constructivist perspective (see Bozdaglioglu, 2003; Dagi, 2005, Yilmaz and Bilgin, 2006; Rumelili, 2008, 2011; Uzer, 2011;

Arkan, 2016; Arkan and Kinacioglu, 2016). However, the original contribution of this research is to be found in three points. First, this study advances these theories of PCWP by focusing on a particular national context and offering an original analysis of Turkey. Although there are a significant number of studies which have used the constructivist approach in the literature of TFP (as cited above), the existing body of research does not have an emphasis on popular culture. In addition, there is a gap within this literature in terms of focusing on the AKP era. Therefore, the second contribution of this study is to the field of TFP literature by examining the Davutoglu era in terms of TFP from the constructivist perspective. The third point is the reading of the series. The four themes which are used in this study to analyse the series in terms of the reproduction of the representations make this study original. A variety of textual methods is employed, including discourse analysis. I also tease out some of the complexities of the nature and implications of the representation of TFP by using critical reception. This is because in this study critical debates around the television series are used as tools to explore discourses around consent production. Together with an analysis of the critical reception of the television series, political discourses around foreign policy are examined in line with the ways in which these policies are depicted and reproduced by the series. This leads to an intertextual reading of Turkey's state identity and security imaginary and a critical examination of TFP in the last decade from a constructivist perspective.

Chapter-by-Chapter Outline

The thesis starts with Chapter 1, which provides the theoretical framework of the study and shows how this framework relates to the methods and concepts operationalised in the empirical (discursive) analysis of the speeches of the AKP elites and *VoW: Ambush*. First, an explanation is given of why constructivism is a better approach when using popular culture in IR and the principal focus is on Weldes's contribution to constructivism in terms of representation and identities. Second, I shall examine how popular culture is dealt with in IR by addressing the works of scholars working on popular culture. After situating the research within this debate, I shall examine Gramscian hegemony theory since its approach to popular culture is important for this study in explaining the relationship between popular culture and hegemony in Turkey.

Chapter 2 unpacks the historical background to the Turkish political and media structure. First, Gramsci's approach to hegemony is applied to Turkish politics and I shall explain why it is relevant. Second, I shall examine the historical development of political Islam in Turkey and at the same time shed light on Kemalist ideology because political Islam first emerged as a counter-hegemonic ideology to Kemalism. The focus then turns to the rise of political Islam since the 1980s with an emphasis on political, economic and cultural developments. The third section of the chapter looks at the relationship between popular culture and Turkish politics and investigates this in the historical context. Finally, I shall scrutinise the structure of the Turkish media and its relationship with the current hegemony in Turkey.

Whereas Chapter 2 deals with the historical background of the Turkish political structure and shows the rise of political Islam in Turkey, Chapter 3 aims to understand how TFP was transformed after political Islam established its hegemony. TFP in the Davutoglu era is examined by applying the constructivist approach to the case of Turkey. First, I shall compare this era with previous eras to demonstrate the general differences in TFP. Second, the focus then moves to Davutoglu and I shall examine his speeches, articles and books about TFP in order to understand his security imaginary in terms of international politics and Turkey's role within them. Since Davutoglu was the mastermind behind the AKP's foreign policy at that time, his ideas and understandings are crucial. I shall then argue that we can understand this imaginary through three fundamental representations, each related to the state identity of Turkey: 1. as the leader of the Middle East, 2. as the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East, and 3. as self-confident Turkey.

Chapter 4 starts with an analysis of *VoW: Ambush* in which I shall engage with the series in general terms. First, I shall provide an overview of *VoW: Ambush* outlining the plots of the seventh and eighth seasons. I shall then undertake a textual analysis of the series and show how its ideological representation overlaps with that of the AKP. Third, I shall develop an analysis of the ideological 'articulation' in the series with a particular emphasis on how it constructs Turkey in a relationship with its 'others'. Finally, I shall examine 'identification' – the ways in which the narrative and visual style interpellate viewers such that they are aligned with the characters and concepts of the series. Overall, in this chapter I shall demonstrate that *VoW: Ambush* is a popular cultural product which shares the AKP hegemony and has the

potential to create consent for AKP foreign policy by discursively reproducing the ideological representation of the AKP security imaginary.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present more detail of the three fundamental representations of TFP identified in Chapter 3, showing how they are reproduced by the series. Each chapter focuses on one representation and presents an examination through discourse analysis linked to four themes: knowledge, ideology, articulation and identification. Since my intention is to regard critical debates around the television series as tools to explore discourses around consent production, these chapters also offer critical reception studies to show how the discourses in the television text are also set in motion by it, being circulated, represented and recirculated in a variety of media.

In the discussion and conclusion part of the thesis, I shall summarise the original contribution of the research and explain the main argument of the study which is that '*VoW: Ambush* functions as a site for the production of consent for foreign policies formed by the AKP elites within the last decade, through a process of the reproduction of state identities, ideologies and discourses at the level of narrative', in the light of the constructivist approach in IR.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

My argument in this thesis is that as a popular text, *VoW: Ambush* functions as a site for the production of consent for foreign policies formed by the AKP elites within the last decade, using a process of the reproduction of state identities, ideologies, and discourses at the level of narrative. In this first chapter, I shall review and assess theoretical approaches to research in IR in order to develop the framework to be used throughout the study. First, I shall examine general IR theories with a focus on how they approach the issue of state behaviours and foreign policy. What shapes state behaviours is of course an important, foundational question of the whole IR discipline. Although the concept of power was at the centre of the IR discipline for a long time since it was believed that it is the only aim of states, the end of the Cold War brought about different approaches such as constructivism to state behaviours or foreign policies. The constructivist approach demonstrates that state identities have a crucial role in shaping foreign policies.

Second, I shall examine approaches to the relationship between popular culture and IR. Popular culture has attracted many IR scholars as a subject which has been overlooked for a long time. However, after the end of the Cold War, when the cultural turn was happening in IR, popular culture has also been studied since the end of the millennium. Many of the studies which will be discussed in this chapter have shown that popular culture is a new field for IR scholars. I shall also argue that social identities have a role in determining foreign policies and that popular culture plays a part during this process as a site for hegemonic power which attempts to control popular culture. Popular culture has therefore become a terrain where the discourses, ideas and identities of hegemonic power are reproduced. Since this study is intended to contribute to the field of IR and focuses on the reproduced foreign policy discourse of state elites in a television series, it should be evaluated by IR theories. However, this phenomenon cannot be explained by IR theories alone. The two mainstream IR theories, realism and liberalism, are not sufficient to include popular culture into the IR discipline. In this study I shall therefore also discuss the relationship between constructivism in IR using a Gramscian approach to culture and consent.

I shall therefore first explain how IR deals with state behaviour by addressing three specific theories, realism, liberalism and constructivism, and explain why the role of domestic politics in foreign policies cannot be explained sufficiently by realism and liberalism. Constructivism in IR is an approach which is very promising for attempts to think through domestic politics and popular culture because of its emphasis on the role of identities, interests and processes of articulation and interpellation. In this section, I shall also elaborate the post-structuralist approaches in IR and focus on the role of discourse in IR since my aim is to investigate the discourses of politicians in Turkey around the country's foreign policy. I shall also examine how popular culture is dealt with in IR by considering the works of scholars such as Jutta Weldes (1999a, 1999b), Iver B. Neumann and Daniel H. Nexon (2006) and Elspeth Van Veen (1999) on popular culture and situating popular culture within these debates. Third, Gramscian hegemony theory will be debated since its approach to popular culture is important for this current study in explaining the relationship between popular culture and the hegemony in Turkey. In the fourth and final section, I will explain methodological approach of this thesis, which is discourse analysis.

1. IR Theories and their Approaches to State Behaviour

In this section, I shall explain why I have used constructivism in IR theory and the Gramscian approach in this thesis. The two major schools of IR, realism and liberalism, are not sufficient to explain the roles of ideas, understandings, domestic identities or popular culture, although there is a new tendency to accept their roles among the scholars from these schools, such as Walt from the realist camp and Nye from liberal theory. Both of these theories are interested in anarchy (as an international system) or power (as material capabilities) for explaining state behaviour. They overlook the importance of the relations between domestic politics and foreign policies and their role in the construction of national interests. On the other hand, social constructivism in IR is more concerned with the relationship between identity, power and culture. It emphasises non-material concepts such as intersubjective understandings, ideas, values and norms to explain state behaviours. These features of social constructivism make it a better approach for this study. Therefore, in the following three sections I shall clarify realism, liberalism and social constructivism in IR and explain why realism and

liberalism are not sufficient but constructivism is a better approach to take for this current study.

1.1. Realism

Realist theory can be divided into two strands - classical realism and neorealism or structural realism. Classical or traditional realism explains the international system as anarchical. There is no higher authority above states so actors who are defined as only states in the realist view seek power for their survival, and this leads to a struggle for power. Realists believe that human nature is inherently evil and cannot be trusted, and that makes the international system open to conflicts and wars. As a result, the concept of power is at the centre of realism, and it puts a special emphasis on coercive power such as military power, which is the most important feature that states use (Mearsheimer, 1994: 9-10; Schmidt, 2005: 527).

Power-seeking is therefore the main driver for the behaviours of states because of human nature. Here, the concept of power should be explained in more detail. Classical realists such as Carr and Morgenthau believed that the power of nations cannot be measured easily and that "international politics was more of an art than a science" because political life and also the power concept in politics is ambiguous (Schmidt, 2005: 536). On power, Morgenthau (1948: 17) stated that "both national and international policies are a struggle for power" because of the desire for power in human nature. He claimed that "all politics is a struggle for power, but while power is sought in domestic politics as a means toward other ends, power is sought as an end in itself in international politics" (Schmidt, 2005: 531). He defined power as "man's control over the minds and actions of other men" (Morgenthau, 1948: 13) and political power as "a psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised" (Morgenthau, 1948: 14).

In addition to Morgenthau, another classical realist, Carr, argued that power is an essential element of politics and a crucial element of governments (Carr, 1946: 102). He saw power as an end in international politics and divided political power into three categories: military power, economic power and power over opinion (Carr, 1946: 108). States use these to control other states and ensure their security by changing other states' actions. Although material resources such as military or economic power are at the centre of realist theory, Morgenthau and Carr believed that non-material concepts such as human psychology or public opinion are

also important. Although state elites are the only actors for state behaviours, they put an emphasis on individuals because leaders need approval. This is what differentiates classical realism from structural realism.

Structural realism, or neorealism, puts the emphasis on the international system. It argues that the international system is anarchic because there is no higher authority and thus states necessarily struggle for power (Schmidt, 2005: 537). It can therefore be said that the structure of the international system determines the behaviour of states. Kenneth Waltz (1979: 126) observed that “In anarchy, security is the highest end” and that “power is a means and not an end”. In the absence of a higher authority in the international system, states develop a self-help system which enhances their security, and power is only a means in order to do that. He suggested that “the first concern of the states is not to maximize power but to maintain their positions in the system” (Waltz, 1979: 126). Maximizing power may not serve this end, but establishing or joining alliances can be more successful for security and interests. Waltz (1979: 192) believed that Dahl’s relational definition of power, that “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (Dahl, 1957: 202-203), is ill-defined because it does not consider structure and its actions. He defined power as “the old and simple notion that an agent is powerful to the extent that he affects others more than they affect him” (Waltz, 1974: 192). So as can be seen, realism, whether classical or structural, focuses on power and the international system as the only variables for explaining state behaviour. It ignores the role of domestic politics. Also it does not deal with any non-material concepts such as ideas and culture. More specifically, popular culture has no place in realist theories. If we want to examine foreign policies or the behaviour of states, we should focus on power or the structure of international politics, and that is why realism is not sufficient as an approach for this current study.

1.2. Liberalism

In this section, the approach to the IR characteristic of liberalism will be explained in two parts: idealism or utopianism, and neoliberalism. Idealism is acknowledged as the beginning of the IR discipline. Whilst realism was the dominant theory after the Second World War, idealism predominated in the IR discipline in the inter-war period (Knutsen, 1997: 305; Guzzini, 1998: 15; Vasquez, 1998: 33). Having emerged after the First World War, idealism was affected by the ideas of liberalist thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham and

John Locke (Knutsen, 1997: 214). Unlike realism, idealists believe that human nature is not evil, but that, on the contrary, anarchy in the international system can be overcome by human reason (Guzzini, 1998: 17). They contend that individuals are self-interested but that this does not have to cause a conflict because actors can look after each other's interests. It is therefore possible to say that idealists see the international system as an arena where states can cooperate with each other, not a site where anarchy forces states to conflict with each other. Reason is the main driver behind the behaviours of states according to utopians, and this can be criticised in many cases. For instance, when we think of the behaviours of the combatant states before and during the Second World War, it can be said that reason was not a priority at that time.

Neoliberalism concerns the desire to achieve cooperation in the international system and focuses on the role of the international structure in state behaviours. In this respect it shows a similarity to neorealism. Economic interdependence and liberal institutionalism are two neoliberal theories different from idealism for approaching this issue. Neoliberal theories, like neorealism, accept anarchy in the international system but they have a more positive approach than neorealist thinkers: they believe that international cooperation can be sustained in an anarchic system.

Economic interdependence theory emphasises the structures. Keohane and Nye (2001: 11) asserted that states are affected by each other because in the international system all states are connected and dependent on each other in terms of sensitivity and vulnerability. They explained sensitivity dependence as the "liability to costly effects imposed from outside before policies are altered to try to change the situation" and vulnerability dependence, in contrast, as "an actor's liability to suffer costs imposed by external events even after policies have been altered" (Keohane and Nye, 2001: 11).

Moreover, Keohane (1984: 26) believed that wealth and power are linked to each other, that states seek wealth as well as power, and that the international system affects state behaviours by providing both constraints and incentives. Although this is similar to neorealist thinking, Keohane (1984: 26) distinguished his approach from that of the neorealist thinkers by saying that international institutions and practices influence state behaviours.

Interdependence does not have to be only through trade nor does it have to be exclusively between states. There can also be societal interdependence which includes institutions and other actors such as NGOs or international supra-national organisations. Keohane and Nye (1998: 83) suggested that although interdependence is not a new concept, the information revolution which eradicates the cost of communication over distance is new. They claimed that that information revolution created a world in which power matters are more connected by social and political relationships, and have increased the number of channels of connection between societies, making them more interdependent (Keohane and Nye, 1998: 83-84). It is therefore possible to say that economic or societal interdependence shapes state behaviours. This systemic approach ignores the influence of domestic politics by focusing on only the international system, as in the case of neorealism.

Liberal institutionalists also accept that the international system creates an insecure environment because of its anarchical nature (Keohane, 1984: 7). However, liberal institutionalists are more optimistic than neorealist thinkers in terms of achieving cooperation because if there is common interest between states, cooperation can be achieved by the support of institutions. Liberal institutionalism focuses on the role perceptions in international politics which are significant especially in the decision-making process of states (Axelrod and Keohane, 1985: 247) and institutions can eventually change the perceptions of states by reducing uncertainty and increasing credibility between states (Keohane, 1998: 86): "Institutions can serve as the informational and signalling mechanisms that enable states to get more information about the interests, preferences, intentions, and security strategies of other states. They reduce uncertainty by providing credible information" (Wallander and Keohane, 2002: 95). So it can be said that trust is created by international institutions which are constituted by states and as a result of these organisations, cooperation is possible between actors with mutual interests. Although this approach claims that foreign policies are driven by state interests, it does not say how those interests are constituted.

Neoliberal theories are therefore another systemic approach which explains how state behaviours are constrained by institutions as in neorealism. Both theories see states as the only actors in international politics and both believe that state behaviours or state interactions are determined by international structures. Other actors such as individuals and culture were overlooked by these theories, especially in the Cold War era. From the 1990s

onwards, however, these concepts started to be acknowledged by these theories, especially after the contribution of constructivism. For instance, Andrew Moravcsik (1997: 519-520) integrated domestic politics with international politics in liberal theory. He claimed that preferences are very crucial in liberal theory. Domestic interests are defined by individuals and civil society groups, the fundamental actors in international politics, and they shape state preferences for foreign policies. States and their institutions represent domestic society in terms of interests. He explained that states “pursue particular interpretations and combinations of security, welfare, and sovereignty preferred by powerful domestic groups enfranchised by representative institutions and practices”. From the realist camp, Stephen Walt accepted that the role of ideology and culture should not be ignored. He stated that Marxism-Leninism or American exceptionalism shaped how Soviet and American leaders viewed the world during the Cold War and he stated that he was more open to cultural explanations of political behaviour (Walt, 2015).

These developments among realist and liberal thinkers show that although these theories do not include the role of domestic politics in examining state behaviour, scholars from these schools have started to acknowledge it. Constructivism, on the other hand, puts a special emphasis on domestic politics which will be important when the role of culture will be explained. In the next section, I shall explain constructivism and the place of popular culture in it.

1.3. Constructivism

Constructivism is not an IR theory in the way that realism and liberalism are; it is an ontology for understanding how international politics works. Ted Hopf (1998: 172) explained that “Constructivism offers alternative understandings of a number of the central themes in international relations theory, including: the meaning of anarchy and balance of power, the relationship between state identity and interest, an elaboration of power, and the prospects for change in world politics”. Whereas rationalist theories such as neorealism and neoliberalism believe that the interests of actors are exogenously determined, in other words, actors encounter one another with pre-existing sets of preferences and overlook where such preferences come from, constructivists argue that understanding how actors develop their interests is crucial to explaining a wide range of international issues (Burchill *et al.*, 2013: 221). To explain interest-formation, constructivists focus on the social identities of individuals and

states (*ibid.*). For instance, Wendt (1992: 398) stated that “Identities are the basis of interests”. In Chapters 2 and 3, I shall explain how Turkey’s interests have changed in the twenty-first century as a result of changing domestic identities with the established hegemony of the AKP.

It is not easy to describe what constructivism is because constructivism focuses on different strands. Maja Zehfuss (2002) suggested that constructivism can be defined in three divisions according to the works of Alexander Wendt, Friedrich Kratochwil and Nicholas Onuf. Wendt focused on the role of identities and interests whereas Kratochwil (1991) and Onuf (1994) argued for the central role of norms and rules in social life (Zehfuss, 2002: 22). I shall study Turkish state identities during the AKP era and the role of popular culture in creating consent for TFP in accordance with these state identities. I shall therefore be following Wendt’s constructivism rather than that of Onuf and Kratochwil since it investigates identities in TFP. Although I am accepting Wendt as a starting point, the contributions of other constructivist scholars such as Ted Hopf and Jutta Weldes will be used to explain the role of popular culture in state identity formation. Whilst Hopf (2002: 35) stated that popular fictions are crucial sources of identity and its discursive practices, Weldes (1999a: 119) believed that popular culture reproduces the content and structure of the dominant foreign policy discourses and eventually this helps to construct the reality of world politics for state elites and publics alike. Weldes (1999a: 112) proposed that state elites have some control over public discourse “through the articulation of meaning and the interpellation of the subjects or identities, a particular meaning of the national interest emerges and comes to be commonsensical and legitimate”.

So we can claim that through the processes of articulation and interpellation, identities can be formed by the discourse of the state elites. In other words, foreign policies of state elites can be legitimate as a result of this dual process. This linguistic practice can also be reproduced by television series when the discourse of the state leaders is represented by the television series. For instance, in *VoW: Ambush*, when two characters, one the main character and the other representing the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, talk about Turkey’s Syria policy, it can be seen that there are parallels between Turkey’s real Syrian policy discourse and the fictional one depicted in the series. This example can be multiplied in other scenes in *Kurtlar Vadisi Pusu* and in other television series. I do not claim that there is a direct

relationship between the television series and the state, although there is strong evidence to believe so.

My contention is that there is no need to prove a direct relationship between the television series and the government because when we look at it from a Gramscian perspective, hegemonic power does not need to have direct control over intellectuals. Intellectuals might support the hegemonic power on the basis of consent, not coercion. Therefore, whether because of coercion or consent, if there is parallelism between the discourses of the dominant group and a television series, it can be argued that foreign policy discourses can be reproduced and that this can lead to contributing to identity formation as well as the production of consent for Turkey's foreign policies. In this section, I shall first explain the role of identities in international politics and in determining foreign policies. Second, I shall explain the role of discursive practices, articulation and interpellation to show how the discourses of state elites can create legitimacy for foreign policies. Third, I shall discuss popular culture in the IR discipline, and fourth, I shall include Gramsci's ideological hegemony to clarify the role of popular culture in the production of state identity, legitimacy or consent for the foreign policies of a state.

1.3.1. The Role of Identities in Constructivist IR Theory

Whilst neorealists assume that the only meaningful identity in international politics is that of self-interested states, constructivism offers more accounts in terms of identities and state actions. In fact, criticism of neorealism is the starting point of Wendt's approach to the identities in IR, although there are some similarities between his approach and neorealism. He stated that

Constructivism is a structural theory of the international system that makes the following core claims: (1) states are the principal units of analysis for international political theory; (2) the key structures in the state system are intersubjective, rather than material; and (3) state identities and interests are in important part constructed by these social structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics. (Wendt, 1994: 385)

In this definition, the idea that states are the sole actors and structures in the international system is as crucial as it is in neorealism. However, he differentiated his approach from neorealism by using intersubjectivity to define those structures. Wendt contended that

intersubjectivity gives meaning to the international system, not material capabilities. It will be useful here to consider intersubjectivity in constructivism. Intersubjective understandings, which are norms, rules, meanings, languages, cultures and ideologies, create identities, determine actions and comprise structures and agents (Klotz and Lynch, 2007: 7). Without these intersubjective understandings, components of international politics, such as anarchy, are meaningless. Security-oriented state behaviour, or a self-help system, cannot be understood as a result of an anarchic international system. Wendt (1992: 396-397) contended that "A fundamental principle of constructivist social theory is that people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them". States act differently towards friends and enemies because whilst one of them is threatening the other is not. For instance, Azerbaijan and Turkey see each other as a friend whilst Greece and Turkey have seen each other as threatening for many years, and that has caused militarisation for both states. This is not explained by realism because it only focuses on a self-help system in which all states are rival and threatening to each other. Self-help, then, is one of the intersubjective meanings which Wendt put forward. So states act according to the meanings which are intersubjectively constituted, not because an anarchical international system forces them to do. Therefore, "Self-help and power politics are institutions, not essential features of anarchy. *Anarchy is what states make of it*" (Wendt, 1992: 395).

More precisely, state behaviour in Wendt's constructivism is caused by state interests which stem from state identities. He divided state identities into two, corporate and social identities: "Corporate identity refers to the intrinsic, self-organizing qualities that constitute actor individuality" (Wendt, 1994: 385). This kind of identity creates four interests: 1. physical security; 2. predictability in relationships to the world; 3. recognition as an actor by other actors; and 4. development in economic terms (Wendt, 1994: 385). How an actor satisfies these interests "depends on how it defines the self in relation to the other, which is a function of social identities at both domestic and systemic levels of analysis" (Wendt, 1994: 385).

Whilst there is one corporate identity, there are multiple social identities which are "a set of meanings that an actor attributes to itself as a social object while taking the perspective of others, that is, as a social object" (Wendt, 1994: 385). Actors can determine 'who they are' in a situation as a result of their social identities and their "positions in a social role structure of shared understandings and expectations. In this respect, they are a key link in the mutual

constitution of agent and structure, embodying the terms of individuality through which agents relate to each other” (Wendt, 1994: 385). It can therefore be said that the existence of social identities is dependent on others.

Even so, Wendt did not emphasise the domestic roots of state identities; he used a systemic approach by claiming that the identity of a state is determined only in inter-state interactions. It can therefore be said that Wendt’s contribution is similar to the neorealist and neoliberalist views because he believed that the international system shapes the identities and interests of states (Epstein, 2011: 330). He overlooked the historical and political contexts which shape national interests or collective meanings since he approached states as unitary actors in the system (Weldes, 1999b: 9; Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 24). Although states can be accepted as actors in the international system, state officials are responsible for state actions and they come to state positions with an already comprehensive knowledge of international politics and of the role of their state within the international system (Weldes, 1999b: 19): “This appreciation, in turn, is necessarily rooted in collective meanings already produced, at least in part, in domestic political and cultural contexts” (Weldes, 1999b: 19). Thus, my contention is that state actions are determined by two kinds of identity. The first is the systemic identity which is the result of inter-state transactions. The second is the domestic identity which is created by domestic political, cultural and historical contexts. My specific focus in this current study is on this second kind of identity.

1.3.2. Domestic Identities and National Interests

Identities in the constructivist approach have three functions in society: “they tell you and others who you are and they tell you who others are” by implying a particular set of interests with respect to the choices of action in particular fields and with respect to the extent of particular actors (Hopf, 1998: 175). The identity of a state indicates its interests, preferences and actions because states understand each other to the extent of the identities which they attribute to themselves, and daily social practices simultaneously reproduce their identities (Hopf, 1998: 175).

In Wendt’s approach to state identities as described above, states have to interact with each other otherwise they do not have any conceptions of self or other. Before interaction, they

cannot understand each other as a friend or a foe, and the interests of these states are only shaped after an interaction. Weldes, however, contended that “national interests are social constructions created as meaningful objects out of the intersubjective and culturally established meanings within which the world, particularly the international system and the place of the state in it, is understood” and she suggested that “The categories of common sense for foreign policy, the intersubjective and culturally established *meanings* on the basis of which state officials make decisions and act, are provided by the security imaginaries of states” (Weldes, 1999b: 10). In her analysis, a security imaginary is “a structure of well-established meanings and social relations out of which representations of the world of international relations are created” (Weldes, 1999b: 10). Epstein (2011: 329) reached the same conclusion and said that “... if the social world is indeed made by interacting actors, then it is important to consider the sets of meanings they bring to these interactions; that is, the ideas they hold, the cultures to which they belong and the patterns of rules and norms regulating these exchanges. Meaning is thus central to social agency”.

The state officials who are dealing with foreign policy have ideas about foreign affairs, or security imaginary, and their ideas are represented by intersubjective and culturally established meanings through discursive practices, in other words, national interests emerge out of these representations. For instance, in foreign policy, Turkey was western-oriented since the first years of the Republic. The Republican elite was secular, western-oriented and keen to join with all civilised nations, which meant the west, for peace and friendship. Particularly after the Second World War, Turkey joined almost all the western organisations, such as NATO, the IMF and the Council of Europe, and interactions with the Middle East were kept to a minimum. Throughout the Republican era, this policy was reinforced by negative images and stereotypes of the Arab nations as being untrustworthy, uncivilised, backward states governed by *sharia* Law. Then the Kemalists believed that Turkey’s national interests rested on the west, and through intersubjective understandings they created meanings of Arab countries. As a result, Turkey was anchored to the west rather than to the Middle East in its foreign policies, especially during the Republican era. However, with the rise of political Islam in Turkey, this started to alter and Turkey began to become more involved in Middle Eastern politics. This will be explained in Chapter 3 in further detail.

In Weldes's approach, then, representations are at the centre of analysis because they have a role, at least partially, in constituting national interests with the help of the articulation of meaning and the interpellation of identities. She answered the question of by whom these representations and thus the national interest are constructed as state officials who are the decision-makers responsible for foreign policy (Weldes, 1999b: 11). In Turkish politics, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) should have the first place. Ahmet Davutoglu, who was an IR academic, Recep Tayyip Erdogan's principal consultant for foreign policies between 2004 and 2009, Minister of Foreign Affairs between 2009 and 2014, and prime minister between 2014 and 2015, is a key figure in this current study. Moreover, in Turkey, the former prime minister and current President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has to have a special role because of the extraordinary power that he holds.

Weldes also suggested that although state officials construct national interests out of linguistic, cultural and institutional resources provided by the security imaginary, they also reproduce their own positions as decision makers. It can be said that they construct the meaning and in the process they also become the subject of that meaning. This can be seen from the findings of a study carried out in Kadir Has University into Turkey's foreign policy. In this survey, people were asked about which state institution is responsible for TFP first in 2013 and then again in 2015. When the results are compared between the two years, it can be seen that in 2013, when Erdogan was still the prime minister, only 8.8% of the respondents believed that the presidency is an important institution for foreign policy decision-making; in 2015, however, when Erdogan was president, 25.8% of the participants believed that the presidency conducts TFP. This result can be interpreted in the light of the reproduction of Erdogan's position in foreign policy-making since although the presidency has no role in the decision-making process for Turkey's foreign policies, the participants thought that Erdogan did have a crucial role in conducting foreign policy.

State officials create broad representations for themselves and others, as a security imaginary, to construct national interests. By doing that, they make sense of the international system and the role of their state in that system; and they have to describe a specific issue which they face to enable decision-making: "After all, people act in terms of their interpretations of, and intentions towards, their external conditions, rather than being governed directly by them" (Weldes, 1999b: 12). For example, during the *Mavi Marmara*

flotilla crisis,¹ Turkish officials functioned within the post-cold war security imaginary in which the international system was represented as no longer unipolar, and regional powers were increasing. With the ambitions of becoming a regional power in her neighbourhood, Turkey interpreted what happened in the Mediterranean as the *Mavi Marmara crisis*, rather than as the *Mavi Marmara nuisance*, and acted according to this interpretation. This issue will be investigated along with another crisis in Chapter 3, where I shall explain the transformation of TFP during the AKP era.

The most important question is: how are these representations of the self and others in world politics rendered commonsensical? Weldes claimed that it is possible through the dual processes of articulation and interpellation. In the next section, I shall explain these two processes.

1.3.3. Articulation of the Meaning and Interpellation of the Subject Identities

In this section, I shall explain the processes of the articulation of the meaning and interpellation of identity to explain how they can constitute a national interest for states. They are crucial because if the national interests of a state are altered, it means that the representations and discursive practices of state officials can have a role in the legitimacy of foreign policies. First, therefore, I shall explain what articulation of the meaning is. According to Lawrence Grossberg (1992: 54), articulation is “the production of identity on top of differences, of unities out of fragments, of structures across practices. Articulation links this practice to that effect, this text to that meaning, this meaning to that reality, this experience to those politics. And these links are themselves articulated into larger structures, etc.”. These practices include linguistic resources or cultural materials of their time period, and meanings are produced through these processes. Stuart Hall (1985: 113, note 2) described articulation as:

A connection or link which is not necessarily given in all cases, as a law or a fact of life, but which requires particular conditions of existence to appear at all, which has to be positively

¹ “On May 31, 2010, when, in international waters, fully equipped Israeli soldiers stormed a passenger ship, the *Mavi Marmara*, the largest of a flotilla of six boats carrying humanitarian aid to besieged Gaza. The operation left nine activists dead, eight of whom were Turkish citizens, and over 30 activists wounded. Immediately after the crisis, Turkish officials openly condemned Israel for carrying out ‘state terrorism’ and Turkish-Israeli bilateral relations were reduced to the lowest point in history” (Onis, 2011: 52).

sustained by specific processes, which is not 'eternal' but has constantly to be renewed, which can under some circumstances disappear or be overthrown, leading to the old linkages being dissolved and new connections-re-articulations-being forged.

With these processes or structures, different terms, concepts and ideas are linked to each other and they come to connote one another because they are connected with each other by discursive chains (Hall, 1985: 104). These processes are pertinent in a particular society since meanings can change from one society to another. Some linguistic elements have meanings for Turkey whilst they have no meanings for British people. For instance, the word *capulcu* was used by Erdogan during the *Gezi Parki* events to describe the young people who attended the events. Although the word means simply 'marauders', shortly after Erdogan had used it with other words such as 'separatists', 'tongs' (as tools of foreign powers) or 'terrorists', *capulcular* began to invoke those meanings and connotations that the protestors of *Gezi Park* were controlled by powers outside Turkey who want to divide Turkey (Idiz, 2013). By doing this, Erdogan was articulating the Gezi protestors with external powers who 'make evil plans' over Turkey:² "With their successful repeated articulation, these linguistic elements come to seem as though they are inherently or necessarily connected, and the meanings they produce come to seem natural, come to seem an accurate description of reality" (Weldes, 1999b: 98-99). However, it is important to say that articulation does not always lead to one specific meaning. Although *capulcu* connoted the meanings that the AKP wanted in specific groups, among other groups it has different meanings, such as people who 'act in a peaceful and humorous manner to remind governments why they exist'. It should therefore be emphasised that there are two important consequences of articulations: they must be repeated vigorously and the meanings which they create can be broken and contested with other meanings.

Weldes discussed the degree of freedom which exists in the construction of articulations, and thus the meanings of international relations. She wrote that

There is no simple or abstract answer to this question; rather, it is an empirical issue that requires a response grounded in extensive empirical analyses. Such analyses would demand an elaborate investigation of, among other things, the range of interpretive possibilities permitted by the security imaginary within a particular situation at a particular historical juncture and the constraints placed on possible articulations by extant power relations. (Weldes, 1999b: 102)

² This is a part of the representation of self-confident Turkey and it will be examined in detail in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3, I shall elaborate this issue with specific situations such as relations with Syria or Israel, and Turkey's security imaginary in the light of the transformation of TFP. I shall analyse which articulations are constructed for these specific relations and how they are used in the speeches of state officials such as Ahmet Davutoglu and Recep Tayyip Erdogan. When these articulations are reproduced in the television series, they would be repeated not only by television news channels but also by popular culture products.

The second process which will be discussed is the interpellation of subject identities. After meanings are articulated for foreign policies or the security imaginary to construct national interests, the interpellation of subject identities constitutes the second process. Althusser (1971: 174) described interpellation as that "ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing". It refers to a dual process in which subject identities are created and individuals are hailed into or interpellated by those subject identities (Althusser, 1971: 174-175).

Specific subject positions or identities are created when social relations are depicted; there are different descriptions of world politics and individuals position themselves according to these descriptions: "Each subject position or identity carries with it particular ways of functioning in the world, is located within specific power relations, and is characterized by particular interests" (Weldes, 1999b: 104). A state creates many subject identities including that state itself and other states, and in the central subject position or identity, there is that state itself. For instance, in Turkey's security imaginary, Turkey is in the central position and the existence of Turkey is created as a subject by the security imaginary of the Turkish state: "Out of an abstraction designating a territory, a population, and a set of governing principles and apparatuses is created an anthropomorphization, the fiction of an apparently acting subject with motives and interests" (Weldes, 1999b: 104). This fictional Turkey has a specific identity and that identity has specific interests. As a result of the interpellation of this identity, Turkey positions itself as the central object of discussions of TFP and national interests and becomes the central object of the security imaginary which is responsible for the security of Turkey.

Weldes claimed that these subject positions or identities are provided by state elites according to individuals' self-understandings and experiences. Individuals who construct national interests are hailed by specific representations of state identities because those representations are also a part of their experience. Weldes (1999b: 105) explained this as follows:

Imaginariness and the representations they enable describe to individuals in a recognizable way the manner in which they live their lives; they construct and entail subject positions or identities from which both perceptions of the world and perceptions of the self make sense. As a result, the representations appear to be common sense, to reflect 'the way the world really is'. As a result, individuals can speak from the identities – the subject positions – entailed in the imaginary. That is, subjects 'recognize themselves in the discourse' and as a result they can 'speak it spontaneously as its author'. It comes naturally because it accords with their (already constructed) self-understandings.

In interpellation, therefore, people accept or adopt an identity, in my case related to foreign policy, which is articulated by state officials. Individuals are hailed into or interpellated by specific identities through reiteration of the imaginations of selves and others. They give their consent to, or actively embrace, representations when they make sense of the identities. Within the frame of cultural references and common vocabulary, state officials attempt to speak in a language which resonates with their people (Klotz and Lynch, 2007: 80).

When we think about interpellation in the case of Turkey, it can be given as an example that there are identities which come from the time of the foundation of the Republic. People are interpellated by these identities, such as Turkishness or anti-imperialism, and give consent for these identities when, for example, there is an issue about Turkmen (Turcomans or Iraqi Turks) in Northern Iraq or when state officials raise arguments about external powers which aim to divide Turkey, as they attempted with the Sevres Treaty in 1920. These two specific issues are related to the identities which have historical roots for people in Turkey and will be discussed in Chapter 3. Moreover, with the rise of the AKP, attempts have been made to create new identities such as neo-Ottomanism, and state officials have used discursive practices to make references to Turkish history, mostly Ottoman history, in order to interpellate this identity which had come with the foundation of the Republic to legitimate their foreign policies. This will also be explained in Chapter 3.

In the final section, I shall clarify the inclusion of popular culture in these processes since it is my contention that the Turkish television series is another terrain where these identities,

discourses and representation can be seen. For this purpose, I shall use Gramsci's hegemony theory to argue how popular culture, and a television series in my case, can be a site for the production of consent. Before moving on to discuss Gramsci's theory, it is important first to explain popular culture and IR.

2. Popular Culture and IR

The end of the Cold War opened new fields for the IR discipline. The major IR theories of neorealism and neoliberalism could not predict the end of the Cold War, and new theories were emerging as a result of challenges to these major theories. Constructivism was one of these new theories. Culture, which is a constituent element of constructivism, started to be evaluated within IR and at the beginning of the new millennium popular culture found a place in IR. A growing number of IR scholars focused on sub-fields of popular culture and attempted to integrate it with the IR discipline. Jutta Weldes (1999a, 2001, 2003) focused on the science fiction television series *Star Trek* and its connections to world politics, and stated that *Star Trek* had parallel features with US foreign policy discourse and that this discourse was reproduced in this television series. Cynthia Weber (1999, 2001) showed that popular Hollywood films can be a useful tool for explaining IR theories. Nicholas Evan Sarantakes (2005) also investigated *Star Trek* and revealed how the Cold War environment shaped the content of the series. Dittmer (2005) illustrated the political relevance of *Captain America* comics in the post-9/11 era from a geopolitical perspective. Nexon and Neumann (2006) and Kiersey and Neumann analysed the realms of *Harry Potter* and *Battlestar Galactica* and explained their relevance to world politics. Kyle Grayson, Matt Davies and Simon Philpott (2009) offered a research agenda for studying popular culture in IR. Klaus Dodds (2008) found intersections between film, geopolitics and IR by focusing on Hollywood, the Bush administration and the post-9/11 era. Ted Hopf (2002) included the discourses in popular Russian novels in his sample when he explained the relationship between Russian identity and Russian foreign policy. Robert Young (2015) looked at the reproduction of narratives of warfare and counterterrorism in popular video games. All of these scholars were attempting to integrate popular culture into IR. I also intend to contribute to IR by focusing on a Turkish television series.

Popular culture is a domain which both affects politics and is affected by politics. It infiltrates social and political life and representations of social and political life infiltrate the domain of popular culture. The former can be seen when a Chinese diplomat accuses Japan of becoming the villain in the *Harry Potter* series (Xiaoming, 2014); for the latter, a television series such as *The West Wing*, or more recently *House of Cards*, which contain fictional representations of the White House can be given as examples. Such representations play a crucial role in constituting the social and political worlds because most of our knowledge does not derive from direct experience: we make generalisations or form stereotypes about other people and the social and political worlds and learn things from the testimony of our parents, teachers and scientific, religious and political authorities (Neumann and Nexon, 2006: 6). These representations are also applicable to our knowledge of international politics in which representations constitute a crucial point. Neumann and Nexon (2006) suggested that there are two kinds of representation. First-order representations which directly represent political events, such as television and print journalism or a politician's speech, constitute the first kind of representation. Popular culture is second-order representation which represents narratives in politics indirectly, through a layer of fiction. The Turkish television series which I shall analyse in this study can therefore be regarded as the second kind of representation.

Popular culture is a field in which political representations can be found and can create meaning for us. A television series as a part of popular entertainment and a vehicle for second-order political representations should be investigated fully for a better understanding of IR since it can include symbols, analogies, knowledge and meanings of international politics. It can reproduce power relations, help to construct the reality of world politics, and even generate consent for foreign policies. According to Weldes (2003: 6), culture is a set of practices:

These practices, including representations, language, and customs, are "concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings – the 'giving and taking of meaning' – between members of a society or group". Understood in this way, culture encompasses the multiplicity of discourses or "codes of intelligibility" through which meanings are constructed and practices produced. This multiplicity, in turn, implies that meanings can be contested. Culture is thus composed of potentially contested codes and representations; it designates a field on which battles over meaning are fought. In Stuart Hall's words, culture encompasses "the contradictory forms of 'common sense' which have taken root in and helped to shape popular life". Popular culture properly comprises one substantial element in this field of contestable and contradictory common sense meanings.

We can make the assumption that popular culture contains both favourable and challenging ideas about power relations. Weldes (2003: 6-7) said that “While prevailing cultural and discursive practices constrain and oppress people, they simultaneously provide resources to fight against those constraints”. For instance, in Turkey, whilst television series such as *VoW: Ambush* or *Resurrection: Ertugrul* represent the current hegemonic power, others such as *Leyla ile Mecnun* do not. The former use a similar discourse to that of the current hegemon, whereas the latter is mocking this discourse. According to Weldes, examining these texts to determine whether they support or undermine extant power relations helps us to highlight the workings of power (Weldes, 2003: 7). I have focused on a television series which supports the current hegemonic power in order to understand how it reproduces the discourses on foreign policy issues such as relations with Syria and Israel, or the concept of neo-Ottomanism.

Weldes (2003: 7) also asserted that “popular culture helps to define and represent, or to construct, world politics for state officials”, therefore official representations depend upon the culture of a society. But more importantly for my argument, she contended that the plausibility of the state actors “depends upon the ways in which publics understand international politics and the location and role of their own and other states in it” (Weldes, 1999: 119; Weldes, 2003). Part of the plausibility comes from a structural combination of both daily experiences of people and official representations, and “this explicitly implicates popular culture in providing a background of meanings that help to constitute public images of world politics and foreign policy” (Weldes, 2003: 7). As a result, Weldes (1999a: 119) claimed that “Popular culture thus helps to construct reality of international politics for officials and non-officials alike and, to the extent that it reproduces the content and structure of the dominant foreign policy discourse, it helps to produce consent for foreign policy and state action”. In other words, popular culture, in my case a television series and the speeches of the politicians, creates an intertextuality and this can lead to consent creation. Elspeth Van Veeren (2009: 364) explained that a television series “can be considered an important and useful example in the production of intertextual meaning ... By both (re)constituting and drawing on the same (re)presentations of ‘reality’, the intertextuality of popular culture and world politics helps to make the world intelligible”. Van Veeren also explained in the same article in which she focused on the series 24 that the intertextuality between popular culture and official

discourses makes it impossible to distinguish fiction from reality. My contention is that *VoW: Ambush* does the very same thing because of its reiteration of the foreign policy discourse of the AKP, its coverage of real Turkish political issues and the myth that *VoW: Ambush* can predict future events in Turkish politics. This will be explained in Chapter 4.

At this point, Neumann and Nexon's (2006: 11-20) four ways to research popular culture in IR, which they call *popular culture and politics*, *popular culture as mirror*, *popular culture as data*, and *popular culture as constitutive*, should be mentioned. The first approach, *popular culture and politics*, treats popular culture as causes and effects of political events of the kind depicted. For instance, if a television series affects an event in another country, that should be evaluated by this approach. The Greek Golden Dawn Party's protests in Greece after the popularity of the Turkish television series is an example of this approach. *Popular culture as mirror* approaches popular culture as a tool to show themes and processes and to make analogies between world politics and IR. It is useful when teaching IR theories, as in Daniel Drezner's (2011) *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*. *Popular culture as data* "draws on insights from hermeneutics, forms of content analysis, and ethnography, in which cultural texts and images are seen as storage places for meaning in particular society" (Neumann and Nexon, 2006: 13). Using this approach, popular culture can be treated as evidence for norms, beliefs, ideas or identities in a particular state since it can reflect cultural themes and ongoing political processes better than elite discourse. With this approach, popular culture is treated as a second-order representation which can reveal crucial facts about national identities. The final approach is *popular culture as constitutive*, which lifts the distinction between first- and second-order representations because this approach attempts to understand how popular culture shapes first-order representations such as in the way in which it reflects a politician's speech or a column in a newspaper. This approach also deals with determining, informing, enabling and naturalising ways which can be constituent effects in international politics.

In this current study, I used the *popular culture as data* and *popular culture as constitutive* approaches since I have focused on the relationship between a television series and Turkey's domestic and state identities. As a second-order representation, the television series *VoW* will be investigated. In constructivism, state identities can determine the foreign policies of a particular state and these identities are constituted not only as a result of interactions with

other states but also by domestic identities which are affected by culture. State identities are not static; they can be altered according to relations with other states or when domestic identities are affected by new political actors, or when a hegemonic power emerges. A new hegemonic power alters the narratives, norms, ideas and discourses in the political and social spheres to secure its hegemony and popular culture reflects this, as Weldes stated above. These television series can be treated as *data* from which to examine the extant hegemony in Turkey since they reproduce political discourse and the narratives of state officials. In this thesis, I shall focus on discourse on TFP and investigate the speeches of state officials as first-order representations and the television series as second-order representations. In addition to this approach, I shall also use the *popular culture as constitutive* approach because of the intertextual meaning created by *VoW* and other texts. This intertextual meaning abolishes the line between reality and fiction. Also, when the reception of *VoW: Ambush* is investigated it is seen that the series reproduced the speeches of politicians and that politicians and the media reproduced in real life the speeches and representations in *VoW: Ambush*. It can therefore be claimed that this intertextuality lifts first- and second-order representations. The parallels between them will give a clear picture from which to argue how the current hegemony in Turkey is using a television series to produce consent for its foreign policies.

Antonio Gramsci becomes an important part of this study because of his approach to the creation of consent. Although he discussed consent for approving the rule of hegemonic power, consent for foreign policies can also be evaluated within Gramsci's concept because domestic and foreign policies are intertwined. The Gramscian approach is also used to analyse popular culture and hegemonic relations. John Storey (2010: 81) stated that by using Gramsci's hegemony theory, the interaction between a society and the texts and practices of the culture-based industries can be understood. Although I shall use constructivism in IR theory, I shall also integrate Gramsci's hegemony theory to explain how a television series might have an effect on state identities when it reproduces the content and structure of the dominant foreign policy discourse. If we accept the assertions of Weldes and if popular culture reproduces the content and structure of the AKP's foreign policy discourse, we can claim that this Turkish television series can have a role in the production of consent.

3. Gramsci and Popular Culture

This section presents an insight into the concept of hegemony from the Gramscian perspective to explain why popular culture can have a role in the legitimation or production of consent for foreign policies. The Gramscian approach can be integrated into the two processes, articulation and interpellation, which were explained above. The starting point of this idea is this question: what if the discursive practices of Turkish state officials are represented in a television series which is part of the AKP hegemony? I believe and shall show that there are parallels between the discourse in the statements of state officials and the discourse of some characters such as *Polat Alemdar* in *Kurtlar Vadisi Pusu*. It can then be claimed that not only do the speeches or statements of state officials reproduce articulated meanings, but also that the television series reproduces them. In addition, individuals may not only be interpellated by or hailed into the identities into which state officials attempted to attract them, but also the television series may also have a role in that. If we accept this, the television series may have a role as a second-order representation, as Neumann and Nexon claimed, in the production of consent for foreign policies, because Weldes suggested that representations of foreign policy would be seen as commonsensical. However, I propose only to focus on the reproduction of identities and representations of foreign policies by investigating how the television series reproduces the discourses, representations and identities of the AKP which can be understood as commonsensical. At this point, therefore, Gramsci's hegemony concept should be clarified.

3.1. Gramsci in IR Theory

In the 1980s, a group of IR scholars approached IR from the Gramscian perspective by using his hegemony theory. In his writings, Gramsci did not have much to say about world politics. Even so, IR scholars such as Robert W. Cox (1983), Stephen Gill (1993, 2008, 2012) Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton (2004), Morton (2003) and William I. Robinson (2005) applied Gramsci's theory and his concepts of hegemony, common sense and historical bloc to IR and evaluated them within the field of International Political Economy (IPE). Cox (1983), for instance, adapted Gramsci's understanding of hegemony to understand the problems of the world order. He explained that Gramsci accepted that the state is the only actor in the international system but included the social basis of the state because a change in the international power relations or world order can be traced to change in social relations (Cox,

1983: 169). Cox (1983: 171) expanded Gramsci's ideas on this subject by saying that "A world hegemony is thus in its beginnings an outward expansion of the internal (national) hegemony established by a dominant class". A mode of production of one state becomes dominant through time, it penetrates other states and links to other modes of production through complex international social relationships which connect the social classes of the different states. International institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, which are the products of the hegemonic world order of powerful core states, sustain the world order by embodying rules which facilitate the expansion of the hegemonic world order and by co-opting the elites from weak peripheral countries and absorbing counter-hegemonic ideas (Cox, 1983: 172). Gill (2012) also engaged with the problems of the world order and focused on US hegemony on the global scale by offering a critique of US organic intellectuals. As in Cox's approach, Gill thought that world hegemony is a result of an internal or national hegemony which expands to become international.

Gramscian scholars within IR have focused mostly on world order, the hegemony of states over other states, by addressing Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, common sense and historical bloc. When we look at their works, it is possible to say that hegemony on the domestic level is important for evaluating hegemony on the international level. I shall, however, develop a different approach and differentiate my study from those works by investigating hegemony only on the domestic level: popular culture and its relation to the foreign policy of one country, Turkey. Thus it is still within the boundaries of the Gramscian approach in IR but, on the other hand, it will draw a bit on Gramscian cultural and media studies. In Gramscian IR, the state is a crucial actor as in realism, but it is different in terms of civil society and of social and political forces. Domestic hegemonic relations have a determining role at the international level, or to put it differently, in foreign policies, and this is exactly what I shall argue for Turkish domestic politics and TFP. Even so, Gramsci still needs to be connected to popular culture and popular culture needs to be connected to foreign policies. Therefore, in the next paragraphs I shall explain Gramsci's approach in more detail, and link it to Weldes' approaches which I clarified above.

In the Gramscian concept of hegemony, political society and civil society are equally important because the exercise of hegemony needs "the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally without force predominating excessively over consent"

(Gramsci, 1971: 80). The ruling class has to use the private sphere, or civil society, to justify and maintain its dominance, and for this it needs the active consent of the subordinated class (Bieler and Morton, 2004: 92). In the Gramscian sense, then, the political and civil spheres are intertwined: "Hegemony filters through structures of society, economy, culture, gender, ethnicity, class and ideology" (Bieler and Morton, 2004: 87). The private sphere of a society, such as the church, media and education, become a part of the places where hegemony functions (Bieler and Morton, 2004: 92). Therefore, hegemony, according to Gramsci, is "intellectual and moral leadership whose principal constituting elements are consent and persuasion rather than coercion" (Fontana, 1993: 140). In this concept, Gramsci believed that intellectuals have a specific role which is to help a certain class to form a particular structure of a knowledge and values system, and to transform them into general and universally applicable conceptions (Fontana, 1993: 140). Intellectuals are the intermediators between the dominant and the subordinated class, and they function not only as the creators of a particular way of life and a particular conception of the world, but also as translators of the interests and values of a social group into general values and interests (Fontana, 1993: 141).

According to Gramsci, intellectuals "must be understood not (as) those strata commonly described by this term, but in general the entire social stratum which exercises an organizational function in the wide sense – whether in the field of production, or in that of culture, or in that of political administration" (Gramsci, in Sassoon, 1987: 134). An intellectual is a member of "an elite of men of culture, who have the function of providing leadership of a cultural and general ideological nature" (Storey, 2009: 81). Here, it should be understood that intellectuals function in all spheres of a society, ranging from the economic to the cultural fields. In this current study, I shall focus on intellectuals in the cultural field to explain the hegemony of the AKP.

Gramsci believed that hegemony is a constant struggle between the ruling class and the adverse groups which are against the ideology of the hegemon elites. The ruling class needs the consent of these groups and this causes the ruling class to constantly endeavour to maintain the consent of the society and to prevent any resistance. In his analysis, "an ideology manages to spread throughout the whole of society not only united economic and political objectives but also intellectual and moral unity" (Guins and Cruz, 2005: 7). Popular culture is a sphere in which this struggle is present. Storey (2009: 81) stated that in cultural studies,

intellectuals can also be understood collectively and that television, the press, education, organised religion and the culture industries can be part of this group. In his writings, Gramsci put an emphasis on mass communication as a means by which the ideological structure of a dominant class is organised: "Press in general: publishing houses, political newspapers, periodicals of every kind, scientific, literary, philological, popular etc., various periodicals down to the parish bulletins" are part of this ideological structure (Gramsci, 1985: 389). So the press is not the only actor in this structure; "everything which influences or is able to influence public opinion, directly or indirectly, belongs to it: libraries, schools, associations and clubs of various kinds, even architecture and the layout and names of streets" (Gramsci, 1985: 389). Gramsci made it clear that hegemony is based on methods of mass communication and when this is applied to the twenty-first century, not only the printed press but also radio, movies, television and the internet can be included in those methods. As a result, a television series as a part of popular culture can be investigated as an ideological structure of a dominant class. By using Gramsci's hegemony theory, the interaction between the society and the texts and practices of the culture industries can be understood (Storey, 2009: 81). This current study is an investigation of a television series as a part of popular culture because the producers, scriptwriters and actors and actresses can be evaluated as part of intellectuals. They can have a role in forging identities, representations, security imaginaries and state interests by reproducing the discourse of state officials, in other words, extant hegemony.

In Gramsci's approach and throughout this thesis, 'common sense' has a crucial place. Gramsci (1971: 330, note) stated that common sense is "the diffuse, unco-ordinated features of a generic form of thought common to a particular period and a particular popular environment". According to Hall (1986: 20), common sense is important because

... it is the terrain of conceptions and categories on which the practical consciousness of the masses of the people is actually formed. It is the already formed and 'taken for granted' terrain, on which more coherent ideologies and philosophies must contend for mastery; the ground which new conceptions of the world must take into account, contest and transform, if they are to shape the conceptions of the world of the masses and in that way become historically effective.

With the articulation and interpellation processes, representations of international politics become commonsensical, as stated above. Social constructions appear as natural and

become common sense when they have defined the relation of meaning to reality as one of representation. Thus, they become common sense if they neutrally represent the real. Common sense therefore “entails the reification or naturalization of constructed representations of the world, thereby obscuring their constructed nature and their ideological effects” (Weldes, 1999b: 226). Through the processes of articulation and interpellation, the naturalness of representations is created. This may be the explanation for why more people do not oppose the foreign policy of supporting the opposition groups in Syria such as the Free Syrian Army. The articulated representation of neo-Ottomanism and the interpellation of neo-Ottoman identity may make individuals, at least partly, give their consent for these policies. A television series which reproduces that identity may have a role in this process as part of a second-order representational role. Hopf (2002: 35) claimed that “popular fictional works are an especially important source of identity and its discursive practices”. Therefore, the approaches of both Gramsci and Weldes are conformed on this point. Even so, it is not my intention to investigate the role of the television series in the production of consent for foreign policies. I shall examine the discourses of state officials and the television series in the frame of identity construction for foreign policies to show how the AKP government, the media and the television series reproduce those discourses, representations and identities. In the next section, I will explain methodological approach of the thesis in details.

4. Methodology

4.1. Approaches to Discourse within IR Discipline

As stated above, this thesis will be carried out within a constructivist approach. In this research I claim that a popular Turkish television series, *VoW: Ambush* can produce consent for the TFP because it reproduces the same identities, meanings and representations created and rearticulated by the AKP politicians in the last decade. The most suitable methodology for such an approach is discourse analysis. This section aims to demonstrate the advantages of using this approach.

When we look at the focus on discourse in IR it can be said that it accelerated particularly quickly in the 1990s when sub-fields such as post-structuralism, critical theory and constructivism emerged. Some of the studies which used discourse theory were those of Derian and Shapiro (1989), Doty (1993), Sharp (1993), Hansen (1996, 1997, 2006), Campbell

(1998), Milliken (1999), Weldes (1999b), Epstein (2008; 2011), Diez (2013), Bevir, Daddow and Hall (2013) and Holzscheiter (2014). It is possible to say that post-structuralism in IR used the concept of discourse first, but it travelled to constructivism especially after Jennifer Milliken's article (Holzscheiter, 2014: 143). Whereas post-structuralists and critical theorists were interested in the deconstruction of discourses and decision-making processes for foreign policies, constructivists concentrated on discourses to understand the role of identities which shape foreign policy behaviours, and focused on inter-subjectivity which creates identities and norms (Bevir, Daddow and Hall, 2013: 165). Discourse also became an important part of research in geopolitics. O Tuathail and Agnew (1992: 191) explained that

It is through discourse that leaders act, through the mobilization of certain simple geographical understandings that foreign-policy actions are explained and through ready-made geographically-infused reasoning that wars are rendered meaningful. How we understand and constitute our social world is through the socially structured use of language. Political speeches and the like afford us a means of recovering the self-understandings of influential actors in world politics. They help us understand the social construction of worlds and the role of geographical knowledge in that social construction.

Then, discourse is used in different strands of IR and there are different approaches to discourse within this sub-field. As Holzscheiter (2014: 144) stated, "Discourse analysis is an engagement with meaning and the linguistic and communicative processes through which social reality is constructed. Discourse can therefore be defined as, basically, the space where intersubjective meaning is created, sustained, transformed and, accordingly, becomes constitutive of social reality". Therefore, it is through discursive practices that politicians communicate their ideas and it is through the reproduction of the discourse that these ideas become intersubjective.

O Tuathail and Agnew (1992: 192-193) also stated that "Discourses are best conceptualized as sets of capabilities people have, as sets of socio-cultural resources used by people in the construction of meaning about their world and their activities". Then, it can be said that meanings, representations and identities related to the TFP are constructed in the discourse and this needs to be examined in this thesis to understand how new identities and representations were constructed during the Davutoglu era and led to the policies of this era.

According to Ole Wæver (2009: 164-165) discourse is "a system that regulates the formation of statements" and "A discourse analysis tries to find the structures and patterns in public

statements that regulate political debate so that certain things can be said while other things will be meaningless or less powerful or reasonable". Then, Wæver thought that discourses create structures and he investigated discourses within structures. Epstein (2008: 2) also stated that "A discourse is a cohesive ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations about a specific object that frame that object in a certain way and, therefore, delimit the possibilities for action in relation to it. It is a structured yet open and dynamic entity". She believes that discourses are sense-making practices and first, they constitute a 'space of objects', they render real things meaningful to us in particular ways. Second, they constitute the identities of actors, by carving out particular subject-positions (*ibid.*: 6).

Hansen (2006: 17) followed the paths of Foucault and Derrida. She stated that a "discursive formation can be defined as 'a system of dispersion [whenever] between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices,' which form 'a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations)'"'. She claimed that meaning is created within discourses through "a series of juxtapositions, where one element is valued over its opposite" (*ibid.*). Hansen suggested that meaning and identity is constructed through discursive juxtaposition between a privileged sign and a devalued one and this leads her to suggest two processes, a positive process of linking and a negative process of differentiation (*ibid.*). According to her, therefore, investigating these processes should be the focus of discourse analysis if the aim is to understand identities.

In another approach to discourse, Milliken (1999) argued that there are ways to study discourses in IR. One of these ways is to look at discourses as systems of signification which sees discourses as structures of signification that construct social realities because people construct meaning of things using sign systems. (Milliken, 1999: 229). Doty (1993: 302) referred to this approach as a linguistic construction of reality, utilising from Shapiro (1984: 222) that "language can be seen as a set of signs which are part of a system for generating subjects, objects, and worlds". Thus, discourse can create 'reality' according to Doty (1993: 303) and a focus on discourse as a unit of analysis sheds light on "how this 'reality' is produced and maintained and how it makes various practices possible".

The second approach to study discourses that Milliken suggested is discourse productivity (or reproduction). She stated that

...discourses make intelligible some ways of being in, and acting towards, the world and of operationalizing a particular 'regime of truth' while excluding other possible modes of identity and action... Discourses produce as subjects *publics (audiences) for authorized actors*, and their *common sense* of the existence and qualities of different phenomena and of how public officials should act for them and in their name (Milliken, 1999: 229).

Then, she focused on the production of common sense, explaining the processes of articulation and interpellation of Weldes. Sharp (1993: 494) also claimed that "Common sense appeals through the obviousness of its claims; it makes the world simple, and manageable. This is facilitated through a silencing of complexity, of problems which do not produce 'right or wrong', 'true or false' conclusions. In effect, the elements complicating simple notions of right or wrong are disciplined to binary simplicity by pulling the world through the discursive practice of common sense". According to this approach then the analytical focus should be on how discourse produces this world, us and them, including its policies (Larsen, 2004: 67) and when this is applied to the foreign policy analysis it helps to understand how particular subjects and identities are constructed and how particular policies become intelligible while others are not.

The third approach of Milliken is the play of practice. She stated that dominant discourses could be unstable, changeable and historically contingent, and authorised actors always need to "articulate and rearticulate their dominant knowledge and identities to fix the regime of truth" (Milliken, 1999: 230). This approach also includes investigations of alternative discourses which are silenced by the dominant discourse as well as the dominant discourse. Milliken suggested the deconstructive method, juxtapositional method, subjugated knowledges and genealogical method for this purpose (*ibid*: 242-243).

Laffey and Weldes (2004: 28) suggested a different approach to discourse analysis which will also be used in this thesis. They claimed that discourse is not equivalent to language and defined it as structure and practices: "As structure, discourses are 'sociocultural resources used by people' – and which use them – 'in the construction of meaning about their world and their activities'. As practice, they are structures of meaning-in-use" (*ibid.*). According to Laffey and Weldes, discourse analysis asks what the conditions are of particular discursive productions and also it examines how discourses are naturalised and became common sense (*ibid.*). In that context, they offered the two concepts I explained in the previous sections, to

understand aspects of discourse: articulation and interpellation. As method, they suggested that these processes can be investigated through analytical steps. First, articulations can be examined by looking at representational practices; “the main signifying elements of the discourse, whether linguistic or non-linguistic, must be identified” (*ibid.*: 29). Connotative chains become important in this process because it is possible to find nodes within those chains (*ibid.*). They also stated that investigating institutions is important to understand because some articulations of representations are more powerful when they are articulated to institutional power: “Thatcherism, for instance, was first articulated to think tanks like the neo-liberal Institute for Economic Affairs and the Centre for Policy Studies, then to the Conservative party, and gradually to media outlets like The Sun and The Mail” (*ibid.*). Thus, ideological effects of representations should also be examined according to them. Second, interpellation can also be investigated by analytical steps. Finding subject positions is very crucial as the first step: identities of subjects and objects and their relational positions are constructed in the discourse (*ibid.*). This is, then, similar to Hansen’s processes of linking and differentiation. Laffey and Weldes suggested investigating the linking of qualities to subjects and objects to understand what meanings attach to them. For instance, they claimed, during the Cold War the qualities linked to the US were such as freedom, honesty and democracy while the Soviet Union were linked to negative qualities such as secretive, despotic and aggressive (*ibid.*).

When we look at the relationship between popular culture and discourse, Weldes’s high data/low data distinction explains why popular culture can be invited to discourse analysis. According to Weldes (2006: 179), all discourses include diverse representations. She stated that all these representations are necessarily cultural because “the real is never wholly present to us—how it is real for us is always mediated through some representational practice” (*ibid.*). She defined culture as the context in which individuals give meaning to their actions and experiences and make sense of their lives. She cited from Hall and explained that “Culture, in this sense, is less a set of artifacts—novels, television programs, paintings, comics, for instance (although it is these things as well)—than a set of practices ‘concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings... between members of a society or group.’” Understood in this way, culture encompasses the multiplicity of discourses or ‘codes of intelligibility’ through which meanings are constructed and practices produced (*ibid.*).

There are increasing works in the IR discipline that investigate discourses in popular culture. One example is Ted Hopf's (2013) work which aimed to demonstrate the discursive fit between the Western hegemonic ideology of neoliberal capitalism and the Russia elite. In this article, Hopf investigated popular texts such as Russian school textbooks and popular novellas to have an idea about common sense in Russia. In his conclusion he suggested that "the discourse analysis should go beyond the sample of common sense I have compiled to include at least blockbuster movies, the most popular television programs, more mass pulp fiction, and a sample of newspapers around the country" (Hopf, 2013: 350). He, therefore, put much more importance to all kind of popular culture products to understand common sense in one country. Another work related to popular culture and discourse analysis is Elspeth Van Veeren's (2009) article that examined a popular television series, *24*, and the global war on terrorism discourse in this series. In this article, she demonstrated the importance of intertextuality for the production of meaning by investigating the discourses in the series and official texts. Weldes (1999a) also looked at a popular television series, *Star Trek*, and globalisation discourses within this series to show that the series reproduces elements of the common sense of US foreign policy discourse and contributes to common sense production in significant ways. Consequently, popular culture or low data can be essential of discourse analysis in terms of questions of meaning, its constitution and its reception.

4.2. The Position of the Thesis

Discourse and discourse analysis, therefore, constitute an important part of this thesis. I will use discourse analysis in Chapter 3 when I will define three representations in the TFP and in Chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7 when I will demonstrate how these representations are reproduced by *VoW: Ambush*. In this thesis, discourse analysis is used differently to critical discourse analysis (CDA) which has emerged from Critical Linguistics that see language as a form of social practice (Wodak, 2001). CDA focuses on "social problems, and especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination" (Van Dijk, 2001: 96) and "engages in detailed analysis of individual texts to show how the meanings of broader discourses are promoted" (Larsen, 2004: 65). It can be used to explore how text or speech can be biased towards racism, sexism or a particular ideology. Wæver (2009: 167) criticised this approach to discourse by saying that "A weakness of this approach is the limited integration of the different elements and the tendency to resort to intuitive laundry lists of

important questions to ask to a text". Therefore, while it becomes an effective tool for research that prioritises social inequalities, it may not be effective in this research which focuses on identity formation and common sense production for the TFP.

In this thesis, I will look at how discourses of the AKP officials, as a part-political Islam ideology, produce the world, Turkey, its enemies, friends, and how these discourses become common sense with the help of a popular culture product. Thus, it is compatible with the first and second approaches of Milliken and the methods that Weldes suggested. Milliken's first and second approaches are compatible because I aim to understand how the meanings and representation are changed or rearticulated during the AKP era and how these representations become common sense in Turkey. I will not use the third approach of Milliken in this thesis because this approach also aims to discover alternative discourses which are excluded by a hegemonic discourse. I will mostly use Weldes's methods because her approach to the relationship between popular culture and discourse, mentioned above, explains that popular culture can be a focus of discourse analysis. Moreover, her processes of articulation and interpellation explain how identities in the TFP are reproduced in popular culture and how they become common sense in the context of the TFP. I do not claim that the other approaches cannot be implemented in this research. For instance, Hansen's processes of linking and differentiation explain the antagonism created in some of the discourses related to the TFP such as oppressed/oppressor discourse. Yet, there are other discourses which created representations in the TFP without producing antagonism in articulations such as the representation of the leadership in the Middle East. I believe and therefore I used the approach of Weldes since it is the most suitable to this research.

In terms of foreign policy, I will particularly focus on the 'how' question. As will be mentioned in the next section, the second research question this thesis seeks to answer is: "How have the TFP, security imaginary of Turkey and the state identity changed during the AKP era?". A specific focus on discursive practices of the AKP politicians and comparing them to previous politicians from the same (political Islamist) and different (Kemalist) ideologies could help us to understand this transformation in the TFP. I will examine the speeches, articles, statements of the AKP politicians, mostly Ahmet Davutoglu and Recep Tayyip Erdogan for this reason. How these politicians produced specific meanings and representations by using discursive

practices is very important for this thesis because I claim that *VoW: Ambush* reproduces these discourses and representations and meanings related to the TFP within these discourses.

Roxanne Lynn Doty (1993) also approached the foreign policy of the US from a 'how-possible' question in her article. She examined "how meanings are produced and attached to various social subjects/objects, thus constituting particular interpretive dispositions which create certain possibilities and preclude others". According to Doty, a Discursive Practices Approach can be a useful tool when dealing with 'how' questions. She states that a Discursive Practices Approach emphasises the linguistic construction of reality; discourses provide discursive spaces by which meanings are created (*ibid.*: 302). In this approach, Doty explains that politicians function within discursive space in which meanings on their understandings about the world are imposed and thus creates reality (*ibid.*: 303). Neumann (2008: 62) also explained that

Discourse analysis is eminently useful for such analysis, because it says something about why state Y was considered an enemy in state X, how war emerged as a political option, and how other options were shunted aside. Because a discourse maintains a degree of regularity in social relations, it produces preconditions for action. It constrains how the stuff that the world consists of is ordered, and so how people categorize and think about the world. It constrains what is thought of at all, what is thought of as possible, and what is thought of as the 'natural thing' to do in a given situation.

Therefore, a focus on discursive practices as a unit of analysis can understand how 'reality' about the TFP is produced and maintained by the AKP politicians. For instance, how representations of the leader of the Middle East, the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East and self-confident Turkey became the centre of the security imaginary during the Davutoglu era can be understood from the discursive practices of the AKP politicians.

Milliken suggests popular culture approach to analyse everyday cultural conditions of novels, comic books, television and film and how they make the foreign policies intelligible. In this research, I will look at a popular culture product, *VoW: Ambush* to understand how a popular culture product renders sensible and legitimate the representations belong to the security imaginary of the AKP; how it becomes a site of discursive practices of common sense, or in other words how it creates consent for the TFP.

Here, intertextuality becomes important for this thesis. Lene Hansen (2006: 49) explained that the meanings of a text is not fully given by the text itself, in fact other readings and interpretations give it meaning, and this is called intertextuality:

“It [intertextuality] highlights that texts are situated within and against other texts, that they draw upon them in constructing their identities and policies, that they appropriate as well as revise the past, and that they build authority by reading and citing that of others. It points analytically, politically, and empirically to seeing official foreign policy texts—statements, speeches, and interviews—not as entities standing separately from wider societal discourses but as entities located within a larger textual web; a web that both includes and goes beyond other policy texts, into journalism, academic writing, popular non-fiction, and, potentially, even fiction”.

Then, not only other foreign policy texts but also popular culture texts can be included to the intertextual reading of the TFP. Weldes (2006: 180) stated that

The concept of intertextuality is useful here. This notion draws our attention to the fact that texts, whether official or popular, high or low, are never read in isolation. Instead, “any one text is necessarily read in relationship to others and . . . a range of textual knowledges is brought to bear upon it” (Fiske 1987, 108)... Intertextuality allows us to illustrate and explain the often striking similarities in the way world politics are officially narrated, the way academics represent world politics, and the way stories are told in popular media. Intertextual knowledges—a culture’s popular “image bank”—“pre-orient” readers, guiding them to make meanings in some ways rather than others (Fiske 1987, 108).

Van Veeren (2009: 364) stated that television series “can be considered an important and useful example in the production of intertextual meaning By both (re)constituting and drawing on the same (re)presentations of ‘reality’, the intertextuality of popular culture and world politics helps to make the world intelligible”. This leads to the claim that if *VoW: Ambush* reproduces the same foreign policy discourse on the same representations in the TFP, it helps to make the TFP intelligible for the viewers. This is the reason why I focus on the discourse in *VoW: Ambush* in terms of ideology, articulation and interpellation.

Moreover, as I am going to explain in Chapter 4, intertextuality between the discourses in *VoW: Ambush* and official discourse of the AKP politicians makes it impossible to distinguish reality from fiction. This is very important especially in the case of *VoW: Ambush* when we think of its popularity and ability to reach viewers. When we look at the columns and news items in the Turkish media, it can be seen that *VoW: Ambush* constitute an important part of Turkish societal and political levels. In the series, the names of the characters are inspired by

real people from Turkish politics. Also, many issues in international and domestic politics such as Gezi Events or Syrian issue can be seen in the series as well. These similarities between fiction and reality increase the ability of the series because the gap between fiction and reality is lifted and this has the ability to consent production.

4.3. Research Process

In terms of foreign policy, first, I looked at the discourses of the AKP politicians. Since I focus on the Davutoglu era in the TFP, I mainly examined articles, columns and speeches of Davutoglu with his famous book *Strategic Depth* to understand his and political Islam's security imaginary. I also looked at Erdogan's speeches since he was the prime minister and highest decision maker at that time. When I examined these texts I saw a reiteration of the same words in their discourses. For instance, Ottomanism is a common feature of their speeches. In his speeches, Davutoglu always started with a historical issue from the Ottoman Empire or the Seljuk Empire and before he mentioned a current issue he used other historical events and rearticulated them with religious features. Erdogan also used historical events from the Ottoman era and he articulated them with nationalist and religious features. When I was investigating these texts I specifically looked at issues related to the TFP and how these politicians see Turkey and the others. I carefully examined their word choices to understand their worldview. For instance, Davutoglu used derogatory word choices for Western civilisation, mostly for the countries in the West, and Erdogan gave references to the historical events which have nationalist meanings and articulated them with a defender of the oppressed representation. Both Erdogan and Davutoglu used oppressed/oppressor dichotomy in their speeches with positive and negative words respectively. Therefore, it can be said that I used Miliken's first approach and Weldes's process of articulation approach when I examined the discourses of the AKP politicians. Out of this inductive approach to these discourses, I realised there are three representations belonging to the security imaginary of the AKP: the leader of the Middle East, the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East and self-confident Turkey. I do not claim that these are the only representations in the TFP. Another researcher could find other representations as well. Yet, these ones were so obvious and could be found in most of the texts I selected.

The discourses in *VoW: Ambush* constitute the other texts I examined in this thesis. Before starting this study, I had not watched any episodes of *VoW* completely although I saw some

scenes on the Internet and television. Thus, first, I watched some of the episodes from the first seasons and looked at forums as well to have a general idea of these seasons. From these forums and debates in these seasons I decided to examine Season 7 and 8 because these seasons were mostly on international relations while the previous ones were mostly about domestic politics. I collected data from 68 episodes (each episodes lasts ninety minutes, some of them are almost two hours) from these two seasons. I carefully watched the series in the PGR room at the UEA library and at home as well with my laptop and headphone. I downloaded episodes from its official YouTube page and archived it on my laptop. The total size of the archive is 121 hours 23 minutes. I watched each episode once but I re-watched some specific scenes such as the meetings of the Elders Committee or operation of Alemdar to Syria because these scenes were about international politics and they were rich in terms of foreign policy discourses. I focused on some characters such as Alemdar, the leading character of the series, and his sides, Kara, Akif, Aksacli and Cahit, the characters that are loved by the viewers. Moreover, I examined important events such as the meetings of the Elders Committee where the TFP related subjects are debated and operations in Turkey and in the neighbouring regions conducted by Polat or international actors.

Since I claim that *VoW: Ambush* can be a site for consent production to the extent that it reproduces the same foreign policy discourses of the AKP politicians that create representations about the TFP, main priority of my analysis was the foreign policy discourses in the series. I noted down the discourses related to foreign policy belong to the characters and events I mentioned above. I did not use coding or specialist software. I simply wrote down what I heard in these scenes. This method took very much time but it gave me a huge data set to analyse. Then, I read and re-read the notes (more than 60 pages) and examined them in terms of information, ideology, articulation and interpellation for Chapter 4 and in terms of ideology, articulation and interpellation for Chapter 5, 6 and 7 because I investigated the ideology of political Islam and articulation and interpellation processes of the AKP politicians for the TFP.

Here, the challenges of translations should be mentioned. Since the series is in Turkish, I took down the dialogues in the series in Turkish first. After I selected the dialogues that I will use in the thesis, I translated these texts into English. This also took some time and it was mostly painful because I am not a translator. After I translated these texts, my second supervisor,

who also knows Turkish checked to prevent loss of meaning in the translation. After I finished my draft, I also worked with a proof-reader, who is British, to edit these dialogues and reorganise them to be better understood for the British readers. This process is, of course, not only applied to the texts from *VoW: Ambush*. The same process was also applied to the other translated texts such as the speeches of Davutoglu, Erdogan and other politicians, or news items and columns. Therefore, it can be said that there are a lot of work to prevent loss of meaning in this thesis.

Before I watched the series I expected similarities between the discourses in the series and of the AKP politicians because I had already seen some short videos and trailers before. Yet, I did not expect many similarities between them. I did not watch the series according to the representations that I found in Chapter 3. I looked at linking qualities to subjects and objects related to the TFP to understand what meanings attached to them in the series, as I did in the speeches of the AKP and found the same discursive structures such as using the same oppressed/oppressor dichotomy. Thus, it can be said that my approach to the series is inductive rather than deductive. This helped me to overcome the issue of bias to representations already found in Chapter 3. This led me to evaluate the representations in the series without being affected by representations related to the TFP.

Hansen (2006) suggested three research models to study intertextuality. Model 1 centres on political leaders and focuses on official texts such as speeches, political debates, interviews, articles and books. This model aims to carefully investigate identity construction within official discourse. In Chapter 3, I used this model to understand how the state identity changed during the AKP era. Model 2 broadens its scope and investigates other major actors such as oppositional parties, the media and corporate institutions. In Chapter 3, I did not apply this model because I wanted to understand the security imaginary of the AKP rather than the others. In model 3A, the analysis aims to include material implicitly engaging official policy discourse and model 3B focuses on policy but has a marginal status.

Model 3A brings in representations of foreign policy issues as they are articulated within 'high' as well as 'popular' culture and relates them to articulations within official foreign policy discourse. Analysis investigates whether popular representations reproduce or contest those of official discourse and how representations travel between the spheres of entertainment and politics. Studies of popular culture include film, fiction, television, computer games, photography, and comic books (Hansen, 2006: 55).

What I did in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 is model 3A. In these chapters, I looked at the foreign policy representations articulated in *VoW: Ambush* and I related them to articulations of within official foreign policy discourse of the AKP politicians. As a result, it can be seen that the series reproduced these official discourses, representations and meanings created and articulated by the AKP officials.

Other texts also helped me to show the intertextual meaning that the series created. This was important especially for the interpellation sections. I examined news items on the webpages of newspapers to understand the reception of *VoW: Ambush*. How it was debated in the media as a news items and in the columns of prominent journalists broadened the scope of intertextuality. Examining interviews with the scriptwriters gave me chance to do intertextual reading of the political ideology and the representations in the series. There are also other texts that created intertextuality such as the speech of the main actor in the series, Necati Sasmaz about the coup in Egypt and comments in the fan forums about *VoW: Ambush*.

Moreover, intertextuality is evident for the viewers as well. For instance, there is a reiteration of oppressed/oppressor discourse in the series which has very same discursive structure with the discourses of the AKP officials. It is possible to see the same discourse in episodes 164, 165, 167, 171, 172, 174, 196, 197, 205, 212, 215, 216, 221 and 222 of Seasons 7 and 8. While the viewers are exposed to this discourse in the series, they see this discourse in the news by the AKP officials or in the newspapers as a news items. Therefore, this intertextuality could make this discourse more intelligible to the viewers, in other words, it can 'hail' the viewers to this representation.

Thus, in order to show intertextuality, I examined

1. Political texts; speeches, articles, books, columns of the AKP politicians
2. *VoW: Ambush* as a popular culture text
3. Turkish media; columns and news items for the reception of *VoW: Ambush*
4. Interviews with scriptwriters
5. Other supportive texts such as fan forums and speeches of the actors

Intertextual reading of these texts helped me to demonstrate the reproduction of the official discourse, representations and meanings related to the TFP in the series. For instance, after I watched the series I could easily show that the series reproduced the same representation.

Then, this representation is also reproduced in the news items, columns, in interviews with the scriptwriters, in the speech of Necati Sasmaz and in the fan forums. These texts show that there are sufficient evidence of intertextuality between *VoW: Ambush* and the TFP and that this series can function as a site for consent production for the TFP during the Davutoglu era.

Conclusion

The identities of states are not static. They can change over time for a variety of reasons, such as domestic political developments. Different ideologies can cause different identity conceptions which might identify national interest in a different way. The rise of political Islam in Turkey has changed the perception of national interest and Turkey started to be more proactive in the Middle East from the 1990s onwards. Internal developments will be investigated in Chapter 2 in detail and how they changed the identities in TFP will be explained in Chapter 3. Since 2002, the AKP has increased its hegemony in all spheres including popular culture, although the site of popular culture has not been fully controlled because of its nature. Popular culture reproduces the discourse of the AKP government and the television series *VoW: Ambush* is included in this process, which is investigated in this current study.

Popular culture and IR is not a new field for IR scholars. There have been various studies and ongoing projects for this particular study area. This thesis will contribute to this area by accepting the television series as a second-order representation and as a site for the reproduction of the content and structure of the AKP's foreign policy discourses, representations and identities. To the extent that it reproduces them, they have a role in the production of consent for foreign policies, or at least the legitimisation of them. I shall approach the selected television series as *popular culture as data* and *popular culture as constitutive* since these techniques can be used to trace state identities and the discourses of state elites, and also since *VoW: Ambush* creates intertextual meanings with the speeches of the AKP politicians.

For this purpose, I shall employ constructivism rather than the realist or liberal theories because of constructivism's promising approaches to popular culture. Whilst the realist and

liberal theories cannot explain the role of identities in state behaviour and undermine the role of domestic politics and also non-material concepts such as understandings, meanings, ideas and culture, constructivism offers a bridge between the two theories and puts a special emphasis on the role of identities and inter-subjectivity. Moreover, as a constructivist, Weldes's views constitute a huge part of this study because of her inclusion of the processes of the articulation of meaning and the interpellation of subject identity in constructivism in order to explain the role of discursive practices in the creation of national interests. When we apply her approaches and include the hegemony concept of Gramsci, we can claim that the selected television series as a part of popular culture can produce consent for foreign policies. *VoW: Ambush* reproduces the articulated meanings and created identities of state officials and they both create an intertextuality which plays an important role in the production of consent for specific foreign policies. I shall therefore focus on a television series, *VoW: Ambush*, in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 to investigate the extent to which the television series reproduces the discourse, representation and identities of the AKP, and of its foreign policies discursively.

This study was therefore designed to seek answers to following research questions (RQ):

RQ 1: How does the AKP establish its hegemony in Turkey?

This will be explained in Chapter 2 through historical reflections informed by Gramsci.

RQ 2: How have the TFP, the security imaginary of Turkey and the state identity changed during the AKP era?

This will be addressed and answered in Chapter 3 through analysis of the foreign policy elites of the AKP such as Ahmet Davutoglu and of the foreign policy discourse of the AKP.

RQ 3: How might popular culture play a role in consent creation for foreign policies?

This will be discussed in Chapter 4 and *VoW: Ambush* will be investigated as a case study by looking at intertextuality, at how the show presents information to viewers, and by drawing on key concepts from media studies (ideology, articulation, identification).

RQ 4: How do the show and the security imaginary complement each other?

This will be answered in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 by applying three key concepts to the television series (ideology, articulation, and identification) in conjunction with the three key features of the security imaginary identified by answering RQ 2 in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2: Historical Background of Turkish Politics and Media Structure

Introduction

My argument in this study is that *VoW: Ambush* has functioned as a site for the production of consent for foreign policies formed by the AKP elites within the last decade. It does so through a process of reproduction of state identities, ideologies and discourses at the level of narrative. As was explained in the previous chapter, according to the constructivist approach to IR, the identities of a state can determine its behaviours in the international system. These identities are not static but can alter for two main reasons. First, a change in the international system can lead to a transformation in state identity. For instance, the end of the Cold War transformed the international system from a bipolar to a unipolar or multipolar system and this affected Turkish state identity – something which I shall address in detail in Chapter 3. Second, state identity can be altered as a result of a domestic change in hegemonic power. New hegemonic powers will attempt to redefine national and state identities and imaginaries as part of their attempt to establish and maintain their own hegemony. It is with this last situation in mind that I shall now examine the rise of political Islam and of the AKP in Turkey, and the establishment and defence of a new political and state hegemony.

To understand the state identity of Turkey during the AKP era, we need to understand the historical context out of which it emerged. This means understanding the identities at work under previous hegemonic regimes, and in Turkey that means understanding Kemalism. The hegemony of political Islam in Turkey was first formed as a counter-hegemonic movement challenging the Kemalist hegemony. In this chapter, therefore, I shall focus on how the AKP has established its hegemony in Turkey and explain the rise of political Islam in Turkey. I shall also clarify Kemalism in order to better understand the rise of political Islam. In addition, because of our interest in this study in popular culture as a site for consent production, I shall also and in particular examine the relationship between political hegemony and the media structure in Turkey. Understanding the latter is crucial because of the key role which it plays in sustaining hegemonic identity. As we shall see, there is a close and important relationship between those who own and control the major media companies and the AKP.

The theoretical basis of the arguments in this chapter lies in Antonio Gramsci's influential work on cultural hegemony (as discussed in Chapter 1). Consequently, in the first section of the chapter I shall explain the relevance of Gramsci to Turkish politics. Although Gramsci formulated his ideas as a way of explaining politics in Italy and in western Europe in the first half of the twentieth century, they can be and, in the work of scholars such as Serif Mardin, have been, applied to Turkey today. In the second section, I shall turn to the historical context and explore how political Islam has been a counter-hegemonic project against Kemalism. The hegemony of the AKP as the last political party which represents this ideology is examined from the political, economic and cultural perspectives. In the third section, since a television series is my main focus in this study, I shall examine the relationship between popular culture and Turkish politics from an historical perspective. Finally, in the fourth section, I shall examine the Turkish television industry since the 1990s emphasising in particular the relationship between the AKP government and the media owners.

1. Gramsci and Turkish Politics

Many scholars studying the politics of Turkey, for example Ahmet Oncu (2003), Hasret Dikici-Bilgin (2009) and Cihan Tugal (2009), have drawn on Gramscian theory for developing their analyses. However, there are no studies directly concerned with popular culture. Oncu analysed hegemony in the Turkish state in the twentieth century but did not focus on popular culture, television or political Islam in the twenty-first century. Dikici-Bilgin used Gramscian analysis to understand current developments in Turkey and focused on civil society without mentioning popular culture. Tugal analysed rising political Islam in Turkey. None of these studies focused on television series as a part of popular culture, nor on TFP. There is, then, more to be said about Gramsci in Turkey.

The relevance of Gramsci to Turkish politics may be questioned given that he was writing at such a different time and in a different place. But although Gramsci's thinking and concepts such as cultural hegemony, passive revolution and civil society were formed with western European countries in mind, they are applicable to Turkey where the cultural aspects of conflict in civil society, linked to changes in the relationship between state and society, are certainly evident: in Turkey, civil society and political society are intertwined (Dikici-Bilgin,

2009: 108). For instance, in the pre-AKP era, headscarves and veils were banned in government buildings, and *Arabesk* (a form of popular music which originated in the Middle East and represents the periphery in Turkey) was banned from official radio and television channels. Here the political sphere sought to secure power through interventions in civil society and popular culture. Of course, the civil and political spheres in contemporary Turkey are not exactly the same as they were in Gramsci's Italy - they are more conflated and more complex today because of the democratisation process, electoral effects and developments in mass media such as television and the internet (Dikici-Bilgin, 2009: 111). But these developments in the civil and political spheres make Gramsci's theory not less but more applicable to recent politics because they increase the importance of winning consent in civil society.

Some academics such as Serif Mardin (1990) have claimed that in Turkey, as well as in the other Muslim countries, civil society has not developed as it did in western European countries. He pointed out that there was an absence of civil society in the Ottoman Empire and suggested that this has continued to be the case in the Republican era. The Sufi orders (*tariqas*) and other religious groups played the role of civil society. These orders were centres for religious and social activities and on some occasions they played an oppositional role in the struggle against the Sultan. Even so, they were weak and could not compare with the examples in western countries. If we take this into account, Gramscian analysis may not be so easily applicable to the early years of the Republic. But civil society has strengthened since the multi-party era and a Gramscian analysis of Turkish politics is necessary if we are to explain hegemony in Turkey.

Consider, for example, the two main contending ideologies in Turkish politics: secular Kemalism - the dominant ideology until the twenty-first century - and political Islam, which has been in the ascendant since the 1980s and is currently hegemonic in Turkey. Gramsci helps us to see that political Islam had been a counter-hegemonic movement against Kemalism and has succeeded by organising the consent of more than half of the population. As Gramsci (1971:210) stated:

In every country the process is different, although the content is the same. And the content is the crisis of the ruling class' hegemony, which occurs either because the ruling class has failed in some major political undertaking for which it has requested, or forcibly extracted, the consent of the broad masses (war, for example), or because huge masses (especially

of peasants and petty bourgeois intellectuals) have passed suddenly from a state of political passivity to a certain activity, and put forward demands which taken together ... add up to a revolution. A 'crisis of authority' is spoken of; this is precisely the crisis of hegemony or the general crisis of the state.

According to this explanation, Kemalist hegemony failed to maintain consent which the AKP and the ideology it represents were more successful in obtaining. Four military interventions in Turkish political history support this argument. Although the reasons for these coups were political, economic, and cultural in two of these interventions (in 1960 and 1997), the army intervened as the defender of the Kemalist ideology against the Islamists. It can be said that religion was the most important issue in these interventions and because the Kemalist army felt that there was a counter-hegemonic movement against Kemalism, it intervened. In Turkey, therefore, it can be argued that the hegemonic struggle is not only about economic classes, it is mostly about secularism and Islam and that differentiates Turkey's case from the western examples.

Consequently, Gramsci and his analysis of hegemony can actually be used for Turkish politics after the multi-party era, even though his analysis included the traditional left and right ideologies which do not have the same connotation in Turkish politics as in Western Europe. In Turkey, the 'left' is often used to describe "political ideas and parties that are supportive of the modernizing reforms of the republic, most notably secularism" and nationalism can also be included in this definition (Carkoglu, 2007: 268; Turan, 2007: 329). On the other hand, 'right' represents "a respect for tradition, a social conservatism and a milder interpretation of secularism that allows for a greater role for religion in public life" (Carkoglu, 2007: 268; Turan, 2007: 329). Kemalism can be evaluated as a leftist ideology because of its revolutionist/reformist, statist-collective and nationalist characteristics (which will be identified in the next section); and Islamists can be positioned on the right of the spectrum. Furthermore, in economic terms, whilst Kemalist ideology is against neo-liberal policies such as privatisation, the AKP embraces neo-liberal policies which have the support of the growing capitalist Islamist bourgeoisie. In this sense, although Turkey has a specific political culture, the struggle between the left and the right is similar to that in western European countries.

Understanding the current hegemony in Turkey compels us to examine the historical roots of political Islam's counter-hegemonic project against Kemalism. In the next section I shall therefore give the historical background of politics in Turkey and explain in greater detail the

Kemalist hegemony in relation to political Islam. The late Ottoman Empire is very important for the current politics of Turkey because some of the identities can be traced back to that era. The next section starts with a description of the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century.

2. Historical Background of Politics in Turkey

As I stated in Chapter 1, my aim in this study is to demonstrate the transformation in TFP by looking at state identities in TFP. In order to do that, the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth century should be examined for two reasons. First, Islamism as a state identity was first seen in that era and there are many references to that era in the discourse of the AKP. It is therefore important to investigate that era since the roots of some state identities can be traced back to it. Second, in that era, ideas of Kemalism can be seen and this helps us to understand it better. The ideas of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) which was formed by the Young Turks movement was very influential for Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and other elites who shaped the official ideology of modern Turkey. The founders of modern Turkey, including the first three presidents Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Ismet Inonu and Celal Bayar, were all CUP members. Before analysing the Kemalist hegemony in order to define the place of political Islam in Turkish politics within its historical context, the late nineteenth century should first be explained briefly.

First, during that era, Islamism, as an opposition movement, was seen for the first time as a response to westernism and the period of modernisation. Members of this movement believed that the westernisation process in the nineteenth century caused people to lose their cultural identities and that the best way to protect them was to bring Sharia Law back into Ottoman society (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 41). During that period, Sultan Abdulhamid II used Islamism, the status of the Caliphate, internally and externally as a unifying force (Deringil, 1991; Ahmad, 1993: 16; Mardin, 2005). Pan-Islamism as a reaction to western ideologies was used to gather Muslim subjects of the Empire around Islam, to create a solidarity between Muslims and to gain the loyalty of external Muslims (Deringil, 1991; Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 42). Although Abdulhamid II had success with national unification through Pan-Islamism, at the turn of the century "'Arab', 'Laz', 'Abaza', 'Tcherkess', 'Arnaut', 'Kurd', and 'Lezgi' were still

words that referred to the social reality of the Empire” (Mardin, 1973: 176). As we shall see in Chapter 3, Abdulhamid II and Pan-Islamism had a special place in the approach to foreign policy taken by the key AKP policy thinker Davutoglu in his approach to TFP (Ozkan, 2014; 2015).

Second, the CUP, which constitutes the historical background of Kemalism, has a crucial point in an analysis of Kemalism. The founders of the CUP, the Young Turks (*Jeunes Turcs*), were elites who were secularly educated and came to power through the constitutional movement in 1908 and became the major ruling power in the Ottoman Empire until 1918 (Ahmad, 1993: 15). During that era, the Young Turk movement represented the modernist wing of the Ottoman bureaucracy. According to the beliefs of its members, who were heavily affected by European science and materialism, the era of enlightenment in the Ottoman Empire began with the relations with western civilisation (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 43). Westernism or modernisation was very important and constituted one of the components of their ideology. Another component was Turkism. Ziya Gokalp, one of the members of the CUP, a sociologist and poet whose ideas heavily influenced Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, was an advocate of Turkism. Gokalp believed that Turkish culture and western civilisation were not in conflict but that the purification of Turkish culture from Islam through secularisation was needed, and the only way to save the Ottoman Empire was to revive the pre-Islamic Turkish civilisation (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 44). Westernisation, secularisation and Turkification were therefore the core tenets of his thinking and they have constituted the tenets of Kemalist ideology until today. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and the elites of modern Turkey were heavily influenced by these ideas. However, when the CUP attempted to implement these ideas within the Ottoman Empire, it had no intention of changing the identity of either the state or the people. They attempted to protect the state and its identities. On the other hand, after the First World War, a new state emerged from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire and Kemalists in this modern Turkey attacked the existing state institution to implement these ideas and to create a new identity for the state and the people. This will be explained in the next section.

2.1. Kemalist Hegemony

Since political Islam is a counter-hegemonic project to Kemalist ideas, it is crucial to define what Kemalism is. After the new republic was founded, the Republican People's Party (CHP), which was established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, defined six fundamental principles: republicanism, nationalism/patriotism, populism, statism, revolutionism/reformism and secularism/laicism. These principles became the symbol – 'six arrows' – of the party emblem and since then the CHP has been the main party which represents the Kemalist ideology in Turkish politics (Ahmad, 1993: 88). Kemalism was the dominant ideology of the Turkish state until the twenty-first century, although in some periods there were some governments which were against the Kemalist ideology. Before the AKP, all governments had to meet the standards of the Kemalist ideology and those who could not meet them had to step down from government. For example, the Welfare Party (RP), which was an Islamist political party, had to resign from government in 1997 because of the strong tradition of Kemalism in the military cadres. The military has always identified itself as the defender of the state against not only international threats but also domestic threats against the Kemalist ideology such as anti-secular parties or separatist groups.

Two features of Kemalism, radical secularism and reformism, are key concepts for understanding the relation between the Kemalist hegemony and the Islamist hegemony. The Kemalists implemented the French style of secularism, *laïcité*, under the name of *laiklik*, which simply means secularism enforced by the state in a militant form (Gordon and Taspınar, 2008: 12). In Turkey, religion became the symbol of the *ancien régime* as in France, and it has been seen as a threat to the new regime because it was not progressive, modern and enlightened (Heper, 2000: 72). Religion was therefore eradicated from the public sphere. However, instead of formally separating religion from the state, the new regime institutionalised religion under the name of the Directorate of Religious Affairs in order to better control it. Religion was seen as a threat to the Kemalist hegemony because it was believed to be a hindrance to modernisation in social, cultural, political and economic improvements.

Modernism is another feature which is related to the Islamist hegemony. Kemalists believe that there should be a modern Turkey which aspires to be the same as western European countries. So a radical form of westernisation came after the establishment of the Republic and several reforms were introduced by the Kemalist elites in the first years of the Republic. Among these,

In an ambitious drive to import European civilization, the republic abolished the caliphate and the use of the Arabic alphabet, Islamic education, and the Sufi brotherhoods. It adopted Western legal codes from Germany, Italy, and Switzerland, together with the Latin alphabet, the Western calendar, Western holidays, and Western measuring systems. The country's official history and language were reworked. A new education system glorified pre-Islamic Turkic civilizations at the expense of the country's more recent Ottoman (and Islamic) past, and many Arabic and Persian words were purged to create an 'authentically' Turkish vocabulary. In the name of secularism, even the Islamic call to prayer was translated from Arabic into modern Turkish. Western clothing became the new compulsory dress code for men, and the traditional Ottoman headgear, known as a fez, was banned. Women were discouraged from wearing the Islamic veil. (Gordon and Taspinar, 2008: 14-15)

These two developments in the early years of the Republic are still important parts of the context of Islamist hegemony today. Through these developments, Kemalist ideology sought not just to change the state identity but to create a new one. There were no secular, westernist or and nationalist (Turkist) identities in the Ottoman society, so Kemalist ideology attempted to establish a new identity by a combination of three identities. However, although strenuous efforts were made to establish a Kemalist hegemony, it could barely infiltrate Turkish society at large (Gordon and Taspinar, 2008: 15). Kemalism remained restricted to the centre and could not be as influential on the periphery. The nation-building project was implemented by the state elites who represented only a small part of the population and it was a top-down process which ignored a social contract or negotiation with the general population or the opposition (Rabasa and Larrabee, 2008: 32; Keyman, 2010: 542). The pious and rural proportion of the society remained largely unaffected by these attempts because the consent of the rural population hinged on the use of traditional and religious symbols to which the new republic was radically opposed.

Furthermore, in Turkey, a range of activities and reforms took place in the name of modernisation but were independent from society as a whole because of the traditional state-society relationship (Heper, 2000: 81). The cultural revolution during the Ataturk period, the democratic revolution during the Inonu period and the economic revolution during the Ozal period were all carried out by state and political elites and not as a result of any demand from society. In fact, the regime was afraid of primordial groups in society which could harm unity (Mardin, 1973: 177; Heper, 2000: 68). Serif Mardin (1973) explained this with the centre-periphery theory and highlighted that traditional state-society relations are very crucial for understanding the current political structure because some aspects of this structure still exist.

Mardin (1973) stated that the Turkish political structure in the twentieth century can be traced back to the Ottoman era, and the confrontation between centre (state, elites, bureaucracy) and periphery (religious, alienated society mostly in rural area) in the Ottoman era could also be seen in the Republican era. He commented that confrontations in the European context such as conflicts between state and church, between nation builders and localists, or between owners and non-owners of the means of production seem to have been missing in the Ottoman Empire until the process of modernisation began in the nineteenth century (Mardin, 1973: 170). Instead, the major conflict was unidimensional and between the centre and the periphery. This conflict was still prevailing in the early Republican era because the strong, centralised state which was the main feature of the Ottoman Empire can also be seen in the Republic. The Kemalist elites were afraid of primordial groups on the periphery and that caused them to establish a strong centre which made them unable to create any contact with rural areas, or in other words, the periphery (Mardin, 1973: 177-183). So modernisation in the Kemalist sense was a top-down process managed by imposing regulations, as in the Ottoman modernisation process during the nineteenth century (Mardin, 1973: 183-184). As a result, the Kemalist ideology remained in the centre and could not reach the periphery which in fact constituted the majority of the population in the early years of modern Turkey. When the current political structure is investigated, it can be seen that people still determine their party choices according to this centre-periphery division. Religiosity, ethnicity and place of residence still reflect the peripheral traits in Turkish politics (Carkoglu, 2007: 256).

Mardin (1990) also stated that although civil society could be a medium between the periphery and the centre, it was unable to develop for a long time. This may explain why the Islamists could not form a counter-hegemonic movement before the 1990s. Because of the weak civil society, the Islamists could not organise in civil society and that hindered their hegemonic project. However, from the 1960s onwards, civil society in Turkey started to develop and strengthen because of the 1961 constitution and the Islamists started to organise. Turkey's EU candidacy status has also strengthened Turkey's civil society structures and has given Islamists more space to organise and challenge the Kemalist hegemony, especially from the 1990s onwards.

Kemalism has been challenged since the beginning of the new Republic. When the elite of the new nation were implementing the transition from a religious community to a nation-state, they failed to persuade opposition groups about the secularisation of the state. Instead they oppressed all groups in this process, as in the case of the Kurdish Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925, which was against the abolition of the Caliphate, or other groups which were against other reforms related to religion, such as translating the call to prayer (*ezan*) from Arabic into Turkish. In such issues, the state used coercive tools to overwhelm any opposition (Ergil, 2000: 53) although it would be wrong to claim that the Kemalists established a hegemony based only on coercive measures. It must also be considered that Kemalism and society have common features such nationalism and statism which could create consent among different groups because they cut across Kemalism and Islamism as well as the Left and the Right (Tugal, 2009: 66). Here, we can recall the discussion in the previous chapter to explain identities. The Kemalist elites created a new identity, a combination of westernism, secularism and nationalism (Turkism), and they articulated the meaning of the modern Turk by linguistic resources and cultural materials of their particular time. Dogu Ergil (2000: 50) stated that

... the nationalist elite found their glory in a history that never was. The search for, and consolidation of, a new nationalist identity were carried to such extremes in the 1930s that theories like the Sun Theory of Language were concocted. According to this 'theory', all languages emerged out of Turkish. As a reminder of those days, the presidential banner consists of a sun representing the Turkish Republic encircled by 16 stars, symbolizing the Turkish states that were presumably created by Turks throughout history. This fabricated glorious past was a panacea for Turkish pride wounded by the loss of empire and reincarnated as a poor, backward society that was occupied during the First World War.

This identity has been interpellated since then and this may have created consent for Kemalist hegemony until the emergence of a political Islamist hegemony. Furthermore, it can also be argued that recently the AKP has also used this identity because of Turkish-Islamic synthesis which will be explained in the following sections. In 2015, President Erdogan welcomed the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, with sixteen Turkish warriors dressed in historical armour, carrying spears, swords and shields, each representing a Turkish state throughout history (The Guardian, 2015). This and many other examples show that nationalist identity or pride in being a Turk is still used in many instances. So it can be (and will be) argued that the AKP articulates nationalism with other features such as Islam and Ottomanism.

It can therefore be argued that Kemalism is based on identities such as westernism, modernism, secularism and nationalism. It sees the West as the civilisation to which Turkey should belong, rather than the Middle East. It eradicates the influence of religion from politics and also from the public with its modernist reforms. However, the Kemalist hegemony could not be successful in representing the whole of Turkey and was challenged by the Islamists in many cases. Nationalism became the only identity which has produced consent in the centre and on the periphery for many years. However, coercive exercises to eradicate religion from the political and public spheres led Islamists and conservatives on the periphery to challenge the Kemalist elites in the centre. These exercises created feelings such as anger on the periphery and the Islamist parties used this in politics when they challenged the Kemalist ideology. When the discourses of the AKP elites in the last decade are examined, it can be seen that there are many references to these exercises. In *VoW: Ambush* these discourses can also be seen. Both the AKP elites and *VoW: Ambush* create antagonism between the Kemalist hegemony and the Islamists. These challenges of the Islamists against the Kemalist hegemony can be examined in two periods, before and after the 1980s. The military coup in 1980 was a determining moment in the rise of political Islam because after the coup the Kemalist military used religion as a cementing element in society to secure consent. This will be explained in detail in the following sections.

2.2. History of the Rise of Political Islam before the 1980s

Until 1946, there were two experiments with a multi-party system, one in 1925 and the other in 1930, but both of the parties which challenged the CHP were closed down because of the strong support from the many groups opposing Kemalism (Mardin, 1973: 182; Ahmad, 1993: 58). In addition to the traditional religious opposition to Kemalism, the reforms failed in the rural areas; they were limited to urban areas (Rabasa and Larrabee, 2008: 33). So as Mardin (1973) claimed, until the 1960s there were two Turkeys: one of them was comprised of the state elites which represented the urban, modern and secular centre, and the other was formed by the majority of the population which was the rural, traditional and pious periphery. These features of the one-party era indicate that the Kemalist hegemony was sustained by coercion more than the consent of the general population. Religion was banished from the

public sphere and the Directorate of Religious Affairs was established to subordinate religion to the state (Rabasa and Larrabee, 2008: 33). However, religious orders such as *Naksibendis* and *Nurcus*, which later were to become very influential in Turkish politics, were formed in the countryside and “in response to their forced exclusion from the political sphere, many Muslims established their own informal networks and educational systems” (Rabasa and Larrabee, 2008: 34). So the roots of political Islam in Turkey can be traced back to the one-party era of the new Republic.

The multi-party era started in 1946 and opposition groups supported the Democratic Party (DP) because the DP was seen as the saviour from the oppression of the hegemonic power group and was believed to be able to fulfil expectations for resolving the social and economic inequalities which had been caused by the CHP (Karpaz, 1970: 1660). The DP government (1950-1960) was supported by the masses from conservative landlords, ancient *ulema* (Islamic scholars in the Ottoman Empire, as clergy in European class system) and families, and after it introduced intense communications with the public through the media, such as the wide circulation of newspapers or the extensive use of radios and increased economic activity, social mobilisation in Turkey was accelerated and the nature of popular demands began to change (Karpaz, 1970: 1660). The DP era illustrates that at that time there was also strong opposition to the CHP and what it represented. The CHP lost its monopoly on power and had to be more tolerant towards Islam because of the Islamist popular support for the DP. The DP was supported by a wide range of the population including pious traditional groups, but it can be said that although the DP used populist Islamist discourse to attract Islamic votes, it did not contradict secularism.

The 1960 coup ended the DP government and resulted in the executions of three members of the DP, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, Minister of Foreign Affairs Fatin Sukru Zorlu and Minister of Finance Hasan Polatkan, because of the fear that the DP would sweep away all the reforms of the Republic. Hopf (2002: 8) said that “The greatest threat to the Self is a comprehensive alternative identity, an Other that can plausibly be understood as a replacement”. The military and the Kemalist elites saw the DP as a threat to the acquisitions achieved by modern Turkey, to state identity and secularism, and to the Kemalist hegemony. After the coup, in order to restore the Kemalist hegemony, a new constitution was formed in 1961 by the military and the Kemalist elites. This constitution was radically different from the

previous one and it is regarded as the most liberal constitution in Turkey's history (Ahmad, 2003: 122). The most important feature of this new constitution relating to this current study was that it opened the political arena to every kind of political group, even the pro-Islamist ones, and as a result of this, Islamist political parties such as the National Order Party and the National Salvation Party (MSP), which were led by Necmettin Erbakan, and religious organisations were founded (Rabasa and Larrabee, 2008: 36). It can therefore be claimed that political Islam was officially allowed to be a part of the Turkish political system in the 1960s.

In the 1970s, the Islamist MSP succeeded in relaxing the pressure on high schools for imams and preachers, and graduates from these schools became the principal leaders of political Islamist groups, such as the current president of Turkey and many other cadres of the AKP (Tugal, 2009: 48). Those graduates started to hold important positions in Turkish society in the following decades and constituted a religious class which challenged the secularist class in the economic, cultural and political realms (Tugal, 2009: 48).

In the 1980s, the Islamists started to gain as much cultural capital as the Kemalist elites because of the state policies which sought a Turkish-Islamic synthesis. Islamic periodicals, newspapers and books mushroomed, veiled women entered the public sphere, Islamist intellectuals such as Ali Bulac and Ismet Ozel used the printed media for Islamic debates, and as a result Islam moved from the periphery to the centre in cultural terms (Gole, 1997: 55). During the 1980s, Islamic publications by foreign thinkers were translated into Turkish and it could be claimed that these publications affected the current hegemonic project. For instance, the writings of Sayyid Qutb and Hassan al-Banna, who were the leading figures of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, were translated during the 1980s. Although the ideology of the AKP was more moderate than the views of al-Banna and Qutb, their writings influenced some of its members (Tugal, 2007: 227). In fact, today the Muslim Brotherhood and the AKP have a close relationship, and Turkey supports the Muslim Brotherhood in every political sphere. Moreover, after the execution of Sayyid Qutb in Egypt, Turkey gave residence permits to members of his family in the 1980s and they acquired citizenship during the AKP era (Atilla, 2013). Today, Osama Qutb, the nephew of Sayyid Qutb, is a businessman very close to the AKP government and the Gulf countries.

As a result, culture and politics have always been close since the first years of the Republic. Whilst the Republican elites held the cultural capital and used cultural products and media to

transmit Kemalism in the first years, the Islamists were involved in this process from the 1950s onwards. Before the relationship between culture and the AKP hegemony in the twenty-first century is discussed, the rise of political Islam since the 1980s should first be investigated.

2.3. Rise of political Islam in Turkish Politics since 1980 and the AKP

The 1980 military coup was a turning point for political Islam in Turkey as well as for the AKP. That period is crucial for understanding the rise of the AKP because of the developments in the political, cultural and economic realms. The Islamisation of these realms was seen in the 1980s and 1990s and opened the political arena to political Islam. The military, led by Kenan Evren, closed all the political parties after the coup and did not allow the formation of any kind of political party until the 1983 elections. After the new constitution in 1982, the Motherland Party (ANAP) led by Turgut Ozal won the elections and the party constituted the majority in the government between 1983 and 1989.

This era was crucial for political Islam in Turkey. Religion was institutionalised by the military after the coup in order to expand control of the hegemony because in the 1970s the radical left had challenged the power bloc and was seen as a threat (Yavuz, 2003: 71; Rabasa and Larrabee, 2008: 37; Tugal, 2009: 40). The aim of the military was to create a Turkish-Islamic synthesis for this reason and today it is part of the AKP ideology and dominant in Turkey's political, societal and cultural spheres. When *VoW: Ambush* is analysed in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, it will be seen that Turkish-Islamic values, ideas and security imaginary constitutes an important part of the ideology of the series.

Conservative scholars sympathetic to the Islamic dimension of modern Turkey founded the Intellectuals Hearth Association in 1970 to protect the Turkish 'soul' from other cultures (Yavuz, 2003: 71). It became an apparatus for state/civil relations in the 1980s and attempted to create a new ideology out of Ottoman, Islamic and Turkish popular culture to justify the hegemony of the ruling elite (Yavuz, 2003: 71). The Association reinterpreted the state as an integral part of the nation and the media were used to instil its ideas such as that anarchy and the fragmentation of society are a danger to family, nation and state in a popularised version of the ideology (Yavuz, 2003: 72; Rabasa and Larrabee, 2008: 38). Although the military was still secular and supported secularism, it lifted the pressure on Islam and thus articulated

Turkification and Islamisation under the name of Turkish-Islamic synthesis to eradicate the radical left in Turkey. This articulation can be seen in *VoW: Ambush* as well. In Chapter 4 I shall show how nationalism in *VoW* is articulated with Islamist and Ottomanist elements.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the Islamisation of society. Islamist publishing houses, magazines and newspapers mushroomed and Islamic dormitories where young people were trained politically through debates were strengthened (Tugal, 2009: 49). The Prime Minister, Turgut Ozal, known to be a member of the *Naksibendi* order, pursued policies to Islamise the educational system, and his Minister of Education, Vehbi Dincerler, also a member of the same religious order, prepared a new programme of national history and geography which constantly used the term *Milli* ('national') in a religious sense. The expansion of higher education, the printed media and mass communication all played a crucial role in the constitution of a public Islamic identity in the late 1980s (Yavuz, 1997:69). According to Tugal (2009: 49), the CHP had never succeeded in linking the secularisation of civil society to such a degree. This may be one of the reasons why the AKP or political Islam was more influential in the general population compared with Kemalism.

From the 1980s onwards, Islam and Turkishness were combined by the state elites and a Turkish-Islamic identity was created. Although there were still radical secular Kemalist elites in the military and the state bureaucracy, the state identity started to change as a result of this Turkish-Islamic synthesis. When we recall the articulation and interpellation processes explained in Chapter 1, today the AKP interpellates this identity which has been articulated since the 1980s by means of discursive and cultural practices. The AKP also attempts this process in terms of TFP, as will be explained in Chapter 3.

Another component of the rise of the AKP can be found in two economic developments in this era: the rise of Islamic capitalism and Islamisation of the working class. The former is a result of the neo-liberal policies of the governments in the 1980s. These policies caused an emergence of a conservative bourgeoisie represented by Islamist organisations such as the Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MUSIAD) (Yavuz, 1997:67). This new class represents "capitalists from smaller Anatolian cities, some large firms established in Istanbul, highly-educated Muslim professionals from modest Anatolian families, and the urban poor and marginalized. All wish to reposition themselves in the state, which should be

restructured on neoliberal lines but in a way that caters to their imputed Muslim cultural difference and regional background” (Atasoy, 2008: 122).

This new class, which can be referred to as the Anatolian bourgeoisie or the Anatolian Tigers, rejected the Kemalist ideology which marginalised them and supported the AKP. Tugal (2007: 22-23) stated that, just as Gramsci had noted that the Italian south was seen as lazy and criminal by nature, Turkish western elites have regarded Central Anatolia, the Black Sea region and the east as uncivilised, backward and a major obstacle to Turkey’s modernisation. These stereotypes caused the Islamists to win these regions in the elections and also allowed Central Anatolian Islamist and conservative capitalists to integrate into world markets (Tugal, 2007: 23). As a result, people from those regions may have trusted the AKP in the struggle against western elitism. This alliance has been reflected in the elections and in parliament. For instance, twenty members of MUSIAD were elected as AKP parliamentarians in the 2002 elections and also ten members were among the founders of the AKP (Atasoy, 2008: 126).

Furthermore, not only have neo-liberal policies changed the social classes and created an Islamist bourgeoisie which supports the AKP, but also demographic changes have created a significant proportion of the population in favour of the AKP. Immigrants who came from Anatolian cities and now form a majority in Turkish urban areas constitute an important source of the AKP’s power (Cagaptay, 2007: 21). As religious businessmen, these immigrants from the Anatolian cities are pious and socially conservative, and consequently they support the AKP rather than secular parties from the left or the right (Cagaptay, 2007: 21). It can also be claimed that since those immigrants constitute the working class in the big cities, this means that there is a shift from the left to the right in the working class. This means that whilst in many countries the proletariat is linked with the left, in Turkey it can be found closer to the right because of the Islamisation of the working class, and that is one of the reasons why the left loses out to the right in the large urban areas.

Consequently, political Islam constitutes one of the pillars of the AKP ideology and it is important to investigate this in any study of the AKP hegemony. After the 1980 coup, the state elites, as already explained, used Islam as a cementing element and opened the political and social spheres to the Islamist organisations. Although the Islamist groups had been part of Turkish society since the foundation of the new Republic, their political rise intensified after the 1980s. Democratisation and economic liberalisation opened new public spaces for

marginalised Islamic groups and carried political Islamist views from the periphery to the centre (Yavuz, 1997: 69). Media and popular culture played an important role in helping the Islamists to achieve their aims, especially after the 1980s, by disseminating ideas, thoughts and norms of the current hegemonic ideology and identities. Television as a part of the visual media entered the frame in the 1990s following the privatisation of the media. In the next section, I shall consider the relationship between popular culture and politics in Turkey and then focus specifically on the media industry.

3. Popular Culture and Politics

It can be claimed that popular culture has been a site for Turkish politics from the first years of the new republic. From the beginning of the Republic, culture has constituted an important and influential area for the new regime. Republican elites sought to make secularism penetrate not only the political sphere but also to make it part of everyday life. These elites were academics, novelists and journalists who identified themselves as *İlerici Atatürkçü Aydınlar* (Progressive Kemalist Intellectuals) and who became the transmitters of the new regime's ideology in the early years of the Republic (Gole, 1997: 50).

In the first years of the Republic, popular culture was completely western. Ekmel Gecer (2013: 34) stated that this was normal because at that time in Turkey modernisation was seen as westernisation. He explained that especially after the 1950s, this was intensified and cinema and magazines presented the lives of Hollywood celebrities and of the American people. Over time, westernisation was replaced by localisation and Turkish values started to become popular. The westernisation policies of the Republican elites reflected the sphere of popular culture, and popular culture products, which were under the control of the state, became the medium of the official ideology of the state (Ozdemir, 1999). This aim of the official ideology was to bring about a disengagement from traditional culture and this led people to react defensively. People on the periphery became more determined to conserve their traditions and that resulted in the polarisation of the society on the periphery and the military and civil bureaucracy in the centre (Ozdemir, 1999).

Ottomanism, Islamism and conservatism could all find themselves a part in this populist political discourse. For instance, centre-right parties such as the DP (1946-1961) or the Justice

Party (AP, 1960-1980) saw the Ottoman Empire as part of the Turkish collective memory; the nationalist right-wing parties such as the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP, 1971-today) portrayed Ottoman history as a glorious past; and the religious right parties such as the National Salvation Party (MSP, 1971-1980) and the Welfare Party (RP, 1983-1998) used Islamic features of the Ottoman Empire (Colak, 2006: 591, Jung, 2008: 123). During the DP era, Ottomanist discourse such as the 'Turkish ideal of world domination' or 'a thousand years of glorious history' can be seen in its political discourse and this discourse started to influence the Islamists in terms of nationalising religion (Sahin, 2012: 124). Ottoman images and imagination continued and intensified in social and political life after the 1980 coup as a result of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis project, even though it had not yet turned into a political vision combining the Ottoman system with modern political principles to produce policy (Colak, 2006: 591).

Although there were opposition groups which challenged Kemalist ideology during these years, they were relatively weak and the military, which is the stronghold and defender of Kemalism, prevented any hegemonic movement against their ideology. It can therefore be said that it was not possible to mount a counter-hegemonic project during this period because of the coercive measures of the state, especially considering the 1960, 1971 and 1980 military interventions.

Nevertheless, Islamist activism can be seen in the cultural sphere, particularly in the print media. Periodicals were one of the media for disseminating Islamist ideas. The most popular and influential periodicals, such as *Sebilürreşad*, *Büyük Doğu* and *Serdengeçti*, played an important role in achieving this aim (Cinar and Sezgin, 2013: 331). Those magazines supported Islamist activism not only in the social sphere but also the political sphere as they contributed to the national dissemination of thoughts about political Islam, thereby becoming the hub of Islamist political engagement and enabling the formation and mobilisation of an Islamist network in Turkey from the late 1940s (Cinar and Sezgin, 2013: 331-332). Their influence on political society also can be seen in the following decades. For instance, one of the most influential writers was Necip Fazil Kısakurek. His thoughts and ideas also influenced the AKP cadres. Erdogan recalled him as "the master and his ordeals helped us, like no other, to make sense of history and the present" and has occasionally included him and his political thinking, writings and poetry in his political discourse (Singer, 2013: 82). He reads his poems frequently

and one example is that, in 2013, he read one of Kisakurek's poems, "Indeed tomorrow is ours, ours indeed! / The sun rises, the sun sets, eternity is ours!" at a meeting with his supporters during the Gezi events (Singer, 2013: 88). Moreover, the word which Erdogan used to define the Gezi protesters, *capulcus* ('marauders') was used by Kisakurek to describe the Action Army which had to quell a pro-sharia uprising in Istanbul in 1908 (Singer, 2013: 86). Kisakurek described this army as a band of Macedonian *capulcus*, but it also contained Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and Ismet Inonu, the first and the second presidents of modern Turkey. This example shows how Islamist cultural products can influence the political imaginary and how politicians can include these products in their speeches. In the later chapters, I shall show how *VoW: Ambush* was used by politicians and how the series has influenced Turkish politics.

Another example of the relationship between popular culture and politics in Turkey can be seen in the 1980s when state-controlled television and radio broadcasts were used to popularise Ottoman and religious cultural traits as classical Turkish music and some linguistic forms (Colak, 2006: 592). *Arabesk* music, which was previously banned on state television because of its religious aspects and because it could be aligned with the periphery also became part of the political sphere. For instance, some *Arabesk* stars such as Bulent Ersoy and Ibrahim Tatlisles could be seen on TRT (the state-controlled television channel and the only channel until the 1990s); the Prime Minister Turgut Ozal attended *Arabesk* concerts and even used some *Arabesk* tunes as electoral jingles (Stokes, 1992: 219).

Unlike the popular music of the 1980s, there was a revival of Ottoman culture at the beginning of the 1990s. Neo-Ottomanism, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, started to be discussed in politics and it found a place in Turkish popular culture. For instance, when Erdogan was the mayor of Istanbul, the Islamist Welfare Party (RP) attempted to revive aspects of Ottoman culture such as calligraphy, food and architectural forms and sought to integrate them into everyday Turkish life, and he launched a series of activities to commemorate Istanbul in the Ottoman era (Colak, 2006: 596). Remembrance Day of the Conquest of Istanbul by the Ottoman Empire became an important event during his term in office and was celebrated in a magnificent way every year. It can therefore be said that Ottoman and religious cultural traits which were banned in the political and social realms

before the 1980s entered the frame of politics as well as popular culture because of the state's own actions.

Because my purpose in this current study is to investigate a popular television series as a site of reproduction of identities, discourses, ideas and imaginaries of the AKP government, it is important to examine the development of the television industry. After the introduction of colour television in the 1980s and then during the 1990s with the arrival of commercial television and the neo-liberal policies of the state, people themselves became part of the entertainment industry. The mass media organisations which started to be owned by big capital groups in the 1990s became the means of spreading the new consumption culture. Popular culture products on television at that time played a role in enabling people to connect with this new culture. For the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, television became a positive tool. This current research study was designed to investigate a television series as a part of popular culture. It focuses on how a television series during the AKP era reproduced the foreign policy discourse of the state and my intention is to explore how the series might produce consent for specific foreign policies such as Turkey's policy on Syria or on the Middle East in general. This was explained from the IR approach in Chapter 1 and it still needs to be investigated from the perspectives of television and media studies. In the next section, I shall examine this and apply it to the case of Turkey.

4. The Television Industry as Part of a Hegemonic Project

Television can frame and reproduce political discourse on a daily basis and that can lead to the legitimisation of the political discourse of actors such as governments, political parties and groups. These actors use the media to render some aspects of reality more salient by promoting a particular understanding, interpretation or solution of a problem (Panayirci and Iseri, 2014: 65). In a domestic or international policy crisis, the media can be used for creating a positive angle on the issue. Especially in non-democratic states where press freedom is low, news dissemination is monopolised by political elites or their cronies and the media are manipulated by the political elites (Panayirci and Iseri, 2014: 66). Turkey is a semi-democratic state and has a low record on press freedom, according to human rights organisations such as Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders. In Turkey, it can be seen that the AKP

government utilises the media and the news frameworks which support its views in order to sustain power (Panayirci and Iseri, 2014: 66). When the relationship between the political elites of the AKP and the owners of the media conglomerates is researched, parallels can easily be seen between the policies of the AKP and the news broadcasts on the television channels owned by those conglomerates. This will be discussed in detail below. In this section I shall investigate the television industry, first by looking at the political economy of the media. I shall give information about the history of the Turkish media and the regulation of the media by the state. Second, I shall focus on media ownership in Turkey. Finally, I shall use Cultural Theory to better understand hegemony in the Turkish media.

First, it is important to examine the political economy of the Turkish media industry. Gramscian hegemony theory may not be sufficient to explain the relationship between hegemonic power and the media industry. There are other approaches which put the emphasis on the political economy of the media. For instance, “the Frankfurt School combined political economy of the media, cultural analysis of the texts, and audience reception studies of the social and ideological effects of mass culture and communications” (Kellner, 1995: 28). Studies carried out by this school have shown that popular culture products reproduce the existing society and promote social norms and practices which can legitimate the state capitalist organisation of society (Kellner, 1995: 30). Culture industries “should be seen as major institutions of contemporary societies with a variety of economic, political, cultural, and social effects” (Miller, 2002: 17). For example, Herbert Marcuse stated that the thoughts and behaviours needed for the social and cultural reproduction of capitalist societies are produced by television (Miller, 2002: 19). Television is seen as part of the apparatus which controls information and leads individuals into confusion; it is a tool of manipulation and societal domination.

Another approach which makes the political economy of the media important is the propaganda model proposed by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988). They used this model to carry out an institutional analysis of the major media in the US. They believed that the major or elite media has a role in agenda-setting by selecting topics, distributing concerns, emphasising and framing issues and filtering information in order to serve the interests of the dominant groups in the society. They saw the dominant media as profit-seeking businesses, owned by conglomerates and funded by other profit-seeking advertisers

who wanted their advertisements to appear (Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Herman, 2000: 102). The dominant media are embedded in the market system and the mass media also rely heavily on to the government and major business firms as information sources. Political considerations and overlapping interests cause solidarity between the government, major media and other conglomerates (Herman, 2000: 102). The government and large non-media business firms put pressure on the media by direct or indirect modes of attack, such as threats of withdrawal of advertising or of television licences (Herman, 2000: 102). During the Cold War, the media were constrained by the dominant ideology. Herman and Chomsky also claimed that the media were not only constrained by the dominant ideology but also propagated anti-communist propaganda during the Cold War and were often mobilised to induce consent for US interventions in small communist states such as Vietnam.

Even so, the focus was only on the news in the media, not on popular culture products such as television series. Continual analysis of the political economy of the media industry remains important because television series are aired on the television channels just as news bulletins are, and series also acquire advertisements according to the viewing ratings. If a television series is not in accordance with the dominant ideology, this may go against the interests of the media owner since the owner has an economic relationship with the government. *Magnificent Century*, an historical soap opera, is an example of this situation. After depictions of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent showing him drinking alcohol and having intimate relations with women in his palace, the then Prime Minister Erdogan condemned the show, its directors, broadcasters and actors and actresses (Fowler, 2011). After his declaration that *Magnificent Century* should not be continued, Turkish Airlines excluded the series from its in-flight programming (Batuman, 2014). Moreover, the media regulator, RTUK, admonished the television channel SHOW TV, because the channel had "broadcast a programme that was contrary to the national and moral values of society" (Onderoglu, 2011). As a result, the producers started to edit the offending scenes, shortened the kissing scenes and rewrote later episodes. So the political economy of the media is not only important for television news, as Herman and Chomsky found, but it is also possible to say that it is important for popular culture products on television. To understand the media system in Turkey better, the development of television broadcasting in Turkey should be explained.

After many tests starting in 1952, the first television broadcasts started in 1968 by the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) which was established in 1964 as an autonomous state corporation. Although at first only a small proportion of the population had the privilege of watching television, the number had reached more than 18 million people by the end of 1976 and was 74% of the population in 1980 (Kuyucu ,2012: 110). The state monopoly of television continued until 1990 and in 1994, as a result of privatisation, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK) was established to regulate television broadcasting in Turkey. When we look at the history of television series in Turkey, it can be seen that soap operas such as *Roots*, *The Young and the Restless* and tele-novelas such as *Los ricos también lloran* and *Escrava Isaura* were very popular when the TRT was the only channel. After privatisation, television series became diversified and domestic television series became popular after 1995 and started to be aired in prime time. Today, it can be seen that on almost every channel there are Turkish television series, and growing professionalism and technical quality enable the Turkish television series sector to open to the world. According to the head of the Turkish Exporters Assembly, Turkey was the second highest television series exporter in the world after the US, and Turkish television series exports were worth \$200 million in 2012 whilst it had been \$10,000 in 2004 (Hurriyet Daily News, 2014a).

Television series, as well as other television products, have to make a profit from advertisers and as Dallas W. Smythe (1981) stated, audiences are commodities which are sold to the advertisers by the media industry. When we look at the advertising share in the Turkish media, income from television advertisements constituted 52% of turnover and 2.979 million Turkish Liras in the first half of the 2014, according to the Turkish Advertisers' Association. Television series carried a huge portion of these advertisements, 50%-55% according to Deloitte research (Deloitte, 2014). Episodes lasted 150-180 minutes with the summary of the last episode because the RTUK restricted the numbers and span of advertising breaks and that made broadcasters increase the length of the television series. If the broadcasters increase the length of the series, they can have more advertisements in more advertising breaks. Therefore, people spend three hours at least when they watch an episode of their favourite television series. The RTUK punishes channels if they do not follow the regulations about advertisements. For instance, in 2015, the RTUK penalised KANAL D because it had shown advertisement against regulations. According to the Council's report, there was product

placement of an alcoholic beverage company and that might encourage young people to consume alcoholic drinks (Cumhuriyet, 2015).

The RTUK is in a very crucial place for regulating broadcasting. There are nine members of the Supreme Council and they are selected by the Turkish Parliament taking into consideration the member basis of each political party. The current president of the council is İlhan Yerlikaya, an academic and an AKP MP. The RTUK has four main powers: power of regulation, power of permission, control power and enforcement effect. It has the ability to monitor and control the content of any broadcast on television and radio and is authorised to impose sanctions such as a warning, the suspension of broadcasting and financial punishment (Yildiz, 2013: 917-918). It can be argued that most of the members of the council were from the AKP bearing in mind that the AKP held the majority in the parliament from 2003 onwards.

The RTUK has been used as a means of coercion by governments, even though it is autonomous, since its establishment. For instance, throughout the 1990s, it was used to prevent Kurdish broadcasting (Sinclair and Smets, 2014: 322). Recently, it has been argued that the RTUK is using its power in favour of the AKP to help to imbue conservative values and identities. For instance, many sanctions have been imposed on television series which are believed by the council to have acted against conservative values. One instance of this is the RTUK's financial punishment of the TV channel CNBC-E, which showed an episode of *The Simpsons*. According to the RTUK, the £20,000 fine was for "making fun of God, encouraging the young people to exercise violence by showing the murders as God's orders" (Vela, 2012). Another example is that the council imposed a fine of £100,000 on another channel, SHOW TV, for broadcasting a television series, *M.U.C.K*, because the council believed that the erotic dances in the series would have a negative effect on young people (Milliyet, 2012a). It could therefore be thought that the RTUK can act under the control of the government even though it should be an autonomous council. In the 1990s, it was used to prevent the use of the Kurdish language, nowadays it is used to prevent anti-Islamic values. It also suppresses television programmes which do not show conservative values or which seek to criticise the government. Although the broadcasters might not face economic fines, they nevertheless have to play by the rules of the extant hegemonic power. So it can be said that the RTUK is used as a coercive tool by the hegemonic power over the media.

The AKP also attempts to regulate television directly. The current media structure in Turkey, which is heavily controlled by the government, is closely related to the AKP's hegemonic movement. What is aired on the media can serve Gramsci's concept of 'common sense'. Gramsci believed that common sense is a complex formation partly drawn from 'official' conceptions of the world circulated by the ruling bloc and partly formed out of people's practical experiences of social life. "According to Gramsci, common sense offers a deeply held guide to life, directing people to act in certain ways and ruling out other modes of behavior as unthinkable" (Bozkurt, 2013: 381). By controlling the media, the AKP's ideology, ideas and perceptions can be made part of common sense. Social life can be shaped not only by setting the agenda but also through the use of ideological symbols and religious/cultural codes. The media and, as a part of it, television series, can contribute to this aim and its importance can be understood from the government's statements on the content of the television series. Erdogan's and other officials' statements about conformity to Turkish 'family values' or about *Magnificent Century's* misrepresentation of Ottoman history can be seen as giving an example of the ideal television series in terms of the ideology of the AKP. It can be claimed that there is oppression of the scriptwriters of some television series because they are not representing the AKP ideology.

Second, there is also the consent of the media to the hegemony of the AKP and that can be explained by the relationship between the government and the media. Patterns of ownership in the media are an important issue which shapes the influence on media discourses in Turkey as well as in other countries. Two important developments should be mentioned here in order to understand the current media industry and its relationship with the government. The first is the inclusion of businessmen in the media sector in the 1980s during the Ozal era. Before the 1980s, owners of newspapers were dealing only with journalism. During the 1970s, the press sector was dominated by two groups: the VEB Group and the Hurriyet Group, which both belonged to the same family, the Simavis. Their share in the media economy was 52.4% in 1975 (Kuyucu, 2012: 244). However, in the 1980s large companies entered the sector with the intention of using the media for their own interests, such as advertising and marketing their own products and increasing their influence in other sectors related to the government such as public tenders (Kuyucu, 2012: 248). During his administration, Ozal "provided the big media bosses with business interests in banking, insurance, tourism, and marketing, and

subsidies in the form of low interest rate credit and tax exemptions, amounting to an estimated sum of three billion dollars” to gain the support of the mass media (Alpay, 2010: 376). This led to a shift in the ownership of newspapers from families with a sole interest in publishing to businessmen who used newspapers for their own interests. The former relinquished their places to the latter at the beginning of the 1990s. After this radical development, the businessmen who owned media outlets started to exchange political support for favours and privileges from the government.

The privatisation of media outlets in general and television channels in particular was the second important development for the media industry. During the 1990s, the lifting of the state monopoly on television broadcasting, which had been started by the TRT in the late 1960s, “resulted not only in sharpened competition between newspapers, but also in the integration of print and broadcast media under an increasingly oligopolistic ownership structure” (Alpay, 2010: 376). By the 1990s, there were two media conglomerates, Dogan Holdings and Medya Holdings, which dominated the sector: the former controlled nine newspapers, 31 magazines, two major stations and three radio stations, along with a bank and companies in the energy, fuel distribution, tourism, publishing, internet and other sectors; the latter Medya Group controlled several dailies, channels, magazines and a medium-sized bank (Alpay, 2010: 377). Competition between these two groups was reflected in the political arena when they developed close relationships with the two centre-right parties, and when they found themselves engaging in a media war by discrediting each other, they made an agreement to promote their common interests against the government and its employees (Alpay, 2010: 377). As a result of these two developments in the media market, media owners started to “utilize the material benefits of the ‘patrimonial/clientelistic’ relationship between the media and the state” and that led to the instrumentalisation of the media (Carkoglu and Yavuz, 2011: 618). In this new structure, “whilst private media owners ‘have connections to obtain government contracts and concessions’, ‘politicians can pressure media owners by selectively enforcing broadcasting, tax and other laws’” (Carkoglu and Yavuz, 2011: 618). For example, the case of a businessman named Korkmaz Yigit can demonstrate this new kind of relationship between the media industry and politics.

Mr Yigit, after winning the public tender for the privatisation of the state-owned Turkish Trade Bank in 1988, moved to purchase two national dailies (*Milliyet* and *Yeni Yuzyl*) and two television stations. Soon after being arrested on charges of having links

to organised crime, he stated that he had been encouraged to buy the media outlets by Motherland Party ministers, anxious to have a media group that would loyally support them. The scandal led to the resignation of the government led by Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz in 1998. Mr Yilmaz was tried by the Constitutional Court on corruption charges, and eventually acquitted due to a statute of limitation before the case came to trial. (Alpay, 2010: 378)

This kind of relationship maintained its prominence in the AKP era too. It can be seen that the media groups are strictly identified as pro-government or anti-government, and the relationship between some media groups and the government is clearer than it was in the 1990s. It is important to acknowledge here that the media holdings which own the five most-watched television channels will be examined to provide examples of the relationships between media groups and the AKP, although such relationships are not restricted to these five. According to an RTUK survey, top five channels on the ratings table are KANAL D (54.6%), ATV (51.9%), SHOW TV (44.2%), STAR TV (43.8%), and TRT 1 (16.2%). So Dogan Holdings (KANAL D), Calik Holdings and Zirve Holdings (ATV), Ciner Holdings (SHOW TV) and Dogus Holdings (STAR TV) are the companies which should be examined. Because TRT is a state channel, it will be excluded from this analysis.

Dogan Holdings is one of the biggest media groups, it also has investments in the energy, industry, finance, tourism and trade sectors as stated above. It owns many channels including KANAL D and CNN TURK, many newspapers such as *Posta* (the second biggest seller), *Hurriyet* (the third biggest seller), *Radikal*, and *Hurriyet Daily News*; and also many radio stations. The Dogan media group has been the most critical of the AKP government and its owner, Aydin Dogan, criticised Erdogan because he was choosing the Islamic direction rather than the secular (Arsu and Tavernise, 2009). Because of that, Dogan Holdings was given a \$2.5 billion fine, nearly as much as the value of the holdings. Erdogan publicly instructed his authorities to fine Dogan Holdings for alleged tax irregularities and prison sentences were demanded for Aydin Dogan, Ertugrul Ozkok, the editor-in-chief of *Hurriyet*, and six other company executives (Kaya and Cakmur, 2010: 532). Also one of the anti-AKP columnists, Bekir Coskun, was asked to resign from his post after pressure from the government. As a result of this pressure, Ertugrul Ozkok had to resign from his editor-in-chief post and Aydin Dogan stepped down as chairman and board member of the Dogan group of companies to cede this position to his daughter (Kaya and Cakmur, 2010: 533). It can be said the relationship between Dogan Holdings and the AKP reflected the AKP's oppression of Turkish media.

The relationship between Calik Holding and the AKP represents another kind of relationship. The former CEO of the Holdings and the current Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Berat Albayrak is the son-in-law of Erdogan and until the end of 2013 he controlled *Turkuvaz Medya*, which has television channels such as ATV and *Yeni Asir* TV and newspapers such as *Sabah* (the fourth best seller) and *Takvim*. The seventh and eighth seasons of *VoW: Ambush* were aired on ATV. Calik Holdings has other investments in the textile, energy, construction, finance and telecommunication sectors. During the AKP era, it “has built power plants in Turkmenistan, bought a bank and cell phone company in Albania and invested in an oil pipeline project backed by the Turkish government. The company had \$1.7 billion in sales in 2008, more than double its 2003 revenue” (Hurriyet Daily News, 2008). In addition, Calik Holdings was given \$700 million credit by two state banks in 2007 when it was buying *Turkuvaz Medya* from the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF) in an auction (Kaya and Cornell, 2008). Thus one of the biggest media groups in Turkey was in the control of a holding company which had close relations with the AKP, not only based on common interests but also based on familial relationships. *Turkuvaz Medya* was sold to Zirve Holdings which was created by the owners of the Kalyon Group, Omer Faruk Kalyoncu and Orhan Cemal Kalyoncu. According to a 252-page police account of mobile phone intercepts, stakeouts and video surveillance for investigation into government corruption, the owners of the Kalyon Group were asked to create Zirve Holding by Erdogan (Srivastava, Harvey and Ersoy, 2014). This holding is another which has many public tender contracts. For instance, it is in the Cengiz-Kolin-Limak-Mapa-Kalyon Consortium which will build the third international airport in Istanbul (Hurriyet Daily News, 2013a).

Ciner Holdings and Dogus Holdings are the other groups which have a relationship with the AKP based on common interests. Ciner Holdings owns media channels such as SHOW TV and *Haberturk* TV and a newspaper, *Haberturk* (the sixth best-selling newspaper in Turkey). In addition, it has other investments in the energy, mining, trade, industry and service sectors (Freedom House, 2014). During the AKP era, *Haberturk* followed a line sympathetic to the AKP government and Ciner Holdings won public tenders in the energy and mining sectors (Cengiz, 2014). At this point, it is important to mention the recordings of conversations between Erdogan and Mehmet Fatih Sarac, deputy chairman of *Ciner Yayin*. One of the recordings (which was admitted by Erdogan) allegedly reveals that he called Sarac during the Gezi Park

protests and requested him to remove a screen banner on *Haberturk* TV (Yetkin, 2014). Another recording allegedly shows that Yalcin Akdogan, one of Erdogan's deputies and a columnist on the pro-AKP *Star* and *Yeni Safak* (he uses the name Yasin Dogan as an alias in *Yeni Safak*) newspapers, called Sarac and asked him why *Haberturk* TV had shown a speech by Devlet Bahceli in Parliament live. Although the AKP cadres do not accept that these recordings are legitimate, technical investigations have shown that according to the forensic evidence, they are genuine (Hurriyet, 2014). These two recordings out of many are sufficient to demonstrate the coercion imposed on journalists and media patrons by the AKP government today.

Dogus Holdings are owned by Ferit Sahenk, who has television channels such as STAR TV and NTV, and other investments in the finance, automotive, construction, tourism, energy and retail sectors. Dogus Holdings has also won public tenders such as a \$702 million bid to operate Istanbul's Gaziosmanpasa neighbourhood (Freedom House, 2014). As a result of these interests, the media outlets owned by Dogus Holdings have adopted a pro-government attitude. For instance, journalists such as Can Dundar, Banu Guven, Mirgun Cabas, Nuray Mert and Rusen Cakir had to leave NTV screens because of their anti-AKP attitudes. Another example of NTV's pro-government attitude was seen during the Gezi Park events. NTV did not cover the events and continued to broadcast the government's controversial speeches even while people were gathering in front of the NTV building to protest about its pro-government attitude.

Religious businessmen also started to use the media efficiently after the 1980 coup and they supported the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. Islamist sects such as *Naksibendis*, *Nurcus* and *Suleymancis* started to set up their own media operations to transmit their ideas and they found more places in intellectual debates. As a result, they started to gain more public visibility, social recognition, legitimacy and prestige than in the 1980s (Gole, 1997: 55). For instance, in the 1980s, one of the most popular publications in Turkey with a circulation of 110,000 was *Islam*, a *Naksibendi* (the sect of prime minister at that time, Turgut Ozal) monthly magazine (Hiro, 1986; Gole, 1997: 56).

First, Islamist sects prioritised radio stations as a main medium to reach a broader audience because they were easy to manage with a moderate budget (Kuran-Burcoglu, 2011: 194). When the Islamic capital grew, television stations also became part of the Islamic media. From

1990s onwards, the Islamic media have continued to increase the number of their channels, radio stations and printed media. Today, among these, “the *Naksibendi* sect which is represented by a newspaper (*Türkiye*), two TV channels (TGRT and *Akra* FM), and a news agency (IHA), and the Qadiri sect which is represented by one cable (*Mesa*), one local (*Ege*), and two main TV channels (*Mar* and *Kadırga*) were appealing to the more general public, the *Nur* community³ with its journals and magazines (*Aksiyon*, *Sızıntı* and *Gonca Çocuk*) along with its TV channels (*Samanyolu* and *Burç* FM) and the newspaper *Zaman* was also considering children and young people as being within its audience in order to gain popularity among the young” (Kuran-Burcoglu, 2011: 194-195). The daily newspaper *Zaman* is in the first place as the best-selling newspaper in Turkey with a circulation of more than a million. In addition to those, *Yeni Safak* is another Islamist newspaper of which the previous owner was the Albayrak Group, and one of its columnists, Sadik Albayrak, is the father-in-law of Erdogan’s daughter. The Albayrak Group also has interests in construction, industry, logistics, energy and services. *Yeni Safak* also dismissed critical columnists while gaining opportunities from the government, such as public and international tenders. So the political economy of the Turkish media shows that there are close ties between the media owners and the AKP regime.

Third, the approach to political economy of the media is not sufficient to understand and cultural theory can help us to understand it. Television series as part of media entertainment and popular culture can be included in this debate because popular culture is a site where the ideologies can be seen. They can also be used for framing a political issue in parallel to the discourse of political groups by reproducing their perceptions, ideas, norms and identity. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, Nexon and Neumann (2006: 8) explained that popular entertainment is a form of second-order representation on which people spend enormous time and energy. Also, the interpellation process described in Chapter 1 can be applied to the television series. Representations and definitions of the Other (Syria, Israel or the US) and the Self are very important in the television series. Weldes explained this in terms of the representation of US foreign policy in *Star Trek*. She said that “The representation of the self is particularly significant because it helps to interpellate or hail the audience into *Star Trek*’s

³ These journal, magazines, newspapers and TV channels were belong to the Gulen Movement that attempted to do a coup on 15th July 2016. They are appointed trusteeship and later closed down.

discursive universe and so render that universe commonsensical” (Weldes, 1999a: 122).

Douglas Kellner (1995: 58) stated that

On one level, ideology mobilizes sentiment, affection, and belief to induce consent to certain dominant core assumptions about social life (i.e. such as the value of individualism, freedom, the family, the nation, success, and so on). These core assumptions, the ‘common sense’ of a society, are deployed by groups, whereby, for example, groups and forces in struggle tend to deploy discourses of democracy, freedom, and individualism which they inflect according to their own ideological agendas and purposes.

Kellner (1995: 59) claimed that the former US president Reagan produced a rhetoric which operated also in the Clinton era and which redefined US common sense, and that media culture (Kellner used this term instead of ‘popular culture’) “produces representations that attempt to induce consent to certain political positions, getting members of the society to see specific ideologies as ‘the way things are’ (that too much government is bad, that protecting the country requires intense militarization and aggressive foreign policy)”. Popular cultural texts naturalise these positions and produce consent for them. John Street (2001: 95) stated that

Media content has to be understood as part of a process where ‘common sense’ is constructed through the readings which can be made of the images and languages of the text. Meaning is not to be read simply as neutral information supporting a particular world view. It also engages feelings and passions, a desire to preserve or change the world, a judgement of the way others behave and think. What is being appealed to is the idea that culture ‘structures feelings’.

Street also claimed that the mass media do not have a direct effect, such as cause and effect, to generate particular effects. Rather, it puts “a set of ideas into circulation, as normalizing a set of practices and attitudes, representing ‘common sense’” (Street, 2001: 97). So it can be argued that, in Turkey’s case, framing specific issues in a television series may not have a direct effect in the same way that framing negative views of Assad on the Syrian issue causes people to think that Assad is ‘evil’ and that Turkey should do something about its troublesome neighbour. However, the meanings which the television series creates may have an effect on the social reality of the audiences; for instance, a television series which has neo-Ottoman characteristics might change the ‘common sense’ in Turkey and people could start to think that Syrians are brothers of Turkey because they have a common shared history in the Ottoman era, and Turkey therefore has a responsibility to intervene over the Syrian issue. Representations of foreign policy in television series can construct the reality of international

politics for individuals if they reproduce the structure and content of the dominant foreign policy discourse, and as a result they can produce consent for foreign policies.

Here, it should be mentioned that, as Hall explained in his article *Encoding/Decoding*, representations can be understood differently by one individual to another. Hall (2003: 165-166) stated that during the production process, a message is encoded through meaningful discourse, but that this encoded message can be understood in a different way during the decoding process of different individuals. Producers encode meaning in a particular way whilst the individuals decode it differently according to their personal position. Hall identified three positions, the dominant-hegemonic position, the negotiated position and the oppositional-counter-hegemonic position. If the decoder, an individual or viewer, understands the encoded meaning according to the encoder's intentions, this means that he or she fully shares the text's code and reproduces the identity of the hegemonic power (Hall, 2003: 171). In this position, viewers do not oppose any of the ideas or identities of the hegemonic power. Decoding from the negotiated position contains both adaptive and oppositional elements. The viewer "acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations (abstract), while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules – it operates with exceptions to the rule" (Hall, 2003: 172). Finally, the viewer may decode the encoded message in a contrary way and oppose the ideas of the hegemonic power. In this position, the viewer "detotalizes the message in the preferred code in order to retotalize the message within some alternative framework of reference" (Hall, 2003: 172-173).

When we apply this approach to this current project, it can be argued that the coded messages or identities in television series under the hegemony of the AKP government can be defined from the hegemonic, negotiated and counter-hegemonic positions. The message may not be understood in the way that the existing hegemonic power wants. It is not my intention in this study to investigate the extent to which the messages are understood. As Hall said above, some people do understand the messages in accordance with the intentions of the hegemonic power. I accept this and shall focus on the discourse, identities and representations in the television series related to TFP, and shall look for possible parallels between them and the discourses and identities of hegemonic power. In cultural studies, Kellner (1995: 59) stated that "ideology contains discourses and figures, concepts and images,

theoretical positions and symbolic forms". Be that as it may, my purpose in this study is to contribute to the IR field and to focus on only the foreign policy discourses of the AKP and the discourses in the television series, which may produce consent even though it accepts that narrative, concepts and images, signs, theoretical positions and symbolic forms should also be examined.

Since discourses hold a special place in this study, the reason why they are crucial should be explained here. John Fiske (2011: 14) explained that "Discourse is a language or a system of representation that has developed socially in order to make and circulate a coherent set of meanings about an important topic area. These meanings serve the interests of that section of society within which the discourse originates and which works ideologically to naturalize those meanings into common sense". Discourses have a social basis and they may promote or oppose the dominant ideology. Language is very important when we are making sense of the world. As explained in Chapter 1, Althusser put a special emphasis on discourse which he called 'interpellation', which refers to the relationship between addresser and addressee, and in which use of discourse calls to or 'hails' the addressee. Fiske (2011: 53) explained this as "In responding to the call, in recognizing that it is us being spoken to, we implicitly accept the discourse's definition of 'us', or, to put it another way, we adopt the subject position proposed for us by the discourse". Discourses also operate in the social system; they are part of society. Therefore, when an addresser uses discourse to hail an addressee, it has to use the discourse of that particular society. In Turkey's case, the AKP, the addresser, uses the discourse of a society which has been influenced by the Turkish-Islamic synthesis since the 1980s, as stated above in this chapter. So individuals who are familiar with this discourse are hailed into it. The discourse of the AKP therefore needs to be examined and the television series, which reproduces the discourses of the AKP and puts the viewers in the subject position that the AKP proposes, should also be examined. In Chapter 3, I shall deal with these processes in terms of TFP.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Gramsci believed that a combination of force and hegemony maintains stability in a society. Whereas some institutions such as the police or the military use coercion, others means such as religion, schools and the media "serve to induce consent to the dominant order through establishing the hegemony, or ideological dominance, of a specific type of social order" (Kellner, 1995: 31) such as Kemalism or political Islam. So the

media are one of the institutions of state domination which attempt to control individuals and it is possible to say that it is a crucial medium for hegemonic power. In the case of Turkey, it can be said that television can be accepted as an instrument for hegemonic power because of its significance. The significance of television as a medium has been indicated by research studies. According to research findings published by the RTUK, women watch television for 3.8 hours a day and men watch it for 3.6 hours (RTUK, 2013). In that study, participants were asked to answer this question for each channel: 'Why do you prefer this channel?' The response given for all channels except TRT was 'Because I like the TV series in this channel'. This shows that people in Turkey chose channels according to the television series which they broadcast. So it can be said that television is watched for more than three hours a day and primarily for television series. These findings show why television series are important and can be used as a means to reproduce the discourse of the extant power in Turkey.

According to the findings of another study conducted in 2012 with more than 15,000 people, 84% of the participants watched television every day whereas only 21% listened to the radio and 18% read a newspaper on a daily basis (Nalcaoglu, 2012). Moreover, whilst 65% stated that they often watched news programmes, 62% often watched local television series (77% among women participants). These findings show that television is more significant in Turkey than other media, and that television series are being watched by a very significant proportion of the population. This supports the argument that television series in Turkey can be an influential instrument to produce consent for policies.

As a result, by representing the AKP ideology, television series may contribute to the hegemony of the AKP as a result of complex interactions between state regulations of television, media ownership and common sense. Although the AKP government has coercive power over the media, there are also other kinds of relationship. Holdings which have common interests with political organisations support the government in their newspapers and their radio and television channels. Moreover, there are other media organisations which give their consent to the AKP voluntarily since they have similar ideology and identities. Cultural theory here becomes important because my intention is to understand how the popular culture texts work. Therefore, although the political economy of the media is important, it is not sufficient for me to focus only on that. The AKP built the hegemony of the party on a mixture of conservative, Islamist and nationalist identities which also constitute

the current common sense of Turkey (Bozkurt, 2013, 382). *VoW* also represents these values in a fictional way, and that could be one of the reasons for its popularity. Between 2010 and 2014, it was aired on ATV as *VoW: Ambush* when the channel was owned by Calik Holdings, a strong supporter of the AKP as stated above. During that period, there were many parallel events between the plot of the series and TFP, and there were many references to the identities mentioned above. These reproductions will be examined in the following chapters. The series reproduced the values, ideas, ideology and imaginary of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. So as a second-order representation, this series (with others) was involved in the policies of the hegemonic project by creating intertextuality and intersubjectivity and it had a role in the production of consent.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have given the historical background of two opposing hegemonic movements. First, I explained Kemalism because political Islam emerged as a counter-hegemonic movement against Kemalism. Whilst Kemalism has westernist, modernist, nationalist and secular characteristics, political Islam has anti-secular, conservative, nationalist and anti-westernist features. As a counter-hegemonic movement, the AKP does not simply oppose Kemalism, it re-articulates some concepts such as Turkish nationalism. It articulates it with Islamic and historical concepts which are not part of Kemalist ideology. Moreover, Ottomanism became an important part of the ideology in the later stages. Second, I have analysed the rise of political Islam in Turkey in order to understand the AKP's hegemonic movement. The Turkish-Islamic synthesis project played a crucial role in the rise of political Islam because the 1980 coup started the use of religion as a cementing element in society. Furthermore, economic developments in this period and the rise of Islamic capitalism and the Islamisation of the working class were the two important issues behind the AKP's rise.

Since television series as a part of popular culture is what this study is focusing on, the relationship between the current hegemony and the television industry was examined in this chapter. To understand this relationship, the previous hegemony was also explained in the light of historical, political and cultural contexts. It is clear that since the beginning of the Republic, cultural and political terrains have intertwined. From the 1980s, political Islam could

be seen in the political economic and cultural spheres, and its ideas, perceptions, thoughts and norms started to be disseminated throughout society by the mass media and through cultural products such as magazines, periodicals and books. The print media as a part of popular culture was an important site which the current hegemony makes use of.

Television became part of this equation in the 1990s following the privatisation of the television industry, and political Islam finally had a voice on television channels from then on. Many channels such as *Kanal 7* and *Samanyolu TV* owned by Islamist sects support the AKP because of their common ground, Islam. However, the owners of the other channels support the AKP because of common economic interests. It can therefore be said that this relationship draws a picture of the AKP controlling the media industry when we look at the five most-watched television channels and their relationships with the AKP cadres. The hegemony of the AKP over the media is based on both consent and coercion. Whilst the owners of channels such as *ATV* give their consent because of the common interest, others which are critical of the AKP, such as *KANAL D* and its owners Dogan Holdings, had to face punitive measures imposed by the state. These channels are under the control of the AKP and people who are not sympathetic to the AKP ideology cannot be allowed to appear on or openly criticise the government on those channels. Therefore, the discourse on those channels has to be compatible with the AKP ideology because either they give their consent or they are coerced. This can also be applied to the television series aired on those channels, and that supports my principal argument in this thesis.

As a part of popular culture, the television series shown on those channels could contribute to the AKP hegemony when they reproduce the AKP's ideology by framing the concepts, discourse and symbols of the hegemon power. By reproducing it, they create intertextuality and that leads to people being interpellated to these identities and that might create consent for the policies of the AKP. When the content of *VoW: Ambush* is examined, it will be seen that there are many significant parallel discourses and concepts between the television series and the AKP. The series reproduced the identity of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis which is an important part of the AKP ideology. It could be argued that as part of popular culture, television series shown on the pro-government channels give their consent and become part of the AKP hegemony because of the common interests. Under the hegemony of the AKP,

television series may contribute to the process of creating consent by affecting the common sense of Turkey.

When we think in terms of foreign policy, there are parallels between the discourses in television series related to TFP and the discourses of the state elites responsible for foreign affairs such as Davutoglu and Erdogan. Therefore, whilst the state elites attempt to create a representation related to foreign policy such as the Turkey as the leader of the Middle East representation, television series help in this process of identity creation by reproducing the very same representation and using the very same discourses as used by the state elites. So the state identities brought in by the AKP and the discourses which are being used by the AKP elites should be examined. In the next chapter, therefore, I shall focus on these identities and representations by examining the discourses used for these representations.

Chapter 3: The Security Imaginary in the Era of the AKP: Three Representations

Introduction

In Chapter 1, I explained that this thesis is grounded in a constructivist theory of state identity and behaviour. State identities are an important part of state behaviours. They define behaviours and foreign policies emerge out of these identities. Identities can be divided into two in terms of how they are constituted. First, they can be constituted by interaction with the other states. Second, they can be the results of domestic developments such as a revolution or a hegemony change. In Chapter 2, I analysed how the AKP government became the hegemonic power in Turkey in the twenty-first century and outlined in particular the link between the state and cultural practices, especially television. But how was this hegemonic change reflected in the TFP? How have the new identities promoted by the AKP affected the TFP? The constructivist theory argues that this domestic change in Turkey has influenced not only the country's domestic sphere but also its international policies. In this chapter, I shall analyse the transformation of the TFP in the light of constructivist arguments and explain the emergence of the neo-Ottomanist identity in Turkey.

This thesis focuses on the TFP in the AKP era and a popular television series, *VoW: Ambush* as a site for the reproduction of the TFP. I shall examine the two seasons of the series which were aired between 2012 and 2014. My emphasis is therefore primarily on the TFP during Davutoglu's term in office. The ideas of Ahmet Davutoglu, who was Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs between 2009 and 2014, have to be investigated in order to understand the AKP's foreign policies since he was the architect behind them. His 'strategic depth' doctrine has shaped the TFP in the twenty-first century. It is important to note that his ideas were shaped by the ideology of political Islam. So the ideas and security imaginary of political Islam and Davutoglu should be examined together. I investigated his articles published in Islamist periodicals and newspapers in the 1990s; his famous book, *Strategic Depth*; his speeches delivered at the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Ambassadors' Conferences; and other speeches delivered in other places such as in Diyarbakir Dicle University and the UN Conferences, with the speeches of the Islamists in the 1990s. In addition to those sources, I also looked at his published academic articles in order to understand the perception of the TFP and the security

imaginary in the AKP era. From my analysis of these speeches, I shall uncover the new identities in the TFP.

As I explained in Chapter 1, Weldes identified the processes of the articulation of meaning and the interpellation of subject identity in constructivism in order to explain the role of discursive practices in the creation of national interests. In Davutoglu's security imaginary, his ideas and created meanings, representations and identities were successfully articulated to previous identities which were created in the 1980s with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, so it is possible to argue that interpellation to these identities became easier. For instance, how the Middle East has become accepted as an area of influence on Turkey whereas it previously was not. I shall therefore explain how AKP officials articulated these meanings about the TFP and which discourses were used and reiterated by government officials to interpellate individuals to these subject identities.

My argument in this thesis is that these meanings and representations are not only part of the discourses of the foreign policy elites but can also be seen in popular culture. *VoW: Ambush*, for example, reproduced the very same imaginary about the TFP and created an intertextual meaning which could lead to the creation of consent for the TFP, as I explained in Chapter 1. In this current chapter, therefore, I shall examine these representations and features of the security imaginary of the AKP and in the following chapters I shall focus on *VoW: Ambush*.

As I stated in Chapter 1, my intention in this current chapter is to seek an answer to RQ 2: 'How did the TFP, the security imaginary of Turkey and the state identity change during the AKP era?' I shall first explain the TFP in the AKP era by comparing it with previous eras. This will show clearly what differentiated the TFP in the last decade from those of previous eras. Second, I shall explain the relevance of social constructivist IR to the subject and apply it to the case of Turkey. Third, I shall explain Davutoglu's strategic depth doctrine and his security imaginary by analysing his articles and speeches along with the other AKP politicians such as Erdogan and comparing their ideas with those of political Islam in the 1990s. Fourth, I shall explain three features which the AKP introduced as part of state identity and I shall consider how they were constructed by the discourses of state officials. I shall evaluate them alongside the foreign policy issues of the 2000s. By examining the TFP during the AKP era, the discussion in this chapter contributes to the TFP analysis literature by using the constructivist approach

in IR. Since there is a lack of constructivist research in the literature on this topic, my aim in this chapter is to fill this gap by discussing the transformation of the TFP during the AKP era by applying the perspective of social constructivism in IR.

1. The Transformation of the TFP in the AKP Era

As discussed in the previous chapter, the hegemony change in Turkey brought new features to domestic politics. The TFP was also affected by this change; there was a transformation in the TFP in the AKP era. Ahmet Davutoglu was the architect of this transformation. In the third section, his ideas and imaginary about Turkey and the TFP will be examined in detail. In this section, I shall explain the main ways in which the present-day TFP differs from those of previous eras. However, the TFP of the AKP cannot be thought of as wholly unified. It must be evaluated through the internal and external developments. For instance, this era can be divided into two periods in several ways - before and after the Arab Spring (2010); before and after Davutoglu's appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs (2009); or before and after the third general elections in 2011 which gave the AKP more power to establish its hegemony. This makes it hard to draw a clear line. For instance, whilst Aaron Stein (2014: 36) argued that the Arab Spring had caused massive disruption in the TFP, Behlul Ozkan (2014: 132) claimed that Davutoglu's position between 2002 and 2009 was not sufficient to implement his all ideas. I believe that all three developments had an influence on the transformation of the TFP during the AKP era. It is important to understand that whilst there were differences between the TFP in the AKP era and policies in the previous eras, there were also differences within the AKP era. It can also be discussed that after Davutoglu's term as prime minister, there was again a transformation in the TFP. For instance, more recently, it can be argued that whether the TFP showed characteristics of realism or identity-based and ideology-based TFP in the Davutoglu era, although it sometimes still shows indications of the Davutoglu era. For this reason, I draw a line and examine the TFP until the end of Davutoglu era. In this section, shall first explain the main tenets of the TFP in the AKP era and what differentiated it from those of previous eras; and second, I shall explain what has changed in the last five years.

1.1. The main tenets of the TFP

In an academic article which Davutoglu wrote in 2008 in the journal *Insight Turkey*, he explained the main principles of the TFP in five points:

1. the need for a balance between security and democracy in Turkey. Turkey had become successful in foreign policy and had increased her soft power when she improved her democracy, which is one of the most important soft power sources.
2. the 'Zero problem policy' towards Turkey's neighbours. Relations with neighbours were on right track and trust had been developed.
3. by developing relations with the neighbouring regions and beyond, Turkey could be a pro-active regional power.
4. by adhering to a multi-dimensional foreign policy, relations with other global actors such as the United States would be complementary not competitive.
5. a rhythmic diplomacy implied that Turkey had a more active role in international organisations and global issues (Davutoglu, 2008: 79-83; Davutoglu, 2010).

In a 2010 article in *Foreign Policy* he referred to these five principles and suggested that there were three methodological principles within them. The first methodological principle was a visionary foreign policy. Turkey would be visionary and realise problems before they occur. The second principle was a consistent and systematic framework around the world. Turkey's approach to all regions was to be consistent. For instance, Turkey's vision for the Middle East was not in opposition to its approaches in another regions. The third principle was the adoption of a new discourse and diplomatic style. With this new style, Turkey could increase its soft power in the neighbouring regions (Davutoglu, 2010). In that article, he summarised the goals of Turkey in the next decade in five points:

First, it aims to achieve all EU membership conditions and become an influential EU member state by 2023. Second, it will continue to strive for regional integration, in the form of security and economic cooperation. Third, it will seek to play an influential role in regional conflict resolution. Fourth, it will vigorously participate in all global arenas. Fifth, it will play a determining role in international organizations and become one of the top 10 largest economies in the world. (Davutoglu, 2010)

When we evaluate all these principles and methodologies, we understand that Turkey had ambitions to be a regional power with a pro-active diplomacy and an important soft-power

country with unproblematic relations with its neighbours. This kind of activism in foreign policy was also seen at the beginning of the 1990s, when the Soviet Union collapsed. At the beginning of the post-Cold War era, Turkey left its wing state role at NATO against the Soviet Union and started to diversify its policies from security-based relations to a combination of security, economic and cultural relationships with neighbouring regions such as the Balkans and Central Asia (Sozen, 2010: 116). For instance, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, six Muslim states emerged in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Turkey experienced one of the most active years in diplomacy since the establishment of the Republic in 1923 and tried to create its own area of influence in the surrounding regions. Due to a large deficit and high inflation, however, Turkey was not able to “deliver much of the expected economic aid and [was] not able to counterbalance the domineering Russian position” (Aydin, 2004: 9). Ismail Cem, Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1997 and 2002, also conducted more proactive diplomacy compared with previous governments (Meral and Paris, 2010: 78; Onis, 2011: 49). During his period in office, relations with Armenia, Greece and Syria were normalised (Meral and Paris, 2010: 78; Onis, 2011: 49). It can therefore be claimed that the transformation of the TFP began earlier than the accession of the AKP government and that the TFP during the AKP era shows continuity with the foreign policies of the 1990s. The end of the Cold War created an environment conducive to a more active and multidimensional TFP. The changing international structure provided opportunities for Turkey to develop more active international strategies.

It is important to note that what differentiated the AKP’s TFP from that of the 1990s was the programme and the aims. Altunisik and Martin (2011: 571) stated that “In the 2000s, Turkey mainly pursued its goals through diplomatic negotiation rather than military force, focused on its soft power assets, emphasized engagement and economic interdependence, and promoted mediation roles. Thus, clearly Turkey began to use different means in achieving its foreign policy objectives in the region”. There were also changes in terms of goals, such as forming a deeper relationship and clearly aiming at regional leadership in the Middle East (Altunisik and Martin, 2011: 571).

So soft power, cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy were crucial policies in the TFP of the AKP and they differentiate the AKP era from the previous eras. Ibrahim Kalin, advisor to Erdogan on foreign policy issues, explained these policies as follows:

Turkey's soft power is different from that of other countries in its form and content. Turkey's soft power potential, which extends from the Balkans and the Middle East to inner parts of Central Asia, emerges from the cultural and historical experience it has inherited. The values Turkey represents, as well as its history and cultural depth, have mobilized regional dynamics and provided opportunities for the creation of new spheres of influence. (Kalin, 2011: 10)

Hakan Fidan, the undersecretary of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), defined Turkey's cultural diplomacy activities as that "Turkey has launched many initiatives to revitalize its historical and cultural ties with the people in its immediate neighbourhood in an effort not only to compensate for the negative memories of the past, but also to build a joint future" (Fidan, 2013: 95). He described these activities under the four points: the restoration of the Turkish and Muslim cultural heritage, the promotion of the Turkish language and culture abroad, administering scholarships for foreign students via a new institution, and the presidency of External Turks and Relative Communities (Fidan, 2013: 95).

Both Kalin and Fidan emphasised the cultural and historical experience which was inherited from the Ottoman Empire. These policies, pro-active diplomacy and becoming a regional soft power in the neighbouring regions where there are common historical and cultural ties stirred Turkish academia and argument began over whether or not the policy was neo-Ottomanist (see for example Taspinar, 2008; Aras, 2009a; Candar, 2009; Keyman, 2009; Kardas, 2010; Sozen, 2010; Taspinar, 2011, Yanik, 2011). Neo-Ottomanism was not a new concept; Turgut Ozal's foreign policy strategies were also dubbed neo-Ottomanist (Yavuz, 1998; Laciner, 2003; Colak, 2006; Murinson, 2006). Perhaps, then, neo-Ottomanism in the AKP era was a continuation of the 1990s. But when the AKP era and the 1990s are compared, two differences become apparent. The first was that in the 1990s it was not possible to say that Islamist politics could not implement their ideology successfully as the foreign policy; Kemalist mechanisms were still intervening in politics. The 1997 military intervention is an example of this. However, during the AKP era, the military had to be forced to remain in their barracks and out of politics as a result of Turkey's EU candidacy. The power of the military was dramatically curbed and this gave the AKP an opportunity to implement its politics and control the TFP. Therefore, the AKP was in a better position to implement neo-Ottomanist policies compared with the Islamists in the 1990s. The second difference was that the AKP had won three consecutive parliamentary elections and as a result of this had increased its control in

many governmental cadres, including the MFA. This also gave more freedom to Davutoglu to implement his policies after he was appointed to the MFA post. It is therefore important to emphasise again that the AKP era was different from the 1990s in terms of freedom in the TFP.

In the late 2000s, it can be seen that the AKP lost control of its foreign policies in the neighbouring regions. The centre of Davutoglu's doctrine, the zero-problem policy towards neighbouring countries, failed after troubles began in the Middle East when the political parties affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood (which the AKP supported in many countries such as Egypt, Iraq, and Syria) lost its power. This development was described by Ibrahim Kalin as "precious loneliness" (Gardner, 2015). He explained this term in 2013 as "The claim that Turkey has been left alone in the Middle East is not true, but if it is a criticism then we should say that is a precious loneliness" (Stein, 2014: 92). This also curbed Turkey's pro-activity and rhythmic diplomacy in the region. Diplomatic problems emerged with neighbouring countries. For instance, Egypt expelled the Turkish ambassador in 2013 (Saul, 2013) and Turkey had to recall its ambassadors from Libya, Yemen and Syria because of problematic relations (Hurriyet Daily News, 2015). In addition, Turkey had to abandon its soft-power policy after intervening in the internal affairs of Syria during the Syrian Civil War and in Egypt after the coup. Moreover, Turkey's democracy, which was explained by Davutoglu as one of the sources of Turkey's soft power, started to be criticised when it showed a low record in terms of human rights, especially after the Gezi events.

As stated above, these changes in the TFP can be explained in three headlines. Even so, I shall not draw a clear line on when actually the TFP in the AKP era changed. I believe that there was a transformation of foreign policy strategies in the AKP era compared with the previous eras and shall seek answers to these questions: What caused these changes? Why did the Middle East become more important than before? Why has this regional leadership become a constituent part of the AKP's TFP? Is it because of the identities of the AKP? To what extent has the ideology of political Islam's security imaginary become influential in TFP? Which identities have become part of the TFP? In the following sections, I shall focus on the security imaginary of the AKP and its identities in order to answer these questions. However, it is important to recall the approaches of social constructivism in IR to explain why ideas matter,

why a security imaginary is important for understanding the identities which AKP brought for the TFP and how those identities can create consent for TFP in the twenty-first century.

2. Social Constructivism in IR in the case of TFP in the Twenty-first Century

According to constructivism in IR, intersubjective understandings, which are norms, rules, meanings, languages, cultures and ideologies, create identities, determine actions and comprise structures and agents (Klotz and Lynch, 2007: 7). Political Islam as an ideology in Turkey which has arisen since the 1980s can be understood as an intersubjective understanding of a group and when this group becomes the hegemon in Turkey, its identities are created within the state; the actions of Turkey in international politics are determined by this intersubjective understanding.

Ideas are also very important in the constructivist approach. According to Houghton (2007: 29), the national interest of a country is a social construction which must be interpreted through the prism of ideas. Collective ideas construct both identities and national interests. It can therefore be said that constructivist thinkers believe that in foreign policy analysis, intersubjective understandings are more important than individuals. Finnemore and Sikkink (2001: 393) stated that “the most important ideational factors are widely shared or ‘intersubjective’ beliefs, which are not reducible to individuals”. Ted Hopf also wrote that “every foreign policy decision maker is as much a member of the social cognitive structure that characterizes her society as any average citizen” (Hopf 2002:7). So when Davutoglu’s ideas and security imaginary are explained in the next section, it is important to realise that his ideas represent an extensive background and an ideology, which is political Islam.

As a constructivist thinker, Weldes also believed that national interests are social constructions. She stated that

... national interests are social constructions created as meaningful objects out of the intersubjective and culturally established meanings with which the world, particularly the international system and the place of the state in it, is understood. More specifically, national interest emerges out of the representations - or, to use more customary terminology, out of situation descriptions and problem definitions - through which state officials and others make sense of the world around them. (Weldes, 1996: 280)

Houghton (2007: 37) explained that state officials and others “do this by identifying objects (including the self and others), posit relations between these objects, and hence shape national interests and identities by defining the world surrounding them”. That is the reason why it is important to understand how Davutoglu made sense of the world around him since he was the architect of the TFP in the twenty-first century. How he identified the self and the others and posited relations between these objects, the self and the others, is crucial to understanding the TFP in the last decade because it shapes the identities which the AKP seeks individuals to be hailed to.

Weldes pointed out that these intersubjective and culturally established meanings relating to the self and to others in the international system constitute a security imaginary. The security imaginaries of states provide the categories of common sense for foreign policy. The security imaginary seeks to answer these questions: “Who are we as a collectivity? What are we for one another? Where and in what are we? What do we want; what do we desire; what are we lacking?” (Weldes, 1999b: 10). She explained that these questions must be answered because through them a society defines its identity, its articulation, its position in the world. Weldes (1999b: 10) asserted that “Similarly, the security imaginary of a state provides what might be called the cultural raw materials out of which representations of states, of relations among states, and of the international system are constructed. National interests, in turn, emerge out of these representations”.

State officials therefore act according to the security imaginary and individuals can strongly identify themselves with the foreign policies and state actions thanks to the very same security imaginary. What differentiates Weldes’s analysis of US foreign policy during the Cuba Crisis in 1962 from the TFP in the twenty-first century is that Turkey has been in a transformation, in a hegemony change, since the 1980s with the rise of political Islam. In Weldes’s analysis, there is no emphasis on ideology within US politics, such as a distinction between the Republicans and the Democrats, and their understandings about international politics. This is possibly because there is not much distinction between their ideologies. However, different ideologies can have different understandings and meanings in terms of international politics. For instance, when we look at Turkish politics, the Kemalists and the Islamists have different approaches to foreign policy. The secularist Kemalists believe that the West is a natural ally of Turkey, whereas the Islamists turn to and prioritise the Middle East

because of their Muslim identity. Or, as in the case of the Syrian civil war, members of the Kemalist party (CHP) can visit the Assad regime in Syria, whereas the AKP strongly supports the opposition groups in Syria. These differences between ideologies show that different ideologies can have different understandings about foreign policy. So when Davutoglu's ideas or understandings of international politics are investigated, it should be understood that he represented political Islam and the collective understandings of this ideology.

The TFP in the twenty-first century has been conducted by state officials who identify meaningful objects, posit relations between these objects, and shape identities by defining the world surrounding them according to the ideology of political Islam. The identities brought to TFP by the AKP are therefore related to this ideology. The Turkish-Islamic synthesis strategy which started to be used after the military coup in 1980 and the neo-Ottomanist foreign policy strategies used by conservative and Islamist politicians in the 1990s help individuals to understand this security imaginary of the AKP, make the state identity intelligible for society in general and interpellate people to the features and representations of this identity or subject position by discursive practices. In the fourth section, I shall therefore also explain these representations and features in relation to the TFP.

The processes of articulation and interpellation must be explained here in order to understand how individuals are interpellated to the identities of the AKP. Constructivist thinkers such as Hopf (2002) and Weldes (1996; 1999b) explained that state officials articulate particular meanings and identities to construct differences between the 'self' and 'other', or 'us' and 'them', into which they interpellate individuals to provide legitimacy for their own actions (Klotz and Lynch, 2007: 75). Whereas Hopf (2002), for instance, investigated how group identities such as 'New Soviet Man' or 'New Western Russian' were articulated by Russian elites, Weldes (1999b) used the articulation process as a tool to show how specific representations of the world are produced by linguistic resources. References to Fidel Castro and his revolutionary associates were articulated to the word 'bearded' and this established a meaning in US representations of the Cuban problem by connoting that Castro and other revolutionaries were uncivilised, not responsible and a threat to the American way of life. As a result of this repeated articulation, Castro and Cuba were understood to be a danger for the US. When this process is applied to Turkey during the AKP era, it can be seen that particular articulations become prominent. For instance, whilst Sisi in Egypt and Assad in Syria are

described by the state officials as oppressive, cruel, dictators and Turkey is described as a country which has always been against such people, the peoples in those countries are described as oppressed and suffering who have always been under the protection of Turkish civilisation.

Another feature which differentiates Turkey from the analysis of US foreign policy made by Weldes is that in her analysis, in the US security imaginary the US was the self and Cuba and the Soviets were the others. In Turkey, however, the others are not only external actors. Since political Islam is a hegemonic movement against the Kemalist hegemony, the Kemalist hegemony is also one of the others. This can be seen in Devetak's (2009: 200) explanation of geographical discourse. He said that "The geo-political creation of the external other is integral to the constitution of a political identity (self) which is to be made secure. But to constitute coherent, singular political identity often demands the silencing of internal dissent. There can be internal others [kemalists, leftists in my case] that endanger a certain conception of the self, and must be necessarily expelled, disciplined, or contained". The AKP elites established identities and articulated meanings according not only to external others but also to internal others. For instance, Davutoglu accused the Republic of Turkey of being a periphery, as a tool of the West, but he thought that Turkey should be a strong regional power and even a global power as it had been in the period of the Ottoman Empire. The recent articulation of the 'New Turkey' is a consequence of this identity. According to the AKP elites, 'Old Turkey' (during the Kemalist era) was passive, weak and not self-reliant. However, the 'New Turkey' in the AKP era is powerful, active and confident in every area. In another example, Erdogan has accused the CHP of being in the same mould as Mussolini and Hitler. By doing this, he articulated the representation of the CHP and the Kemalist party in parliament as showing that they were just as much dictators as Mussolini, Hitler and Assad, and that the AKP's policy against Syria was legitimised by its defence of the oppressed feature of the state identity.

Moreover, whilst the AKP elites articulated meanings and identities, they could also marginalise any alternative articulation because they had control over the discourse through state institutions (Klotz and Lynch, 2007: 80). For instance, Neumann (1996: 4) stated that censorship is an important tool for imposing identities, but that it is not always necessary. When the AKP hegemony was established, the AKP did not always need to use censorship

because the media, intellectuals and celebrities supported the AKP voluntarily because either they shared its ideas, understandings, ideology and imaginary, or they had mutual interests, as was discussed in Chapter 2. When *VoW: Ambush* is investigated in Chapter 4, it will be seen that the producers, actors and script writers shared the very same ideology as the AKP; they actively supported the government on important issues such as during the Gezi event or after the coup in Egypt.

The other process, interpellation, makes people accept or adopt an identity articulated by state officials. Klotz and Lynch (2007: 80) explained this as that “Publics are ‘hailed’ into specific identities through the reiteration of characteristics of selves and others. People presumably acquiesce to, or actively embrace, representations when they recognize themselves in these tropes”. When the discourses around the TFP are examined, it can be seen that representations related to the TFP were reiterated by the AKP elites. These discourses were ubiquitously reproduced in the speeches of Erdogan and Davutoglu, so it can be claimed that by using discursive practices, the AKP elites not only intended to articulate meanings and create subject positions, but also to interpellate people to these meanings and subject positions.

Weldes claimed that the ‘we’ word is important in the process of the interpellation of identity or subject position. She stated that

This ‘we’ is of particular importance. The process of interpellation, at least in the United States, is facilitated by this ‘we’, ... With such pronouns, ‘the person designated by the message is always determined by the message itself’. Shifters thus are named for their referential ambiguity which can only be defined within not only the context of the message itself, but the situation (the moment) in which the message is uttered. The referential ambiguity of this ‘we’ is central to its shiftiness and thus to its importance in the interpellation of subjects. When ‘we’ are hailed into a statement about U.S. foreign policy and U.S. national interests ... the referent of ‘we’ is often deliberately ambiguous. (Weldes, 1999b: 105-106)

According to Weldes (1999b: 106), this ubiquitous usage of ‘we’ has a variety of functions:

It helps to define the subject position that the audience is asked to assume; it helps to weld potentially disparate members of its audience into a single, unified identity; as a result, it helps to create common sense by rendering the argument being offered intelligible to that audience; and, because it helps to create common sense, it also helps to legitimize that argument.

When we look at the speeches of Davutoglu and Erdogan, it can be seen that there is a ubiquitous usage of the 'we' word. This will be explained in the fourth section. To sum up, it can be said that when there is an international issue, states act on national interests which are defined previously by articulated representations of identities in the security imaginary. For instance, the security imaginary of the AKP defines its identities. The discourses of officials produce and reproduce these identities and their representations. Whilst state elites act according to these representations, the individuals who are interpellated to them believe that the foreign policy makes sense. Moreover, these individuals are exposed to these discourses and interpellated to these positions not just because of the speeches of politicians. There are other levels and I maintain that popular culture is one of them to the extent that it reproduces these meanings and representations. *VoW: Ambush* and the other media channels reproduce the very same discourses, meanings, representations and security imaginary of the AKP and create intertextual meanings as will be illustrated in the chapters which follow. As a result of this intertextual meaning, individuals give their consent for the foreign policy for the very same international issue since the representations of the identities have common features with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis and the neo-Ottomanist strategies which have been a part of Turkey's political structure since the 1980s. In the next section, I shall explain the security imaginary of the AKP in detail and focus specifically on Davutoglu, who formulated a TFP related to political Islam.

3. The AKP's Security Imaginary and Turkish State Identity

According to Weldes, a security imaginary is "a structure of well-established meanings and social relations out of which representations of the world of international relations are created" (Weldes, 1999b: 10). She stated that these representations are constructed by the state officials who are responsible for foreign policy decision-making. So as the architect of the TFP in the AKP era, Davutoglu is accepted as one of the most important state officials related to the TFP and he was in the political Islam movement since the 1990s. As a professor, he was a prominent thinker on IR within the political Islam ideology and wrote articles for

Islamist journals and newspapers such as *Aksiyon*⁴ and *Yeni Safak*. According to Ozkan (2014), Davutoglu was the first intellectual to devise an Islamist foreign policy based on rational and pragmatic features. His contributions to the Islamic journals and newspapers define him as “an Islamist ‘organic intellectual’ (to use Antonio Gramsci’s term)” (Ozkan, 2014: 120). Davutoglu’s book *Strategic Depth*, which was first published in 2001 and sold more than 100,000 copies, formulated a foreign-policy strategy compatible with political Islam in the 1990s, despite some differences. Although the concept of neo-Ottomanism was never used by Davutoglu in his articles or speeches (except for *Strategic Depth*), it can be said that this concept is very important for understanding Davutoglu’s and political Islam’s security imaginary and, as a result, their identity related to the TFP.

In this section I shall therefore explain Davutoglu’s approach to the TFP using his academic and non-academic articles in journals and newspapers, his famous book *Strategic Depth*, and his speeches before and after he became the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I shall also briefly discuss the development of political Islam in Turkish politics in order to understand the intersubjective and culturally established meanings related to international politics in political Islam. By doing that, I shall show the security imaginary and representations of IR in political Islam and of Davutoglu who formulated the TFP strategy in the AKP era. This will help us to understand the identities which were introduced by the AKP and expected to be interpellated by the masses.

3.1. Political Islam in the TFP

As discussed in Chapter 2, political Islam has become part of Turkey’s political sphere since the 1970s when the first Islamist party was formed and the 1980s were a turning point for political Islam in Turkey as a result of the military coup in 1980 because that era witnessed the Islamisation of Turkish nationalism. The army wanted to protect the Turkish ‘soul’ from other cultures and the Turkish-Islamic synthesis was created out of Ottoman, Islamic and Turkish cultures (Yavuz, 2003: 71).

⁴ This journal’s website was shut down in 2016 after the government appointed trustees to Feza Journalism Inc., the owners of the journal, because of its relationship with the Gülen Movement.

The influence of political Islam was increased in foreign policies at the beginning of the 1990s when Turkey took an active interest in the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Central Asian region and the Middle East. Conservative politicians such as Turgut Ozal from the centre-right ANAP and Suleyman Demirel from True Path Party (*Dogru Yol Partisi*, DYP) saw Islam as an opportunity to influence neighbouring regions after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. For instance, in 1995, the then President Demirel said that “Islam is one of the most important bases of our solidarity” to describe Turkey’s relations with these regions (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 132). Ozal, who was a member of the Islamist MSP and the leader of the ANAP until he became the president of Turkey in 1989, followed a more active foreign policy in those regions which was interpreted as neo-Ottomanism by journalists and scholars such as Cengiz Candar.

Conservative politicians in Turkey still saw the West as an important ally and believed that Islam could not be an alternative to Western civilisation in the first half of the 1990s. The RP, on the other hand, transformed political Islam into an ideology which could challenge the Kemalist ideology which saw the West as a target to reach in terms of civilizational level (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 132). The RP won 29 cities, including Istanbul and Ankara, in the 1994 local elections and was the leading party with 21% in the 1995 general election. As a result of this success, the RP became part of the coalition government and for the first time in Turkish politics an Islamist leader, Necmettin Erbakan, became the Prime Minister of Turkey.

During this coalition, the TFP showed characteristics of political Islam. For instance, Erbakan’s first meeting was with the leader of Muslim Brotherhood, the son of the founder of the organisation, Hasan al-Banna (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 135; Yavuz, 2003: 243). The first official visit which Erbakan made was to Iran to settle a \$23 million gas and oil deal (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 135; Yavuz, 2003: 243). During his term, Erbakan visited Muslim countries such as Libya, Malaysia, Iran and Indonesia to raise Turkey’s profile with the Islamic countries; he initiated the D-8 (Developing Eight) project between Turkey, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria and Pakistan aiming at economic cooperation between the member states, and the Turkish delegation was asked to vote against a UN resolution which sought to condemn Iran for its human rights violations, along with North Korea, China, Cuba and Libya (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 135-136). These developments can be interpreted as the continuation of the neo-Ottomanist policies of the previous conservative governments. Moreover, since

there were policies such as Islamic unity, it can also be said that the TFP of the RP era showed characteristics of Pan-Islamism.

In this era, the other coalition partner was Tansu Ciller, the leader of the DYP, who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs and believed that Turkey should be in the Western camp rather than the Middle East. This identity crisis between the coalition powers makes it impossible to say that political Islam was the main identity in the TFP at that time. Ultimately, Erdogan was opening Turkey to the east and Ciller was visiting European leaders and countries to confirm Turkey's Western identity, and this led to an identity crisis in the TFP (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 135). The founder members of the AKP, such as Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Abdullah Gul, were among the RP cadres in the 1980s and 1990s. After the military intervention in 1997, the RP was banned and its leader Erdogan had to abandon his political career. After the intervention, the 'traditionalist' cadres established the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*, SP) and the 'moderate' cadres who questioned the leadership of the traditionalist and political style founded the AKP. Whereas the AKP had followed a Western-oriented foreign policy in the first half of the 2000s, this changed in the late 2000s when it curbed the role of the military over foreign policy. Then the AKP, elected for three consecutive terms, was the only actor controlling the TFP by the end of 2000s. This gave political Islam the opportunity to transform the TFP.

Davutoglu was an intellectual and academic of IR during all these developments and was very popular among the Islamist camp because of his articles. For instance, after an academic article which criticised the End of History thesis of Fukuyama and the Clash of Civilisations thesis of Huntington was published in 1994, he was invited onto a programme on *Kanal 7*, an Islamic television channel presented by Nabi Avci, the Minister of National Education between 2013 and 2016 and the current Minister of Culture and Tourism. Davutoglu also contributed to debates on the TFP throughout the 1990s with his articles in Islamist journals and newspapers. After the AKP came to power, he served as the Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister and stayed in this position until he became the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2009. So it is possible to argue that Davutoglu was an 'organic intellectual' of political Islam during the 1990s and that his ideas shaped and were shaped by the ideology of political Islam in terms of foreign policy. Since his book *Strategic Depth* was a guidance for the TFP of the AKP era until his term ended, his ideas are crucial for this current study. However, since constructivists believe that in foreign policy analysis intersubjective understandings are more

important than individuals, I shall analyse Davutoglu's ideas and I shall also investigate the speeches of the cadres of the RP to show that Davutoglu was part of the social-cognitive structure of political Islam ideology. The security imaginary of the AKP will emerge and provide us with the identities of the TFP.

3.2. The Security Imaginary of the AKP

In this section, I shall first describe Davutoglu's ideas and give examples of other political Islamist officials to show the security imaginary of the AKP. According to Davutoglu, the end of the Cold War improved Turkey's ability to become more active in the neighbouring regions and once again appear as an actor on the stage of history. He believed that Turkey was the "product of a historical [Ottoman] heritage which had been formed as the result of an intensive and centuries-long struggle against the prevailing [Western] civilisation, which constituted the international system" (Davutoglu, 2001: 66 in Ozkan, 2014: 123). Turkey was not an ordinary nation-state on the periphery of Western civilisation because "it is the centre of [Ottoman] civilisation, which had established an original and long-lasting political order" (Ozkan, 2014: 123). Therefore, according to Davutoglu, Turkey needed to find its potential.

Geopolitics constituted an important part of Davutoglu's ideas. According to him, geography is one of the constant parameters, along with history, culture and population, that determine the power of a country (Davutoglu, 2001: 17; Murinson, 2006: 951; Walker, 2007: 32; Davutoglu, 2008: 79; Davutoglu, 2009: 12; Kardas, 2010: 124; Yanik, 2011: 1; Yalvac, 2012: 169; Ozkan, 2014). He wrote in *Strategic Depth* that in the Cold War period, Turkey's geopolitical position had been used by the MFA to maintain the *status quo*. In the post-Cold War period, however, Turkey's geopolitical position should be seen as a dynamic tool to open Turkey to the world gradually and to transform Turkey's regional activity into global activity by using political, economic and security ties with the neighbouring regions. He claimed that if Turkey continued to use *status-quo* politics, it would not only fail to become a global player, but would also fail to protect its current borders (Davutoglu, 2001: 117). This new approach to geopolitics which targeted strengthening the economic, political and cultural ties with the neighbouring regions would affect Turkey's international parameters in the long term (Davutoglu, 2001: 118). Moreover, he suggested that Turkey should gradually expand its

activity in these regions along this line: 1. the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus; 2. the Black Sea, the Adriatic Sea, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Gulf and the Red Sea; and 3. Europe, North Africa, South Asia and Central and Eastern Asia.

This approach was not in fact new for the TFP. Since the beginning of the 1990s, political figures had used similar discourses. Politicians from the centre-right, Turgut Ozal and Suleyman Demirel for instance, used the phrase 'From the Adriatic to the Chinese Wall' to describe Turkey as a new regional actor which intended to increase its influence from the Balkans to the Caucasus and to Central Asia (Kohen, 1993: 39). Another example is that after Turkey was not accepted as a member of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1989, Ismail Cem, a member of the Kemalist CHP and the Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1997 and 2002, asked in 1990, "What should Turkey do? Turkey can be an important power in the Middle East. There are 1 billion people in the world who share the same customs and religion with us. But Turkey has one more unique aspect: it is secular and democratic. We should defend this model and use it as a foreign policy weapon" (Bozdaglioglu, 2005:99), and in 1998, he also said that "Turkey can undertake a different mission in the changing world. Instead of being a periphery country, it can gain a position in the core" (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 105). In 1998, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Mumtaz Soysal from the CHP stated that

This is the most opportune time to rid ourselves of the complex of being considered Europeans We are Turks from Turkey. Turkey is a country with one bank in Europe and the other in Asia. The same thing can be said of our geography and our culture. We must realize and accept this as such and we must turn this embarrassment into a sense of superiority. (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 104)

However, although the secularists saw Turkey's potential to become a regional power from a secularist-nationalist perspective, political Islamists approached this from a different perspective connoting the Ottoman era. When we look at the conservative and political Islamist parties, the religion (Islam) and the historical heritage (the Ottoman past), come forward. For instance, Turgut Ozal stated that

When we look at this geopolitical space from the Adriatic Sea to Central Asia under the leadership of Turkey, we realize that this space is molded and dominated by Ottoman-Muslim and Turkic populations ... The Ottoman-Muslim population shares the same historical legacy and fate as the Turks of Anatolia and they still regard themselves as 'Turk'

in the religio-cultural sense. These groups live in Bosnia, Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Western Thrace. (Yavuz, 1998: 24)

Abdullah Gul, who formulated the Welfare Party's foreign policy strategies in the 1990s, said that

Turkey is neither Luxembourg nor Bangladesh. History, geography and reality require Turkey to carry and fulfil a mission regardless of our desires. This mission or role may be the role of the Ottoman Empire. We therefore cannot remain indifferent to the developments in Palestine, Yugoslavia and Albania due to our national interest ... [Turkey is] the cultural centre of Islamic civilization in Europe. We [Turkey] therefore have to involve ourselves in the developments in the Balkans. (Yavuz, 2003: 236)

So the idea of becoming a regional power had started in the post-Cold War period and all the ideologies in Turkey, whether the Kemalists, the conservatives or political Islamists, grabbed and formulated it from different perspectives. At that time, two developments were important for understanding the emergence of this idea: the first was the failure of Turkey's submission for EEC membership and the second was the collapse of the Soviet Union. Whilst the former forced Turkey to devise new aims, the latter gave Turkey an opportunity to increase its influence in the neighbouring regions. So what does differentiate the ideas of Davutoglu and political Islam from the political atmosphere of the 1990s? This can be explained in two ways: first, he was in a position set ideologically against Western civilisation. Second, he emphasised the domestic sphere if Turkey aimed to be a regional power.

First, therefore, the ideology of Davutoglu and political Islam should be examined. In his writings, Davutoglu criticised the Kemalist hegemony by saying that it was an utopian project which aimed at civilisation change and ignored its historical, cultural, political and social forces in society, and he stated that "the Turkish experience in this century proved that an imposed civilizational refusal, adaptation, and change ... cannot be successful" (Cornell, 2011: 20). He thought that Western civilisation was in a deep crisis and he argued in his book *Civilizational Transformation* that at the end of the Cold War, capitalism did not win; it would collapse just as communism would since they both had the same philosophical background (Cornell, 2011: 20). For this reason, it would be an undesirable system for Turkey.

In an article by Behlul Ozkan (2014: 134), Davutoglu's ideas about Western models were stated as follows:

Davutoglu argues that unity among the peoples and governments of the Middle East can only be achieved if political regimes derive their legitimacy from Islam. He believes that the Western model, whose legitimacy comes from elections, parliament and other representative institutions and mechanisms, is inadequate for the Islamic world. Indeed, according to Davutoglu, 'the West has turned into a civilisation with a merely mechanical supremacy'. He argues that 'humanism, which is claimed to be the source of Western civilisation, is nothing but a delusion', and that Western democracies are dangerous because they lack religious values to keep them in check.

In addition, Davutoglu made some assumptions in the 1990s about the Western leaders during the Bosnian War. He stated that not only would the regional contradictions spread the Bosnian crisis to affect the entire Balkan region, but also that "inhuman understanding pervaded the heads and souls of the Western leaders who have claims to establish a world order. Until the Western mentality which sees some people as more superior and more equal than others is reformed and overcomes this moral crisis, there will be no end to this tragedy [Bosnian crisis] (Davutoglu, 1995a)". As can be seen in this example, the language of Davutoglu against the West is very firm. In other articles, he used terms such as "Catholic Spanish barbarians" (Davutoglu, 1996a), "Christian terrorism and fundamentalism" (Davutoglu, 1995b) and "European fascism" (Davutoglu, 1996b) (in the Bosnian War). On the other hand, he defined the Muslim combatants in the Bosnian War as "the leader[s] of the jihad" and the combatants in Chechnya as fighting against "the attacks coming from the barbaric Russian steppes" (Ozkan, 2014: 127). So in the West-East conflicts it can be said that whilst the West was being described in derogatory language, Muslims as their counterparts were described in elevated language since he was also a member of the school of political Islam.

When we investigate the political Islam movement in the 1990s, it can be seen that the cadres of the Welfare Party also made statements about the West and Western institutions. For instance, the leader of the party, Erbakan, stated that "Turkey should cooperate with Muslim countries through which she can realize the goal of being a leader, instead of being a servant in the EU ... To become a member of the EU by leaving the Community of Muslim countries means to lose the very essence of our identity and to accept a 'Second Sèvres'". (Bozdaglioglu,

2003: 135). He also argued that “the reason for the lack of solidarity among Muslim nations is the Western mentality of Turkish administrators. They [Muslim countries] need Turkey’s leadership. Turkish leaders, instead of trying to assume such a leadership role and thus serving the ‘Just Order’, choose to serve imperialism and Zionism” (*ibid.*).

In his writings, Davutoglu compared the policies of Abdulhamid II with those of the CUP in the late nineteenth century. As I explained in Chapter 2, during that period, the CUP members believed that the best interests of the Empire lay in the West whereas Sultan Abdulhamid II sought to unify Muslim communities internally and externally by using the Caliphate as a tool (Deringil, 1991; Ahmad, 1993; Mardin, 2005). According to Davutoglu, when the policies of the CUP and of Abdulhamid II are compared, the Sultan’s policies were more superior in terms of seeking alliances in the neighbouring regions than the CUP’s strategies, which caused the Empire to lose Rumelia because of the Balkan Wars and the Middle East because of the First World War (Davutoglu, 1996c). He believed that the

Islamist policy of Abdulhamid II gave the Ottoman Empire the possibility of exercising power more than its potential within its borders. One of the best examples of this policy was the effort to balance the pressure of the British Empire with the Ottoman Empire by creating Caliphate-centred areas of influence in Islamic countries such as India and Sudan colonised by the British Empire. In this way, on the one hand, the borders of the Ottoman Empire were protected by the cross-border areas of influence, and on the other hand, a radius of action was procured by increasing diplomatic means that would be used by foreign policy makers (Davutoglu, 1996d).

This is important because in this article Davutoglu favoured Pan-Islamist policies rather than the Western-oriented policies of the CUP. In Chapter 2, I explained that the CUP members were the founding fathers of modern Turkey and the current main opposition party, the CHP. The AKP elites often articulate the CHP’s approach to the policies of the CUP and the authoritarian single party era in the early years of the new republic. They also articulate Erdogan to Abdulhamid II and revive the Sultan’s policies and ideas. This effort of articulation even finds a place in popular culture. For example, a new television series named *Payitaht* will be aired in 2017 on the state channel TRT. In this series, the reign of Abdulhamid II during the Ottoman Empire and his struggle against the CUP members will be depicted. So it can be said that Abdulhamid II policies were not only accepted by Davutoglu, but also by other AKP elites and individuals who share the AKP ideology.

Moreover, in Ozkan's article Davutoglu is dubbed as a Pan-Islamist who thought that

Bosnia and Albania should be regarded as 'natural allies of Turkey', and the Muslim population of the Balkans are the 'most important elements of Turkey's Balkan policy'. Characterising Bosnia-Herzegovina as a 'political, economic, and cultural outpost of Turkey in Central Europe', Davutoglu boldly defines the societies of Bosnia and Albania as 'the remnants of the Ottoman Empire whose fates are tied to Turkey's regional power and hegemony'. But his pan-Islamism particularly focuses on the Middle East, which he claims has a geopolitical potential that can only be realised by ending the separation of its nation-states. (Ozkan, 2014: 127)

Even so, it is my belief that Davutoglu was not a Pan-Islamist. During his term in the MFA, he made many references to the Ottoman Empire. For instance, in a speech at the Dicle University in Diyarbakir (Davutoglu, 2013a), he said "... look at the the Malabadi Bridge [in Diyarbakir] and the Mostar Bridge [in Bosnia]; only then can you feel the shared values beyond our borders. And at that time you will understand the necessity of the integration of the Middle East and the Balkans, the Caucasus and North Africa after a period of separation". These references were not only about Muslim communities in the Ottoman Empire, he also spoke about non-Muslim communities which were under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, if Davutoglu is dubbed as only a Pan-Islamist, how can the current relations with the non-Muslim countries in the Balkans be explained? According to data from the Ministry of Economy, the volume of trade with the Balkan countries was worth USD 2.9 billion in 2000, and it reached USD 18.4 billion in 2011. The Free Trade Areas created with Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia led to increases in the volume of trade and investments between Turkey and those Balkan countries (Bechev, 2012: 143). Turkish companies have invested not only in Muslim countries but also in non-Muslim countries as part of Turkey's economic interdependence strategy. For instance, three Turkish companies have invested in Serbia to build part of the highway which connects Belgrade to the Montenegrin port of Bar (Bugajski, 2012: 4). Tepe-Akfen-Vie (TAV) Airports have secured a twenty-year concession to operate Skopje and Ohrid airports and also have a contract for building a new terminal in Zagreb (Bugajski, 2012: 4). It is therefore my belief that Davutoglu followed policies in accordance with neo-Ottomanism rather than Pan-Islamism, but that Islam, the Middle East and Muslim countries were given priority.

Here, the concept of neo-Ottomanism should be defined to explain why I believe that Davutoglu's and the AKP's foreign policy was neo-Ottomanist. The concept of neo-Ottomanism emerged first during the Ozal government in the late 1980s and the early 1990s when he was President of Turkey. According to Yavuz (1998: 40), there were three characteristics of neo-Ottomanism during those years: "... (1) the re-articulation of Turkish nationalism and increased political and cultural tolerance for diversity as in the Ottoman past; (2) the elimination of economic borders between the Balkan, Caucasian and Middle Eastern countries; and (3) respect for the political borders of neighbouring countries". These characteristics were the result of systemic factors. The dissolution of the Soviet Union led to the emergence of new states in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia which had common historical, cultural and ethnic ties with Turkey. Ozal saw the opportunity for creating economic ties with these countries and believed that economic barriers between Turkey and these countries should be lifted.

In addition, neo-Ottomanism at that time can also be defined as a concept which addressed pluralism in the Ottoman Era. Ozal sought to solve internal socio-cultural tensions just as the Ottoman Empire had done in the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire reformed its legal and political systems through *Tanzimat Fermani* (1839, the reform edict) and *Kanun-i Esasi* (1876, the first constitution of the Ottoman Empire) under the influence of the Western legal and political system (Colak, 2006: 589). With these developments, the idea of Ottomanism emerged. Ottomanism can be defined as an "attempt by the Ottoman government to use one single citizenship as a common political identity in order to achieve equality and unity among all Ottoman subjects and supersede differences of faith, ethnicity, and language" (Colak, 2006: 589). By eliminating ethnic and religious differences, the intention was to build the unity of the Ottoman Empire at a time when the Empire was negatively affected by the Nationalist movement in the Balkans. The similarities between neo-Ottomanism in the Ozal era and in the Ottoman era was defined by Colak (2006: 593) as

(1) the reorganization of the state in accord with a changing international context, forming a new political identity and culture to prevent the rise of nationalist movements, and, in the search for such culture, seeking an eclectic synthesis between traditional forms and Western values; and (2) although Ozal's neo-Ottomanism defined citizenship differently from nineteenth-century Ottomanism by placing more emphasis on a common Ottoman-Islamic identity, in the construction of neo-Ottomanism as a myth of the melting pot, those

considered Ottoman but with different ethnic and cultural affiliations were the spiritual grandchildren of the Muslim populations of the Empire, the ruling millet (*millet-i hakime*).

Ozal believed that Islam could be powerful cement for the society. He explained this:

Just as it was during the Ottoman Empire, it is possible today to transcend ethnic differences through Islamic identity. I believe that the most powerful single constituting element of identity in this society is Islam. It is religion that blends Muslims of Anatolia and the Balkans. Therefore, Islam is a powerful cement of co-existence and cooperation among diverse Muslim groups ... Being a Turk in the ex-Ottoman space means being a Muslim and *vice versa*. (Yavuz, 1998: 24)

The Welfare Party put the emphasis on the Islamic characteristics of the neo-Ottomanist concept in the 1990s. They interpreted the concept with more Islamic tones. Colak (2006: 596) described this era as follows:

They became passionate champions of reinstituting and regenerating the spirit of pax Ottomania, especially in the ex-Ottoman provinces. While the WP was in power (1996–97), in accordance with such neo-Ottomanist pursuits, Islam and Ottomanism were used in foreign policy to make Turkey a dominant regional power, and both constituted the foundation of the WP's search for solutions to Turkey's internal political crises. Especially in dealing with cultural diversity, WP leaders seemed to adopt an Islamic intellectuals' formulation of multiculturalism that was based on the classical Islamic mechanism of legal pluralities, according to which each group is treated according to its own legal system (read as 'religion') – Islamic, Christian, Jewish, atheist.

The RP mayor of Istanbul in 1994, the current President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was among the RP mayors who attempted to revive aspects of Ottoman culture such as calligraphy, food and architectural forms and sought to integrate them into everyday Turkish life, and he launched a series of activities to commemorate Istanbul in the Ottoman era (Colak, 2006: 596).

In terms of foreign policy, the RP showed some characteristics of Pan-Islamism in projects such the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation. Erbakan also promised to transform Turkey to become the leader of the Muslim world "through the establishment of an Islamic Union that would include an Islamic United Nations, an Islamic defence organization, a common Islamic currency, and an Islamic common market" (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 135). In the foreign policy section of the RP's 1994 general election declaration leaflet, articles 4 and 5

described the aim of the TFP for Turkey to be a leader, not a satellite. To succeed, the “Position of Turkey will be with ‘The Union of Muslim Countries’ not the ‘European Union’ which was established as a union of Christianity based upon the Treaty of Rome under the counsel of Pope Pius XII” (The RP Manifesto).

This Islamic characteristic of neo-Ottomanism in terms of foreign policy cannot be seen during the AKP era. In the last decade, the AKP has shown three characteristics related to neo-Ottomanism, according to Taspinar (2011: 2): 1. “The willingness to come to terms with Turkey’s Ottoman heritage at home and abroad”; 2. “A sense of grandeur and self-confidence in foreign policy”; and 3. “The goal of embracing the West as much as the Islamic world”. It could, however, be argued that the last characteristic has lost its importance lately and the Middle East has recently been prioritised as discussed above. Consequently, neo-Ottomanism in the AKP era has shown features of the Ozal era foreign policy and the concept is articulated to the Turkish-Islamic understanding without Pan-Islamist features. It is important to state here that most of the cadres of the AKP, including the founding ones, were in the RP in the 1990s and followed a neo-Ottomanist foreign policy showing characteristics of Pan-Islamism. The Islamist intellectuals and politicians of the 1990s were affected by and affected this intersubjective meaning of international politics as well as Turkey’s security imaginary. However, the military intervention in 1997 halted this influence of political Islamist ideology and caused a division between the traditionalists and the moderates of the RP which later led the moderates to establish the AKP. As a result, the moderates started to use a moderate neo-Ottomanist policy just as Turgut Ozal had.

The second feature which differentiated the AKP’s approach from the 1990s political atmosphere in terms of foreign policy was that Davutoglu believed that there should be a link between domestic and international politics, which differentiated his ideas from those of the 1990s. He criticised, for example, the neo-Ottomanist policies of the Ozal era and the Islamist RP era by saying that they could not be successful because although they had claimed to redefine the relationship between domestic political culture and international position, their lack of knowledge, inexperience and theoretical extemporaneousness caused them to fail (Davutoglu, 1999). According to Davutoglu, there should be cooperation between domestic and international politics, in other words, the domestic and international identities of Turkey should be in harmony.

Davutoglu also believed that domestic politics constitutes one of the pillars of the TFP. In a speech at the 3rd Ambassadors' Conference in 2011, he emphasised public opinion, regarding the people of Turkey as the source of the MFA along with three other sources: the MFA officials, the structure of the MFA and coordination between the state institutions. He explained that the "people of Turkey expect an assertive, high-scale state because the Turkish nation embraced an assertive country in history and this nation has felt and lived what making a big contribution to the history is throughout different historical eras" (Davutoglu, 2011a). In the same speech, he said that "... the state in the minds of this nation is powerful and mighty; whilst it is compassionate, at the same time it is a phenomenon that is never harmed For that reason we must integrate with this public. If we cannot tell our feelings and diplomatic goals to the Turkish public, we cannot tell them to the world. If we cannot have the power of Turkish public, we cannot feel powerful in the world. The public needs this message" (*Ibid.*).

In addition, in Davutoglu's speeches there was also an emphasis on the restoration of the public. In a speech in Diyarbakir in 2013, for example, he explained this restoration as "a matter of the construction of a new mentality". In that speech, he spoke of two levels of restoration. The first was domestic restoration, "... the restoration of our country in itself. This restoration is very important. First, mentalities, psychologies have to be rebuilt. Through these psychologies, past fears, past drives, past anomies, past provocations must be overcome and a new moral, modest, mutual respect and, yes, love and conversation must prevail. In the last decade, what we totally wanted to do was the rediscovery of this" (Davutoglu, 2013a).

The second kind of restoration, according to Davutoglu, was directly related to identity. He said "about the construction of our identity and civilizational belonging, we should meet on common grounds without hesitation" (*Ibid.*). The concept of common history was very crucial at that point. Davutoglu believed that Kemalist governments cut the ties between the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. He believed that it was a result of nationalism and it broke the ties between the peoples of the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Central Asia. In the same speech, he said that "No matter what they say, wherever there is someone who has a common history with us, he/she is our kin, is someone with the same fate, at the same time, he/she is a core element of our foreign policy. Describing this, we never distinguish

a Turk from a Kurd, an Albanian from a Bosnian” (*Ibid.*). Davutoglu believed that if Turkey could succeed in this restoration, it would cause a domino effect and lead to restorations in other regions. Consequently, with this common history, “peoples in other regions will find a place under the plane tree⁵ which has been formed by the identities of Turks, Kurds and the other Anatolian peoples” (*Ibid.*). In the speech, Davutoglu did not say how to create this identity. Even so, it is important to realise that there was a project which aimed to create a new identity based on common history, in other words a neo-Ottomanist policy.

So, affected by the neo-Ottomanist ideas of the 1990s and the Islamist ideology, Davutoglu used geography, history and culture to define the security imaginary of Turkey. His ideas show that Turkey should follow an active foreign policy embracing the neighbouring countries. Turkey was in the leading position in this imaginary and had responsibilities and duties for peoples in the neighbouring regions because of their common history dating back to the Ottoman era. This imaginary showed similarities with the neo-Ottomanist understanding of the 1990s and the TFP during the AKP era. For instance, the zero-problem policy and economic interdependence with neighbouring countries could be evaluated by this concept. In the AKP era, however, this imaginary became more prominent than in the 1990s because although in the 1990s there was not the political environment in which to implement this kind of policy because of political instabilities and economic reasons, since 2002 the AKP had control of the government and this brought the opportunity to establish a new Turkish state identity under the name of ‘restoration’. This identity had three features related to international politics and these will be examined in the next section.

4. Three Features of the State Identity Created by the AKP

In this section, I shall explain which features of the state identity were introduced by the AKP for Turkey’s international politics. I shall examine this under three headings: the leader of the Middle East, the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East, and self-confident Turkey. These features are the products of the security imaginary of the AKP which will be explained in the third section. With these features, the AKP sought approval for its policies in the TFP.

⁵ Plane Tree here represents the Ottoman Empire. According to a tradition, the founder of the Ottoman Empire, Osman Bey, had a dream that a long-lived and glorious plane tree was growing in his chest, representing the Ottoman Empire.

The discourse of the AKP for these policies can be legitimised by the dual process of articulation and interpellation which will be explained in the second section. The very same features discussed in this section were also reproduced in *VoW: Ambush*. Together with the speeches of the AKP elites, this series and its reception constitute an intertextual meaning. It can therefore be claimed that *VoW: Ambush* was another part of this process and this increased the ability of the articulation and interpellation processes. This will be demonstrated in the following chapters in which I shall examine the series. In this current section, the discourses of the AKP elites will be investigated because these features were discursively constructed.

4.1. Turkey as the leader of the Middle East

According to Weldes, being a leader gives warrants for action in many situations. In her book *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Weldes (1999b: 199-201) claimed that the leadership position of the US and attendant responsibilities and obligations were taken for granted by US foreign policy officials such as the then US president Harry S. Truman. She suggested that the representation of the US as a world leader led to consequences for the US identity. First, she stated that this representation provided the US with a warrant for action because a leader is expected to act, not to remain passive or to hesitate. Second, the leadership position grants a leader “the right to moral leadership, the right to set the standards against which threats and appropriate policy responses are measured” because a leader is capable of determining when action is required and suggesting the right action (Weldes, 1999b: 200). Third, according to Weldes, a leader is obligated to do this. That is, it is not only about rights, it is also about obligations and duties. She explained this as follows: “Just as the ‘white man’s burden’ had imposed upon the British the obligation to bring Anglo-Saxon civilization to the backward and often barbaric ‘natives’ residing within its empire, so global leadership conferred upon the U.S. the burden of preserving and promoting freedom, democracy, and order” (Weldes, 1999b: 200). Fourth, Weldes stated that the decisions and actions of a leader are in part altruistic rather than for its own gain because there is a cost to being a leader.

These representations can also be found in Turkey's state identity in the AKP era. Turkey and Erdogan were introduced as the leader of the Middle East and one of the leaders of the world by state officials and by academics and columnists. For instance, Davutoglu stated in a speech in parliament that "There is a new Middle East and we will be its owner, leader and servant ... Irrespective of what others say, the new order's leader and spokesperson will be Turkey" (Barkey, 2012: 4). After Erdogan returned from the 2009 World Economic Forum in Davos during which he had stormed out of a debate about Gaza, thousands of people greeted him at the airport holding up 'a new world leader' placards (BBC News, 2009). In his victory speech after the parliamentary elections in 2011 (known as the famous 'balcony speech'), Erdogan said "... today, Sarajevo won inasmuch as Istanbul; Beirut won inasmuch as Izmir; Damascus won inasmuch as Ankara; Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza won inasmuch as Diyarbakir" (Oran, 2013: 197). This speech can be interpreted as showing that he believed that he is not only the leader of Turkey but also the leader of the neighbouring regions. It can therefore be argued that there was a leadership identity among the AKP officials.

Moreover, this leadership feature was in accordance with the foreign policy imaginary of Davutoglu. As stated in the previous section, he believed that Turkey should follow a proactive diplomacy in the neighbouring regions where historically and geographically the Ottoman Empire had held its hegemony. When we apply the representations of the leadership to the TFP and the security imaginary of Davutoglu, it can be seen that the leadership feature of Turkey constituted a very important part of the TFP. I shall explain this using the same four points made by Weldes which I listed above.

First, this feature should give Turkey a warrant for action for issues relating to the neighbouring regions. When we look at the TFP during the AKP era, we see that Turkey took part in the conflicts in the Middle East. For instance, after the Arab Spring, Turkey supported the Muslim Brotherhood Parties in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria and Iraq, and that can be interpreted as intervening in the internal affairs of these countries. Ziya Onis (2012: 54) stated that although Turkey sought to play a leadership role indirectly by supporting the Muslim Brotherhood parties, it played that role directly in Syria by taking a confrontational attitude towards the Assad regime. Moreover, Turkey actively supported the Sunni opposition groups against the Assad regime by providing a safe passage to material support - arms and funds -

from Saudi Arabia (Sengupta, 2015). Also, Turkey provided help to the Free Syrian Army which explicitly used a Turkish address and a Turkish GSM number in the contact section of its website (Akan, 2012) (and although it changed the address to Syria later, the Turkish number was retained). So Turkey's leadership feature gave Turkey warrants for action and intervention in the politics of the Middle East after the Arab Spring.

Second, it can be seen that the AKP acted as a moral leader in the Middle East, especially in the cases of the coup in Egypt and the Syrian civil war. For instance, after the coup in 2013 against the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Erdogan condemned then General and later President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi for state terrorism, saying that "The Al-Fath Mosque is under siege. People's place of worship is innocent. They have burned, destroyed our mosques in Syria and in Egypt. Whether Bashar or Sisi, there is no difference between them. There is no salvation with oppression" (Hurriyet Daily News, 2013b) and he called Sisi a tyrant and an illegitimate leader because he came to power by force rather than in a democratic way. Davutoglu stated that "As a universal principle, we have supported the democracy demands based upon protection of the honour of humanity, principles of the state of law and open and transparent elections of fellow peoples in the Middle East. These demands are supported by our countries and we will continue to support whoever demands us to do so" and added that peace would come to the Middle East when regimes are reconciled with their people (Davutoglu, 2013b). These examples can be multiplied with the Syrian case. So as the moral leader of the Middle East, Turkey, or Erdogan, believes that democracy, or elections, should be an important part of the Middle East.

Third, Turkey feels that it has to intervene in the politics of the neighbouring regions because it is the leader of these regions which had been dominated by the Ottoman Empire. As stated above, Turkey has common history, culture and geography with these regions, and for this reason cannot remain unresponsive to issues especially related to people, or 'our brothers and sisters'. Turkey has an obligation, duty and responsibility for these people. Davutoglu explained that

... Turkey is in the centre of a geography where all cultural crises emerge. We as a country which is in the influence area of all these crises, in the centre of Afro-Eurasia, has lands in Asia and as well as in Europe, is neighbour to Africa, has direct connections with the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, the Caspian Sea, the Gulf, we have a responsibility to be a main actor who produces the right answers to all

these crises. We have a position that produces a view on global crises, not only to produce answers. Again in all geography we are in a situation that takes historical responsibility (Davutoglu, 2009b).

In this speech, it can be seen that Davutoglu was positioning Turkey at the centre of the old Ottoman geography and making Turkey responsible because of this geographical position. With this kind of representation of Turkey, a subjective position of Turkey is created for individuals. Because of this feature Turkey believes that it is in a position in which it has a responsibility and obligation for development in the region and should not remain silent in a crisis.

Finally, the decisions of Turkey in the region, not all but in part, are altruistic rather than for Turkey's own gain. In the case of Syria, Davutoglu explained this altruism as "... we place importance on a stable transformation. Of course, our hope, our aim is that our Syrian brothers will live together in peace, in tranquillity in their villages and cities, and can be hopeful for the future. Turkey will spare no sacrifice for this" (Davutoglu, 2011b). The refugee crisis can be evaluated within this altruistic leadership position. Turkey is the leader in the Middle East and has to open its borders to the refugee brothers who are escaping a dangerous undemocratic regime. Turkey has to provide shelter for those in need not for its own advantage but for the needs of its brothers, its 'kin'. Erdogan also said in a speech in parliament: "Are we to close our doors on our brothers and say 'You can die in Syria'? Can we say this? I ask you, do we have a right to do this?" (Idiz, 2014). Turkey therefore had to open its borders to refugees as the leader of the region without any gain for itself. When the cost of admitting refugees was investigated, Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus announced that Turkey has spent \$7.6 billion caring for 2.2 million Syrian refugees so far (TRT World, 2015).

These components of the leadership feature oblige Turkey to intervene more in regional affairs. Since it is part of Davutoglu's new neo-Ottoman imaginary and that of other AKP officials, this feature became a constituent part of the TFP during the AKP era and legitimised the policies of the AKP. According to the findings of a study conducted by Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV), in 2011, 71% of the participants from Egypt, Syria, Libya and the Gulf countries believed that Turkey should play a larger role. However, this percentage dropped to 66% in 2012 and 60% in 2013 (Akgun and Gundogar, 2013: 21).

According to another TESEV study carried out in 2011, almost 75% of the participants believed that Turkey should be a model for the Middle East. Again 75% of the participants believed that Turkey should play an intermediary role in the Israel-Palestine conflict (Seufert, 2011: 4). In the light of these results, it can be argued that the leadership feature of the state identity becomes intelligible for Turkish and the Middle Eastern peoples.

4.2. The Defender of the Oppressed in the Middle East

This representation also legitimised the TFP's increasing activity in the Middle East. In the discourse of the AKP cadres, it can be seen that Turkey has always taken sides with the weaker and the oppressed (*mazlum* in Turkish). This feature of the state identity makes Turkey right in her policies on Israel and the authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. When the speeches of the AKP leaders are investigated, it can be seen that these policies are constructed as if Turkey is supporting her oppressed brothers against their oppressors (*zalim*). This oppressor/oppressed approach has been used many times. For instance, Davutoglu said in 2014: "We never asked the Syrian refugees 'are you Sunni or Shia or Nusayri [Alawi]? Are you Arab, Turkish or Kurdish?' we did not ask. When they came to our border, it was a divine duty to protect them and as long as we are on this land, with these responsibilities, on these weak shoulders, Allah is our witness that we never abandon the oppressed [*mazlum*] to the oppressor [*zalim*]" (Davutoglu, 2014a). In another speech, he said: "We have always been on the same side as the *oppressed* and against the *oppressor*, and we will continue to do that. No matter how hard a time they give us, no matter what conspiracies they make, Syrian Turkmens, Syrian Arabs, Syrian Kurds, Syrian Muslims, Syrian Christians, Syrian Sunnis, Nusayris, all Syrians should know that we will continue to be on their side with all our capabilities" (Davutoglu, 2014b).

Erdogan has used this discourse more frequently than Davutoglu. In 2012, for instance, he legitimised the Egypt policy of Turkey and at the same time criticised the opposition party by using the oppressor/oppressed discourse:

Today, the ones who tell us 'do not interfere in Egypt', they do not abstain from supporting the bloody-handed illegitimate regime and from taking a souvenir photo with the leader of this regime. If we had backed the bloody-handed regime in Syria, they would have asked us 'what is your business in Syria? They talk differently in the morning from what they say

in the evening. They are uncomfortable since we are taking sides with the *oppressed*, the rightful because they have always taken sides with the *oppressors* throughout their history. This main opposition [CHP] took sides with Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. Throughout their history, they have always taken sides with blood shedders, the ones who oppress their people. Today they are doing the same. They are backing the *oppressor*, they overlook the *oppressed* in favour of the *oppressor* (Hurriyet, 2012b).

As can be seen, the ubiquitous usage of the oppressed/oppressor and us/them discourse articulates the historical role of Turkey to this representation. When Erdogan articulates the opposition party with the oppressors in the Middle East and in the historical context, he creates this representation for the AKP and for Turkey. He has criticised Sisi, Assad and other oppressors in the current context of the Middle East. He has also put the Kemalist opposition party in the same group as Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin. He has said that whilst the *CHP* was on the same side as dictators, *they* are with the oppressed. He has created the meaning that the Kemalist foreign policies were wrong and that the Turkish people need to be on the same side as the oppressed, the rightful.

There are other examples of this oppressed/oppressor discourse. In another speech in 2013, he said:

We will always be in the same side as the *oppressed*. You have seen Baniyas [Syria], you have seen how children were massacred. Every day, tens of women are massacred and raped in Syria. The ones who say 'Syrian refugees should go back', I wonder how they can look their neighbour in the face ... We are not a racist nation, we are not selfish. What makes us a great nation is being on the same side with the *oppressed* in the hard times (NTV, 2013).

This discourse was used also in policies on Turkish-Israeli relations; Erdogan said that

We have always felt the sorrow of Palestinians and we are a nation that has never stayed silent about injustices and inhuman conduct against them. The situation of Palestine, for us, has always been a symbol of the agony of all *oppressed* communities. Each piece of bad news coming from Palestine has torn our hearts out, every piece of good news relieves us (TRT Turk, 2012).

It is clear that the discourse of oppressed/oppressor is relevant in many foreign issues within the frame of the TFP. It is important to say that this discourse is used with historical references

from Turkish history. This leads this feature to articulate with the neo-Ottomanist identity. For example, Erdogan said that

Turkey is a great country, which is something which some people are unable to comprehend. With its history, ancestry and civilisation, Turkey is a great country which will never be silenced. Since 1071, we have defended the rightness on this land where our voice and word could reach. We have only defended peace, friendship, brotherhood and solidarity. For a thousand years, we have never allowed one brother to massacre another, one Muslim to massacre another, and we have never allowed sectarian conflicts to happen. We have always been a negotiator and have taken sides with the *oppressed*. We have always been understood to promote peace, to reconcile brothers You see that the Seljuk sultans were against the *oppression* and on the same side with the *oppressed*. Look at the Ottoman world state. You see a comprehension which is integrative, unifying, siding with the union of forces and partnerships created by fate; not pillaging, exploiting, blood shedding. You see fleets sent to deal with *oppression* in the Indian peninsula and Aceh, Indonesia ...(Avci, Sisko and Turan, 2013).

In this speech, Erdogan used many references to Turkish history and to Islam. For instance, the date 1071 was a reference to the Battle of Manzikert which was one of the most important battles in Turkish history. After this battle between the Byzantine Empire and the Seljuk Turks, the Turkification of the region of Anatolia began. This is taught to all people in Turkey and everybody knows it through the explanation 'After this war, the doors of Anatolia were opened to the Turks forever'. According to Erdogan, we, the Seljuk Turks, the Ottomans and now Turkey under the AKP rule, as Muslim Turks have always promoted peace in these regions and even in the far Islam lands such as India and Indonesia. However, he did not mention anything about the Christians or the Jews as 'others' or any non-Turkish and non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire as 'selves'. This approach articulates Turkishness to Islam and creates a neo-Ottoman identity which gives Turks a duty to help their oppressed neighbours in the Middle East.

In another speech he said

When you go to the martyr's cemetery here [Canakkale or Gallipoli], you see all of them in each other's arms. You see people from Skopje, from Bosnia, from Kars, from everywhere. They came and became martyrs in this land ... these martyr's graveyards tell us our history. They tell us why we are so interested in Palestine. Because here, in Canakkale, there are martyrs from Jerusalem. They ask us why we are so interested in Syria. [The answer is] because there are martyrs from Damascus, Aleppo in Canakkale. Go to Syria, there are martyrs who were *Mehmetcik* (Turkish soldiers). If they helped us 98 years ago, we will be on the same side with them in their hard times ... We have not been in the same

photograph frame [with Assad]. We have always been on the same side as the *oppressed*, and we will. Because the Battle of Gallipoli commands us to do so (T24, 2013).

Again, here, Erdogan was seeking to articulate the Battle of Gallipoli, which has an historical importance for Turkish nationalists and gives them an Islamic mission as well as a nationalist one. Events in Turkish history are articulated with this oppressed/oppressor discourse for both nationalist and Islamist people in Turkey. His narrative about the important events in Turkish history articulates their meaning to Islamic features and creates a naturalising effect for individuals. This feature becomes intelligible for the people who share Islamist, conservative, neo-Ottomanist and even nationalist identities.

4.3. Self-confident Turkey

This feature introduced by the AKP demonstrates Turkey as a great, powerful country, not as 'weak' as before, and as a player of its own 'game', not that of others. As a nation which has self-confidence, this creates a representation of Turkey in which Turkey can do anything it wants without hesitation. This feature also legitimises Turkey's recent foreign policies in the Middle East. To start with, it is important to state that Davutoglu put special emphasis on this self-confidence building. In his speeches at the 4th, 5th and 6th Ambassadors' Conferences, he spoke about this. At the 4th Ambassadors' Conference in 2011, he said:

As diplomats of a country which is on route of becoming a global power, what should we pay attention to? First, in this route, in this flow of history, the psychological principle that we will never abandon is self-confidence. We will trust ourselves, our nation and our state. We will not think whether our power would be sufficient enough. If it is not sufficient, we will create means. For years, decades, our people have been humiliated by a feeling of helplessness ... In their minds there is a perception of an imperialist power with which they could not compete. This is sometimes America, and sometimes it is Israel Others set the game, Turkey, at the most, takes its share in this game. We create the game, dream, imagination, future ideal, vision; we create and we conduct (Davutoglu, 2011c).

In 2013, Davutoglu also said in a speech to university students in Diyarbakir that "we should construct a new culture of self-confidence with the pace which we get from history and by using that accumulation" as a part of internal restoration (Davutoglu, 2013). At the 6th Ambassadors' Conference in 2014, he explained that Turkey had received a self-confidence

vaccination after 2002 (Davutoglu, 2014c). He spoke about this as Turkey's biggest success and said "We shall not think what the other states would think if we decide to do this or that. Other states will think about what Turkey will decide to do next" (NTV, 2014).

Davutoglu also stated the need for a new self-confident feature of the Turkish state identity in *Strategic Depth*. He wrote that

... Turkey is in need of a multilateral strategical regeneration. This strategic regeneration, in the first place, makes essential a new strategical interpretation frame and a new stance of this new frame. In this interpretation process, the primary origin is constructing social psychology with self-confidence. In an era where the world interacts reciprocally, the societies which sustain their self-confidence will constitute the cores of new power centres. On the other hand, the ones that lose their self-confidence and accept being on the periphery of their societies will be faced with the danger of strategic disintegration after a psychological downfall. (Davutoglu, 2001: 559)

It is clear that a self-confident Turkey in the twenty-first century was crucial for Davutoglu. According to him, Turkey with a self-confident identity could be more independent about its policies in the neighbouring regions. This representation makes Turkey not a tool of international powers. Rather, according to this imaginary, Turkey is a self-confident, independent country which can conduct its own policies in neighbouring regions and is not a part of anyone else's game, it is the playmaker.

This representation also creates a self-confident Turkey which spoils the games and plots played over Turkey and the neighbouring regions. Erdogan also used this discourse on many occasions. For instance, he said:

Those who intend to play off brothers against each other as Sunni and Shia in the Middle East also wanted to play this game in Turkey. They wanted to warm up this game from time to time and serve it in Turkey. Thank *Allah* for endless time, Turkey has not fallen into this trap of discord despite all these set traps. *Allah* willing, it will never be. Alawis and Sunnis are their sole protectors (T24, 2014).

Erdogan has also used this discourse for domestic politics. If there is a development against the AKP government, this discourse becomes useful. For example, in the corruption scandal which is called the 17-25 December affair, he explained that "This dirty game is a game played against great Turkey. This plot is a plot organised against new Turkey. This dirty game is a

game against the Turkish nation, the national will and national sovereignty rather than us, the AK Party” (Al Jazeera Turk, 2013).

This discourse is important because it might be intelligible for different groups in Turkey because it has a meaning for all groups in Turkey. This can be called the Sèvres Syndrome. It can be explained as follows:

The Sèvres Syndrome is an expression used in international relations to describe the paranoia of the Turkish secular bureaucracy and its politicians. This takes the form of an irrational fear that Western powers are bent on dismantling Turkey vis-à-vis the abortive Treaty of Sèvres in 1920. This ‘insecurity complex’ has been reinforced by other threats and dangers to Turkey’s national security in the intervening years, ranging from Stalin’s expansionist statements in the mid-1940s, to Armenian and Syrian irredentism, to the bilateral military cooperation of Greece and Syria, to the invasion of Iraq, and finally, to Turkey’s ostracism from the European Union. Going hand-in-hand with this enduring perception of threats from without are threats from within, most notably the Islamists who plot to demolish the secular state, but also the hardline secularists who plot to prevent Islamists from gaining power and popularity. There are also fears that Christian, Kurdish, or Armenian minorities are colluding with foreign powers to divide and destroy the country. (Guida, 2008: 38)

It is important to explain that the idea of ‘external powers that plan to separate Turkey’ has historical roots in Turkish politics. It has roots among the Kemalists, the nationalists, the leftists and the Islamists. Politicians from all ideologies used this discourse from time to time. What the AKP brought as a new approach was, as I said at the beginning of this section, that Turkey is now self-confident and has the capability to overcome any plots even though there are still ‘dirty games’ being organised by external and internal powers. This feature makes Turkey an actor which can challenge plots in the region as well as within its own borders. By articulating the domestic threats with international ones, the AKP has legitimised its foreign policies in the Middle East. For instance, Erdogan said that “The game played in Egypt today will be organised in another Muslim country tomorrow. The atrocity displayed in Egypt today will be displayed in another country tomorrow. *They* may want to mix up another country, or Turkey. Because *they* do not want a powerful Turkey in this region” (Radikal, 2013).

It is also important to mention that this discourse is still in use in current events. Especially after the coup attempt on 15 July 2016 and the terrorist attacks by PKK and ISIL in Turkey, President Erdogan still appeals this discourse and this time he has started to use the Sèvres

Treaty in his speeches. He has stated that “In this critical time period in which this region is shaped, if we stop, the place we would find ourselves in would be Sèvres conditions To be fair, Turkey is putting up the biggest fight since the War of Independence. This is a fight for one nation, one flag, one homeland and one state Our nation stood up courageously against the coup and broke the hands around its throat and wrecked the operation” (NTV, 2016). By using this discourse Erdogan was intentionally invoking the Sèvres Syndrome for the individuals who were threatening Turkey and he also believes that by himself and with the nation’s new self-confidence, they can deal with these powers. He understands and explains Turkey’s internal and external issues from the perspective that external powers seek to divide Turkey.

When the polls relating to Turkey’s perceptions about foreign countries are examined, it is seen that Turks neither trust nor like anyone but themselves. According to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2014, Turkey does not have a favourable view of any country or organisation. The findings showed that

... Turkish distaste for foreign powers does not begin and end with the US. On balance, around two-thirds or more Turks express unfavorable views of the European Union, China, Brazil, Russia, Iran and Israel. Turks even dislike Saudi Arabia (53% unfavorable and, notably, the highest favorability percentage (26%) among all the countries we asked about). The people of Turkey also hold negative views toward NATO specifically (70% dislike the organization). In fact, it is hard to find any country or organization the Turkish people really like, except, of course, Turkey itself. According to our spring 2012 poll, 78% of Turks said they had a favorable view of their country (Poushter, 2014).

It can be said that this feature is also intelligible for the Turks and it is not only part of the common view but also has the potential to affect the common view. It is also important to add that recently the ‘New Turkey’ discourse has helped to construct this representation. The New Turkey discourse is used by the AKP elites to differentiate the AKP era from the previous eras and to create new representations under the name of ‘New Turkey’. According to these representations, self-confidence constitutes the psychological basis of New Turkey. In 2014, Davutoglu explained this as the biggest success of the AKP in the last twelve years (AKPARTI Official Website, 2014). Also, after Davutoglu became prime minister, he launched a short programme on the concept of addressing the nation on television under the title ‘On the Way for New Turkey’. By using this discourse, he compared the AKP era with the previous eras in

which Turkey was not 'self-confident' enough. By the articulation of a self-confident Turkey to the New Turkey, this feature becomes a part of the identity of the New Turkey under AKP rule.

Conclusion

My contention in this thesis is that, as a popular text, *VoW: Ambush* functioned as a site for consent production for foreign policies formed by the AKP elites within the last decade, through a process of reproduction of state identities, ideologies, representations and discourses at the level of narrative. Therefore, in this chapter I have examined the TFP in the last decade in order to find out how state identity during the AKP era has changed. After the AKP established its hegemony in Turkey in the twenty-first century, it can be seen that the TFP was transformed and Turkey became a country which aimed to be a regional power with ambitions of being a leader country. It is becoming more responsive to regional issues, especially in the Middle East. This can be explained by the new identities in the TFP according to the constructivist approach in IR.

The security imaginary of Turkey has also been transformed in the twenty-first century as part of the new political Islamist and neo-Ottomanist ideology. The security imaginary of the political Islamist party, the AKP and especially Ahmet Davutoglu as the architect of the TFP in the AKP era, are ideas and approaches which are of great importance for this transformation. Since the 1990s, the ideas, imaginary and representations about international politics of both conservative and Islamist politicians were very important for the identities which the AKP introduced. These identities are products of these intersubjective understandings which constitute the security imaginary. As a political Islamist, Davutoglu's ideas, representations and imaginary affected by these intersubjective understandings have made Turkey more involved in events in the Middle East and Islamic countries.

Out of this imaginary and state identity, three representations of Turkey relating to international politics became prominent in the AKP era. The elites of the AKP believed that Turkey is the leader and defender of the oppressed in the Middle East. They also believed that Turkey can also prevent the 'dirty strategies' of the external actors in the region if it could

become self-confident, because Turkey has sufficient power to do this. These are the features that legitimise the foreign policies pursued by the AKP elites. However, it is important that public opinion should give its consent for these policies, according to Davutoglu. The question of how these representations discussed in the previous sections might have an 'effect' on Turkish people becomes important. As I explained in Chapter 1, through the articulation and interpellation processes, these identities can be hailed by the individuals who are exposed to the repeated discourses, in other words, the reproduction of the discourse. This discourse is not only produced by the AKP but is also reproduced by columnists, celebrities and popular culture. It is my belief that popular television series watched by millions of people have reproduced the discourse of the AKP and they have contributed to the interpellation or hailing process by reiterating the discourse and narrative relating to the representations and features explained in this chapter. In the next chapters, I shall examine how one of the most popular television series, *VoW: Ambush*, became part of this interpellation process by reproducing the discourse relating to the security imaginary, the new state identity and the representations discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4: The Case of *VoW: Ambush*

Introduction

In the last decade, political Islam has established hegemony in Turkey under the leadership of the AKP and has reduced the Kemalist military's role in Turkish politics (as was explained in Chapter 2). The party has become a hegemonic political force and its conservative 'democratic' identity has influenced the political (domestic and international) and social spheres (culture, media, religion and education) since 2002. This hegemony is also reflected in the TFP. The rise of political Islam under AKP rule has changed perceptions of the national interest and Turkey has started to be more proactive in the regions where previously the Ottoman Empire had ruled for centuries.

In Chapter 1, I explained that according to social constructivism in IR, state identities are an important part of state behaviours. They define behaviours and foreign policies emerge out of these identities. Identities can be divided into two in terms of how they are constituted. First, they can be constituted by interaction with the other states, and second, they can be the results of domestic developments such as a revolution or a hegemonic change. As a result of the hegemonic change in Turkey in the last decade, I identified three new representations in the TFP based on the neo-Ottomanist identity: Turkey as the leader of the Middle East, as the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East and as self-confident Turkey. These representations are part of the security imaginary of the political Islamist ideology. As previously explained in Chapter 1, state officials have ideas about foreign affairs and their ideas are represented by intersubjective and culturally established meanings through discursive practices (Weldes, 1999b). So when the discourses of the AKP elites are examined, these identities can be identified there.

In this thesis, I argue that these discourses are reproduced by popular culture. If popular culture reproduces the content and structure of the dominant foreign policy discourse and reiterates it often, it helps to produce consent for foreign policy and state action. I argue that *VoW: Ambush* reproduced these state identities which the AKP introduced. *VoW: Ambush* reproduced the discourse and it produced intertextual political meaning about the TFP. As a result, it rendered a commonsensical construction of neo-Ottomanist foreign policies.

In this chapter, I shall first provide an overview of *VoW: Ambush*. The plots of Seasons 7 and 8 have to be explained before the series can be analysed. I am only focusing on these two seasons for two reasons: these seasons were aired on a pro-AKP TV channel, ATV, and they were richer in terms of foreign policy. Second, I shall look at the intertextual meaning created by the series. I shall focus on how the series lifted the line between fiction and reality. Third, I shall analyse the two series by examining the ideology and showing the similarities between the ideologies of the series and those of the AKP. In this section, I shall carry out discourse analysis. Fourth, I shall focus on articulation in the series. In that section, I shall demonstrate how the series approached Turkey and 'others'. I shall analyse this by examining the discourse in the series. Fifth, I shall look at interpellation in the series to examine how the viewers can be aligned with the characters and concepts and can identify themselves with the subject positions created in the series. By doing all this, I shall demonstrate that *VoW: Ambush* is a popular cultural product which shared the AKP hegemony and had the potential to create consent for the foreign policy of the AKP since it ideologically and discursively reproduced the representations of the AKP security imaginary.

1. *VoW: Ambush* Production Background

VoW: Ambush is one of the longest-running productions in Turkish television history. It started as *VoW* in 2003 and has continued to become one of the most watched television series since then, and this popularity of *VoW* makes it a perfect case for this research. It is always in the first place in the TV rankings during its broadcast day, which is at 9pm on Thursdays. In some cases, even the matches of Turkish football teams against foreign teams have been unable to exceed *VoW* in the rankings. *VoW: Ambush* holds the record for the most watched TV series on the internet with more than four million people per episode (Radikal, 2016). It is therefore important to say that *VoW* has an ability to reach an enormous number of people and this distinguishes it from the other television series in the same genre, political action thrillers. Whilst the first four seasons were aired under this name, the new name *VoW: Terror* was announced by the producers in 2007. However, that season was aired for only two episodes and was cancelled after complaints to the RTUK, the media watchdog in Turkey. Later in that same year, the series restarted as *VoW: Ambush* and has continued until today. In addition to the television series, the production has also given rise to three movies: *VoW:*

Iraq, VoW: Gladio and VoW: Palestine, and a spin-off movie, Muro: Nalet Olsun Icimdeki Insan Sevgisine.

In Chapter 2, I examined Turkey's media structure to shed light on the relationship between media ownerships and the AKP hegemony. *VoW* has been aired on different channels since 2003. The first series, between 2003 and 2006, was aired on *Show TV*. The first three seasons of *VoW: Ambush* were also aired on *Show TV* from 2007 to 2009. The fourth season was on *Star TV* and the fifth and sixth seasons were aired on *ATV* and *TNT* respectively. The seventh and eighth seasons which are the focus of this current study were again aired on *ATV*.

In terms of media ownership and AKP hegemony, the channel should be examined closely. In 2007, *ATV*, which was owned by the *Turkuvaz Media Group*, was sold to *Calik Holdings* and it stayed in that ownership until the end of 2013. The media group was then sold to *Zirve Holdings*. Between 2007 and end of 2013, the CEO of the holding company was *Berat Albayrak*, *Erdogan's* son-in-law. *Albayrak* is the current Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. His brother *Serhat Albayrak* became the executive director of the *Turkuvaz Media Group* and after the group was sold to *Zirve Holdings* he kept this position. According to the journalist *Efe Kerem Sozeri*, conglomerates close to *Erdogan* such as *Cengiz*, *Limak* and *Kolin* financially support the channels and newspapers belonging to *Turkuvaz* to get public tenders in return and as a result the chief editors of these media groups have to endure pressure and those who have attempted to resist this pressure have been fired (*Sozeri, 2016*). *VoW: Ambush* was aired on *ATV* in such a media structure and time period.

It is also important to mention here the production company *Pana Film* because although it was established as a company in the television and cinema sector in 2004, it became a holding company whose business interests in 2008 extended to the construction and energy sectors as well as the media sector. Among the partners of the holding company were *Necati Sasmaz* (the actor who plays the role of the hero *Polat Alemdar* in the series), his brothers *Recai* (one of the script writers) and *Zubeyr Sasmaz*, the other script writers *Bahadir Ozdener* and *Cuneyt Aysan*, and one of the producers *Mehmet Canpolat* (*Arman, 2008*). Also, at the same time as it was producing television series and cinema films, it expanded to other sectors and became a competitor for public tenders.

VoW: Ambush also has its own spin-off sector: fashion. The suits which the characters wear in the series have become very popular since 2003. Melis Alphan stated that Alemdar inspires especially young people to imitate his style (Alphan, 2009). So it can be said that people identify themselves with Alemdar and define themselves with his style of dressing. In addition to the fashion spin-off, in *VoW: Ambush* characters are shown reading books in many episodes. These books are fiction, non-fiction, investigative journalism or sometimes academic books. The camera shows these scenes for four to five seconds. It is interesting that all these books were written by pro-AKP authors; for example, in two consecutive episodes, a book by Alev Alatli, a Turkish academic who, although she had previously been in the opposition camp, had in 2013 started to praise the AKP and Erdogan. In an interview given by Alatli in 2011, she described *VoW* as a ground-breaking and revolutionist series (Sabah, 2011). It could therefore be said that because the series is a phenomenon in Turkey, there is also a varied market around it. It not just about television, there are also other sectors which *VoW* touches. There is a hegemonic relationship between the series and the TV channels, the production company and the Turkish state.

Overall, between 2012 and 2014, the production was aired on a pro-AKP channel which belonged to a conglomerate governed by the son-in-law of the then prime minister. The production company, Pana Film, transformed itself from a simple company in the film and television industry into a holding company and started to operate in other sectors in which it could bid for public tenders. Also, *VoW: Ambush* created its own sector with its links to the fashion industry, using its advertising power. It can therefore be said that there is a complex relationship between the production company, the television channel, the fashion spin-off and the AKP elites in terms of political economy.

1.1. Series Overview

The first *VoW* consisted of four seasons and 97 episodes. Each season continued to tell the same story: Polat Alemdar, the main character, infiltrates the Turkish Mafia structure under a mission for the Turkish 'deep state' organisation. The main goal of the mission is that he should become the leader of the Mafia structure by eliminating (killing) other Mafia leaders and as result will be able to rescue Turkey from these harmful organisations. For this purpose,

he has facial surgery and a new identity. In these seasons, he accomplished his mission by dealing with Mafia leaders who were supported by internal and external 'dark forces' led by American/Jewish organisations and even a secret organisation called the 'Templars' (*Tapinakcilar*).

The first four seasons had a nationalist characteristic and fed popular conspiracy theories relating to the Turkish Mafia throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s. Whereas there was continuity in the plot across the first four seasons of the original *VoW*, the same cannot be said for *VoW: Ambush* where the plot has been shaped in line with contemporary political and social developments. The first season of *VoW: Ambush* started in 2007. There were ten seasons and 300 episodes. Almost all of the episodes lasted for more than 90 minutes and sometimes more than two hours. In the first four seasons of *VoW: Ambush*, Alemdar waged a war against the Gladio structure within the Turkish 'deep state' and businessmen who had relationships with a consortium consisting of 'deep states' in Russia, the US, China and the EU. Alemdar and his team fought against these groups which were the remnants of 'old' Turkey and which carried out assassinations of politicians and other businessmen. In the fifth and sixth seasons, Alemdar and his team dealt with a Kurdish terrorist organisation (representing the PKK in Turkey) which was supported by 'dark' external forces such as Mossad, the CIA and *Al-Mukhabarat*.

Whereas the first six seasons of *VoW: Ambush* focused on domestic developments in Turkey, it is interesting that the seventh and eighth seasons covered a story related to international politics. In these two seasons, Alemdar deals with not only domestic issues but also with international issues such as the Syrian crisis. He carries out operations in Egypt and Syria. Moreover, whilst he was the leader of the secret organisation, the KGT (Organisation of Public Security) in the first six seasons, he becomes the leader of the regional KGT which is responsible for the security of the neighbouring regions, such as the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East. Given my interest in hegemony in relation to security identity and the TFP, I chose to focus specifically on these two seasons which were aired in 2013 and 2014. These seasons engaged very directly with international issues and there are many parallels between them and representations and discourses between the AKP elites and the series in issues related to the TFP.

Weldes (1999a: 119) claimed that popular culture “helps to construct reality of international politics for officials and non-officials alike and, to the extent that it reproduces the content and structure of the dominant foreign policy discourse, it helps to produce consent for foreign policy and state action”. As I shall show in this chapter, *VoW: Ambush* is a popular cultural product which reproduces the content and structure of the foreign policy discourse of the AKP. The discourses in the series will be examined thoroughly and analysed in relation to four themes: as a source of information; as a source of ideological form; structure and articulation; and identification. In addition to the textual analysis, I shall also focus on ‘reception’ in order to understand how discussion about and in relation to the plot furthers the AKP’s hegemonic functions.

1.2. Overview of Seasons 7 and 8

Polat Alemdar is the leader of KGT, a non-official intelligence organisation in Turkey. He also works for another secret organisation called the Committee of Elders (*Ihtiyarlar Heyeti*) which has protected various forms of the Turkish state for more than two thousand years. This ancient organisation controls every institution in Turkey and works for the survival of the Turkish state. It not only has members from Turkey; it has been active in near-by regions such as the Middle East, Central Asia and the Balkans. This international role of the Committee was introduced to the audience in Season 7. In that season, the leader of the Committee, called *Aksacılı* (which means ‘white-haired’) and the other elders establish a regional KGT network under Alemdar’s leadership and send him to countries in the region to work for Turkey’s national interests and for the sake of publics in these regions. Thus, the focus on domestic issues in the previous seasons shifted onto international issues in these two seasons.

In the previous season, the leader of the Committee of Elders, *Aksacılı*, and Alemdar’s best friend and right-hand man Memati are assassinated. A new *Aksacılı* is chosen by the Committee. However, it is believed that these assassinations were carried out by an insider in the Committee. Alemdar and the new *Aksacılı* investigate to identify this person. On the other hand, *Aksacılı* establishes a new organisation called regional-KGT and makes Alemdar the leader of this organisation. He also gives Alemdar a seemingly suicidal mission in Syria and

this mission lasts for four consecutive episodes. Moreover, Alemdar's men and members of the regional KGT carry out missions in the Middle East and the Caucasus.

In later episodes of this season, it is revealed that Sencer Bey, one of the elders on the Committee, was the one responsible for the assassinations. He stages a coup and becomes the new *Aksacli*. He deviates from the contemporary TFP which favours regional activity in the territories of the pre-republic era. The first move of Sencer Bey, for instance, is to make agreements with Israel and the US. At the end of the season, a new enemy appears: The Templars. The Templars, a global secret organisation, realise that Turkey is becoming more independent and powerful in the region and find out about the Committee of Elders. The Templars attempt to discover the secrets of the Committee. After this, the season goes on depicting the rivalry between Alemdar, the regional KGT, the Committee of Elders and the Templars. Finally, Sencer Bey is killed because of his treachery and Alemdar gives a mission to Akif, one of his best men and a member of the regional KGT, to kill him (Alemdar) because Alemdar is the only person who knows all the secrets about the Committee. The season ends with his death.

In Season 8, it is revealed that Alemdar is not dead. He becomes the new *Aksacli* and Akif is the new leader of the regional KGT. The season goes on to show the constant struggles between the Templars and Alemdar's team. The Templars have their own organisation, the Armageddon Team, which is renowned for causing civil conflicts in developing countries. When the Armageddon Team attempts to cause problems for the domestic politics of Turkey such as killing the Alawis and fomenting public protests (representing the Gezi events), Alemdar and KGT prevent these attempts.

Alemdar attempts to infiltrate the cadres of the Templars by using a businessman who works for the Committee, Murat, and one of his best men, Cahit. Murat fails and is killed, but Cahit becomes successful and in one of the Templar ceremonies, he detonates a bomb and kills most of the top cadres of the Templars. In this season, Kara (an important member of Alemdar's team) establishes the Black Flag team. This team has duties to carry out military operations in the neighbouring regions and in later episodes it carries out operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq. In this season, references are made to contemporary events such as Turkish local elections, the crisis with the Gülen Movement, MIT Trucks and the Gezi events.

2. Intertextuality

VoW: Ambush helps to reproduce the dominant discourse related to the TFP. According to Weldes (1999a: 119), “to the extent that it [popular culture] reproduces the content and structure of dominant foreign-policy discourses, it helps to produce consent to foreign policy and state action”. This leads to the argument that popular culture may have a role in the production of consent for foreign policies (Weldes, 2003: 7). Moreover, Elspeth Van Veen (2009: 364) stated that television series “can be considered an important and useful example in the production of intertextual meaning By both (re)constituting and drawing on the same (re)presentations of ‘reality’, the intertextuality of popular culture and world politics helps to make the world intelligible” (*ibid.*). She also stated that the intertextuality between popular culture and official discourses makes it impossible to distinguish reality from fiction (*ibid.*: 368). The intertextuality created by *VoW: Ambush* can also increase this blurriness and help the series to make the world intelligible for its viewers. Three important features make *VoW: Ambush* more ‘real’ because they distinguish the line between reality and fiction and this can be understood by investigating its reception.

The first feature that creates intertextuality is that the series uses ‘real’ events in Turkish politics in a ‘fictional’ way. It covers real issues such as shells fired from Syria in 2012 and the *Mavi Marmara* crisis with Israel. There are many events like these covered in the series. In addition, there is a myth that *VoW* predicts future events because some events in Turkish politics happened after they were depicted in the series. This has led to the belief that the series can foresee future events. For instance, in the Turkish media, almost every year there is a headline ‘The Valley Predicts Again’, such as in 2009 (Aytug, 2009), 2010 (Ensonhaber, 2010a; Ensonhaber, 2010b), 2011 (Bugun, 2011; Takvim, 2011) and 2013 (Habervaktim, 2013). In one of these stories, a prominent columnist, Reha Muhtar in daily newspaper *Vatan*, contributed to this myth by asking “What if the scene of the assassination of Turgut Ozal was real?” (Muhtar, 2012). In another column, Yuksel Aytug of daily newspaper *Sabah* claimed that an episode of *VoW: Ambush* successfully revealed the reality about the Gülen structure within the state. He wrote that “if we did not read the newspapers, watch the real video scenes, we would have said *VoW* exaggerated this issue. Unfortunately, what we watch as scenario now, in fact, is a small part of the reality. Who can say, one day *VoW* will become just an elementary school demonstration beside the real agenda?” (Aytug, 2014). Aytug also

wrote in 2012 that *VoW* is a very crucial television series because it has an agenda which gives news from the future (Aytug, 2012).

These examples can be extended by audience comments. For instance, in one of the most important websites related to television and cinema, Internet Movie Database (IMDB), one of the users made a comment on *VoW: Ambush* which shows this myth:

There is a reason why *Valley of the Wolves* is dubbed as the most legendary TV Show in Turkey of all time. The way it combines reality, action, and even comedy is unlike any other TV show. The way *Valley of the Wolves Ambush* predicts the future and reflects in in the show with potential solutions to contemporary problems is stunning. Polat Alemdar and company does a great job in addressing problems and solving them. Recently, the show has even created characters that resemble known terrorist leaders. It has been said that a lot of research is done before each episode is written and that is truly apparent in all of the episodes. I truly hope this show goes on until all of the problems of Turkey have been resolved (IMDB *VoW: Ambush* Message Board).

The trailer for Season 8 also reproduced this belief by saying that “*VoW* will continue to speak the truth” and “Learn the facts from *VoW*”. The trailer emphasised the Gezi events by saying “Do not watch the penguins, watch *VoW*”.⁶ Cuneyt Aysan, one of the script writers of the series, stated that they emphasised that because they wanted both sides, pro-AKP and the opposition, to watch the series (El-Aziz, 2013). He also claimed that people think that *VoW* is not just a television series, they watch the series as if it is a product of a think-tank (*Ibid.*). This interplay between the ‘real’, the ‘fiction’ and the ‘real’ in the ‘fiction’ increases the possibility of making identities more commonsensical.

Another feature of the series is the names of the characters. Since the first *VoW* series, the scriptwriters have been inspired by real names in Turkish politics when creating characters. Some of the characters are listed below, the name in the series first and then a real person.

Memati (a bodyguard of Polat Alemdar) – **Muradi Guler** (bodyguard of Alaattin Cakici, a former member of the ultra-nationalist organisation, Grey Wolves)

Lale Zara (one of the most important characters of the Kurdish terrorist organisation) – **Leyla Zana** (a Kurdish MP)

⁶ During the Gezi events, people criticised CNNTurk because the channel aired a documentary about penguins instead of people being attacked by the police during the Gezi demonstrations.

Iskender Buyuk (a ‘deep state’ agent, enemy of Alemdar; his surname means ‘big’) – **Veli Kucuk** (a gendarmerie officer, convicted to life imprisonment in the Ergenekon trials; his surname means ‘small’)

Kara [right-hand man of Alemdar, he uses only this nickname which means ‘black’) – **Yesil** (also a ‘deep state’ agent, he uses this nickname which means ‘green’)

Mete Aymar (a ‘deep state’ agent related to intelligence organisation) – **Mehmet Eymur** (a retired Turkish intelligence officer)

Mate Agir (a ‘deep state’ agent) – **Mehmet Agar** (believed to be a ‘deep state’ agent, a politician)

These examples can be multiplied (ONEDIO, 2014). In the fan forums, people who watch the series have discussions when a new character appears. They talk about who these characters might be in real Turkish political life. This resemblance between characters and real-life people is not just argued in audience forums but also in the media. For instance, the opposition newspaper *Cumhuriyet* stated that the new character Muhterem Bey represented Fethullah Gülen in Season 8 (*Cumhuriyet*, 2014). So it can be said that the characters in the series are given names drawn from real people in Turkish affairs and they are widely discussed in the forums and the media and as a result this can remove the line between ‘real’ and ‘fiction’.

Second, when we look at Turkish society it can be seen that many incidents related to *VoW* are reflected by the Turkish media and this also creates intertextuality. These incidents show that the series has an important place in Turkish daily life. Among these, one example is that there were people who published condolence messages in newspapers after one of the main characters was killed (Gunes, 2004). Another is that when *VoW: Terror* was cancelled in 2007, it created a public outcry and there were death threats against RTUK officers (*Milliyet*, 2007). There are many other examples, such as a groom stopping his wedding ceremony in order to watch the finale of *VoW* (*Internethaber*, 2005), and because some people identify themselves with the characters, it can be seen that people use violence as if they are Mafia members, such as stabbing a neighbour (*Hurriyet*, 2005), shooting a lawyer in the knee (Kurt, 2009) or killing someone and throwing the body down a well just because he owed money to the killer (Yuksel, 2005). After the *Mavi Marmara* Incident in which nine Turkish citizens were killed by

the Israeli army in 2009, a *mufti* (a religious officer) offered a prayer in Nevsehir during which he made references to *VoW: Ambush*. He said that “in *VoW: Ambush*, the US representative Feller, Christianises Polat’s daughter. Why? Because they are afraid of religious men” (Korkmazer, 2010). The main character Alemdar has become an idol and the films and the series continue this idolising. For example, “when Turkish high schools pupils were asked who their role model was, 19.4% of those surveyed answered ‘Polat Alemdar’” (Yanik, 2011: 158). In 2010, Oral Calislar stated in his column in *Radikal* that children and young people in Turkey are exposed to the messages in the series that the EU, the US and Israel aim to divide Turkey and he asked “What kind of a view of the world do these children and young people have? There are children who have the psychology that world politics is all about a life and death struggle in which all global powers are against Turkey” (Calislar, 2010). According to such news comments in the Turkish media, people who watch *VoW* identify themselves with the characters and act violently as if they are the characters. These news items also support the claim that the line between ‘real’ and ‘fiction’ is blurred among the audience.

Third, in addition to the links with society in general, there are news comments directly related to Turkish politics. When we look at the *VoW*-related news covered in the Turkish media, it can be seen that there are many examples which show that *VoW* is not only related to politics fictionally, but also in reality. For instance, the daily newspaper *Milliyet* claimed that it had obtained a document related to *VoW* prepared by the Turkish National Intelligence Agency (MIT) (Milliyet, 2005). According to that report, the MIT had investigated the scriptwriter, director, actors and financiers in detail. The report said that the series had relationships with real Mafia organisations and with some personnel in the Turkish military, and that the scenario and the characters were written according to the intelligence provided by these sources. However, none of the people mentioned accepted these accusations.

Another important news item relating to *VoW* and politics was that during the *Ergenekon* trial process, which was “turned into perhaps the most important case relating to the civilian-military relationship in Turkey” (Al Jazeera, 2013) (later it is understood that all the trials were organised by the Gülenists), *VoW* became part of the investigation. According to the daily newspaper *Taraf*, the ‘deep state’ in Turkey’s military believed that some television series, including *VoW*, distort public opinion and that the “reliability of these series will be lost by having negative news published about those series” (Radikal, 2009).

Another example is that the daily *Vatan* discussed a story that there was a report presented to the then prime minister Erdogan to cancel *VoW: Terror* because the nationalist features in the series would increase the votes for nationalist party, the MHP, and harm the AKP in the forthcoming elections (Vatan, 2007). The report drew attention to the nationalist discourse in the series. A final example which shows the importance of *VoW* for Turkish politics is that the president of the Republic of Northern Cyprus, Rauf Denktas, appeared in one of the episodes in 2005 to tell Turkish people about Cyprus issue (Haber7, 2005). He criticised the Turkish media because they were not giving sufficient coverage to the Cyprus problem. These examples show that *VoW* is believed to be an important medium for influencing people efficiently. This is the common view of the MIT, the prosecutors in the *Ergenekon* trials, the AKP elites and the president of the Republic of Northern Cyprus.

VoW has also been influential among Syrians and Iraqis. A cigarette factory in Northern Iraq started to produce cigarettes under the label *Murad Alemdar*, which is the name by which the Arabs call Polat Alemdar, the main character of the series (Gazeteciler, 2013). The factory uses a picture of Alemdar with a cigarette on their boxes. In Syrian camps near the Turkish border, a gang leader calls himself *El hal Zaza*, which is the name of a popular character in the series (Hurriyet, 2012c). These examples show that not only Turkish people but also people in the Middle East identify themselves with the characters in the series.

There are also news items related to the AKP cadres praising the series and making positive comments about it. For instance, the elites of the state including the then Speaker of the Parliament Bulent Arinc, the then Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Coskun, and Erdogan's wife attended the premiere of the film *VoW: Iraq*, and Arinc made speech after the film in which he said "It is a terrific film. It is a film that will make history" and he said that the scenario was exactly the same in response to a journalist who asked whether the scenario was as it is in real life (Medyatava, 2012). Erdogan stated that he found *VoW* successful (Ozdemir, 2013a) during an interview with one of the most prominent journalists, Cuneyt Ozdemir. Minister of State Kursad Tuzmen described the series thus: "This series tells the problems of Turkey. It has a philosophy" (Toker, 2008). Moreover, the series was even watched in parliament by a crowd of 30-50 AKP MPs and their bodyguards, according to a *Milliyet* journalist (Vatan, 2010). These news items also show that the issues depicted in the series are perceived as representing the reality and this decreases the gap between reality

and fiction. Pro-opposition journalist and academician Tayfun Atay wrote about this in *Cumhuriyet* and claimed that the series had turned into a semi-official media tool and that the male population of Turkey had started to watch *VoW* instead of watching the news on television (Atay, 2015a). Ozdemir also stated this when he was the anchor-man on *KanalD* by saying “Today, the number of people believing the things in *VoW* is higher than people who believe the things told in the news” (Atay, 2013). A prominent opposition investigative journalist, Dogan Yurdakul, referred to *VoW* in his column on *ODATV* by writing that even a child who watched the series would know the recent history of Turkey’s political structure (Yurdakul, 2008). In addition, an interview with Bahadır Ozdener, one of the script writers, showed that he also believed that what the series tells as a story becomes real in the future. He stated

From the start we promised our audience that they will watch things before they have happened. They were already familiar with this from 2003 to 2005. We said that the mafia era would end, without this being based on anything. We said that this concept would change and it did. We said that ‘deep games’ would be played, they happened. We said that those games have roots, that the Templars and Evangelists are responsible, and one by one they started to show up (Medyaradar, 2013).

So as Van Veeren said, *VoW* creates an intertextuality because “By both (re)constituting and drawing on the same (re)presentations of ‘reality’, the intertextuality of popular culture and world politics helps to make the world intelligible” (Van Veeren, 2009: 364) and this can lead the state identity depicted in the series to become ‘common sense’. On the other hand, the belief that the series tells the ‘real’ events in Turkish politics increases its ability in this process. This belief is not only reproduced by the audience in the fan forums but is also produced *via* the media and the statements of politicians. It can therefore be said that people watching the series approach the series as if it is more than an ordinary popular cultural product, and this increases its role in the process of the production of consent. John Fiske (1987: 108) stated that “one text is necessarily read in relationship to others and that a range of textual knowledges is brought to bear upon it ... Intertextual knowledges pre-orient the reader to exploit television’s polysemy by activating the text in certain ways, that is, by making some meanings rather than others”. Van Veeren (2009: 364) explained that if elements of intertextual knowledges are repeated often they have the ability to produce a common environment in which commonsensical meanings can be cultivated. In Chapter 3, I

investigated the speeches of the AKP elites as a text. *VoW: Ambush* constitutes another text and to understand the intertextuality between them it is important to examine the series.

In the following sections, I shall therefore examine the series as a text under four themes: information, ideology, articulation and interpellation. I shall use these themes to gain an idea about the security imaginary in the series and whether it can play a role in consent production for foreign policies. The information/knowledge in the series shows how the series approaches IR, TFP and political history from a specific perspective which belongs to the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. The viewers may learn a way of thinking about where Turkey and the others sit in the world from the knowledge presented in the series. Ideology is also important as a theme to understand hegemony. Since I am investigating the role of the series for consent production and also hegemony is in the centre for consent production as stated in Chapter 1, the ideology in the series should be examined. The articulation in the series and the role of the series in the interpellation process should also be investigated because these processes are necessary, according to Weldes, in consent production⁷. I shall therefore use these themes as a mixture of Cultural and Media Studies and the constructivist approach in IR to understand the possible role of *VoW: Ambush* in consent creation for the TFP.

3. Analysis of the series

3.1. Information

One of the features of *VoW: Ambush* is that it contains information/knowledge about international politics. Audiences can find many concepts, terms related TFP, political history and the IR discipline. Scenes of the meetings of the Committee of Elders contain knowledge about them. The Committee argues about issues related to Turkey and to the TFP. In some episodes, these discussions last for more than fifteen minutes. As a matter of fact, it can be argued that the series has a mission to teach, or at least to offer enough IR terms to enable the audience to understand, the content related to the TFP. For instance, in one scene the elders are discussing Turkey's regional power status:

Elder 1: I do not understand, Turkey became a regional power and we have not heard about it?

⁷ These dual processes were explained in detail in Chapter 1.

Aksacli: Our country is mature now. There is no longer the problem of survival. From now on, we have to follow active politics in the region. Then again, these politics did not start with me, what I suggest is the continuation of the term of the previous *Aksacli*.

Elder 1: Of course it is important to develop a strategy and a policy according to this strategy. However, we should be careful about the *realpolitik* if we want to put them into practice. Neither our political nor our economic power is sufficient for this kind of gambling. We have to tread more carefully.

Elder 2: We are not in a *bipolar world*. The era of superpowers is ending. Instead, a system based on the balance of regional powers is being formed. The US might overlook the injustices to carry into effect its policies based on its interests in the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus, and might seek alliance. This attitude of the US allows Russia and Iran to gain strength.

Aksacli: This is the point which I see as vital. In our region, we cannot become withdrawn from regional politics whereas our historical rivals are gaining strength.

Elder 1: At this moment of disorder, the one who has the strongest nerves, who can keep its excitement under control, wins. We cannot understand the end of this issue if we intervene in the region with ambition.

Aksacli: We cannot hope that the fire in the region will not reach us because we have closed our eyes. We should take action before the fire gets bigger, so people both in the region and in our country do not burn for nothing.

Elder 1: We intervened in the Arab-Israeli problem and we got harmed; we attempted to take Syria out of terrorist state status and bring it into international society, but the very same Syria became a problem for Turkey. The questions about Turkey's leadership of the Islamic world caused negative attitudes in Russia, Iran and the Western bloc. They are making us pay the price of our Syrian policy (*VoW: Ambush*, Episode 166: 1:22:53).

When this episode was aired, Turkey's regional power ambition was being widely discussed in the Turkish and the international media, in academia and in think-tanks. The series also invited these discussions into the dialogue. As can be seen in this extract, the Elders are talking about international politics with realist concepts such as *realpolitik*, bipolarity and balance of power. These concepts are familiar for IR students, but ordinary viewers who have no idea about realist IR theory are probably encountering them for the first time. One of the script writers, Bahadır Özden, had been an IR MA student in the University of Bogazici and was a student of Ahmet Davutoğlu there (Özkök, 2010). This could explain why the series uses so many IR concepts. Examples of such conversations can be multiplied. In another meeting, the Elders discuss recent developments in world politics.

Elder 1: We are on our own in the Syrian issue with the re-election of Obama. *Neoconservatives* could not persuade Americans for a new war [*Aksacli* approves by nodding his head]. Now, they will come to us with all their strength to persuade us.

Elder 2: There are two points on which we show weakness. The first is the Kurdish formation in Syria. The regime will do whatever it takes to make us fight the Kurds. They

left some areas to the Kurds and let them form an administration there. The second is the provocations of the CIA and Mossad.

Elder 3: They shell us almost every day to drag us into Syria. If this is not enough, they will use *Al-Mukhabarat*.

Aksacli: Well, what should we do?

Elder 1: Sir, there is no doubt that *Baas* should be collapsed. However, it is not possible that the regime can be collapsed from the inside with the recent circumstance of the Syrian opposition.

Elder 3: Speak clearly if you want to intervene in Syria.

Elder 1: I have no intention to drag Turkey into a war. It would hard to do this as long as Iran and Russia support that regime.

Elder 2: Our friend is right. It is not possible to persuade Iran. But if we persuade Russia, Iran cannot stand alone.

Aksacli: Israel wants to divide Syria into three and render it safe for Israel's own interest.

Elder 4: Why do we not make a deal with Israel and support this plan? If Syria is divided into three, at least one piece would be under our control. We can deal with Israel later.

Elder 3: Dear friends, there are people among us who have a dream about Empire without becoming a regional power. This is a very dangerous dream. There were some people who had this dream in the *first Gulf War*. We saw how they make a fool of us after the war. This time, losing our reputation would not be the only thing we would lose. We could even lose some land. Whatever it takes, we should avoid this war.

Aksacli: These territories were drawn up by *two generals during the First World War* [this is a reference to the Sykes-Picot Agreement]. They were drawn up without giving attention to any social, economic, geographical, ethnic or historical factors. They created three Sunni states: Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. Today, it is not clear how many states they will create or how they might draw the lines. If we do not sit around this table, we shall have to agree to whatever they decide, as happened in the First World War. (Episode 172, 38:30)

In this meeting, although the Elders are arguing about recent developments such as the elections in the US, at the same time they are also discussing historical issues and give references and explanations to the First World War, the first Gulf War and the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This demonstrates that the script writers took an explanatory approach. They did not make the characters claim something vaguely, they explain things, why and how they happened this way. It can therefore be said that there is information about international politics to let people understand the TFP comprehensively, not just as a raw information. The series gives knowledge about international politics from its own perspective. It is important to remember here that in Turkey there is a general tendency to learn political issues from VoW. As the journalists Tayfun Atay (Atay, 2016), Cuneyt Ozdemir (Atay, 2013) and the then minister Kursat Tuzmen (Toker, 2008) stated, people prefer watching VoW instead of the

news. It is therefore possible that the script writers may have given themselves a mission to give IR-related information to or to teach the viewers.

This knowledge related to IR in the series helps the audience to understand how the series positions Turkey in the world. According to the series, Turkey has the ambition of becoming a regional power in places where the Ottoman Empire had ruled for centuries. It claims that Turkey has this chance because the recent international structure has created it. It is therefore understood that *VoW: Ambush* puts Turkey in the same position as the AKP politicians. In addition, it gives insights about other actors in the region, such as the US, Iran, Israel and Syria, and makes Turkey one of the most important actors in the region.⁸ In the next section, I shall examine this parallel approach in terms of ideology.

3.2. Ideology

In the previous section, I suggested that *VoW: Ambush* presents information/knowledge related to IR and the TFP from the perspective of Turkish-Islamic synthesis which has nationalist, religious and Ottomanist features. In this section I shall demonstrate how the series brought these features together in a specific political ideology. This ideology in the series shows a resemblance to the AKP ideology which was defined in Chapters 2 and 3.

When the original *VoW* is examined, it can be seen that in the first four seasons, the nationalistic character emerged. As part of this nationalist character, patriotism and statism were built around Alemdar, who infiltrated the Mafia and destroyed it from within. As an agent of the KGT, Alemdar established order in Turkey and in some situations he used extreme violence for the good of the Turkish state. Irfan Erdogan (2006: 112) defined the series in ultra-right ideology and defined Alemdar as an ultra-right vigilante. In this sense, it is possible to say that the series was very far from the liberal ideology.

This patriotism or 'rescuing the country' leads to distraction from the class differences. When Alemdar and his friends rescue Turkey from the enemy, the country's economic problems such as unemployment and poverty are not shown. Erdogan commented on this issue that "In *VoW*, the relation between Polat and his men is constructed on doing 'things' which is

⁸ This is explained in detail in the 'The others in the series' section below.

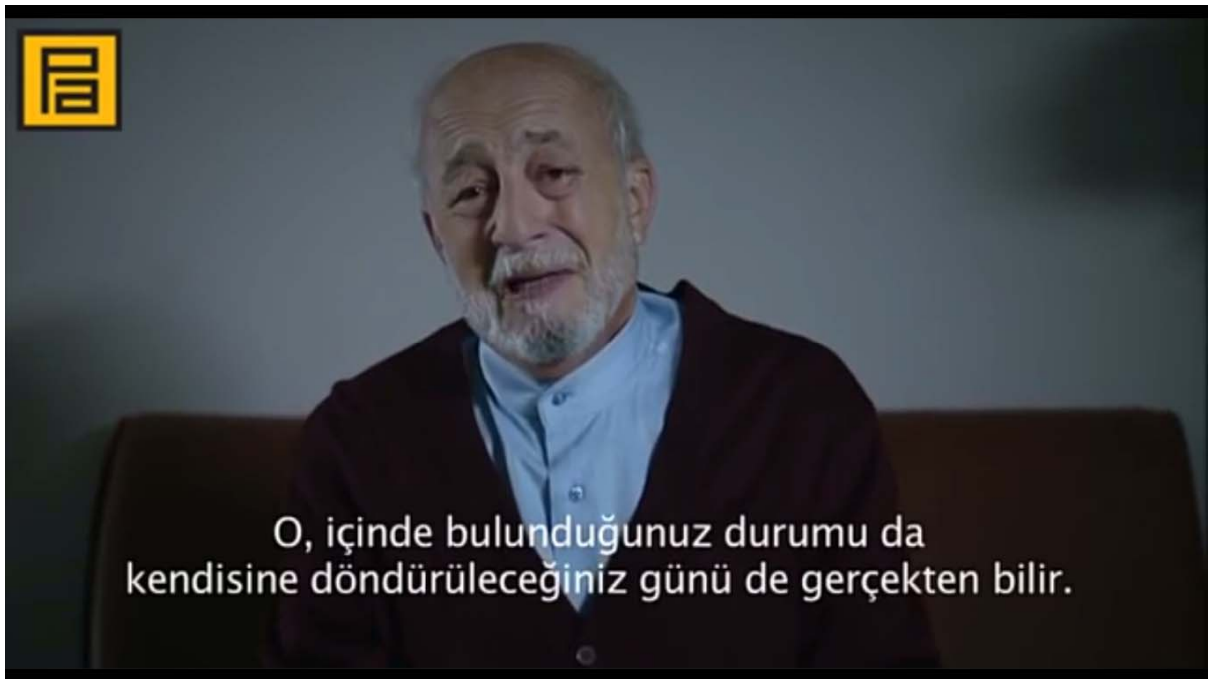
presented as a right, natural and good individual supremacy distinction. Here, the difference is about individual skills, talents, wisdom and leadership, not about class" (*ibid.*, 113). He suggested that by not mentioning these issues, the series reproduced extant class differences and naturalised them.

The series, then, had a nationalistic ideology from the beginning which saw the state as sacred, prioritised it and puts it at the front of every kind of issue. Alemdar and his friends lose their relatives and friends in various story-lines but they still say 'Long live the homeland!' (*Vatan Sagolsun*). First, enemies do things against national security and then Alemdar and his friends respond with full power. For instance, Alemdar struggles with the US in Iraq after the Americans have put hoods on Turkish soldiers, or he goes to Israel after the *Mavi Marmara* crisis. However, this changes in Season 7 with the neo-Ottomanist ideology and although there was not a threat to national security, the series told in its story-line that the Committee of Elders established regional-KGT organisations in order to be more effective in the neighbouring regions. Although there is no threat to Turkey itself, Alemdar and his friends carry out operations in Syria because of the neo-Ottomanist and Islamist features in the ideology which sees the Syrians as the oppressed. In the later seasons of the series, although the nationalist ideology is there, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist features become part of the ideology. A sociologist, Tayfun Atay, also referred to this by adding Islamism to the series. He said that

The beginning of the 2000s was a period when nationalist conspiracy theories were in the forefront and a more 'secular' Turkist-nationalist feature in its theme could be felt. Later, as in the politics, the series sets sail towards 'post-secular' and 'pro-Islamic' waters. Instead of secular-nationalist conspiracy theories and 'othering' impulses, we witnessed the conservative-Islamist ones gaining importance (Atay, 2015b).

In addition to conservative-Islamist ones, the series also used Ottomanist features when the Ottomanist identity became apparent in Turkish politics as a part the AKP hegemony. It is my belief that the ideology in the series does not consist of a nationalist feature anymore. It is a mixture of nationalist, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist features which were explained in Chapters 2 and 3 as the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. In many scenes in *VoW: Ambush*, religious and conservative values play an important role and there are numerous references to religious and conservative features.

First, the character Omer Baba (Father Omer)⁹ represents the ‘conscience’ in the series. Alongside all the violence in the series, Alemdar and his friends visit and consult him in crucial decision moments. Omer Baba gives them guidance and reminds them of the Islamic rules. He cites verses from Quran most of the time. In his scenes, there is special Sufi music in the background and he is always emotional but he is always sane and calm and makes others calm with what he says. Although he was like this from the first seasons, his religious features became very apparent in the later seasons. For instance, there are two scenes in which he prays in Arabic and there are Turkish subtitles to translate what he is saying. Both scenes last for thirty seconds and they are very important because this may be the first instance of using Arabic with Turkish subtitles in a mainstream Turkish television series.



Omer Baba speaks Arabic with subtitles in Turkish: Episode 200, 12:15

There are scenes showing other characters with religious features. In Episode 173, Alemdar has been captured in Syria and members of Al-Mukhabarat torture him. Just before he is tortured he prays in Arabic and he does not suffer a lot, he does not even make a sound. In episode 185, Alemdar prayed again for his fight against his morphine addiction. In this scene, he was seen praying for almost one minute. In another scene in episode 202, his daughter Elif is seen performing a prayer beside her bed. When Alemdar’s girlfriend asks her what she is

⁹ Stepfather and spiritual father of Polat Alemdar.

doing, she says that she forgets to carry out the activity which her grandfather (Omer Baba) used to do. Alemdar sees this and cries. These scenes demonstrate that the series has an Islamic characteristic and there are numerous references to religious values. However, Islam is not the only constituent part of the ideology depicted in the series. Turkishness is also an important part and integrates with Islam. For instance, in the scenes of the Committee of Elders, there are Turkic features such as flags of collapsed Turkish states and ancient Turkic music in the background since this Committee was established with the first Turkish state 2000 years ago.

In another scene, Alemdar defines the nationalistic concept of homeland to his daughter. In this scene in episode 178 (1:14:50), he talks with his daughter and she asks him about his job. He says that he is serving the homeland and he describes what a homeland is. He finds a Quran in a bag hanging on the wall, shows it to her, kisses the Quran and tells that it is the homeland. Then he shows her his mother's headscarf, smells it and says the heart of a mother is the homeland. Next, he breaks a hot loaf, takes a bite out of it, smells it and says that the homeland is what the soil gives us. Finally, he says that the homeland is to serve what the land gives us. Here, it is clear that this concept of a homeland is nationalistic in nature. However, he articulates it using religious and iconic features such as the Quran and his mother's headscarf. Another example is that, in Season 9, the Turkish National Anthem is reinterpreted to the tune of an ancient Islamic song "*Tala' al Badru 'Alayna*, the song that the people of Medina are believed to have sung to the Prophet Muhammad upon his arrival after completing the Hijra, the religious migration, in 622" (Hurriyet Daily News, 2014b). So it can be claimed that the series has an ideology which shares the Turkish-Islamic synthesis features of the AKP.

Another articulation related to the Turkish Islamic synthesis is the Committee of Elders and their methods. For instance, Alemdar asks "What has our ideal been for 2000 years? To establish peace and justice in the world. And after our nation met with Islam, it has been to make Allah's commandments rule over the earth" (Episode 191, 1:18:32). Moreover, according to the Committee's rules, if there is a change in the leadership of the Committee, the previous leader should be killed by the Committee according to the proper rituals. These rituals show characteristics of both Turkic and Islamic culture. For instance, before the leader

dies, he reads some verses from the Quran and then he is strangled with a bow.¹⁰ Again we see Turkic-Islamic synthesis symbols here.

It can be said that the later seasons of the series were in line with the Turkish-Islam synthesis. Moreover, the series had also Ottomanist features. In the series, there is an emphasis on the Ottoman Empire in many scenes and there are symbols and images related to the Ottoman Empire, such as the Ottoman coat of arms and the sultan's signature. These scenes are always connected to the main character or his family members and allies. For instance, Alemdar's father has an antique shop and he is always seen with Islamic and Ottoman objects.



So the neo-Ottomanist ideology consisting of Turkish and Islamic features plays an important role in the series. Although neo-Ottomanism is articulated to Islamic identity, it is also articulated to the nationalist identity. There were many references to a secular nation-state in the first four seasons of *VoW* (2003-2006), but *VoW: Ambush* emphasised neo-Ottomanism since its first episode in 2007. For instance, in the second episode, Alemdar is talking with a member of the 'deep state' organisation about the policies of Turgut Ozal (then Prime Minister and later President of Turkey who introduced neo-Ottomanist policies in the 1990s).

¹⁰ Archery is a very important part of Turkic culture previous Islam. Turkic tribes were famous for horse riding and archery when they were in the Central Asia.

In their conversation, they agree that Ozal's policy of increasing economic investments in the former Ottoman territories was hindered by global actors and ended with Ozal's assassination. They believe that Turkey should increase its activity again in those regions.

According to this ideology (Turkish-Islamist and neo-Ottomanist) in the series, Alemdar and the leader of the Committee of Elders believe that Turkey should be more active in the region. It can be seen that the arguments of the leader of the Committee have neo-Ottomanist characteristics. For example, in one scene, *Aksacılı* gives a mission to the members of the regional KGT:

Aksacılı: Your area of responsibility is the entire area from Bosnia to Turkistan, from Morocco to Yemen. You are commissioned to clear this area of actions and people that are inappropriate for our strategies.

Member: Until today, we have carried out psychological missions such as forming a political base and creating public opinion. However, as far as I understand, we are to carry out operational missions from now on.

Aksacılı: You will carry out surgical operations to expand our area of influence and sustain our influence in the region. (Episode: 167, 17:12)

In Season 8 of *VoW: Ambush*, there is one thing which combines Islam, Turkism and Ottomanism. Kara, Alemdar's most trusted man, is given a mission by Alemdar to form a special team called the Black Flag (*Siyah Sancak*¹¹) which is to operate in 33 countries in the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East, where previously the Ottoman Empire had ruled. He sends Kara to cities such as Kosovo and Belgrade to speak with *Uc Beyleri*.¹² Here, there is again a Turkish-Islamic synthesis, the series uses an Islamic symbol, a black flag. This shows that there are still *Ucbeyleri* in the neighbouring regions waiting for signals from the Turkish state to become active in those regions and they all gather under the name of Black Flag. Also, in one scene in episode 207, while Black Flag members are on an operation, they kill a Russian agent with an old Ottoman pistol and this scene creates a symbolic act and gives a reference to Ottomanism.

¹¹ In episode 212 (48:57) this is explained as follows: "It is Prophet Mohammed's flag of war and one of the first flags of the Turks. It is on the same side as the oppressed until the oppression of the oppressors ends".

¹² A Turkish word to describe frontier lords in the Ottoman Empire.



The old Ottoman pistol in Episode 207, 34:04

So neo-Ottomanist representations and Islamic identity are articulated to the nationalist identity in the series. Furthermore, it also can be seen that, recently, the AKP has also used this Turkish-Islamic identity. In 2015, President Erdogan welcomed the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, with sixteen warriors dressed in historical armour, carrying spears, swords and shields, each representing a Turkish state throughout history. In this way, as a political Islamist, Erdogan was articulating the nationalist identity to his party's Islamic identity. This shows that the ideology of the series and that of the AKP elites were similar and this created intertextuality between them.

In the series, there is also this causality: that Turkey should be more active in the neighbouring regions not just because of Turkey's national interests but there is also a moral issue. Since the peoples in the region were suffering under oppressors, Turkey should do something for these oppressed peoples with whom it has historical and cultural ties. This issue of humanity is the reason for action in Syria. For instance, in episode 164, there is this dialogue between Alemdar and an officer of National Intelligence about the Syrian issue:

Polat: There is no peace for us before the Syrian issue is solved.

Officer: you are right. Major countries see this issue from the perspective of their strategic aims. However, we see this issue from the perspective of humanity and not only from the strategic aims.

There is also a second causality in the series related to nationalism. According to this causality, if the homeland is in danger everyone should volunteer to sacrifice himself in order to save it. The state is sacred according to series and we see many people sacrifice themselves for it. Alemdar himself makes sacrifices many times but also the leader and the elders of the Committee, KGT members and Alemdar's friends do so as well.

Also, for the good of the Turkish state any action becomes legitimate, including torture. In almost every episode, torture scenes are seen. Whereas the enemies of the state torture 'good' characters simply for their own pleasure, 'good' characters also torture the bad characters. For instance, Kara tortures enemies of the state in both Seasons 7 and 8 in order to get information which will save the country. This Jack Bauerian approach to torture which has been discussed by many scholars such as Downing (2007), Van Veeren (2009) and Nikolaidis (2011) can also be seen in *VoW: Ambush*. The torture depicted in the series is legitimate because it is for the state's interests.



So there is a Turkish-Islamic ideology in the series and this runs parallel with the ideology of the AKP politicians. *VoW: Ambush* is an important example of Turkish popular culture in the twenty-first century and can have a crucial role in producing consent for the TFP if it reproduces the dominant discourse in the TFP. The people who conduct the TFP are part of the ideology of political Islam. Davutoglu, for instance, was one of the Islamist intellectuals and academics in the 1990s and he represented and brought this ideology to the TFP in the twenty-first century when he became the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In his term in office, it was seen that Turkey followed an identity-based TFP and there was a secession from the practices of the Kemalist era. Then the neo-Ottomanist identity which the AKP elites brought to the TFP and the security imaginary of political Islamists became important. As discussed in the previous chapters, state officials have ideas about foreign affairs and their ideas are represented by intersubjective and culturally established meanings through discursive practices.

3.3. Articulation

In Chapters 1 and 3, I explained that national interests are social constructions based on culturally established and intersubjective meanings, such as meanings and representations. State officials and others make sense of the country and the world according to these representations. Houghton (2007: 37) explained that state officials and others “do this by identifying objects (including the self and others), posit relations between these objects, and hence shape national interests and identities by defining the world surrounding them”. Weldes (1999b) pointed out that these intersubjective and culturally established meanings relate to the self and the others in the international system and constitute the security imaginary. That is the reason why I examined the speeches of the AKP elites in Chapter 3. I have shown that there were three representations related to the security imaginary of the AKP ideology. State officials act according to these three representations; Turkey as the leader of the Middle East, as the defender of the oppressed and as self-confident Turkey, and these are linguistically articulated by the state officials.

I also contend that popular culture can have an influence on this articulation process if it reproduces the discourse of the state elites. Therefore, Chapter 5, 6 and 7 will focus on these

three representations and how they are articulated in the series. It is also important to investigate a more general articulation about how the series articulates 'us and them' or, in other words, how it approaches Turkey and 'others' to understand the security imaginary in the series. The concept of articulation aligns many terms, concepts and values with each other and then makes other sets the opposite. When this is applied to *VoW: Ambush*, it can be seen how the series has articulated the values and concepts, such as religious and nationalist ones with the Ottomanist ones, and how this draws a frontier. This gives us an idea about the security imaginary in the series. In this section, I shall therefore explain how the three identities in *VoW: Ambush*, the nationalist, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist identities, approach Turkey and the 'others'.

As stated in the previous section, in the first seasons *VoW* had nationalistic features. It was about a man infiltrating deep into the Mafia structure in Turkey and ending its influence on Turkish politics. This man, Polat Alemdar was depicted as a nationalist who prioritised his love for country above everything. For his country, he not only sacrifices his life, he also loses the love of his life, Elif. So for him, Turkey is more important than anything. Moreover, in the first seasons between 2003 and 2006, although the series had a conservative characteristic, it can be said that it did not have religious or Ottomanist features. For instance there were scenes which showed characters drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes. In Episode 36, even the main character, Alemdar drank wine with his girlfriend Elif.



Polat Alemdar drinking wine in *VoW*, Episode 36 (Kurtlar Vadisi, 2015)

However, in *VoW: Ambush* it can be seen that religious and Ottomanist features are articulated to the nationalist characteristic of the series. Alemdar becomes more religious in each season and we see references to Ottomanist features. He is not seen drinking alcohol or smoking for instance. Furthermore, he used Islamic verses when he was tortured (Episode 173) and he became emotional when he saw his daughter Elif praying (Episode 202). So Alemdar presented a more religious identity in *VoW: Ambush* than in the first *VoW* seasons.

VoW: Ambush attempted to articulate nationalist features with Islamic ones. As I described in the previous section, the scene in which Alemdar describes what the homeland is can be given as an example of articulation in the series. With this scene, the series told its audience that the concept of homeland is not only related to nationalism but is also about religion by describing the concept as the Quran and a mother's headscarf. The scene in which the words of the national anthem are sung to the tune of a religious song can be shown as another example of this attempt at articulation. The national anthem is very important for a nation state. It carries a nationalistic meaning. The words of Turkey's national anthem are based on two verses of an epic poem which was written for the fighters in the Turkish Independence War in 1921. The anthem was composed in 1930 after the Republic of Turkey was founded. In 2013, Ismet Ozel, an Islamic intellectual, suggested that the national anthem would be better if it were reinterpreted to the tune of the ancient Islamic song *Tala' al Badru 'Alayna* and he sang the anthem to this tune at a book fair (Milliyet, 2013). He stated that the national anthem should also be 'national' (ODATV, 2013), implying that the current national anthem is not national enough. By saying this, Ozel articulated Islam to nationalism and 'otherised' the republican era during which secular nationalism was strong but religious features were not allowed in the state. In 2014, the series also showed Alemdar singing the anthem in the way that Ozel did. So it can be said that the series also articulated Islamic features into the nationalist ones in the same way that Ozel did in real life. It can also be claimed that the series shared the same ideology as Ozel, which was that of political Islam.

The series otherises the Kemalist identity and articulates it with negative features in relation to religion. The series creates antagonism between the Kemalist ideology and the political Islam identity in many ways. The internal villains, for instance, are somehow related to the secular Kemalist identity. The businessman who has been supported by evil external powers

and is responsible for a number of assassinations has a huge portrait of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in his office. In another example, one of the members of the Committee of Elders, Sencer Bey, is understood later to be a villain and responsible for the assassination of one of the leaders of the Committee. At the beginning of Season 7, he was one of the Elders on the Committee and the leader of the Committee trusted him since they had a shared history. However, Sencer Bey did not share the same ideas with the leader. Whilst the leader of the Committee believed that Turkey should be a regional power, independent from the western alliances, Sencer Bey believed that having such ambitions was very dangerous since Turkey did not have the capabilities or the power to become a regional power. Sencer Bey held these ideas from the beginning of the season and during the Committee meetings he regularly debated this issue with the leader and the other members. From his statements, it can be claimed that he had a discourse similar to that of the main opposition party (the CHP). It can therefore be said that he was representing CHP-minded people. This statement, for instance, shows his approach to the TFP:

Dear friends, there are people among us who have a dream about Empire without becoming a regional power. This is a very dangerous dream. There were some people who had this dream in the first Gulf War. We saw how they made fools of us after the war. This time, losing reputation would not be the only thing we lose. We can even lose some land. Whatever it takes, we should avoid this war. (Episode 172, 38:30)

Whereas in the first episodes in the series he only debates Turkey's ambitions, in the following episodes he takes control of the Committee. We learn that he was responsible for the assassination of one leader. He also persuaded other members of the Committee to believe that the current leader, who believes that Turkey should be a regional power (representing the AKP), is betraying them. As a result, he seizes the leadership and attempts to transform TFP to a more western-oriented style after various deceptions and tricks. After he becomes the leader, the first thing he does is to meet with the American and Israeli ambassadors and then to promise them that Turkey will be a part of the west and will carry out a more coherent political strategy in its policy towards Syria.

During his scenes, we see him in his office in the dark and with a sinister musical background. He is also shown as cunning and uses a perfect western style of speaking without a local accent. At the beginning of the season he is in a wheelchair. It is explained later that he was

injured in an operation when he was serving Turkey in the Middle East. In later episodes, however, we learn that this is a deception; he had healed but he kept it a secret in order to take his revenge on the person who had sent him on the operation in which he was injured. In the series, Alemdar and his team also deal with this character in the same way that they deal with international 'others'. For instance, in one episode Sencer Bey captures Alemdar and hands him over to Israeli agents (Episode 182, 1:00:30).

So through the Sencer Bey character, the secular Kemalist identity is shown as 'other' in the series. The man who has the same discourse as the Kemalist party is revealed to be a cunning traitor. *VoW: Ambush* creates antagonism between the Kemalist and neo-Ottomanist, conservative and religious identities as described above. Whilst the latter identities are aligned with concepts such as patriotism or how a Turkish man acts, the former one, the Kemalist, is aligned with the opposite. This opposition helps the articulation discussed above and 'otherises' the secular identity by showing it as 'bad' and makes the interventionist policies of the neo-Ottomanist features legitimised in the series.

Neo-Ottomanism also is articulated into the nationalist identity in the later seasons although there is no reference to the Ottoman Empire in the first seasons. By articulating the Ottomanist features to nationalist and Islamist ones, the series shapes Alemdar's identity with not only nationalist and conservative features but also with religious and Ottomanist ones. In the first seasons, Alemdar was dealing with Turkey's domestic issues such as the deep Mafia structure in Turkey and the Kurdish issue, but when the AKP became more Ottomanist, the series also became more Ottomanist and touched on regional issues such as relations with Israel, Syria and Iraq. The organisation of which Alemdar was the head in the first seasons, the KGT, expanded its area of activity and a regional-KGT was established. The agents working for this organisation are from all around the neighbouring regions, the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus, the regions where the Ottoman Empire once ruled. Moreover, the Black Flag organisation is also established in later episodes in order to defend 'oppressed' people in these regions and this articulates neo-Ottomanism with Islamic features since the black flag represents the war flag of the Prophet Mohammed. In Season 9, when the Turkish national anthem is sung to an Islamic tune in a Black Flag ceremony, nationalism is also articulated into Ottomanist and religious meanings.

It is interesting that when the AKP came to the power, its ideas, thoughts and values were similar to those of the Christian Democrats in Europe. Many Turkish academics celebrated the AKP's victory and believed that its democratic approach in Turkish politics would normalise democracy in Turkey (Insel, 2003; Tepe, 2005; Ozbudun, 2006; Turunc, 2007).¹³ In the first years of the AKP government, there was no or very little reference to Ottomanist and religious features. However, when the AKP consolidated its power in the following elections and broke the Kemalist hegemony in politics and in the army, Ottomanist and Islamic features emerged. These articulations in *VoW: Ambush* show parallelism with the developments in Turkish politics. Sharing an ideology and ideational background with the AKP, the scriptwriters and producers of the series transformed the series according to the transformation in the AKP, or in Turkish politics.

According to *VoW: Ambush*, a Turkish man who loves his homeland is also neo-Ottomanist, religious and conservative. Other features outside these are otherised in the series. The Kemalist ideology is one of them, as stated above, and there is also a Kurdish group in the series called 'The Organisation' (representing the PKK). The Organisation is a leftist terrorist group which collaborates with the external powers in order to establish a Kurdish state in Turkish territory. The Organisation has some support from Russia, the US, deep states in the EU, Syria and Iran. But in Season 6, the relationship with the Organisation changes because the Committee believes that if Turkey does not solve its Kurdish issue, there will be no chance of becoming a global power (Episode 187, 31:40). Davutoglu also produced the same argument in *Strategic Depth* (2001). It is believed in the series that there should be peace between the Kurds and the Turks in domestic politics. It can be said that the representation of the Kurds became positive in Season 6. It is interesting that this coincided with the politics of the AKP when the AKP started peace talks with the PKK.

People who took part in the Gezi events were also otherised to the others camp. In Season 8, a new character is introduced; a young university student who attends a public demonstration. She is portrayed as a spoiled girl who has friends from the leftist ideology and she deceives her state prosecutor older sister (who is also Alemdar's girlfriend) in order to enter the demonstration area, something which is not allowed. The demonstrators are shown

¹³ Now, these academics criticise the AKP's turn to authoritarianism and Islam.

damaging public property. Also, the series shows that an external power, the Templars, is behind this public demonstration. The young leftists are otherised and the series claims that they had involuntarily become a tool of external powers which wanted to harm Turkey's ambitions to become a regional power by mounting demonstrations of this kind. Again, the ideology of the left is made the opposite and the ideology of *VoW: Ambush* is once more aligned with patriotism.

In the *VoW* world, there is no state in the west which is portrayed with positive features. According to the series, there are countries which have evil plans to prevent Turkey from becoming a regional and global power. They make evil plans in Turkey and also in the other countries in the region. The US and Israel take the lead in this kind of representation. In the series, Israel is an ally of the US and in the region both countries act together. The strategies of the US serve Israel's interest in the Middle East. In episode 172 (26:20), an American agent from the CIA says "Our heart beats for Tel Aviv and our brain works for Washington". The foreign policies of these two countries are represented as if they are the same.

In episode 178 (1:06:50), after Sencer Bey has seized control and become the new leader of the Committee of Elders, he talks with American and Israeli representatives.

American: In your Syria strategy, there are some points which contradict our interests in the region and Israel's national interests.

Israeli: You support the Muslim Brotherhood too much in Syria. If the Muslim Brotherhood seizes power in Syria, it will affect the balance of power in the region. It is *casus belli* according to the security of Israel.

In the same scene, the Israeli representative also demands that Turkey give up its regional power ambitions and in episode 182 (1:00:35), an Israeli agent makes the criticism that "You [Turkey] have turned your face to the Arab world too much". So it is clear that Israel and the US are not happy with Turkey's regional power ambitions and its policy on Syria and want Turkey to be on the same side as the western powers. One of the enemies of the state, Sencer Bey, is also shown to be collaborating with the US and Israel, the states that do not want Turkey more powerful in the region because of their own interests there.

Related to the US, NATO also has a bad reputation in the series. It is portrayed as an organisation which should not be trusted. In one of the scenes of the Committee of Elders, the Elders describe NATO as untrustworthy because it is not doing anything in the Syrian crisis (Episode 167, 27:05). In another scene, one of the villains claims that if NATO wants Assad to leave, he would leave (Episode 195, 1:19:20). It is therefore possible to say that NATO is seen as a negative power which is against Turkey's interests. The representation of NATO in the series also shows that it is against Turkey's regional power ambitions. In episodes 183 to 186, NATO collaborates with people in the deep Turkish state to dismiss high-ranking military officials who believe that Turkey should be a regional power and independent from NATO.

In terms of Syria, Israel and the US collaborate with Assad. In episodes 193 and 194, this issue is covered. In episode 193, an Israeli agent admits that Israel does not want the Assad regime to be overthrown since Israel does not want to be encircled by Muslim Brotherhood regimes. In episode 194, the Turkish minister of foreign affairs states that the US and Israel do not want to overthrow Assad in order to prevent the Muslim Brotherhood from coming into power in Syria. The ideology in the series which has neo-Ottomanist features supports the view that Turkey should be more active in Syria and shows that Assad is an evil character who tortures Syrian 'oppressed' people and forces them to leave Syria in a very bad condition.¹⁴ In addition to Syria, Israel and the US are also shown as collaborators with the Organisation in order to divide Turkey and to prevent it from becoming a regional power.

Alongside the US, Israel and the NATO, there are others in the west who are portrayed as evil and having plans for Turkey. These are first described as 'deep states' of the western countries, such as Germany, France and the UK. At the end of Season 7, the Templars become the organisation which connects all these deep state organisations. The Templars is a secret Christian organisation established after the Crusades. It has influence in all countries and is represented as an organisation which governs the world from behind curtains. It is based in the US and its top cadres live there. The Templars do not want Turkey to become a regional power because an independent Turkey would conflict with their interests in the region. The Armageddon Team works for the Templars and is responsible for fomenting civil wars, public demonstrations and internal conflicts in developing and third-world countries with the aim of

¹⁴ This is explained in more detail in Chapter 6.

making them less powerful. This team comes to Turkey in Season 8 and becomes responsible for various public events and some assassinations of top opinion-leaders such as important Alawi people.¹⁵

In the world of *VoW*, there are evil characters such as Mossad agents who kidnap children or are organ traffickers, or Syrian torturers working for Assad. In episode 183 (2:20), Alemdar becomes a captive of an Israeli character. He sees Alemdar's wounds (he was burned in the previous episodes and has bandages all over his face) and tells him that "I know how it hurts, Polat! I burned many people in Palestine and Lebanon. I still hear their screams and cries". Here, the series draws a very evil portrait. In episode 182, Alemdar's men had shouted and called Israeli agents words such as inglorious and dishonest. Moreover, in episode 220, in a dialogue between Alemdar and his trusted man Kara, Israel is mentioned as the country behind ISIL.¹⁶ In episodes 171 to 174, Alemdar is tortured in a Syrian prison run by Al-Mukhabarat. Also, these Syrian characters kidnap Syrian children and they oppress innocent Syrian civilians in the series.

It is very clear in the series that the west and its collaborators such as the Organisation and Al-Mukhabarat have a very bad reputation. The west's actions always contradict Turkey's interests because they do not want Turkey to become a regional power. They make plans for Turkey and countries in the region for their own interests. These others in the series are also representing as evil and without conscience and are shown doing evil things to oppressed people and some of the characters. Characters such as Alemdar and his friends, on the other hand, are portrayed as people who love their country and work for the interests of Turkey. What they have done in the series so far has been for the sake of their country. In the first seasons, they saved the country from the Mafia organisations supported by external powers, and in the later seasons they work for Turkey's regional power ambitions as a result of the neo-Ottomanist features. Due to these neo-Ottomanist and also religious features, they feel pity for oppressed people in the region, start to act altruistically and even sacrifice themselves for these people. The series aligns them with these features and 'opposites' the others,

¹⁵ The Templars and their plans for Turkey are examined in Chapter 7.

¹⁶ In the series, ISIL is referred to as *Seditler* ('savages').

whether domestic or international, by showing them as devoid of mercy and uninterested in the oppressed people in the region.

Therefore, these 'others' or enemies in the series show that the series sees the west as an enemy. And not only the west, but also other countries such as Iran or in some situations Russia are also seen as a threat. In this sense, *VoW: Ambush* is matching the AKP's neo-Ottomanist identity; it has Turkish, Islamic and neo-Ottomanist features and also treats the west as an 'other'. As discussed in Chapter 3, when the security imaginary of the AKP is analysed, it can be seen that it is a neo-Ottomanist imaginary in which the international system is represented as no longer unipolar but regional powers are increasing, and Turkey is becoming one of these regional powers which has the ability to influence neighbouring regions (as the Ottoman Empire did before). Turkey needs to find this potential according to Davutoglu because Turkey is not an ordinary state on the periphery of western civilisation. In terms of civilization, Turkey is at the centre of Ottoman civilisation (Ozkan, 2014). Kemalism and its aim in terms of a civilisation model, the west, is criticised by the political Islamists. For instance, Davutoglu believed that Kemalism is a utopian project which aims to achieve civilizational change and ignores the historical, cultural, political and social forces in Turkish society (Cornell, 2011). He described the west in robust language and terms such as "inhuman understanding pervaded the heads and souls of the western leaders" (Davutoglu, 1995a), "Catholic Spanish barbarians" (Davutoglu, 1996a), "Christian terrorism and fundamentalism" (Davutoglu, 1995b) and "European fascism" (Davutoglu, 1996b). Thus, it can be said that on an ideational basis, Davutoglu saw the west and the Kemalist hegemony as 'other' and put the Ottoman identity squarely opposed to it.

VoW: Ambush reproduces this security imaginary of the AKP. It looks from a civilizational perspective and otherises the west by articulating it to a meaning in which the west is evil, inhuman and a long-term enemy of the Turkish state. The west is cunning and is responsible for the unfortunate events which Turkey and the Middle East have endured because it does not want Turkey to become a regional power. In an article in which she examined the movie *VoW: Iraq*, Lerna Yanik (2009: 154) also indicated that the movie has an anti-American, anti-western and anti-Semitic character and stated that

... *Valley of the Wolves: Iraq* contains an idealized representation of Islam, Turkish presence in the Middle East and a very negative view of Americans and the United States. While the

movie portrays Islam and Turkish presence in the Middle East as elements of peace and stability, the Americans are portrayed as religious zealots trying to bring their own version of 'order' to Babylon and thus destabilizing the supposed order in the Middle East. Given this framework, in a nutshell, the movie can be described as the clash of 'Pax Turca' along with 'Pax Islamica', against the American Empire.

Along with anti-American, anti-Semitic and anti-western features, *VoW: Ambush* has an anti-Kemalist character because the Kemalist ideology believes that western civilisation is the one to which Turkey should belong, not the Ottoman civilisation, and it is against the neo-Ottomanist imaginary of twenty-first century Turkey. It therefore puts Kemalist ideology in the opposite position for these reasons and it approaches international issues from the perspective of the AKP elites' security imaginary.

3.4. Interpellation

As I stated in Chapter 1, interpellation is an important process for the AKP elites to hail individuals to the specific positions and identities which they created. Klotz and Lynch (2007: 80) explained this as "Publics are 'hailed' into specific identities through the reiteration of characteristics of selves and others. People presumably acquiesce to, or actively embrace, representations when they recognize themselves in these tropes". My contention is that *VoW: Ambush* might also play a role in this process because it is reproducing the discourse, ideology and representations used by the AKP elites. In the previous sections, it was explained that the series has a similar ideology to that of the AKP and articulates meanings with the same structure as the AKP did. But how can the viewers be aligned with these meanings, identities or ideology? I shall explain this in the following section.

Particular characters are very important to mention here. Polat Alemdar, his father Omer Baba, his loyal friend Kara and the regional KGT member and the leader of it, Akif, could be expected to be identified with for different reasons. First, Alemdar is the hero of the series and the most popular character in *VoW: Ambush*. In fact, there is a special relationship between him and the viewers. For instance, this can be understood from a news item that a businessman issued a full-page message of condolence in a newspaper when he thought that Alemdar had been murdered in one episode (Milliyet, 2012b). In another news item, it was

reported that a high-school teenager had killed his friend and said that he was being Polat Alemdar (Yuksel, 2005). There have been other news reports of people who have emulated Alemdar and used violence, such as shooting a lawyer in the knee (Kurt, 2009) or more recently a male teacher wounding a twelve-year-old female student in the throat with a knife while repeating an aphorism of Alemdar, “I do not show off, I do cut off heads” (Dogan, 2015). Alemdar has become an idol and the films and the series continue this idolisation. For example, “when Turkish high-schools pupils were asked who their role model was, 19.4% of those surveyed answered ‘Polat Alemdar’” (Yanik, 2009: 158). This idolising of Alemdar is reflected in fashion-wear and shops sell blue shirts as a “Polat Alemdar shirt” (Alphan, 2009) and newspapers run stories such as “Where you can buy Polat’s new black coat” (Ulke, 2015).

So Alemdar, as the main character and hero of the series, is one of the important characters for the identification process. It can also be claimed that the viewers are aligned with his point of view. His values, ideas, identity and ideology have become very important for viewers. When Alemdar is examined, it can be found that he is a patriot who prioritises his country in all kinds of situation. He also sacrifices the person closest to him, Elif, in pursuit of his patriotic duty. Nationalism is one of his key features. He is also a conservative man and in *VoW: Ambush* we see that he has huge respect for his family, especially for his father. He always visits his father and asks him questions when sometimes he faces dilemmas. He does not drink alcohol in the later seasons, most of the time he drinks tea. He uses prayer beads just as most Turkish people do. In the later seasons, it can be seen that he becomes more religious and prays in Arabic in some scenes. It is therefore possible to say that the AKP ideology which consists of Turkish, conservative and Islamic features come into existence in the character of Polat Alemdar. He also carries the same cultural characteristics that an ordinary Turkish man has. All these specificities of Alemdar cause viewers to align themselves with him.

When the other characters mentioned above are examined, it can be said that Omer Baba, Alemdar’s father, is also an important figure for identifying with. Since he is like an ordinary elder of a conservative Turkish family, viewers can also align themselves with his ideas and perspectives. Omer Baba is a very religious man who has an antique shop full of Islamic and Ottoman artefacts. He is the wise man of the neighbourhood and people visit him and ask questions and when someone’s life is in danger he prays for them. He addresses the Quran to solve every kind of question. For instance, in Season 7, he prays for his sick wife to get

better. There are two long scenes in that season in which he is shown praying in Arabic. He believes that “Our salvation will be by holding the rope that Allah sends for us, in other words, the Quran” (Episode 219, 55:20). This character dies in Season 9 in 2014 while he is praying at a mosque with his son. Alemdar does not break from his praying even though he realises that his father has died, and he cries. The viewers can align with Omer Baba’s religious approach to the issues depicted in the series. His scenes have the ability to address religious people and try to evoke emotions such as trust because he is a religious wise man and sadness because of what happens to him and his family.

Another character with whom viewers can identify themselves is Kara. Kara (which means ‘black’ in Turkish) is believed to represent a real person in Turkish politics, an intelligence officer named Yesil (which means ‘green’).¹⁷ He is one of the most trusted people around Alemdar and is smart, clever and has a sense of humour. He has also a violent side to his nature like Alemdar and sometimes we see him torturing people for the sake of the Turkish state. He has a local accent and always wears a leather jacket. He lives a very simple life, drinks Turkish tea, eats bread, Turkish bagels, white cheese and tomatoes and stays in places in the slum areas. For all these reasons, he can be identified with by the ‘lower class’ viewers who live a similar life-style.

Kara is given very important missions by Alemdar, such as establishing the Black Flag organisation and missions in neighbouring regions such as in Kosovo, Serbia, Syria, Georgia and Afghanistan. He has a nationalist identity because he never questions the missions which he is given and he never acts in opposition to his country even though he loses his two-year-old grandson who is killed by a time-bomb. Also, he has a neo-Ottomanist identity because he operates in the old Ottoman lands. Both of these characters, Alemdar and Kara, are tortured by the Syrian regime. In Season 7, Alemdar is tortured by the Assad regime forces over three episodes and in Season 8 Kara is kidnapped and tortured by the same forces over two episodes. It is possible to say that these scenes create feelings of both sadness and anger. Also, when the VoW-related fan forums are examined, it can be found that some of his scenes were thought to be amusing because of his sense of humour. Since he is one of the most

¹⁷ The series makes a connection between a fictional character, Kara, and a real person, Yesil, by using the names of two colours.

trusted people around Alemdar and he approaches every issue very calmly, feelings of trust can be included in the feelings which he evokes.

Akif is the other character who may be important for identification. He is first introduced in Season 7 when Alemdar establishes the regional-KGT organisation. Akif is one of the members of the regional-KGT. Those members are all young agents from Turkey and the neighbouring regions. Akif is Turkish and the most talented one among these members. At the end of Season 7, he becomes the leader of the regional-KGT. The regional-KGT represents the neo-Ottomanist ambitions of Turkey because their nationalities are drawn from the regional countries and they operate in countries such as Georgia, Iraq, Albania and Serbia. Since they are young men, it is possible to claim that the series aimed to interpellate young people to their positions. Tayfun Atay wrote in *Cumhuriyet* that “Polat and his friends grew old in ten years. The production needed young, new faces to make the series more receptive for young people. For this reason, a young team entered the KGT. Of course, Polat was raised to the *Aksacli* category” (Atay, 2015b). When Akif becomes the leader of the KGT, he brings dynamism; he is very ambitious and stubborn and sometimes does not listen to Alemdar but does what he thinks best, but when he does that he becomes unsuccessful. He also understands technology and makes the KGT technologically more advanced. For instance, they use the internet for operations against the London Stock Exchange and they use drones for operations in Turkey. So it can be said that young people among the viewers can identify themselves with Akif and the other young agents of the KGT.

So the audience of the series can identify themselves with these various characters. Alemdar himself is the most important character with whom they can identify because he is the hero of the series and we see the events from his point of view. His approaches, ideas, identities and values shape the events depicted in the series. His emotions (although the actor is not good at showing the emotions) and reactions to the events are depicted in detail in the series. In addition to Alemdar, other characters such as Omer Baba, Kara and Akif can be identified with for the different reasons which were explained above. The scenes in which they might evoke feelings such as pity, anger and trust and how these scenes can interpellate the viewers to specific positions are explained and discussed in detail in the next chapters.

Conclusion

This reading of *VoW: Ambush* suggests that a popular cultural product might have a role in creating consent for the TFP. In this chapter, I have analysed the series under four themes. First, I have demonstrated that the series gives information about world politics and IR terms. Second, I have examined the series in terms of ideology and shown that the ideology in the series is a combination of neo-Ottomanism and the Turkish-Islam synthesis, very similar to the AKP ideology. Third, I have illustrated how the series articulates Turkey and ‘the others’ as a result of the nationalist, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist identities in its ideology. I have also shown that the discourse of the AKP elites, their approach to Turkey’s national interests, their identities and their way of thinking can all be seen in *VoW: Ambush* as popular representations and the series is not only reproducing similar discourses but also reproducing precisely the same ideology and security imaginary.

People have been exposed to the discourse of the state elites in the media, and as one of the most popular television series in Turkey for more than ten years, *VoW: Ambush* also reproduces these discourses. Moreover, the series is perceived as ‘real’ by the viewers. People in the fan forums discuss the series before and after each episode and they analyse trailers before the episodes are shown. Here, the most important issue is that there is a belief, a myth, that the *VoW* series are not just a popular cultural product, it is believed that the series reflects real events in a television series format and it can even predict future events in Turkish politics. Politicians and the Turkish media have also become part of the discussion and have reproduced this belief and myth. As a result, this feature of *VoW* creates an intertextual meaning which is that *VoW* actually represents the reality and this blurs the line between fiction and reality. This feature of *VoW*, therefore, increases its ability to create consent for specific policies since it is reproducing the neo-Ottomanist state identity and security imaginary of the AKP, and is not giving a voice to alternative approaches to the TFP but is otherising them. The discourse and the visual elements in *VoW: Ambush* and the discourse of the AKP work together and constitute an intertext which can produce common understandings about the security imaginary. Consequently, it can be claimed that *VoW: Ambush* can help to constitute a new common understanding of the ‘new’ TFP.

Chapter 5: *VoW: Ambush* and the Representation of Turkey as the Leader of the Middle East

Introduction

In Chapter 3, I examined three representations or features of the AKP in terms of the TFP. These discursively constructed representations, Turkey as the leader of the Middle East, the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East and self-confident Turkey, create subject positions by articulating specific meanings and have the ability to interpellate individuals to these positions by means of their reiteration and reproduction in the speeches of the AKP elites. Individuals then see international issues from the perspective of the AKP politicians and that may lead to the production of consent for particular foreign policies.

The established AKP hegemony in Turkish politics and the Turkish media influences this process in a positive way because the AKP elites can find places in almost all television channels and reiterate these positions. Moreover, newspapers, columnists and debate programmes also reproduce these positions and this helps to interpellate individuals to these positions. However, it is my belief that popular culture can be more effective in this process because of its consumption by the masses and therefore I am investigating one of the most popular Turkish television series, *VoW: Ambush*, as a case. In Chapter 4, I explained the popularity of *VoW: Ambush* and why it was chosen as a case. In that chapter I examined the series under four themes: information, ideology, articulation and interpellation, and showed that it has a similar ideology and approach to international politics as the AKP elites.

In this chapter, I shall investigate the representation of Turkey as the leader of the Middle East and explain how this representation is reproduced by *VoW: Ambush*. For this purpose, I shall analyse the series in terms of three concepts I have outlined in the previous chapter: ideology, articulation and interpellation. As methods, I shall use discourse analysis and examine some specific scenes and dialogues. This first representation in the TFP was explained in more detail in Chapter 3. Therefore it will not be mentioned again in this chapter. I shall then investigate the ideology in the first section and this will be followed by articulation related to the representation of Turkey as the leader of the Middle East. Finally, I shall investigate the interpellation process in order to understand whether the series creates consent for particular foreign policies.

1. Ideology and Leadership

In Chapter 4, I explained that *VoW: Ambush* had an ideology constituted by neo-Ottomanist, nationalist and Islamist identities. In this sense, it is very similar to the ideology of the AKP. The characters representing the Turkish state (as members of a deep-state organisation in the series such as KGT and the Committee of Elders) believe that Turkey should be more proactive in the region, as the AKP politicians think. In this section, I shall explain this ideology in terms of the leader of the Middle East representation in the TFP and examine the causalities which the representation creates.

According to the ideology depicted in the series, Turkey is seen as the leader of not only the Middle East but also the Balkans and the Caucasus, the regions that were governed by the Ottoman Empire for centuries. In Season 7, with the establishment of the regional-KGT organisation, the neo-Ottomanist feature of the series started to increase. In episode 167 (17:12), *Aksacli* defined the area of responsibility of the regional-KGT as “all regions from Bosnia to Turkistan, from Morocco to Yemen”. These regions are Muslim-majority regions which were once ruled by the Ottoman Empire. Then, however, the series draws a line and does not include Christian-majority regions such as Greece, Serbia or Hungary, places which were also ruled by the Empire.

In *VoW: Ambush* there is an emphasis on being an empire. In episode 172 (28:30) for instance, the Committee of Elders discussed Turkey’s Syrian issue and *Aksacli* believed that Turkey should be more active and be a part of agreements which redraw the maps of the Middle East:

Aksacli: These territories were drawn by two generals during the First World War [he means the Sykes-Picot Agreement between the UK and France]. They were drawn without paying attention to any social, economic, geographical, ethnic or historical factors. They created three Sunni states: Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. Today, it is not clear how many states they will create or how they will draw the lines. If we do not sit around this table, we will have to agree whatever they decide as we had to do in the First World War. (episode 172, 38:30)

The imperialist ambition in the series became clearer in episode 197, when Alemdar speaks as *Aksacli* with the Elders. In this scene, there is a debate on a new constitution between Alemdar and the Elders and Alemdar states that “We should claim with our new constitution and say to our public and to all the world that we have returned to our imperialist claims”. So the ideology in the series sees Turkey from an imperialistic perspective in which Turkey has a similar influence in the neighbouring regions as once the Ottoman Empire had. This approach puts Turkey in a central position of these regions and makes it the leader of these regions. According to this, Turkey as a leader is following a pro-active foreign policy and can carry out operations and intervene in politics in these regions. *VoW: Ambush* also demonstrates that people in those regions want Turkey to have this role. In Season 8, for example, there are still *Ucbeyleri*¹⁸ in the neighbouring regions waiting for a signal from the Turkish state to become active in those regions. Therefore, according to the ideology in the series, the Ottoman Empire, or being an empire, is glorified. Turkey’s neo-Ottomanist ambitions are glorified and Turkey is seen as the leader of these regions and of the peoples in them.

Moreover, four features of the leadership representation explained in the previous section can also be seen in the series as well. First, in the series there is no hesitation in carrying out operations in the neighbouring regions. Alemdar, Kara or members of the KGT act without hesitation if there is a mission in Turkey or outside Turkey. This can also be explained by the representation of a self-confident Turkey which is demonstrated in Chapter 7. These actions can be undertaken without hesitation because it is believed that Turkey, or rather Alemdar, is given a warrant for action because of Turkey’s leadership status. For instance, in episode 163, Alawi representatives from Syria and Turkey discuss the Syrian issue and Turkey’s involvement in it. One of the representatives describes Alemdar as a leader who is going to unite Syrians, Alawis and Sunnis if the Alawis stop supporting the Assad regime. In episode 167, in a dialogue between the elders, *Aksacli* states:

We are not slaves of the UN or of NATO. The victors in the Second World War established this world system. They chose a role for us here. We agreed to play this role. However, it is not the 1950s or the 1970s world system any more [*Alemdar’s Elder friend nods*]. We have more voice in NATO and the UN as a result of our increasing power. *We [with increasing stress] have to be the*

¹⁸ A Turkish word to describe frontier lords in the Ottoman Empire.

representative of the Turkic and Islamic world in there due to our historical ties. (episode 167: 27:05)

According to *Aksacli*, Turkey is the representative of the Turkic and Islamic world. The belief in the series is that Turkey is expected to have this role. In episode 184, Alemdar also reiterates this, saying that “Islam and the Turkic world expect our leadership. For the first time we are trying to be a global actor. If we lose their trust once more, it would be very hard to gain it again”. So according to the neo-Ottomanist ideology combined with the Islamic and Turkic identities stressed in the series, Turkey’s leadership status is also believed in by the peoples in Turkic and Islamic world, and this gives a warrant for action with no hesitation.

Second, according to the ideology in the series, Turkey’s moral status gives it a warrant for action. The series believes that Turkey has always provided peace and justice to those regions. Islam is also one of the features of Turkey and Turkey has also an Islamic leadership responsibility in these regions. Alemdar sees the Turks as a civilisation which has an ideal to be a leader in the region. He describes this as “What has been our ideal for 2000 years? To establish peace and justice in the world. And after our nation met with Islam, it was to let Allah’s commandments rule over the earth” (episode 191, 1:18:32). Thus, the ideology in the series sees Turkey’s moral status from an Islamic perspective and gives references to historical and Islamic features. In episode 167, *Aksacli* talks with the Elders and states that sectarianism is not one of the features of Turkey’s approach to the region. He states:

We do not have a problem as Sunni or Shia. We do not want anybody to be oppressed because of their ethnic background under our area of influence ... In their area of influence, the powers which provide justice and right without making ethnic and religious distinctions have always been exalted throughout history. If you look at the days when peace and stability prevailed in this region, you see justice and right ... We are the most important power in this region. If we believe that in our midst, the world will accept it. (episode 167, 27:05)

Instead of sectarianism, Turkey has always provided justice to the region with its moral leadership and that has created peace and justice in the region. However, when Turkey released herself from this leadership responsibility, the region became more conflicted. In episode 192 (5:30), *Aksacli*, Alemdar and Hoca (a character who represents Ahmet Davutoglu in the series) discuss Turkey’s moral leadership:

Alemdar: The reasons and aims of the conflicts and tensions in our region and the world are going to continue the exploitation. We need to produce a global value opposite to this capitalist order.

Aksacılı: Our references are obvious: civilisations that we founded throughout history, our cultural heritage and the most important source of this heritage, Islam.

Alemdar: They regarded Islam instead of Communism as the enemy of western civilisation after the end of the Cold War because they knew that Islam is the only alternative to capitalism. They produced radical groups such as Al-Qaida in the laboratory to demonstrate that Islam is barbaric, outdated and uncivilised.

Hoca: By doing that they want to remove the only alternative against the system of exploitation. What we should do is to create a model for the world. If we raise hopes and show that an alternative world order is possible, all exploited countries in the region and the world would stand with us.

In this scene, it can be said that the series sees Turkey's moral leadership in Islam and believes that Turkey should create an alternative model for the people in the neighbouring regions. Turkey is seen as a model for the Middle Eastern countries because of its secular and 'democratic' features. Since it has a Muslim-majority population, these features are shown as a model for Muslim countries. The series, then, accepts these features, puts more emphasis on Islam and demonstrates this moral leadership feature in these dialogues.

Here, it must be said that the main actor of the series, Necati Sasmaz (Alemdar), released a video after the military coup in Egypt which toppled the Muslim Brotherhood. Sasmaz claimed in the video that "Some external powers are playing their own games in Muslim countries by finding pawns for themselves. I believe that you, my Egyptian brothers, will spoil this game and beat them down to size" (Haber7, 2013a). This video can be interpreted as showing that first, the members of the production company believed that they could affect Egypt by using a celebrity in solidarity with the Egyptian people, and second, the production was on the same page as the TFP in terms of Egypt since it was using a similar discourse. Raci Sasmaz, the brother of Necati Sasmaz, who is one of the producers and one of the script writers of the series, said in an interview that Turkey is the only country that can prevent any kind of oppression in the region. He stated that "... Turkey seems to be the greatest candidate because it has potential and cadres who can use this potential. We postponed our global vision in 1923 [when the Republic of Turkey was founded]. Now, history forces us whether

we like it or not. Because we have proved ourselves in this region before, we proved that there can be peace and security. It is in our codes" (El-Aziz, 2013). So it is important to say that the moral leadership representation is not just part of the ideology in the series. Also, the production company, in this example the Sasmaz brothers, believes that Turkey is a moral leader in this region. They also share the ideology of the series and the AKP. Moreover, their comments on the Egypt issue or in general terms create an intertextuality between the series, their speeches and the speeches of the AKP elites. This intertextuality can play a role in making the leadership representation more intelligible for the viewers.

According to the third feature of leadership, a leader has obligations and responsibilities and this gives a warrant for action. The neo-Ottomanist ideology in the series also has this feature. It approaches the issues related to the Syrian crisis from this perspective and gives Turkey, or Alemdar, responsibilities to protect oppressed people in the region. Turkey should be more active because it has historical and cultural ties with these peoples and since it is the leader it is Turkey's responsibility to do something for them. Since the series looks from the Ottomanist perspective, it believes that Turkey should follow an interventionist policy because the Ottoman heritage gives Turkey this responsibility for regional issues. This gives Turkey warrants for action in Syria, for instance. This can be seen in the dialogues in the series. For instance, in episode 166 (1:22:53), *Aksacli* discusses Turkey's regional power status with the Committee of Elders and describes this responsibility as follows: "Our country is developed now. We do not have a survival problem. We *have to* pursue pro-active policies in the region from now on". In episode 167 (27:05), when he says "We have more voice in NATO and the UN as a result of our increasing power. We [he stresses this] *have to* be the representative of the Turkic and Islamic world in there due to our historical ties", he is again reiterating this feature that Turkey is a more powerful country, a regional power and this gives Turkey a responsibility or obligation to be more active in the region.

Here, it can also be said that the production company feels a responsibility or duty for the region. That can be understood from the response to Israel. In episode 73 in 2009, there is a scene in which Alemdar undertakes an operation to rescue a boy who has been kidnapped by Mossad agents and he kills an Israeli agent. In one scene, blood sprays over the Star of David on the Israeli flag. This episode created a reaction in Israel and the Turkish Ambassador in Tel-Aviv, Oguz Celikkol, was called to talk with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Israel Danny Ayalon

about the scenes in the series. The meeting resulted in humiliation for Turkey and created a crisis because “Ayalon was caught on camera instructing the Israeli TV news crew covering the event to make sure that its footage captured the fact that Celikkol had been deliberately seated on a chair lower than that of his Israeli counterpart” (Klein, 2010). The production company released a statement about this issue saying that “Instead of preventing the exposure of its inhuman activities by diplomatic channels, the Israeli administration should stop its violence against Palestinian children immediately. *VoW* will continue to say the right things and expose wrongs” (Hurriyet, 2010). This approach of the series can be interpreted as that *VoW* had a mission, responsibility or duty to ‘tell the truth’ about regional politics.

The fourth feature of the leadership representation is that the decisions and actions of a leader are in part altruistic rather than for its own gain. This is also part of the leadership identity of Turkey in the series. The ideology in the series sees Turkey as a leader which deals with regional problems not for its own gain or interest. Instead, Turkey should approach regional issues altruistically, for the sake of the regional peoples and accepting the cost of being the leader. This gives Turkey a warrant for action in the region. In episodes 171-174, when Alemdar goes to Syria to rescue the Syrian people from the oppressor organisation, *Aksacli* tells him that is a suicide mission. Alemdar acknowledges this but even so goes to Syria because he knows that there is a cost to being a leader. During a shoot-out between Turkish and Syrian groups, he jumps between them to rescue a Syrian child who was caught in the cross-fire.

The dialogues in the series also show this altruism. During Alemdar’s mission in Syria, for instance, he talks with an officer of the Free Syrian Army:

Alemdar: If we do not do that, you cannot get the weapons. I came here to transport weapons to you.

Officer: Polat Alemdar, you are a great man. But you will pay for this with your life.

Alemdar: If this fire in Syria is not put out, all people in the Middle East will be burnt. Which one is more important, *my life or yours?*

Officer: I will sacrifice my life with you. But I will still do what you say. We have only fear and that is of being captured by those oppressors, not of dying.

Alemdar: *They can capture me but I will not let it happen to you.* (episode 171: 1:36:40)

As can be understood from this dialogue, Alemdar is prioritising Syrians' lives. He approaches this issue altruistically and knows there is a cost if he wants to help people in the region and he accepts it because of his/Turkey's leadership identity. This can be seen from a broader perspective in this next dialogue between Alemdar and one of the representatives of the Templars in the final episode of Season 7:

Alemdar: We cannot look at this situation as pragmatists as the people in the west do. We have cultural and historical ties with those people there. It is true that we see these people as if they are our own people and approach this issue in an emotional way.

The Templar: Being emotional is a luxury, Polat Alemdar. It brings a huge cost with it. But you do not have the economic power to bear this cost. Over time, you opened your arms to the Kurds in Halabja. Everybody applauded you. You opened your arms to the Chechens in Russian War. The west congratulated you. Now, you show to the world that there is still a conscience by embracing Syrian refugees. The west presents congratulations to you at best.

Alemdar: You are right. People in the west cannot even empathise with us. They are daunted even by the *cost calculation*.

As can be seen, the series, with its neo-Ottomanist ideology, believes that because of Turkey's historical and cultural ties, it cannot look at regional issues from a pragmatist perspective and knows that there is a cost for that, which Turkey embraces. This leadership shows that even though the cost is too high, Turkey should help the peoples in the regions where the Ottoman Empire ruled once, no matter what. Moreover, it should also be mentioned here that one of the aphorisms in the series, spoken in the first episode of *VoW* in 2003 and prevailing across the subsequent seasons and becoming very popular among the viewers, is that 'the one who thinks of his own end can never be a hero'. This understanding shows that there is an altruism right from the first seasons. But this altruism in the first seasons was for the Turkish state; Alemdar and his friends sacrifice their lives to rescue the Turkish state in the first seasons. When the neo-Ottomanist ideology becomes prominent in the later seasons, this altruism starts to work for the regional peoples because the Turkish state means more than a nation state, according to the ideology. This articulation of the meaning will be explained in more detail in the next section.

2. Articulating the 'Leader of the Middle East'

In Chapters 1 and 3, I explained that representations are culturally established and intersubjective meanings which socially construct national interests. State elites and individuals make sense of the world and their country within the world according to these representations by identifying objects and positing relationships between them (Houghton, 2007; Weldes (1999b) and these representations linguistically articulated by state officials constitute the security imaginary. In Chapter 4, I explained the articulation in the series in more general terms. It focused on how conservatist, Islamist and Ottomanist features were articulated into the nationalist feature of the series. In this section I shall examine the articulation of the leadership representation in the series and show how the series has articulated this representation and created antagonism between the neo-Ottomanists and the Kemalists.

As I explained in Chapter 4, the first *VoW* seasons did not have any neo-Ottomanist or Islamist identities. Between 2003 and 2006, the series focused on the Mafia structure in Turkey and Alemdar dealt with this structure and its external supporters. These seasons had an ultra-nationalist feature and Turkey's leadership status was not on the agenda as it was in Turkish politics at that time. However, with the change in *zeitgeist*, by which I mean when the AKP consolidated its power and its ideology became more prominent in Turkish politics, *Vow: Ambush* started to articulate neo-Ottomanist features into the nationalist feature. This led the series to discuss and invite the leadership representation of Turkey. In that era, Erdogan was welcomed with 'World Leader' signs after his outburst at the World Economic Forum in Davos (BBC News, 2009) and Turkey was seen as a leader by domestic and international academic commentators and think-tanks (see Aras, 2009b; Friedman, 2007; Barysch, 2011). At that time, *VoW: Ambush* also started to discuss the leadership representation of Turkey and interpreted this representation from the neo-Ottomanist perspective, as I explained in the previous section and in Chapter 4.

Whilst the series articulated neo-Ottomanist features, it also created antagonism between the AKP identity and the Kemalist identity. It otherised the Kemalists who believed that Turkey should turn her face towards the west rather than the east, that Turkey should follow a more cautious and *pro-status-quo* foreign policy, and that Turkey is a nation-state which has renounced its imperial past. In some dialogues, the series commented that the Kemalist era

has been a 'century-long sleep'. In episode 179, Alemdar spoke about this as follows: "This century-long sleep raised fear among certain people. It created a belief that we will not be a great state; that they will not let us become a great country. They thought that the imperialists would take our lands if we attempt to become a global power again" (episode 179, 1:09:57). So according to the series, Turkey had been asleep since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 because the Kemalists, the founders of the Republic, feared the imperialists. Alemdar believed that this is the reason why the Kemalists do not embrace Turkey's leadership position.

In Season 7, a new character was introduced called Sencer Bey. He was one of the Elders in the Committee and he had arguments similar to those of the opposition party, the CHP, when the Elders discussed the TFP. These scenes were very long and whereas *Aksacli*, the leader of the Committee, believed that Turkey should be a regional power and the leader in her regions, Sencer Bey always produced counter-arguments and insisted that Turkey should not have imperialist ambitions in the region. This creation of opposition began with dialogues in the Committee and reached a peak when Sencer Bey launched a coup on the Committee and attempted to assassinate *Aksacli*. This antagonism can be seen in the dialogues. For instance, in episode 167 (27:05) *Aksacli* stated that

We are not a slave of the UN or NATO. The victors in the Second World War established this world system. They chose a role for us here. We agreed to play this role. However, it is not the 1950s and 1970s world system any more [*Alemdar's Elder friend nods*]. We have more voice in NATO and the UN as a result of our increasing power. We [*he stresses this*] have to be the representative of the Turkic and Islamic world because of our historical ties.

From this speech, it can be said that *Aksacli* believed that Turkey had had to play a passive role in the twentieth century. Because of its lack of power, Turkey could not be an important actor in the world system. Now, however, Turkey can be the leader of the region once again because of its increasing power. In the same scene, Sencer Bey responded to these arguments of *Aksacli* as follows:

Friends, regional politics are conducted with regional countries. We are still thinking according to beyond the Atlantic. However, there are Russia and Iran close to us. You will either deal with them or fight them. Since we do not have sufficient power to fight them, it would be a huge mistake to produce regional politics if we do not make agreements with them.

In the same dialogue, he thought *Aksacılı* is an idealist after *Aksacılı* says “We do not want anybody, either Shia or Sunni, to be harmed in our area of influence”. This antagonism is created between *Aksacılı*, whose speeches are very similar to those of the AKP elites, and Sencer Bey, whose speeches are similar to those of the Kemalists.¹⁹ In episode 172 (38:30), this antagonism becomes more intensified. Again, in a meeting of the Committee of Elders, *Aksacılı* and Sencer Bey were debating about Syria and Turkey’s approach to the issue. Sencer Bey became angry because of the regional power ambitions of the other Elders and said

Dear friends, there are people among us who have a dream about Empire without becoming a regional power. This is a very dangerous dream. There were some people who had this dream in the first Gulf War. We saw how they make fools of us after the war. This time, our reputation would not be the only thing we would lose. We could lose even some land. Whatever it takes, we should avoid this war.

Just as the CHP elites were warning at that time, Sencer Bey also warns the Committee of Elders to avoid a war with Syria. According to him, Turkey should not intervene in Middle Eastern politics by itself. However, in the same scene *Aksacılı* responds to Sencer Bey by saying that:

These territories were drawn up by two generals during the First World War [he is referring to the Sykes-Picot Agreement here]. They were drawn up without paying attention to any social, economic, geographical, ethnic or historical factors. They created three Sunni states: Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. Today, it is not clear how many states they will create or how they draw the lines. If we do not sit around this table, we will have to agree to whatever they decide as we did in the First World War.

In this scene, *Aksacılı* expresses his belief that Turkey should not be afraid to become involved in regional politics and he opposes Sencer Bey. This antagonism created in the series can also be seen in later episodes. It becomes more intensified when Sencer Bey seizes control the Committee. After he has seized power, he attempts to assassinate *Aksacılı* and the first thing he does about the TFP is to make an agreement with the US and Israel about regional politics and then discharge military personnel who had similar thoughts to those of *Aksacılı*. This antagonism in the series helped the neo-Ottomanist ideology to articulate with particular values and concepts. It aligned the neo-Ottomanist identity with concepts such as rights,

¹⁹ This opposition between the AKP and the Kemalists was examined in Chapter 3.

justice, peace and stability in the Middle East, and self-confidence by using a character who represented the AKP ideology and used the AKP discourse. This character, *Aksacli*, believed that Turkey's involvement in the region as the leader would create justice, peace and stability, and that Turkey would end the sectarian conflicts in the region. Therefore, the neo-Ottomanist view did not have a negative meaning in the series but was aligned with these concepts. On the other hand, the series had another character, Sencer Bey, who represented the Kemalist ideology and used the Kemalist discourse. Sencer Bey's thoughts and ideas about the same issue were very different from those of *Aksacli* and were aligned with negative concepts such as fear, lack of self-confidence, betrayal and so on. By articulating the Kemalist ideology with the negative meanings and the neo-Ottomanist ones into the positive meanings, the Turkey as the leader of the Middle East representation became a positive feature in the series.

3. Interpellation to the 'Leader of the Middle East

As stated in the previous chapters, the process of interpellation to the subject positions and identities constitutes an important part of this study. It is my contention that not only the speeches of politicians but also popular cultural products, and in my case a television series, can be a medium for the articulation of the meaning and interpellation to the subject positions if they reproduce the same discourses, ideologies, identities, imaginations and so on. Examining how viewers might align themselves with specific characters, situations or perspectives can shed light on how and why they can be interpellated to particular positions. In Chapter 4, I demonstrated how viewers can approach these positions and perspectives in general terms. In this current chapter I shall examine how they can identify themselves in terms of the representation of Turkey as the leader of the Middle East.

To begin with, in the series the TFP is principally discussed during meetings of the Committee of Elders. These meetings take place in historical places such as city citadels or crypts in Istanbul. The Committee of Elders is a secret organisation founded two thousand years ago. These old places built in the Ottoman era increase the Committee's historical significance. Since these scenes are accompanied by mystic Turkic music traced back to Central Asia and

by dim lighting, the Committee of Elders can be thought of as a mysterious organisation and that can attract greater attention from viewers.



Dim lighting and ancient Turkic flags create a sense of mystery (episode 167, 28:50)

These scenes of the Committee of Elders are intended to evoke a sense of wonder among the viewers. The idea of an organisation which can be traced back to the first Turkic state also probably gives a feeling of pride. In the fan forums, people discuss whether this organisation is real or not and some of them say that they believe that it is real and claim that what the Elders say in the series is only a small proportion (one fan said 0.5%) of the reality (ForumTR, 2012). The news website *Internethaber* ran a news story asking “Are the Elders in the Valley Real?” after Altan Tan, a Kurdish politician, claimed that there are “5-10 ‘deep minds’ who advise the state elites in Ankara” (Internethaber, 2009). This idea of a deep organisation was also reproduced in Selman Kayabasi’s novel *Teskilat* (‘Organisation’) written in 2011. In the book, Kayabasi tells a story of a secret organisation formed more than two thousand years ago which has been influential in Turkey and in other states in the region until today. The book was very popular and 24 editions were printed in five years.²⁰ Therefore, this idea of a secret organisation is widely acknowledged by viewers and they might identify themselves

²⁰ Kayabasi also wrote other books and became the concept advisor of the Ottoman-period drama series *Payitaht* (‘Capital City’) which was aired on the state television channel TRT in January 2017.

with this organisation. The coverage of the Committee in the series with Turkish-Islamic symbols as described in Chapter 4 might also help this interpellation process.

It should also be mentioned here that the meetings of the Committee in the series are actually 'unreal' if you focus on aesthetic considerations. According to the series, *Aksacli* and the Elders are important people with much experience of government and intelligence. They are not ordinary men. However, their way of talking about Turkey's domestic and international problems is similar to that of an ordinary Turkish man as if they are discussing these issues in a café or as if they are just small talk. However, this might also create a reality or might be perceived as real because viewers might identify themselves with the Elders and what they talk about so easily about since they have a similar way of talking. So it can be said that although it is 'unreal' in the flow of the narrative in the series, these scenes can be perceived as 'real' in their reception.

As explained above, there is an antagonism between *Aksacli* (representing the AKP) and Sencer Bey (representing the Kemalists) in Season 7 and this dichotomy prevails throughout the whole season. The series creates this antagonism by using the discourses between the characters. The feelings that the discourses create are an important part of this antagonism and the process of interpellation. When *Aksacli* talks about Turkey and its leadership position, viewers would probably feel pride. On the other hand, when Sencer Bey underestimates this imagination and speaks derogatively about it, they might have negative feelings about it. However, the discourse is not the only way to evoke feelings of this kind; narrative is also important. In the later episodes of Season 7, Sencer Bey stages a coup on the Committee and attempts to assassinate *Aksacli*. He then becomes the new leader of the Committee and issues a warrant for the arrest of *Aksacli*. One of his men arrests *Aksacli* and tortures him and as a result of this torture, *Aksacli* goes blind. This series of horrific events has the ability to evoke anger against Sencer Bey and pity and sadness for *Aksacli*. As a result, the viewers who identify themselves with *Aksacli* could be in a position similar to that of the AKP since *Aksacli* has perceptions which are similar to those of the AKP.

The interpellation related to the leadership representation is not restricted to the antagonism between *Aksacli* and Sencer Bey. The scenes involving Alemdar are also important for this

process because of his popularity among the viewers.²¹ Through Alemdar, these feelings are evoked in the series. For instance, in episode 172 (31:08), Alemdar looks at some pictures of Syrian oppressed people. The camera zooms in to the pictures in which we see destroyed cities and a crying Syrian woman, and then shows his sad face. The series depicts Alemdar on a mission to help the Syrian people not for the interests of Turkey. Also, this scene shows that this is a moral issue which gives him a responsibility to protect these people as a result of this leadership representation.

Sencer Bey does not just harm *Aksacılı*, he also captures Alemdar in episode 183 and hands him over to Israel after he takes control of the Committee of Elders and makes an agreement with the US and Israel. Israel demands Alemdar in return for this agreement and Sencer Bey agrees and hands him over to Israel because the Israelis perceive him as a threat. This scene could also evoke hate because of Israel's position in the series and viewers could take the opposite position to Sencer Bey and his ideas, perceptions and imaginations.

In these ways, viewers are expected to identify with the perspectives of the AKP about the representation of Turkey as the leader of the Middle East because of the antagonism created between *Aksacılı* and Sencer Bey in Season 7. In Sencer Bey's approach to the leadership, his perspectives cannot be aligned with by the viewers because he is portrayed as an evil man who makes a deal with the US and Israel. His scenes would create feelings such as hate and this would make the ideas, thoughts and perspectives of *Aksacılı* more intelligible because *Aksacılı* has similar views to those of the AKP elites, uses the same discourse and believes that Turkey should be the leader in the region. Also, Alemdar has already been identified with by the viewers, and his scenes could be important for the identification of the leadership representation of Turkey because he also believes that Turkey should be the leader of the Middle East.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that one of the representations in the TFP, Turkey as the leader of the Middle East, is reproduced both by discourse and visually in *VoW: Ambush*. I first

²¹ This is explained in detail in Chapter 4.

examined the ideology in the series and showed that the series reproduces this leadership representation in all four of its features as a result of its neo-Ottomanist, nationalist and Islamist features. According to the ideology in *VoW: Ambush*, Turkey is the leader of the region and can act with no hesitation; it is a moral leader; it has obligations and duties; and it acts altruistically because it has historical and cultural ties with the peoples in the neighbouring regions due to their shared Ottoman past. In this sense, the series shares and reproduces the AKP's ideology in exactly the same way.

In this chapter, I have focused on the articulation in the series and illustrated how the leadership meaning is articulated over several years. In the first seasons, the series did not have a leadership representation for Turkey. In those seasons, Turkey was dealing with internal problems such as the Mafia. However, when Turkey's regional power ambitions emerged in Turkish politics, *VoW: Ambush* also started to discuss them and as a result shared this representation in its later seasons. It articulated the regional power concept to the nationalist feature and then to the Ottomanist feature. Moreover, in Season 7, by creating an antagonism between the characters of *Aksacılı* and Sencer Bey, it made Kemalism an opponent of the AKP by aligning it with negative concepts such as fear, lack of self-confidence and betrayal. On the other hand, it set Sencer Bey's ideology, ideas and approaches to foreign issues in juxtaposition to concepts such as rights, justice, peace and stability in the Middle East, and self-confidence, by using a character who represented the AKP ideology and used the AKP discourse. As a result, the leadership representation took on positive meanings for the viewers.

Finally, in this chapter, I have investigated how viewers can be interpellated to the subject positions and identities which share the same representation. Viewers are expected to identify with perspectives of the AKP about this representation because the antagonism created between *Aksacılı* and Sencer Bey could evoke positive feelings for *Aksacılı*, who is in the same position as the AKP, and negative feelings for Sencer Bey, who is opposed to the AKP. Specific scenes have been examined and it is possible to say that the series can have an influence by interpellating viewers to the same identity as the AKP elites.

Chapter 6: *VoW: Ambush* and the Representation of Turkey as the Defender of the Oppressed

Introduction

In Chapter 3, I examined the representation of Turkey as the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East as one of the features constituting the neo-Ottomanist identity in the TFP. Discursively constructed by AKP politicians, this representation suggested that Turkey should be more pro-active instead of following the Kemalist isolationist policies and should support the oppressed peoples of the neighbouring regions. For this aim, the AKP elites have often used historical, religious and nationalist references and have articulated meanings according to these features.

VoW: Ambush reproduced the same discourses and representations as the AKP elites and, as a result, the neo-Ottomanist identity in the TFP. In Chapter 4, I demonstrated howt *VoW: Ambush* used the very same ideology and articulation as the AKP elites and that is the basis for my claim that they share the same security imaginary. To understand this security imaginary better, representations in the TFP should also be examined. Therefore, in Chapter 3, I shed light on these representations in the TFP and in Chapter 5 I focused on the representation of Turkey as the leader of the Middle East in *VoW: Ambush*. In this current chapter, I shall investigate the representation in the series of Turkey as the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East. The oppressed/oppressor discourse in the series constituted a very important part of this process just as it did in the discursive practices of the AKP politicians. In this chapter, the ideology and articulation will be examined discursively to prove that the series reproduced this representation in the TFP.

As stated in Chapters 1 and 3, a constructivist thinker, Jutta Weldes (1999b: 112), suggested that state elites have some control over public discourse because “through the articulation of meaning and the interpellation of the subjects or identities, a particular meaning of the national interest emerges and comes to be commonsensical and legitimate”. Therefore the interpellation process is discussed in the final section to show how the series was able to interpellate viewers to this representation.

Since I explained this representation in Chapter 3, it will not be mentioned again in this chapter. In the first section, I shall explain the ideology in the series and compare it with that of the AKP in order to understand the neo-Ottomanist features in the series. Then the articulations related to Islamist and nationalist features will be investigated by addressing the dialogues in the series. Then, in the third section, I shall discuss the interpellation process and investigate the reception of the series because critical reception allows us to understand how viewers might have identified themselves with these positions.

1. Ideology and the ‘Defender of the Oppressed’

As explained in Chapter 4, the series has an ideology consisting of nationalist, Islamist and neo-Ottomanist features. According to this ideology in the series, Alemdar and the leader of the Committee of Elders believe that Turkey should be more active in regional politics not just because of Turkey’s national interests but also because there is a moral issue. Since the peoples in the region have suffered at the hands of *oppressors*, Turkey should do something for these *oppressed* peoples which have historical and cultural ties with Turkey.

Being on the same side as the oppressor is something related to the Islamist part of the ideology. This can be understood from the writings of Islamist thinkers or organisations. For instance, the Islamic Union Association, which has a mission to struggle for the establishment of a Turkish-Islamic Union, states on its website that the “Turkish army which is always on the same side as the oppressed is competent and deserves to be the leader of the huge peace-keeping force of 30 million soldiers which will be established by the Turkish-Islam Union” (Islamic Union Association Website). The head of the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs (the *Diyanet*), Mehmet Gormez, has also stated at an event held by the *Turkiye Diyanet Foundation* that:

The world is like a ship. Human beings are like passengers on the ship. Five years ago a hole had been punctured in the keel of the ship of humanity because of the Syrian crisis by tyrants. Since then, humanity has been put to the test. But humanity has lost. Humanity lost because it did not help the *oppressed* but on the contrary it supported the *oppressor*. Yet we are proud that we have opened our homes and our hearts to our Syrian brothers and sisters (*Turkiye Diyanet Foundation*, 2016).

He also said at another meeting that “We must not make [any distinction between] the religion, language or nationality of those who are oppressed. We as Muslims must protect all humans around the world who are *oppressed* and are undergoing torture” (Aydoğan, 2015). So being on the same side as and protecting or supporting the oppressed is a part of Islam and Islamist ideology in Turkey. This is not only accepted by Islamist ideology; the nationalist ideology influenced by the Turkish-Islamic synthesis has the same approach. The website of Idealist Hearths (*Ulku Ocaklari*), a foundation which has links with the ultranationalist MHP, explains the movement as follows:

... to depend on Turkish-Islamic culture, civilisation and ideals; recognise Turkishness as the body and Islam as the soul; to struggle with the aspiration to get Turkey to number one in the world by using technological means and to work for this aim day and night. It is an obligation to save the Turkish Islamic world from its sad situation by becoming a young man who would be the hope of Turkishness in the world, the Islam world and *oppressed* nations (Idealist Hearths Website).

So both the Islamist and the nationalist ideologies have the same approach and discourse. Both believe that Turkey should be on the same side as the oppressed by addressing nationalist or Islamic values as their source. In *VoW: Ambush* it is similar. The humanitarian issue is the reason for action in Syria in the series. For instance, in episode 164, this dialogue occurs between Alemdar and an officer in National Intelligence about the Syrian issue:

Alemdar: There will be no peace for us until the Syrian issue is solved.

Officer: You are right. Major countries see this issue from the perspective of their strategic aims. However, we see this issue from the perspective of humanity and not just from strategic aims.

In an interview in 2013, Cuneýt Aysan, one of the scriptwriters, expressed the belief that Turkey has a moral duty for this oppressed people. He said “... because there are great *oppressions* and injustices in our lands and in our region, everybody struggles to stop these oppressions. Alemdar steps in as part of his mission” (El-Aziz, 2013). Aysan also answered a question about Turkey’s political process by saying that

Oppression is not eternal, so someone will put an end to this oppression. This can be a man or a state which organises people. If we say it is a state, Turkey would be the biggest candidate because it has potential, and it has organisations and cadres to use this potential. We delayed our global mission in 1923, now history forces us, whether we want it or not (*Ibid.*).

So Aysan believed that Turkey has a mission in the region to protect the oppressed and, according to his approach, it can be claimed that he approved of the AKP's foreign policy. His beliefs and thoughts can be seen in *VoW: Ambush* as clearly as in the speeches of the AKP elites. For instance, Davutoglu also used this discourse:

We have always been on the same side as the *oppressed* and against the *oppressor*, and we will continue to do that. No matter how hard a time they give us, no matter what conspiracies they make, Syrian Turkmens, Syrian Arabs, Syrian Kurds, Syrian Muslims, Syrian Christians, Syrian Sunnis, Nusayris, all Syrians should know that we will continue to be on their side with all our capabilities (Davutoglu, 2014b).

Thus the ideological constructions of the TFP in the series and by the AKP elites had the same features. What makes it more intelligible is the reiteration of the oppressed/oppressor discourse in the series just as in the speeches of the AKP politicians. The Syrian people in the series are identified as oppressed. When the characters talk about the Syrian issue, the Syrians are always 'oppressed' and the regime is always the 'oppressor'. For instance, in episode 164 (1:18:158), Alemdar said "the *oppressed* in Syria have taken to the streets by acting impulsively with our stand. Both we and they are paying the price of acting impulsively". In episode 165 (1:05:25), there was a meeting between factions forming the Syrian opposition and one character said: "Friends, sooner or later, the *oppressor* called Assad will walk off. If you want to live together under good and brotherly conditions, you must cooperate with us". In episode 167 (27:05), *Aksacli* stated that "The interests of Saudi Arabia and Iran lie in increasing their own areas of influence and not in the welfare of the Muslims. We do not have a problem as Sunni or Shia. We do not want anybody to be *oppressed* according to their ethnic background in our area of influence". In episode 171 (1:36:40), an officer from the Free Syrian Army (FSA) told Alemdar "I will sacrifice my life with you. But I will still do what you say. We have only fear and that is fear of being captured by those *oppressors*, not of dying". In episode 172 (22:09), Alemdar encouraged the same officer using this discourse.

FSA Officer: I lost.

Alemdar: There are other things that you can lose. You need to fight for them.

FSA Officer: We have fought for months. Baas has not collapsed, and will not either.

Alemdar: There is no oppressor that will not be collapsed. I promise, I will take revenge for your son.

In another dialogue, the Elders are talking with Alemdar about Turkey's position in the region:

Elder: Sir, the disappointment of our brothers in Egypt and Syria is increasing each passing day. Muslims in these countries believe that Turkey is the only power that can say no to the genocide.

Alemdar: Turkey is using her economic, political and diplomatic power to save regional people from the oppression. There are more things to do. (episode 197, 1:04:48)

So it is clear that the oppression/oppressed discourse used by the AKP politicians is reproduced and reiterated in *VoW: Ambush*. Both sides, the AKP and the series, have similar ideologies and see Turkey as an actor who could help these oppressed peoples in the region because they share the very same ideology. Fed by nationalist and Islamist features, the series used the oppressed/oppressor dichotomy just as the AKP elites did and there is regular reiteration of this discourse. With this reiteration, the series leads to articulation of the meaning of who is oppressed and who is the oppressor. This is explained in the next section. Moreover, this reiteration could lead to interpellation to the subject position created as a result of the articulation. That is examined in the third section.

2. Articulating the 'Defender of the Oppressed'

In Chapters 1 and 3, I explained that representations are culturally established and intersubjective meanings which socially construct national interests. State elites and individuals make sense of the world and the country within the world according to these representations by identifying objects and positing relations between them (Houghton, 2007; Weldes (1999b) and these representations which are linguistically articulated by state officials constitute the security imaginary. In Chapter 3, I investigated how the AKP elites articulate these representations and meanings and create subject positions. In Chapter 4, I explained the articulation in the series in more general terms. In that chapter, how the conservatist, Islamist and Ottomanist features were articulated into the nationalist feature of the series was demonstrated. In this section, I shall examine the articulation of the Turkey as the defender of the oppressed representation in the series and show how the series has

articulated this representation and created antagonism between the oppressed and the oppressors; Turkey and others.

As stated in Chapter 4, *VoW: Ambush* created antagonism between Turkey and the external and internal powers that are a threat to Turkey. In the series, the 'others' are shown as evil. For instance, there are foreign villains carrying out inhuman activities such as *Jewish* organ traffickers, *American* child kidnappers and *Syrian* torturers. These characters do not just constitute a threat to the main characters but also to civilians in Turkey and other countries in the region. They are therefore represented as a part of general oppression in the Middle East. In episode 171, Alemdar undertakes an operation in order to kill a member of *Al-Mukhabarat* who has tortured members of the Free Syrian Army, killed civilians and kidnapped children in Syria. This operation lasted for four episodes and creates opposition between Bashar Al-Assad and Turkey: it depicted Assad as the *oppressor* and Alemdar (or Turkey) as the saviour of the *oppressed* in Syria. During this operation, in episode 171 (1:30:05-1:31:00), Alemdar sees a group of people, including women and children, walking barefoot and in very poor condition. The scene starts by showing this group from a distance and then Alemdar's car approaches them. While it passes close by the group, the car slows down and Alemdar and two regional-KGT members see them. In each scene, the camera focuses on the faces of Alemdar, the KGT members and the Syrian refugees. When the camera zooms in on Alemdar's and two other men's faces, we see their sad expressions and do not approve of this situation. The camera also zooms in on the feet and the sad faces of the refugees. We are led to understand that those people are very miserable and 'oppressed', as stated in previous episodes. From how they look, it can be understood why Alemdar and his team felt pity for them. At the end of the scene, the camera shows the refugees as Alemdar's car moves off towards Syria.



Also, Assad's picture is shown hanging in the office of the Al-Mukhabarat officer. In one scene in episode 171, a member of the Al-Mukhabarat tortures a Syrian prisoner and eventually cuts his tongue off. Blood splashes across the wall right across Assad's face.



episode 171, 1:39:29

By these scenes, the series articulated the *Al-Mukhabarat* and Assad as evil and responsible for the oppression of the Syrian people and showed that this was the reason why Alemdar has a mission in Syria. This gave a duty for Alemdar and his team and the Elders to intervene in the politics of another country, Syria. This operation was explained in episode 171 as follows:

Aksacli: There is an organisation used by the Syrian regime in Syria. They are using violent means to spread fear in the region. This organisation has to be stopped for the sake of the resistance in Syria.

Alemdar: Who is the leader of this organisation?

Aksacli: A man called Asim.

Alemdar: Would the organisation collapse if this man dies?

Aksacli: This man is a symbol who spreads fear in the region. Because people in the region are afraid of him they do not act against the Baas regime. When this man dies, it will give hope to people. (episode 171, 46:25)

It is understood from this conversation that Alemdar and *Aksacli* believe that they can intervene in Syria because they need to help the people who are being violently oppressed by the regime forces. There is no reference to the national interest of Turkey. There are only

references to the oppressed people in Syria. As has been explained before, Turkey became more active in the Middle East as part of the neo-Ottomanist identity brought in by the AKP which supported the anti-regime groups in Syria. This intervention in Syria by Alemdar can also be interpreted as part of the neo-Ottomanist identity in the series. As in the TFP, in the series this intervention is explained by the oppressed/oppressor dichotomy. As a result, the defender of the oppressed feature is articulated to the neo-Ottomanist identity.

Another articulation related to the neo-Ottomanist identity and the defender of the oppressed representation is the organisation called Black Flag. This organisation has both Turkish and Islamic features and is represented as part of defender of the oppressed in the Middle East representation. Alemdar's right-hand man explains the meaning of Black Flag. He states that it was the battle flag of the prophet Mohammed. It was one of the first flags of the Turks. The Black Flag signifies being on the same side as the oppressed until the oppression ends (episode 210, 48:57). First, he explained that Black Flag has a religious meaning. Then, he articulated it with nationalist features by saying that it is part of Turkish history. Finally, these Turkish and Islamic features articulate into the defender of the oppressed representation with the Black Flag. Kara, the leader of this team, explained the main aim of the Black Flag organisation to the team members during their training: "Friends, Black Flag was founded to be on the same side as the oppressed and to face oppressors anywhere" (episode 221, 22:51) and "Black Flag was founded to protect the rights of all oppressed people in the world and to save them from the hands of the oppressors" (episode 222, 31:14).

In episode 215, one of the KGT members is captured and is jailed in Syria. In the jail, a Syrian prisoner prays. While his words are played in the background, Kara and his team advance into Syria as a part of the mission given to them by Alemdar. They see Syrian women and children who are in a very poor condition. The camera focuses on the faces of Kara and the other members of the team who show pity to the Syrians. At the same time, in his prayer, the Syrian prisoner in jail prays "God, do not leave us in the hands of tyrants. Punish these *oppressors* with your order of suffering. Save your *oppressed* servants from the *oppressors*" (episode 215, 46:53). In this scene, again, it can be seen that there is a religious meaning and that the defender of the oppressed representation articulates into this religious meaning.

As a result, it is possible to say that the articulation of this representation into the Islamist and nationalist features was not only attempted by AKP politicians, it can also be seen in VoW:

Ambush. This representation is also part of the neo-Ottomanist identity in the series, just as in the identity of the AKP.

3. Interpellation to the ‘Defender of the Oppressed’

It is my contention that popular cultural products, and *VoW: Ambush* in my case, along with the speeches of politicians can be a medium for the articulation of the meaning and interpellation to the subject positions if they reproduce the same discourses, ideologies, identities, imaginations and so on. Examination of how viewers might align themselves with particular characters, situations or perspectives can shed light on how and why they can be interpellated to particular positions. In Chapter 4, I demonstrated how viewers approach these positions and perspectives in general terms, and in Chapter 5, I examined how they identify themselves in terms of the representation of the leader of the Middle East. In this section, I shall show how they might identify themselves with the representation of the defender of the oppressed.

In the series, Alemdar and his friends are on the same side as the oppressed peoples in neighbouring regions, as explained above. According to them, Turkey and the Ottoman Empire before Turkey have always been on the same side as the oppressed. The Black Flag team which was formed on Alemdar’s orders and operates under the leadership of Kara is very important for showing this solidarity between the Turks and the regional peoples. Alemdar and Kara are important characters for the interpellation process. Alemdar is the most popular character in *VoW*; there is a special bond between the audience and this character. As described in previous chapters, people imitate him and there are many news stories related to this in the Turkish media. Kara is also important because he is one of the characters with whom the audience can identify themselves. As already explained in Chapter 4, Kara is represented as an ordinary man in the series: he drinks tea brewed on a coal stove in the winter and he is shown eating simple things such as Turkish bagels, bread, cheese and tomatoes. Such scenes help people to identify themselves with the characters and accept their approaches to the particular issues in the story.

Moreover, as already described, in 2013, Necati Sasmaz, the actor who plays Alemdar, released a video for the ‘oppressed’ people of Egypt. In the video, he said “I appreciate your

resistance for freedom and democracy. I believe that you will continue to protest patiently to demand real freedom and democracy ...” (Hurriyet Daily News, 2013c). Here, it can be said that Necati Sasmaz (or Polat Alemdar) was on the same side as the oppressed people in Egypt and was actively against the oppressor, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. In the video, it is also important to note that Sasmaz was speaking on set in front of a wall in Alemdar’s office. This might have an influence on the real/fiction division and increase the effect of *VoW: Ambush*. With this video, not only the people in Egypt but also Turkish viewers who identified themselves with Alemdar could understand that Alemdar (or Necati Sasmaz) was on the same side as the ‘oppressed’ Muslim Brotherhood and against the ‘oppressor’ el-Sisi. This identification with Alemdar could also ‘hail’ them to the position of Alemdar (or Necati Sasmaz) in the situation in Egypt and in other situations which create an oppressed/oppressor dichotomy.



Alemdar’s office in the series



Necati Sasmaz's speech to the people of Egypt (Anadolu Ajansi, 2013)

A prominent columnist, Ertugrul Ozkok of the daily *Hurriyet*, argued that Alemdar was representing the 'oppressed' just as Recep Tayyip Erdogan does and contributed to creating this intertextuality between the series, the production team and the Turkish media. He drew attention to a picture of Necati Sasmaz, Andy Garcia (who had come to Istanbul to play a role in *VoW: Ambush*) and himself. In this picture (see below), all three men are wearing suits; whilst Andy Garcia and Ertugrul Ozkok have a handkerchief in the top pocket of the suit, Necati Sasmaz does not. Ozkok stated that he had never seen a handkerchief carried this way in a suit worn by Erdogan. According to him, both Erdogan and Sasmaz are therefore representing the oppressed people. After this analysis of the photograph, he claimed that "... there is no other feeling in this community which brings gain as oppression does" (Ensonhaber, 2014). So Ozkok thought that Erdogan and Alemdar represent oppressed people and the viewers of the series who identify themselves with Alemdar might also may identify themselves with Erdogan.



Ertugrul Ozkok, Andy Garcia and Necati Sasmaz

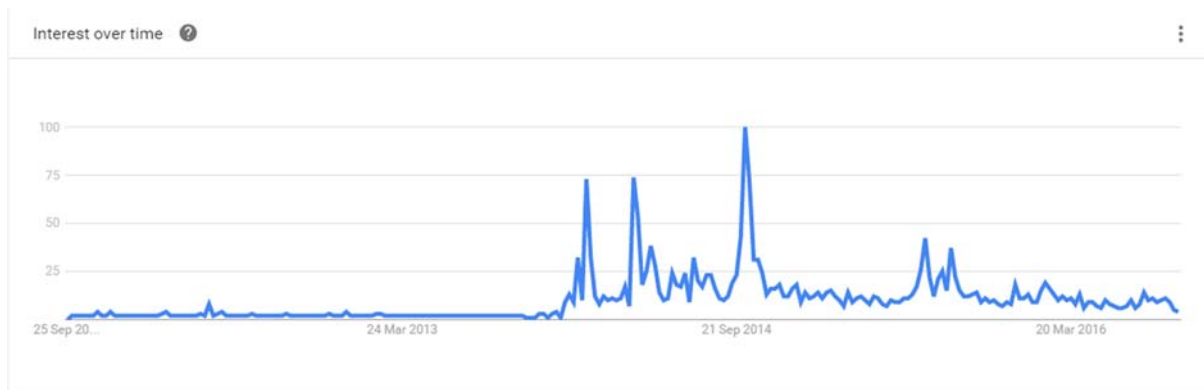
Another media story related to *VoW: Ambush* and this representation was that Pana Film, the production company of the series, was sending suits and jackets to the Syrian refugees in Turkey. This incident was covered by the Pro-AKP daily newspaper, *Aksam*. According to the story, these clothes were distributed to Syrian teachers and bridegrooms. A representative of the Turkish Red Crescent stated that “On the labels of the suits there was the name of Necati Sasmaz. If these clothes were to be sold here, no-one could afford them. But we have dressed our Syrian guests in these clothes and they are very happy. We thank the series”. Also, the state channel TRT put this news story on its website as ‘Syrian bridegrooms will wear Polat’s suit’ (TRT Haber, 2013). As explained in an earlier chapter, there is a *VoW* fashion craze in Turkey. Since the first series in 2003, the fans have been wearing the very same clothes as if they are Alemdar or a character from his team. These clothes consist mostly of a dark suit, dark trousers and jackets and a white shirt; it is important not to wear a tie. According to Melis Alphan in the daily *Miliyet*, “the characters are from the ‘streets’, therefore they do not like ties since ties represent bureaucracy” (Alphan, 2009). This *VoW* fashion is often covered by the Turkish media with such headlines as ‘Polat’s coat becomes a phenomenon’ (Milliyet, 2015) or ‘For shirts, *VoW* is the fashion’ (Coruh, 2006). So donating clothes like these to Syrian refugees was an important issue for Turkish and Syrian fans and it contributed to the

representation in which the series is on the same side as the oppressed people of the Middle East.

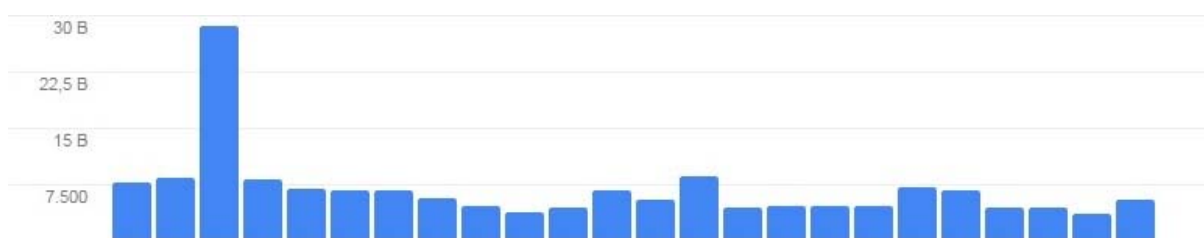
As already described, the two key characters, Alemdar and Kara, are tortured by the Syrian regime. In Season 7, Alemdar is tortured by the Assad regime forces over three episodes and in Season 8 Kara is kidnapped and tortured by the regime forces over two episodes. It is possible to say that these scenes might have a role in the interpellation process because two popular characters suffer at the hands of representatives of the oppressor in Syria. It is possible that these scenes created negative emotions about the 'oppressors' and positive emotions for the heroes and for what they are trying to do, which is to help the oppressed people in Syria. It can be said that the audience is aligned with the popular characters, in the opposite camp to the characters portrayed as oppressors.

It is also important to state that viewers can identify themselves with the Black Flag organisation because of its oppressed/oppressor dichotomy, its aim and its foundation by two favourite characters, Alemdar and Kara. After this organisation was first introduced in the series, two pro-AKP newspapers, *Star* and *Yeni Safak*, covered it as news. In both newspapers, the religious feature of the organisation was emphasised and its meaning was described (Star, 2014; Palavar, 2014). Although in those news stories there were no references to the representation of the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East by using the oppressed/oppressor discourse, it can be said that there were references to the Islamist articulation in the series. In the news items, it was stated that "after 1400 years, the black flag known as the flag used by our Prophet is unfurled once more in *VoW* ... This flag has been kept in the Topkapi Palace with the other Holy Relics since the sixteenth century". It can therefore also be said that these news items were mixing up reality and fiction by portraying a development in the series as if it were real and by backing it up with facts from real life, and as a result they narrowed the line between reality and fiction.

Furthermore, it is understood that the organisation of Black Flag was widely accepted by viewers. After this fictional organisation was introduced in the series in 2014, an increased frequency of searches for the words '*siyah sancak*' ('Black Flag') was seen in the Google search engine.



Interest over time in the term 'Siyah Sancak' (Black Flag) (Google Trends Search (2012-2016))



Monthly Searches in Google, Aug 2014-Jul 2016²²

Also, there is a pro-AKP Facebook page with the same name, and it has more than 150,000 followers (Siyah Sancak, 2017). When this page is opened, it can be seen that it has a Turkish flag as a profile picture and shares pictures and videos of Erdogan and AKP politicians. So it can be said that although the page uses the name 'Black Flag', it is not actually about Black Flag, it mostly shares pro-AKP posts with its followers. In addition to all this, there are three books related to Black Flag all written by the same author, Ali Kuzu. The first one, simply entitled *Black Flag*, was published in 2014 and the others, *Black Flag: Pandora's Box* and *Black Flag Occupation Plan of Turkey: Code Name 96 Hours* (this is fictional), were published in 2016. It can therefore be claimed that this concept became very popular in Turkey after it was first introduced in *VoW: Ambush*. Moreover, in 2015, the Twitter account and website of one

²² This is made by google adwords. <<https://adwords.google.com>>

of the members of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), Sirri Sureyya Onder were hacked by a Turkish hack team calling themselves 'Black Flag', who released this statement:

This account was taken by Black Flag. There is no reason for treason, there would be a price eventually. The homeland cannot be divided virtually and also cannot be saved virtually. We also do not have a thought like this. The Turkish Republic promises to live in this land in a brotherly way. Yet, what did you do? You chose to live in a dastardly way. Then, the under of the soil is fair for you. The first wave is Sirri Sureyya, who is going to be next? For every martyr report, we shall air your dirty laundry. Wait and see (HaberiyaKala, 2015).

So it can be seen that the Black Flag concept in the series was accepted by viewers in Turkey and became very popular. It can also be said that there were no references to its oppressed/oppressor discourse. Its religious and nationalist features, on the other hand, were identified with by the people. This can be understood from the shares of the followers on the Facebook page and the statement of the hacker team which hacked into the website and the Twitter account of an MP from the pro-Kurdish HDP.

As Weldes and Van Veen stated, reiteration of the discourse is also very important in the interpellation process. Viewers who identify themselves with the characters are also exposed to the discourses and not just the images. As stated above, the oppressed/oppressor dichotomy is used in many dialogues. This discourse is also a reproduction of the AKP elites' discourse, so it is important to say again that the audience is exposed to the same discursive practices; they are listening to the AKP politicians using the oppressed/oppressor discourse during the day and in the evening they are watching Alemdar and his friends, the characters with whom they have aligned themselves, using the same discursive structures, and *vice versa*.

For instance, Alemdar's operation in Syria started in episode 171 which was aired on 22 November 2012. During this and the following episode, viewers were visually and discursively exposed to Alemdar's and his friends' involvement in Syrian politics, or, to put it in a different way, to the representation of the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East. For instance, as mentioned above, in episode 171, while Alemdar is crossing the Turkey-Syria border, he and his team see Syrian refugees in need of help going towards the Turkish border. The camera focuses on the bare feet of the Syrians and then zooms in to faces of Alemdar and his friends. In episode 174, Alemdar is seen in a shootout with a pro-Assad group. In between the

two groups there is a little Syrian girl and Alemdar risks his life by jumping in and rescuing her. After this, the mother of the girl says to Alemdar “May Allah bless you” and we see a frame zooming in on graffiti symbolising the resistance.



Episode 174, 1:10:00

So it can be said that during this Syrian operation, Alemdar sees oppressed Syrians, tackles their oppressors in Syria, saves some of them from the oppressors and received God's blessing. He shows that Turks are on the same side as the oppressed people in the region. Moreover, while he is doing all these things, he shows that he is doing them not for his own gain because he is prepared to sacrifice himself. So it can be said that the representation of the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East is constructed discursively and visually in these episodes. Viewers watched these episodes from 22 November to 13 December 2012 and in that same first week, Erdogan used this discourse at the opening of the Kutahya Zafer Airport on 25 November 2012:

Today, the ones who tell us 'do not interfere in Egypt', do not abstain from supporting a bloody-handed illegitimate regime and from taking a souvenir photograph with the leader of this regime. If we had backed the bloody-handed regime in Syria, they would have asked us 'what is your business in Syria? They talk differently in the morning from what they say in the evening. They are

uncomfortable that we are taking sides with the *oppressed*, the rightful, because they have always taken sides with the *oppressors* throughout their history. The main opposition [CHP] took sides with Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. Throughout their history, they have always taken sides with blood shedders, the ones who oppress their people. Today they are doing the same. They are backing the *oppressor*, they overlook the *oppressed* in favour of the *oppressor* (Hurriyet, 2012b).

In addition to episodes 171-174 which showed Alemdar's Syrian operation, this discourse is reproduced in many other episodes. For instance, it is possible to see the same discourse in episodes 164, 165, 167, 171, 172, 174, 196, 197, 205, 212, 215, 216, 221 and 222 of Seasons 7 and 8. This discourse was mostly reiterated in the scenes between Alemdar and Kara. For instance, Kara used this discourse during the scenes when he established the Black Flag organisation: he stated "Friends, Black Flag was founded to be on the same side as the oppressed and to face oppressors anywhere" (episode 221, 22:51) and "Black Flag was founded to protect the rights of all oppressed people in the world and to save them from the hands of the oppressors" (episode 222, 31:14). These episodes were aired on 10 and 17 April 2014. In that same month, Erdogan was using this discourse ubiquitously. On 29 April, for instance, he read a poem in a party meeting (these meetings are aired live on state television and mainstream television channels) written by the nationalist poet Mehmet Akif Ersoy (the poet who wrote the words of the national anthem in 1921). In the poem that Erdogan read, there were lines such as "I cannot applaud oppression, I can never love the oppressor ... If someone assaults my ancestors, I will even strangle him ... I am an enemy of the oppressor but I love the oppressed ..." (Aksam, 2014). So again, it is seen that *VoW: Ambush* reproduced the same discourse in the same time period, and by doing that it became part of the interpellation process.

It can therefore be said that this representation was created by the discursive practices of the AKP politicians and was reproduced and reiterated in *VoW: Ambush*. The AKP elites created a position in which Turkey was more active in the Middle East because Turkey was a regional power which had historical ties with the region and therefore had to do something for the oppressed people in the Middle East. The ubiquitous usage of the oppressed/oppressor discourse helped the elites of the AKP to interpellate people to this position. *VoW: Ambush* not only reiterated this discourse but also consolidated it visually and as a result reproduced

the representation of the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East. Therefore, *VoW: Ambush* became part of this interpellation process, it became a means.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how the Turkey as the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East representation in the TFP was reproduced in *VoW: Ambush* by examining it under the concepts of ideology, articulation and interpellation. To achieve this, I focused on the visual elements and the discourse in the series and on its reception. Ideologically, the series reproduced the very same ideology as the AKP and approached the issue of the defender of the oppressed from the same perspective which has Turkish-Islamic features. Visually, it can be seen that Alemdar and his friends are on the same side as the oppressed peoples in the Middle East, especially in Syria. This can be understood from the scenes in which they rescue and help Syrian people from the oppressors. Discursively, there was a vigorous reiteration of the oppressed/oppressor dichotomy just as in the discourse of the AKP politicians.

The series has also similar articulation. Islamist and nationalist features are articulated to this representation and show the neo-Ottomanist identity of the series. For instance, the Black Flag organisation established by Alemdar and Kara constituted an important element of this representation since its aim was to protect the oppressed people in the Middle East and it had nationalist and Islamist features. This articulation succeeded in using visual and mostly discursive practices to overlap with the speeches made by AKP politicians and helped the interpellation process. Viewers were therefore exposed to those articulations and subject positions in the series and in the speeches of politicians at the same time.

I have also demonstrated that the perspectives related to this representation in the series were identified with by viewers. When the reception of the series is examined, it can be said that the actor Necati Sasmaz and the script writers (one of whom was his brother) reproduced this representation and this was covered in the Turkish media as a news story. Moreover, the Black Flag organisation was widely accepted by the viewers and became very popular. When the aims of this organisation are considered, it can be said that viewers approved of the representation of the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East.

As a result, it can be said that one of the representations of the TFP after the AKP hegemony continued to control Turkish politics was reproduced by a popular television series. This created an intertextuality between AKP politicians and a television programme and this was able to produce common understandings about the security imaginary; Turkey, the world and Turkey's role within the world.

Chapter 7: *VoW: Ambush* and the Representation of Self-Confident Turkey

Introduction

The representation of self-confident Turkey was one of the features of the Turkish state identity brought by the AKP and one of the features of identity-based TFP in the last decade. According to this representation, Turkey is more self-confident in contrast with the pre-AKP era because its capabilities increased in the AKP era. Discursively constructed by AKP politicians, Turkey can deal with 'external powers' and their evil plans and games against Turkey and other states in the region. These discursive practices and representations were created as a result of the AKP ideology and they were examined in Chapter 3 in detail. These practices have helped to create new subject positions and they may have a role to interpellate people into these positions.

However, the speeches of AKP politicians are not the only mechanism that has created this representation. This representation and the discourses related to it are reproduced by popular cultural products, in my case the television series *VoW: Ambush*, and since they are also reproducing these representations they might have a role in the interpellation process. As one of the most influential television series in Turkey, *VoW: Ambush* can have an important role. Also, the series has share the same ideology as the AKP and there is an organic link between the AKP and the production. Moreover, the myth that 'VoW tells the reality', even though it is a fiction, blurs the line between reality and fiction. All these features of the series were explained in Chapter 4. These features create intertextuality between the series, the AKP and the Turkish media and they increase *VoW's* importance in the interpellation process. As a result, I shall now discuss how *VoW: Ambush* can have a role in the process of creating consent for the TFP.

The representation of Self-Confident Turkey was explained in Chapter in detail and for this reason this chapter will not explain it again. In this chapter, I shall therefore examine *VoW: Ambush* in three sections, ideology, articulation and interpellation, to show how the representation of self-confident Turkey has taken place in the series. For this purpose, discourse analysis are used as methods. I shall also look at the reception of the series and examine how this representation in *VoW: Ambush* has been perceived in the Turkish media

to support the argument that *VoW: Ambush* can be an important popular cultural product in the process of consent creation.

1. Ideology and ‘Self-Confident Turkey’

In Chapter 4, the ideology in the series was explained in detail and it was stated that the series has an ideology which consists of nationalist, religious, conservative and neo-Ottomanist features. In Chapters 5 and 6, I looked at the ideology in the series in terms of two representations: the leader of the Middle East and the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East. I shall next examine the ideology in the series from the perspective of the representation of self-confident Turkey. This representation constitutes an important part of the ideology in the series. The Turkish-Islamist ideology which has nationalist and Islamist features can also be seen in this representation. Whilst nationalist features remain at the centre of the series, Islamist features can also be seen. For instance if issues related to Turkey’s domestic problems are covered in the series, the nationalist part of the ideology becomes important. On the other hand, when the scenario expands to regional issues, it can be seen that Islamist features replace nationalist features.

The various ideological features in the series have different approaches to this representation. The nationalist feature of the ideology in the series puts the emphasis on the struggle against the external powers which are attempting to harm Turkey. It sees Turkey as a strong nation and therefore it can be argued that it creates this representation through concepts such as being a strong nation or a self-confident state. One of the scriptwriters, Bahadır Özden, was interviewed on *Al-Jazeera* and his comments are illuminating on this issue. He said that

Since 1071, there have been intelligence wars in Anatolia. *Factions, structures, organisations* have swarmed across these beautiful lands and still swarm today. There were *people* who opened 2500 *missionary schools* 250 years ago, people who established an intelligence organisation in a building bought from *the US* and people who hung the Prime Minister with *English* rope ... All quiet on the ‘Eastern’ front, you understand. Even so, we have the ability to survive as a nation. And we are passionate about it (Guzelce, 2014).

Ozdener stated that there have always been external threats for Turkey, but that as a nation, Turkey can deal with them because it has the passion and the self-confidence to survive. This strong state approach from the nationalist ideology can also be seen in the series. In episode 172 (44:00), for instance, *Aksacli* talked with a man named Faruk from his organisation:

Aksacli: It is important to have the capability of making a nuclear bomb to be free of energy dependency if we want to be a regional power.

Faruk: Sir, if you let me, I would like to share my concern about one subject. We are working on this subject discreetly. When do you plan to open this subject in the meetings with the Elders?

Aksacli: Nuclear weapons are such an important thread that if we say one word without having them, *external powers would do anything to stop us* developing them.

This scene shows that a nuclear capability is necessary for Turkey if it wants to be a strong state. But it should be very discreet because external powers would want to prevent Turkey from having this capability. The nationalistic identity as part of the ideology can also be seen when the series uses a discourse related to imperialists. Turkey as a country suffered from imperialism during the First World War and waged the Independence War against the imperialists. This led the nationalist discourse to refer to the west as imperialists. It can also be seen that the self-confident representation is built into this discourse. For instance, in episode 167 (17:12), there was a dialogue between *Aksacli* and the regional KGT team:

Aksacli: You will carry surgical operations to expand our area of influence and sustain our influence in the region.

KGT member: This means *war with the agents of imperialist states*.

Aksacli: We will win this war because the destiny of the people in the region depends on it.

Thus, the series had a nationalist ideology and approached issues between external powers and self-confident Turkey from a nationalist perspective. However, the ideology in the series has two more features: it is neo-Ottomanist and Islamist. The neo-Ottomanist feature of the series shares this representation from a perspective which refers to the greater times of the Ottoman Empire. This can be understood from the scenes involving the Black Flag organisation which has the aim of protecting the peoples in the regions once ruled by the

Ottoman Empire. For instance, in one scene in episode 210 (1:23:44), Kara talks to an ‘*Ucbeyi*’²³ in Serbia.

Ucbeyi: Here [Serbia] is the country where century-long orphans have lived. After the Ottoman Empire, we lost our *Bey* [the Sultan]. We stayed here as *Ucbeyis* without an owner.

Kara: That’s the reason why *Aksacli* founded Black Flag; he wants to sustain unity and peace by putting an end to this orphan status of the *Ucbeyis*.

Ucbeyi: Then, we shall obey *Aksacli*.

This scene and other scenes involving Black Flag show that Turkey can operate in the former Ottoman territories and connect those regions to itself once again. In this sense, the series has an imperialistic feature and this was explained in Chapter 5. Whilst its nationalistic feature is against imperialism, its neo-Ottomanist feature shows Turkey as an imperialist power which is full of confidence and also give confidence to these regions (by seeking to rescue them from their orphan status). In the series, Alemdar and his colleagues not only spoil the games in Turkey, they do the same in Syria, Iraq, Israel, the Balkans and the Caucasus and even carry out operations in the US and the UK. Therefore, the neo-Ottomanist feature in the series approaches this representation from a perspective in which Turkey’s imperialist ambitions gives it the self-confidence to spoil the games of external powers.

The Islamist feature also constitutes an important part of this representation in the series because being a devout man in the series gives confidence. For instance, in his Syrian operation, Alemdar is tortured by the Syrian regime and he starts to pray in silence. After that, he suffers less and eventually he escapes, kills the people who had tortured him and rescues the innocent victims. Moreover, his father Omer Baba is a very religious man who is regularly visited by the characters when they want his advice. He always gives a reference from the Quran. In one scene, Zulfikar, the head of the deep Alawi organisation, visits Omer Baba and they talk about the secret group in the Turkish state which works for the Templars (a reference to the Gulen Movement):

Zulfikar: Look what have done to me, Omer Baba! When will we stop being played by *external powers*? When will this plotting end?

²³ Frontier lords in Ottoman Empire.

Omer Baba: There has always been a plot, Zulfikar. History is full of bitter examples. However our salvation will come by holding onto the rope that Allah sends for us, in other words, the Quran.

So all three features of the ideology in the series approach the representation of a self-confident Turkey from different perspectives. However, they meet on the common ground that Turkey as a self-confident country can confound the games of the external powers. This is reflected in the characters of Alemdar and Kara when they carry out operations within or outside Turkey to spoil the plots of external powers.

It should also be mentioned that there is a causality in the series related to this representation. All bad events happen because of the 'others'. External powers cause problems and Alemdar and his men solve them. From the start to the end, it was always like this. In the movie *VoW: Iraq*, for instance, American soldiers put hoods on Turkish soldiers and Alemdar and his team go to Iraq to take revenge for this. Again, in the movie *VoW: Palestine*, Alemdar goes to Israel after the *Mavi Marmara* incident and fights against Israel to take revenge for Turkey and also for the innocent Palestinians. This causality can also be seen in the series: the Templars were depicted as being behind issues such as the Gezi protests and Alemdar spoiled their plans. When we look from the regional perspective (neo-Ottomanist), Assad tortures innocent Syrians and Alemdar goes into Syria to save them. So it can be said that the *VoW* world, the series and the films, has a nature in which evil external powers cause problems and Turks to respond to these problems with self-confidence and frustrate their plots.

So it can be expected from the series that it has a nationalistic character and a narrative which deals with external powers. As expected, the main narrative of the series is that external powers (these could be Israel, the US, the EU, the imperialists in general or the Templars) always have evil plans for Turkey and Alemdar as the leading actor battles against these evil plans and eventually overcomes them. This narrative and discourse could be seen even from the first episodes. Although in the first seasons Alemdar's operational area was restricted to Turkish territories, in the later seasons, especially after Season 6, the territories expanded and Alemdar carried out operations on foreign soil, such as in Egypt and Syria, with a self-confidence that only heroes can have. The ideology in the series has approached this self-confident representation from different perspectives, nationalist, neo-Ottomanist and Islamist, and the common ground of these features is that Turkey is self-confident and can

spoil the games of 'others'. In the next section, I shall explain how the series has articulated the concepts related to this representation to the 'others'.

2. Articulating 'Self-Confident Turkey'

In Chapters 1 and 3, I explained that representations are culturally established and intersubjective meanings and that national interests are socially constructed according to these representations. State elites and individuals make sense of the world and the country within the world according to these representations by identifying objects and positing relations between them (Houghton, 2007; Weldes, 1999b). The security imaginary of a state emerges out of these representations which are linguistically articulated by state officials. This was explained in detail in Chapter 3 and in the first section of this current chapter. My belief is that popular culture can reproduce these articulations. In Chapter 4, I explained the articulation in the series in more general terms, focusing on how conservatism, Islamism and Ottomanism have been articulated into the nationalist feature of the series. In Chapters 5 and 6, on the other hand, I focused on articulations related to the other representations. Here, I shall examine the articulation of a self-confident Turkey in the series and show how the series has articulated this representation and created antagonism between the others (external powers) and Turkey.

First, the others in the external powers discourse should be explained. The series has shown that there is always an 'other', an enemy of Turkey against whom Alemdar and his men wage war. These others are always external powers such as the US, Israel or Syria, or imaginary organisations such as the Templars and internal powers which collaborate with these external powers. These countries and organisations are always mentioned as external powers who are 'playing games' against Turkey and its neighbouring regions. However, Alemdar and his men always spoil their games and save the country from these powers with the self-confidence that they have. In *VoW: Ambush*, these external powers are exaggerated in many ways to deepen this antagonism between them and Turkey. To begin with, they are portrayed as unidentifiable people sitting in a darkened room and making plans to split Turkey into regions and share it between the Armenians and the Kurds.



This representation shows that the series also has the Sèvres syndrome which was explained in Chapter 3. These external powers are responsible for events in Turkey and in the region. According to the series, these external powers are described as 'deep states' of the US, the EU, Russia and Israel. In Season 8, it was explained that the Templars and the whole season was built on the conflict between, on the one side, the Templars and their Armageddon Team, and on the other side, Alemdar, the Committee of Elders and the Black Flag organisation.

The Templars are represented as technologically advanced but also loyal to their traditions. For instance, they perform a religious ceremony when they accept a new member. During this ritual they wear clothes from the Middle Ages and drink wine from ancient wine-goblets. This secret organisation has its headquarters in the US but representatives called barons in every country, including Turkey. The top members of this organisation are represented as businessmen running their own companies and having economic relations with their states. The story-line suggests that they control governments across the world with this economic power rather than military power.

These external powers are responsible for every unfortunate event which occurs in Turkey and in the region. For instance, the events in Syria and Iraq occurred because a stable Middle East does not serve their (the external powers') interests. They are also responsible for the

Kurdish issue in Turkey because the Kurdish problem is an obstacle to Turkey's regional power ambitions; a powerful, self-confident Turkey again is against their interests. This can be seen in a dialogue between Alemdar and the deputy leader of the Templars in the final episode of Season 7. In this scene, the Templar says that the US has realised that it cannot be a truly global power so it wants regional powers which it can control. He asks Alemdar to be in control in the region on behalf of the Templars. However, Alemdar replies that Turkey is achieving this power without the Templars' support and asks why Turkey needs their support. The dialogue continues as follows (195 1:19:20):

The deputy leader of the Templars: We have got what we needed until now. But you could not sustain stability in Iraq and could not get what you want even when you were at your strongest. Everyone can see that you do not have sufficient power to overthrow the regime in Syria. The reason for all these things is that you cannot mobilise international sanction mechanisms. If NATO were on board, Assad would have gone already.

Alemdar: We cannot look at this situation as pragmatically as people in the west do. We have cultural and historical ties with these people. It is true that we see these people as if they are our own people and approach this issue in an emotional way.

The Templar: Being emotional is luxury, Polat Alemdar. It brings a huge cost with it. But you do not have the economic power to bear this cost. In the past, you opened your arms to the Kurds in Halabja; everybody applauded you. You opened your arms to the Chechens in their war with Russia; the west congratulated you. Now, you show the world that there is still a conscience by embracing Syrian refugees. The west offers you congratulations at best.

Alemdar: You are right. The people in the west cannot even empathise with us. They are daunted by the cost calculation.

In this scene, the west is portrayed as pragmatic and its interests are more important than showing humanity. If the cost is high, the west does not help oppressed people. On the other hand, Turkey helps these people not for its own interests, but because those people are in need and it is Turkey's responsibility to help them because of the shared historical and cultural ties. Here, it can be said that the neo-Ottomanist features emerge because of the emphasis on historical and cultural ties with this region. Also, whereas Alemdar and Turkey are represented as emotional, the west is represented as uncaring and without mercy because of its approach to the oppression in the region. When we look at the characters that represent

the west in the series, we find that there have been many scenes in which western powers and their collaborators commit evil acts such as torturing, kidnapping children and organ trafficking. This will be explained in detail in the interpellation section later in this chapter. It is important to mention here that the west is otherised by this us/them structure and articulated as merciless and pragmatist external powers which play games against Turkey and the regions of the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus which were once part of the Ottoman territories.

In addition, when the Templars became more prominent in the series they were portrayed as a Christian organisation faithful to its medieval traditions. This representation added Christianity to the structure and created a civilizational opposition just as in the era of the Crusades. The series depicts twenty-first century events from an historical perspective by putting the Templars on one side and the Committee of Elders on the other. Thus, in the series, the west or the Christians and their collaborators in the region have been against the Turks and the Muslims in the region for centuries, and it still continues today. In Season 8, then, the civilizational perspective constituted the main opposition. If we recall how Davutoglu saw the international world in Chapter 3, it can be claimed that the series has had the same chain of thoughts. He thought that the west is morally wrong and claimed that western states used very firm language during the Bosnian crisis in the 1990s:

... an *inhuman* understanding pervaded the heads and souls of the western leaders who have claims to establish a world order. Until the *western mentality* which sees some people as more superior and more equal than others is reformed and overcomes this *moral crisis*, there will be no end to tragedies like this [the Bosnian crisis] (Davutoglu, 1995a).

Davutoglu also used terms such as “Catholic Spanish barbarians”, “Christian terrorism and fundamentalism” and “European fascism” in his writings (Ozkan, 2014:127). On the other hand, he defined Muslim combatants in the Bosnian War as “the leader[s] of the jihad” and the combatants in Chechnya as fighting against “the attacks coming from the barbaric Russian steppes” (*ibid.*). Davutoglu also said in 2013 that “about the construction of our identity and civilizational belonging, we should meet on common ground without hesitation” (Davutoglu, 2013a). In that speech, he emphasised Islam and history as the common ground which articulates Islam into the neo-Ottomanist identity.

Sharing these thoughts of Davutoglu, the series went one step further and articulated these features into the self-confident representation. In *VoW: Ambush*, as a civilization, the west has always had plans for the region and was responsible for the recent turmoil in the Middle East. Turkey was not self-confident before because she had cut her ties from the region and from her civilizational belonging after the formation of the new republic, but had regained that self-confidence in the twenty-first century and rediscovered its civilizational belonging so that it can wage a war against the west just as in the era of the Ottoman Empire. This leads to the second articulation in this section.

Second, the series made a comparison between 'old' Turkey and the 'new' through the self-confident Turkey representation and has articulated 'new Turkey' into self-confident Turkey. In this 'new Turkey', the influence of Alemdar and his team has expanded to other regions such as the Middle East and the Balkans. With this self-confidence, the regional KGT and the Black Flag organisations were established in order to increase Turkey's involvement in the neighbouring regions. In Season 8, also, we saw that the regional KGT had a new building with the latest technological devices such as satellite trackers and drones, and the members were more confident when they were on an operation. So in the series too there is a more confident new Turkey which can operate and compete in the region more efficiently. In Season 8, there was even an operation against the British stock market. This led to Alemdar and his squad struggling with the foreign powers on behalf of the Turkish and other peoples in the region. Tayfun Atay in the daily *Cumhuriyet* commented on this:

More and more they have self-confidence, more they are opened to the outside. Now, Polat and his team spoil the games of actors who want to launch their evil plans over Turkey and the whole world. The doors to the deepest areas of the state are opened to them. They are transformed into a steel core that protects the established order and that also puts the world in order.

It can be said that Alemdar and his team represent the 'new Turkey' which has self-confidence and as a result they have the capabilities to beat the games played against Turkey and the other countries in the region. This is very similar to the ideology of the AKP politicians discussed in the first section. Moreover, the series compares the first neo-Ottomanist period at the beginning of the 1990s (the Ozal Era) with the 'new Turkey'. For instance, in the first episodes, Alemdar talked with a member of his organisation, the KGT. The KGT man told him that the investments made by the then Prime Minister and later President Ozal in the regional

states has disturbed external powers. In the second episode, they discussed this in detail; the man explained that Ozal planned to use businessmen to enter the countries in the region and that Turkey would increase its influence in those countries. He added that a consortium consisting of 'deep states' in Russia, the US, China and Europe would not allow this. Then, according to *VoW: Ambush*, the conservative Ozal's neo-Ottomanist initiative in the 1990s was halted by the 'external powers' and this external powers discourse was established right from the first episodes. In 2009, the film *VoW: Gladio* showed that Ozal was assassinated, poisoned by the deep state actors which were under the control of external powers. This scene was discussed by the journalist Reha Muhtar under the headline 'What if the murder scene of Turgut Ozal in *VoW* is real?' (Muhtar, 2012). Therefore, when the series was using this discourse to explain that foreign countries were opposed to Turkey's neo-Ottomanist policies, some real-life journalists were actually reproducing this discourse.

Moreover, in episode 179, in a dialogue between Alemdar and *Aksacılı*, it was stated that Turkey had become more self-confident compared with the 1990s and that the neo-Ottomanist policies in the twenty-first century would be successful this time:

Aksacılı: At the beginning of the century [the twentieth century], we told the global powers that we were no longer a global power in order to be left alone. However, the global powers did not believe us. Our economic, military, political – all the indicators were designed to persuade those powers. For this reason, we passed that century without a war [so can Turkey now enter a war?]. We waited patiently for the required conditions. The end of the Cold War was a great opportunity. However, we missed that opportunity since our institutions and mentality were not ready for it. This cost us 25 years. *This opportunity is in front of us once more. Besides, our institutions and we ourselves are ready for this than ever before.* However, Sencer and others who think like him [CHP-minded people] could not analyse the transformation in the region and the world well enough.

Alemdar: Because this century-long sleep raised fear among certain people, it created the belief that we will not be a great state, that they will not let us become a great country. They thought that the imperialists would take our lands if we attempt to become a global power again. (episode 179, 1:09:57)

This dialogue shows that *Aksacılı* and Alemdar, the two characters who represent the Turkish state, had a similar approach to that of the AKP politicians. They compared the Ozal era with the current one and, according to them, Turkey can now succeed better than in the Ozal era

and spoil the plots of the external powers. They believed that Turkey is more self-confident now because it has more capability and is psychologically ready. Davutoglu also used the psychological factor in his speeches and Erdogan constantly compared Turkey in their era with the previous eras, as mentioned in the first section and in Chapter 3. It can therefore be said that *VoW: Ambush* reproduces these articulations in a similar way. Moreover, the series created another antagonism between the Kemalists and Turkey in the series. This was explained in Chapter 5 in the discussion of the representation of the leader of the Middle East. The representation of self-confident Turkey can be seen from the character Sencer Bey, one of the Elders on the Committee who staged a coup and attempted to assassinate *Aksacli* in Season 7. As mentioned in Chapter 5, Sencer Bey represented the Kemalist ideology in the series. In his dialogues, he used the same arguments as the Kemalist party, the CHP. As *Aksacli* said in the dialogue above, people like Sencer Bey cannot understand the transformation in Turkey. Alemdar agreed and stated that people like Sencer Bey can never believe that Turkey would become a great country again.

As a result, the series put the external powers into a position in which they are evil, pragmatic and responsible for all the unfortunate events in Turkey and the neighbouring regions. The series also articulated Turkey into a more powerful position in which it can operate in the countries in the region and spoil the games of the external powers. In this sense, it can be claimed that the series reproduced the same articulations as those attempted by the AKP.

3. Interpellation to ‘Self-Confident Turkey’

As stated in the previous chapters, it is important to explain the process of interpellation to the subject positions and identities. My belief is that not only the speeches of politicians but also popular cultural products, and in my case a television series, can be mediums for the articulation of the meaning and interpellation to the subject positions if they reproduce the same discourses, ideologies, identities, imaginaries and so on. Examining how viewers of the series might align themselves with particular characters, situations or perspectives can shed light on how and why they can be interpellated to the positions created by the AKP and the series. In Chapter 4, I demonstrated how the viewers have approached these positions and perspectives in general terms and in Chapters 5 and 6 I did the same for the other two

representations. In this chapter, I am examining how they identify themselves in terms of the representation of a self-confident Turkey.

As stated above, in *VoW: Ambush*, characters who represent the west are portrayed as acting in very inhumane ways. They do things to the heroes in the series, Alemdar, Kara and their relatives. These characters do such evil things that the viewers who watch these scenes feel emotions such as hatred for them and feel pity for those who suffer at their hands. This increases the volume of interpellation to Alemdar and his friends because they are the actors who represent Turkey and are the only people who can respond to these evil characters.

In Season 7, for example, there were Israeli characters such as Mossad agents who kidnapped children or trafficked human organs. In episode 183 (2:20), Alemdar was captured by an Israeli deep state character. He saw Alemdar's wounds (he was burned in the previous episodes and had bandages all over his face) and told him "I know how much it hurts Polat! I burned many people in Palestine and Lebanon. I can still hear their screams and moans". Here, the series presented a particularly evil portrait of Israel, not just because an Israeli character captured Alemdar, a Turk, but because he had already killed many people in the Middle East.

The representation of evil external powers and depicting them while they are doing evil things increased in Season 8 when the Templars became the main threat in the story. In one scene in episode 203 (27:50), the Templars kidnapped Kara's grandson and demanded a ransom for him. Although, Kara did what the Templars asked, they used a remote-controlled bomb to explode a truck where his grandson was. After the explosion, Kara and his friends were depicted in a state of devastation for more than two and half minutes with a background of music played on a folk instrument, a *baglama*.



In this scene, the viewers saw many emotions such as sorrow, hate and vengeance from the characters with whom they could align themselves. Such scenes of *Alemdar* or *Kara* make the viewers feel as the same way as the characters feel and show that the external powers who commit such deeds are evil and inhuman because they are prepared to harm innocent people such as oppressed people in Lebanon and Palestine, and even a three-year-old child.

The series actually depicted real events happening at the time and that could have a huge impact on the interpellation process. Two particular events, the Reyhanli bombings and the Gezi Park protests, were covered in the series only weeks after these incidents had happened, and the incidents were depicted as if evil external powers had been responsible for them. Therefore, they reproduced the real-life discourse and thus became part of interpellation process.

First, the Reyhanli bombings happened on 11 May 2013 and were covered in episode 193 which was aired on 23 May. In the incident, a double car bombing killed 52 people in a southern border town of Turkey (Weaver, 2013). After this incident, the AKP politicians accused the Syrian government and Al-Mukhabarat, whereas the opposition parties accused radical Islamic groups in Syria such as the Al-Nusra Front, al-Qaeda and ISIL. The perpetrators of this attack are still unknown. This event was covered in the series twelve days after the

attack. In the episode, there were two long scenes. In the first, *Aksacli*, the leader of the Committee of Elders, and Hoca, the Minister of Foreign Affairs (who represented Ahmet Davutoglu) spoke together about the Syrian problem:

Hoca: Inside the security and intelligence bureaucracy, there are elements which are sabotaging us. Some of them are working together with Al-Mukhabarat. For this reason, we cannot prevent explosions in the region.

Aksacli: Assad gives two messages with these terror attacks. He wants to give the message that 'if you continue to interfere in our politics, I will carry the conflict to your border'. The other message is for his allies China, Russia and Iran to tell them 'I have sufficient power to direct incidents in Syria and as well as in Turkey, so continue supporting me' (episode 193, 1:11:15).

So, very soon after the attacks, the series was claiming that the Syrian regime was responsible for it. On the other hand, it also claimed that there were internal agents within Turkey's bureaucracy who could also have been responsible for it. In the other scene, four agents of external powers, Germany, Israel, the US and Syria, were talking about the Reyhanli attack in a small room:

German: You did very well in Reyhanli. Assad showed that everything is not over for him.

Syrian: It is out of question that as a friend and neighbour of Turkey in the region, the Syrian state cannot carry out terrorist attacks in Turkey. Terrorist who call themselves the opposition carried out these attacks to provoke Turkey against us.

Israeli: I am impressed by Al-Mukhabarat's diplomatic style of talking. You are speaking as if you are in a UN conference. We are all intelligence officers operating in Turkey. Everyone around this table knows who did what. There is no need to tell us.

Syrian: Just like Israel, you do not care about democracy at all. You turned our land into a military exercise zone.

Israeli: Each one of our bombs increases Assad's reputation in the region ...

German: As the German state, we give all the support we can to the Assad regime ... (episode 193, 1:30:45).

In this scene, the series showed that not only was Al-Mukhabarat responsible for the attack, but agents of 'external powers' congratulated the Syrian agent and the German agent stated that his country was backing the Assad regime. The conversation also implies that Israel and

the Assad regime were in collaboration. Thus, the viewers of the series saw that Assad, backed by 'external powers', was responsible for the attack in Reyhanli. External powers depicted in this way talking about a crisis in Turkey for which they were responsible could have an impact on the representation of 'dark external powers'.

Second, *VoW: Ambush* contained the Gezi Park protests which began on 28 May 2013. These protests started as an environmentalist protest against plans to transform Gezi Park in the centre of Istanbul into an historic Military Artillery Barracks. However, after a police crackdown against a few hundred people, the excessive violence used against them turned the event into a massive protest for democratic rights across Turkey. Erdogan blamed these protests on the 'interest rate lobby' which according to him consisted of domestic and international financial institutions (Saglam, 2013). The story-line in *VoW: Ambush* also presented the Gezi Park protests as part of the plans of external powers and this was implied in the series many times in Season 8. Season 8 started on 12 September 2013 and before its beginning, the new season was advertised with a trailer which referred to the Gezi Park protests. From the first episodes, these demonstrations were covered in the season in a similar way to that which the AKP politicians described them. It is important to mention here that during the protests, Necati Sasmaz (who plays the role of Alemdar) was invited to talk with Erdogan and after that meeting he spoke live on television to calm the demonstrators down.

In the series, there are demonstrations in Istanbul and young people were shown clashing with the police. Water cannons and tear gas were also shown being used against the protestors. A scene in episode 200 explained how the series had approached this issue. In this scene, the deputy leader of the Templars and the Templar baron candidate for Turkey named Murat were shown discussing the demonstrations.

The deputy leader: Everyday a new crisis is happening in Turkey.

Murat: Is it happening or does someone make it happen?

The deputy leader: Both. The most important thing is to be the one who direct the crisis.

Murat: How would you like me to do this?

The deputy leader: By directing money and people. There are few things that cannot be bought with money. By using money you can make people happy and unhappy. When you make them happy, they obey you. When you make them unhappy, they rise up against the government.

Murat: We made a fast entrance to the finance sector. It will not take long to control huge sums of money.

The deputy leader: Good. Social events are next ... Previously Turkey was among the developing countries. You could manage the Turkish economy with 5-10 billion cash. Today, the rules of the game have changed. Turkey is developed now and trade volumes have expanded ...

With this long scene, the implication made in the series was that the Templars wanted to control Turkey's finances and that they were responsible for the Gezi protests. There was also a reference to Turkey's more self-confident character due to her stronger economic capabilities. The Templars as an external threat were playing games against Turkey by creating uprisings in the country. In later episodes, the Armageddon Team had an important role in the scenario. This team is connected to the Templars and went to Turkey to start social conflicts. In episode 204, this team is explained as a very qualified organisation which is behind every conflict in the world. In the same episode, Alemdar talked to the Elders:

Alemdar: Recently, Turkey has become the centre of attention in the region and in the world in terms of the economy and strategy. The countries that are not happy with this want to harm our global image and influence, especially by using the situation in Syria.

Elder 1: We need to take precautions about this. Otherwise, we shall see inevitable results. Do we have a plan?

Alemdar: I am planning to create a team which can resolve such problems on a regional and global scale. Another important issue is that the Armageddon Team has entered our country. We know that this team creates chaos wherever it goes.

Elder 2: What kind of precautions do you plan to take?

Alemdar: We are aware that they are planning large-scale domestic conflicts within the near future. We have taken the necessary precautions. However, since this team is here now, it means that we will see serious actions.

Elder 1: What kind of actions?

Alemdar: Sensational assassinations, civil war scenarios; they are expert at creating ethnic and religious conflicts ... (episode 204, 1:24:00).

With this long scene, the Templars and the Armageddon Team both represented dark external powers. In episode 205, the head of the Armageddon Team stated that he wanted the same ethnic conflict which had happened in the Southern region of Turkey to happen in Istanbul. He stated 'We shall cause such a huge problem for Turkey that Turkey would not be able to deal with regional problems because of her domestic problems' (episode 205, 13:17). So the Gezi events and many other social issues in Turkey were caused by the Armageddon Team and the Templars in the world of *VoW: Ambush*. With these scenes, the viewers could be expected to feel anger against external powers which were planning games against Turkey. With this kind of representation, they could identify themselves with the agents who were defending their country against such evil actors and as a result, while they were identifying themselves with Alemdar, they were identifying themselves with the AKP politicians because they took the same position.

When the current media coverage is examined, it can be seen that the real events in Turkish politics were covered by the Turkish media. The prominent journalist and anchor man Cuneyt Ozdemir, for example, wrote in the daily newspaper, *Radikal* under the headline 'Penguins vs. *VoW*' that:

In the new season of *VoW: Ambush*, we will probably watch and learn the meetings of the fake hooded people behind the Gezi events, the sinister game plans of external powers, 'Otpor!'²⁴ etc. In this way, external powers not involved in the Gezi events will come across to us as lively, shaped in flesh and bones. They will tell the Turkish people how actually Gezi was a 'game' of these external powers (Ozdemir, 2013b).

As an opposition journalist, Ozdemir approached the coverage of the Gezi events in the series cynically, although in the same article he accepted that *VoW* is the most successful Turkish television series since it had been aired for eleven years. He also recognised the external powers discourse in the series and stated that the international issues for which the AKP government had no good explanation would be dealt with in the series.

²⁴ 'Otpor!' was a political organization in Serbia (then part of FR Yugoslavia) from 1998 until 2004 and Erdogan accused 'Otpor!' of being one of the external powers behind the Gezi events.

Tayfun Atay, another journalist and a sociologist, stated in *Radikal* that in Season 9, Alemdar fought against ISIL and the external powers behind it: from the White House to the Pentagon, from the House of Lords to the Kremlin, from the CIA-FBI to the BND, MOSSAD and all world's media. Atay explained cynically that Alemdar will "uncover the dirty games and systems of bloody hands that govern the world ... So this is the new season: Polat versus the world" (Atay, 2014). Thus, it can be seen that opposition journalists gave room to *VoW* in their columns and talked about it cynically even though they were aware of its influence on the viewers.

However, when we look at the newspapers close to the Islamist or conservative camp, it can be seen that the tone in the news which they reported was very different from that in the other papers. For instance, Yuksel Aytug in the daily *Sabah* explained the developments in on episode of *VoW: Ambush* by suggesting how the Turkish government had been 'cloned' by a 'deep state organisation' (a reference to the Gulen Movement) and how this organisation was stopping the trucks which carried humanitarian aid to the Syrians. He described this episode as 'historical' and claimed that it contained 'terrific' messages. He ended his column by writing "If we do not read newspapers, see the real pictures and watch the videos, we would say that 'VoWers' exaggerated too much. Unfortunately, all the things we watch as the scenario constitute a small part of the reality. Who would say that one day even *VoW* would be like an elementary school demonstration compared with the reality?" (Aytug, 2014) So the representation of the Gulen Movement in the series (described as a part of the Templars) was perceived as true by Aytug.

Conservative newspapers and websites such as *Yeni Akit* and *Haber7* have also mentioned particular *VoW* scenes. For instance, *Haber7* posted scenes of the finance lobby on its website and wrote that "*VoW: Ambush* brought up that the Templars were targeting Turkey's mines in episode 212. In *VoW: Ambush*, it was discussed that the *games over Turkey* that began with the 17 December process would continue with Turkey's mine reserves" (Haber7, 2014). The same website stated in a different news story that "*VoW: Ambush* continues to attract attention to Turkey's agenda and also puts the 17 December process on its agenda. The scenes related to the operation in *VoW: Ambush* were like a summary of what actually happened" (Haber7, 2013b). Moreover, in the same news item, *Haber7* reproduced the discourse of external powers when explaining the events in the series. It said that "*International finance organisations* which interfere in the countries they want to govern see

permissible implementations such as fixing elections and launching a coup to prevent the country's resources from slipping out of their control ... the series is drawing attention to the *global powers* that order financial assassinations, especially in Turkey". These scenes were also shared in *Yeni Akit* under the headline 'VoW: *Ambush* hits the bull's-eye once more' (Yeni Akit, 2014).

So real events in Turkish politics are covered in *VoW: Ambush* and the Turkish media respond and argue differently about how these events have been covered. The opposition papers' approach is very cynical but the pro-AKP ones embrace *VoW* and share its approach to real-life events. Whether it is positive or negative, this creates intertextuality between the texts created by the series, the media, real events and the AKP elites. Elspeth Van Veeren (2009: 364) stated that television series "can be considered an important and useful example in the production of intertextual meaning. ... By both (re)constituting and drawing on the same (re)presentations of 'reality', the intertextuality of popular culture and world politics helps to make the world intelligible". Thus, the intertextual meanings created first by the series and then reinforced by the media can make this representation more intelligible for the viewers.

As Weldes stated and as explained in the previous chapter, reiteration of the discourse is very important for the interpellation process for the creation of consent for foreign policies. When the series is examined in terms of relevant discourses which create the representation of a self-confident Turkey, it can be seen that the discourses of 'external powers' and 'the games played against Turkey by these external powers' have been used many times.

In episode 172 (44:00), *Aksacli* and one of the Elders, Faruk, talked about the nuclear weapons ambition of Turkey and about how external powers represent a possible threat to this ambition:

Aksacli: Faruk, I wanted to talk to you to get information about your research in detail.

Faruk: Sir, the infrastructure of nuclear energy research is about to be finished; we shall complete it in a short time.

Aksacli: It is very important that we need to have nuclear weapons as well as being less energy dependent.

Faruk: Sir, if I may, I would like to share my concern about this issue. We are working secretly on this. When are you going to share this subject with the Committee?

Aksacli: Nuclear weapon is such an issue that if we say a word about it without having it, *external powers* will do anything to prevent it.

In episode 203 (1:21:09), Alemdar, one of the Elders and Hoca discussed the TFP:

Hoca: Turkey conducts her own policies in the Middle East and the US, Israel, Russia and the EU countries are not happy with this.

Elder: the US did what Russia said about Syria. In return, Russian will remain silent about the rapprochement between Iran and the US and also Israel.

Alemdar: Previously, our Middle East policies were talked about in the US and Turkey was able to use that. All intelligence related to the region was taken from the US. Now, Turkey established her own information web by establishing an intelligence network across the region. For this reason, Turkey has started to create and apply her own policies independent from the US because of this intelligence network.

Hoca: That is why there is an operation to discredit our intelligence units.

In this dialogue, there is the assumption that Turkey is now more powerful and independent and the external powers do not want a powerful Turkey. For this reason they are making plans to discredit Turkey's intelligence organisation on both the domestic and the international levels. In episode 204, Alemdar and Elders used the same discourse to explain Turkey's negative image in the world:

Elder: On our border with Syria, there are hundreds of foreign journalists and television reporters. Their aim is to show Turkey as the power behind the terrorist organisation by twisting our peaceful and solution-oriented policies.

Alemdar: Recently, Turkey has become the centre of attention in the region in terms of both the economy and our strategy. The countries that are not happy with this want to harm our global image and influence, especially by using the situation in Syria.

In episode 205, the head of the Armageddon Team stated that he wanted to create in Istanbul the same ethnic conflict as had happened in the southern region of Turkey. He stated "We will cause such a huge problem to Turkey that Turkey would not be able deal with regional problems because of her domestic problems" (episode 205, 13:17). Thus, in these three episodes the series reiterated the same discourse and meaning. Moreover, although this discourse was used in the first episodes of Season 8, there are other examples in later

episodes. For instance, in episode 220, Kara and Alemdar were seen in Alemdar's office read a newspaper article in which Kara is accused of the assassination of a state prosecutor:

Kara: They accuse of us without shame. They are set against us. Who are they, Master?²⁵

Alemdar: *They are setting the game* in Turkey once again, Kara. We will be prepared for it.

Kara: So, were they swarming in while we were running around elsewhere for our homeland?

Alemdar: Yes, Kara. They have planned to establish a new order with the chaos which they create here. We will stop this just as we have spoiled their plans before.

Kara: I am ready for anything you want me to do. Where am I going now, Master?

Alemdar: Actually, the *Shadids*²⁶ in Syria are not standing idle. According to information we have received, they are harassing the soldiers guarding the Tomb of Suleyman Shah.²⁷

Kara: Sure, let's go, Master.

Alemdar: For now, the necessary precautions have been taken there.

Kara: So who is behind this *Shadid*?

Alemdar: Israel, of course. They want to drag us into the Syrian War by using the *Shadid*. They know that we will intervene heavily if there is a situation. (episode 220, 1:17:04)

Here, there is a reference to external powers which are making evil plans and setting games against Turkey. According to this scene, the aim of these external powers and their collaborators is to start chaos. However, Alemdar and his men, representing the self-confident Turkey, state that they will not allow this aim to succeed. Here, it should be mentioned that in Season 8, the conflict between the Gulen Movement and the AKP was covered and the Gulen Movement was depicted as working for the Templars. Events such as the Turkish intelligence truck issue and the Gulen Movement's control over Turkish

²⁵ *Usta* in Turkish. This word and also the word *Reis* (which means 'chieftain') are used for Alemdar by his friends in the series. These words are also used for Erdogan, who is called the Great Master by his supporters. For instance, there is a Facebook page named *Buyuk Usta*: <<https://www.facebook.com/Akparti.RTErdogan/>>. Also, a biographical film about Erdogan, the Chieftain (*Reis*) was released in 2016.

²⁶ Means 'severe' in Arabic. This word is used in *VOW: Ambush* instead of ISIL.

²⁷ In 2015, the ISIL movement forced the Turkish military to evacuate troops guarding an historic tomb, demolishing it and moving the remains to a different site.

bureaucracy were represented in the series and the Gulen Movement was shown as collaborating with the Templars²⁸.

So the series reiterated the same discourses about external powers and games being played against Turkey as the AKP politicians did. Also, depicting these external powers as evil and as enemies of Turkey might have a role in producing nationalistic features and emotions such as anger. Viewers might identify themselves with the characters that represent Turkey in the series because those external powers hurt these characters and innocent people in Turkey and as well as elsewhere in the Middle East. These representations of external powers and the reiterated discourse can interpellate viewers to the representation of self-confident Turkey as well as the neo-Ottomanist identity brought by the AKP politicians.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that *VoW: Ambush* shares the ideology of the AKP. Both have Turkish-Islamic features and approach the representation of self-confident Turkey in the same way. From the first episodes, the series has had a nationalist feature and its principal characters, Alemdar, Kara and *Aksacılı*, believe that external powers have plans against Turkey. In the first seasons, these games of external powers only targeted Turkey, but in the later seasons they extended to other countries in the region. Representing Turkey and its deep state mechanisms, Alemdar, Kara and *Aksacılı* have dealt with these evil plans of external actors and their collaborators with great self-confidence. They have carried out successful operations against the Templars and their collaborators in the Middle East. In this sense, the series has reproduced the representation of self-confident Turkey which is part of the neo-Ottomanist identity.

VoW: Ambush has depicted western civilisation as evil in nature. It has approached international issues from a civilizational perspective. The west is portrayed as pragmatist and inhuman when it comes to pursuing its own interests. Therefore, the series created an 'other' which came into existence in the organisation of The Templars. The Templars in the series are

²⁸ Since the situation is extremely sensitive in Turkey and that the Gulen Movement is suspected of being behind the coup attempt in Turkey in July 2016, discussing in the context of a supposedly fictional television series is not appropriate. This issue, therefore, was not covered in details in this thesis.

depicted as being responsible for all the unfortunate events which have occurred in Turkey and in the neighbouring regions. The series has set Alemdar and his friends opposite the Templars. In this way, Turkey becomes the actor which can stop the unfortunate events in the region with the self-confidence which it has gained. By creating this us/them dichotomy, *VoW: Ambush* has reproduced the representation of a self-confident Turkey again.

Moreover, the series has used the same discursive structure that the AKP used in order to create this representation. It reiterated the discourses on 'external powers' and 'the games played against Turkey'. By reproducing the same discursive practices, the series becomes important in the interpellation process by which viewers can be hailed to the subject position previously created by the AKP. In this chapter, I have also shown that scenes from the series have been treated by the Turkish media as if they truly represent current Turkish politics.

As a result, I have demonstrated in this chapter that *VoW: Ambush* might have a role in the process of creating consent for particular foreign policies since it reproduces one of the features of the security imaginary of the AKP, the self-confident Turkey. When the other features and representations examined in the previous chapters are considered, it can be claimed that the series is a terrain where the ideas, thoughts, ideology, meanings and discourse of the AKP have found a place and have been frequently reiterated. As a part of the AKP hegemony of the media, *VoW: Ambush*, as one of the most popular TV series in Turkey, has, along with its production company, its actors and the Turkish media, reproduced the state identity created by the AKP hegemony in the last decade. Together, they all create intersubjective meanings and understandings and this intersubjectivity can affect the common sense of Turkey in terms international politics.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

While I was writing this thesis, the producers of *VoW: Ambush* started shooting another movie which is called *VoW: Homeland* and slated to be released in September, 2017. According to Necati Sasmaz this movie will focus on foiled coup attempt in 2016 (Hurriyet Daily News, 2017a). After this movie the production company aims to continue the series in television under a different name instead of *VoW: Ambush*. It can therefore be said that *VoW*'s popularity still continues. This thesis investigated Seasons 7 and 8 because first, the whole series is too long and not everything can be discussed in a study which is limited by time and by scale. Second, these two seasons were aired between 2012 and 2014 and therefore overlapped with the Davutoglu era and covered TFP issues such as the Syrian crisis.

In this study, I have sought to answer these questions: How did the AKP establish its hegemony in Turkey? How have the TFP, the security imaginary of Turkey and the state identity changed during the AKP era? How might popular culture play a role in consent creation for foreign policies? How do the series and the security imaginary complement each other? These questions led to the main argument of this thesis which is that *VoW: Ambush* functions as a site for the production of consent for foreign policies formed by the AKP elites within the last decade, through a process of the reproduction of state identities, ideologies and discourses which created subject positions at the level of narrative.

Since this research is in the field of IR, in Chapter, I looked at IR theories and explained why the social constructivist approach in IR offers the best way to explain the foreign policy behaviour of Turkey in the last decade and how popular culture has become a field in which to analyse foreign policy. I discussed how the two main rationalist schools in IR, realism and liberalism, are not sufficient to explain the role of domestic politics in foreign policy because of their structural approach. These schools also focus on material capabilities when it comes to state interests and are not interested in how these state interests are constituted. However, the constructivist school focuses on identities and the role of inter-subjectivity. According to this approach, identities define the interests, preferences and actions of states. Countries in the international system understand each other to the extent of the identities which they attribute to them (Hopf, 1998:175). Identities are constructed through intersubjective understandings – norms, rules, meanings, representations, cultures and

ideologies. Understanding intersubjective understandings is crucial for analysing foreign policy. The aim of this study, therefore, was to understand the intersubjective understandings in Turkey's foreign policy.

Turkish politics are different compared with western examples because in the current Turkish political structure the AKP, as one representative of the ideology of political Islam, is a counter-hegemonic project to the Kemalist ideology. In the last decade, the AKP has established its hegemony and the Kemalist ideology has lost its hegemonic power status. In Chapter 2, I investigated the rise of the AKP as a hegemonic movement in Turkey and applied an historical approach and a Gramscian analysis to Turkish politics. One of the key findings was that political Islam is a counter-hegemonic movement against the Kemalist ideology. Whereas the Kemalist ideology has westernist, modernist, nationalist and secular characteristics, political Islam has anti-secular, conservative, nationalist and anti-westernist features. It can be seen that nationalism cuts across the two ideologies and constitutes one of the most important features of most of the political parties in Turkish politics. The AKP also used nationalist discourse, but it articulated nationalism with Islamist and Ottomanist features. I demonstrated that the rise of the political Islam ideology accelerated after the 1980 military coup. After the coup, the Turkish-Islamic synthesis was used to cement Turkish society against the 'Communist threat'. In the 1980s and onwards, Islam infiltrated the political and social spheres and this led the Islamist parties to have more voice in the printed and visual media.

There were two economic developments which affected the rise of political Islam. First, the rise of Islamic capitalism contributed to the rise of political Islam. The emergence of a conservative bourgeoisie in Turkey as a result of neo-liberal policies in the 1980s led to the formation of organisations such as the Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MUSIAD) which aligned themselves with the conservative and Islamist political parties and created economic capital for a counter-hegemonic movement. This new class, which can also be referred to as the Anatolian bourgeoisie, rejected the Kemalist ideology which had marginalised it in the early years of the republic and as a result it supported the AKP in the last decade. Second, demographic changes can also be included in the class-based analysis of the rise of political Islam. Immigration from less-developed Anatolian cities to the urban areas constituted an important source for of the AKP (Cagaptay, 2007:21).

In Chapter 2, I demonstrated that the AKP has seen popular culture as a functional site and the terrain of popular culture became part of the AKP hegemony. In that chapter, I shed light on the structure of the Turkish media and investigated it from the political economy perspective. It was shown that Turkish television channels and the other media instruments are owned by conglomerates, just as in the west. These conglomerates, such as Dogan Holdings, Ciner Holdings, Dogus Holdings and Calik Holdings, have interests in other economic sectors such as construction, mining and energy, and have a clientelistic/patrimonial relationship with the AKP which allows them to pursue public tenders. This kind of relationship supported the AKP hegemony and also led to popular culture products on the TV channels owned by those companies being unable to contradict the AKP's policies. Moreover, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK), which was controlled by the AKP government, could impose fines on television channels which broadcast anything against the interests of the AKP hegemony. It can therefore be said that those television channels and popular culture products gave their consent to the AKP hegemony and that those which tried to work against the AKP hegemony faced coercive measures from the RTUK. The findings of this study have shown that Seasons 7 and 8 of *VoW: Ambush* were aired on ATV, the channel owned by Calik Holdings at that time. Calik Holdings had a different kind of relationship with the AKP because its CEO at that time was Berat Albayrak, the son-in-law of Erdogan and the current Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

Another example of the relationship between popular culture and the AKP is that Erdogan has often invited celebrities to the presidential palace in Ankara and that those celebrities from the television, music and cinema industries have had their pictures taken with Erdogan and have released positive statements about him. There were meetings with journalists and media representatives and even famous football clubs visited Erdogan in the palace and issued statements about their visit. More recently, popular figures such as popstars and football players have made public statements about their decision to support the referendum intended to increase Erdogan's presidential powers. In terms of *VoW: Ambush*, Necati Sasmaz, the leading actor and the one of the owners of the production company of the series (Pana Film), has often released statements in favour of the AKP after various developments in Turkey. This still continues, and after the coup attempt on 15 July 2016, Pana Film released a statement fully supporting the government. These events show that the AKP hegemony

also works in the terrain of popular culture. Thus, Chapter 2 showed that the AKP hegemony was a counter-hegemonic movement against the Kemalist ideology on political, economic and cultural levels. The AKP established its hegemony not only on the political level but also in the other terrains and the Turkish media was among them. So if there has been a hegemonic change in Turkish politics, how has the TFP been influenced by it? In Chapter 3, I approached this question from the constructivist perspective.

In Chapter 3, I looked at the transformation in the TFP and examined the neo-Ottomanist state identity of Turkey. I focused mostly on the period when Ahmet Davutoglu was the Minister of Foreign Affairs between 2009 and 2014, although I also investigated the previous eras in order to understand how the Davutoglu era differed from them. I examined Davutoglu's speeches during his term in office in order to understand his way of thinking about IR, Turkey's position in regard to other countries and his approaches to international events. Analysing his foreign policy discourse provided clues about the AKP's security imaginary. Since Davutoglu was an academic before he took up his role in the AKP government, his articles and books were also analysed to understand this imaginary. In the 1990s, Davutoglu was also writing in a journal, *Aksiyon*, and a newspaper, *Yeni Safak*, in which he commented on IR and the TFP, so I examined these articles as well. His book *Strategic Depth* was also investigated because it was the guide book for the TFP during his term in office. Thus, since Davutoglu is believed to have been the mastermind behind the TFP in the last decade, his understandings, ideas and discourse about the TFP constituted the most important part of the study and his speeches, articles and books were used as texts from which to analyse the TFP. I also looked at the speeches of the then Prime Minister and the current President of Turkey, Erdogan, because he is the most important decision-maker in the AKP cadres.

As I stated in Chapter 3, in the last decade, Turkey has become a country which aims to be a regional power and which has ambitions of being a leader country. It became more responsive to regional issues, especially in the Middle East, as a consequence of the neo-Ottomanist identity that the AKP brought to the TFP. Since the 1990s, the ideas, imaginary and representations about international politics of conservative and Islamist politicians have been very important for the identities that the AKP brought. These identities were products of these intersubjective understandings which constituted the security imaginary. As a political

Islamist, Davutoglu's ideas, representations and imaginary affected by these intersubjective understandings made Turkey more involved in events in the Middle East and in Islamic countries. One of the findings about Davutoglu's imaginary is that he did not believe that Turkey should be beholden to western civilisation. He used derogatory language when he spoke about western civilisation, especially in the 1990s when the Bosnian War was in progress. The second important finding is that Davutoglu often emphasised in his speeches Turkey's Ottoman heritage and the shared values with countries beyond Turkey's borders, lands which once belonged to the Ottoman Empire such as the Balkans and the Middle East. In almost all his speeches, Davutoglu referred to Turkey's Ottoman past. According to the security imaginary of Davutoglu, Turkey holds the leader position in the regions of the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus where the Ottoman Empire ruled for centuries, and Turkey should be pro-active in these regions. Therefore, I used the term neo-Ottomanism as one of the identities in the TFP.

The third important finding in Davutoglu's speeches is that Davutoglu attempted to construct a new identity for Turkey by giving history a special importance. He aimed to recreate Turkey's civilizational belonging because he believed that the Kemalist hegemony had cut the ties between the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. For instance, he stated, "No matter what they say, wherever there is someone who has a common history with us, he/she is our kin, is someone with the same fate, at the same time, he/she is a core element of our foreign policy. Describing this, we never distinguish a Turk from a Kurd, an Albanian from a Bosnian (Davutoglu, 2013a)". Davutoglu believed that if Turkey can succeed in this restoration, it will cause a domino effect and lead to restorations in the other regions. In his speeches, Davutoglu did not say how this identity construction could be achieved. Even so, it is important to think that there is a project which aims to create a new identity based on a common history, in other words neo-Ottomanist policies.

Although I have focused in this study on the TFP until 2014, it is important to state that Ottomania has continued to increase its influence on Turkish daily and political life and some issues related to this identity should be mentioned here to support the findings of the study. For instance, in 2014, Erdogan proposed that the Ottoman language "should be taught in schools to prevent younger generations losing touch with their cultural heritage" (Pamuk, 2014). In 2016, the Turkish military chose the date of the Battle of Marj Dabiq for Operation

Euphrates Shield. The operation took place in the same region as the Battle of Marj Dabiq (in northern Syria) which had occurred exactly 500 years earlier (Milliyet, 2016). More recently, one of the members of the Ottoman dynasty released a statement about how she would vote 'yes' in the forthcoming referendum which would give Erdogan more presidential power (Zaman, 2017). More related to popular culture, there has been an increase in Ottoman-related television series. Particularly on the state channel, TRT, there are programmes which are set in the Ottoman era, such as *Resurrection: Ertugrul*, which tells the story of the founder of the Ottoman Empire; *Filinta*, a detective story which takes place in the nineteenth century in Istanbul; and *Payitaht: Abdulhamid*, which tells the story of the Sultan Abdulhamid II. Another example is that almost two months before the presidential referendum in 2017, TRT aired a video which gave references to the Ottoman past of Turkey and created similarities between current politics and the Ottoman and Seljuk era in terms of love for the homeland (TRT 1, 2017). Finally, a man attacked a Kemalist artist's (Mujdat Gezen) art school in Istanbul and explained that he had attacked the place because Gezen had insulted one of the descendants of Abdulhamid II (Hurriyet Daily News, 2017b). Thus the neo-Ottomanist identity is still relevant and is actually becoming stronger in the current politics and daily life of Turkey.

Examination of the speeches of the AKP cadres revealed three representations related to this identity: Turkey as the leader of the Middle East, Turkey as the defender of the oppressed and self-confident Turkey. These features constituted important parts of the foreign-policy discourse in the Davutoglu era and were articulated in the speeches of the AKP cadres. In Chapter 3, I investigated speeches made by Davutoglu and Erdogan to demonstrate how the two leading AKP politicians responsible for the TFP thought about Turkey and about other states. The findings showed that both Erdogan and Davutoglu thought that Turkey is the leading figure in the neighbouring regions and has consequent responsibilities and obligations, and also that Turkey needs to act altruistically in the events of the Middle East. From their speeches, it can be understood that the AKP elites believed that Turkey is the defender of the oppressed people in the neighbouring regions. They often reiterated this in their discourse. In addition to these features, they stated that Turkey is more self-confident than ever before, and can 'spoil evil plans' of the external powers. Together with all these representations, Turkey has become more active in the region and can even intervene in the domestic politics of other states in the region such as Syria and Egypt.

As stated in Chapter 1, the new hegemonic power's ideas, meanings and representations about international politics were different from those of the previous hegemony. The new hegemony articulated meanings and representations into new ones, created new positions and attempted to interpellate or hail people to these new positions by using discursive practices. Due to these practices, new intersubjective meanings led to new state identities in the foreign policy of the country and they could produce consent for foreign policies if they successfully interpellate individuals to the positions, and successfully articulate representations and meanings. In Turkey, these three representations related to the neo-Ottomanist identity of the TFP had nationalist, Islamic and Ottomanist characteristics which had been formed since the 1980s within the ideology of political Islam and the AKP elites gradually articulated them successfully and attempted to interpellate individuals to the positions which they created in their speeches. This interpellation process could lead to consent production for particular foreign policies.

The aim of this part of the study was to contribute to the literature on the TFP by investigating the Davutoglu era from the constructivist approach in IR and what makes this project original is that it investigated the identities in the TFP and their representations in the discourses of the AKP politicians. I also discussed how these discourses have worked for consent production for particular foreign policies by analysing the processes of articulation and interpellation. But this study has not focused solely on the speeches made by AKP politicians in the process of interpellation, it has also shown how popular culture products can also have a role in this process. By relating a popular culture product to the analysis of the TFP, this study had made its second original contribution to the TFP literature. The findings have advanced the theories about popular culture in the IR discipline by focusing on a particular national context and offering an original analysis of the situation in Turkey.

Popular culture products are useful tools for examining and understanding the ways in which consent creation for specific policies can occur, particularly if they reproduce the discursive practices of politicians. So popular culture products can be included as contributing to the production of consent for foreign policies and in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, I focused on a specific popular culture product, the television series *VoW: Ambush*. I selected Seasons 7 and 8 of the series for several reasons. First, the whole series is too long and not everything can be discussed in a study which is limited by time and by scale. Second, these two seasons were

aired between 2012 and 2014 and therefore overlapped with the Davutoglu era and covered TFP issues such as the Syrian crisis whereas the previous seasons had been about domestic politics such as deep-state Mafia structures. Third, these two seasons of the series were aired on ATV, a pro-AKP television channel owned by Calik Holdings, as explained above.

The analysis of *VoW: Ambush* was presented in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. Chapter 4 gave general information about *VoW: Ambush* and Chapters 5, 6 and 7 presented my investigation of the series in terms of the three representations explained in Chapter 3: Turkey as the leader of the Middle East, as the defender of the oppressed and as self-confident Turkey, respectively. In these chapters, I analysed the series under three themes: ideology, articulation and interpellation, which makes this thesis original in terms of its methodology. I employed discourse analysis and I also teased out some of the complexities of the nature and the implications of representation of the TFP using critical reception because I regard critical debates around the television series as tools for exploring the discourses around consent production. Together with an analysis of the critical reception of the television series, political discourses around foreign policy were examined in line with the ways in which these policies were depicted and reproduced in the series. This led to an intertextual reading of the Turkish state identity and security imaginary and a critical examination of the TFP in the last decade from a constructivist perspective.

In Chapter 4, I first provided information about the world of *VoW* and the plots of the two seasons on which this study has focused. I explained how the series creates intertextual meaning because of its almost mythical status in Turkish daily life. The myth which says that *VoW* tells the truth about Turkish politics is very important for understanding its role in Turkey. Individual viewers believe that the events depicted in the world of *VoW* are actually what happened in real-life Turkish politics. This blurs the line between what fiction and reality are. What makes this line even more blurry is that many people believe that *VoW* can actually foresee future events in Turkish politics. This puts *VoW* in a special position among other television series and increases its role in consent production. For instance, after the coup attempt on 15 July 2016, a television programme argued whether there had been hints of this coup attempt in the previous seasons of *VoW: Ambush* (Hurriyet, 2016). Moreover, since the characters in the series have similar names to those of real people in Turkish political life and the series has covered the current events such as the Syrian Civil War, the rise of ISIL and the

Kurdish issue, this mythical role of *VoW* becomes more significant. Therefore, since the fiction/reality division is not clear among the audience and is discussed not only by the audience but also by journalists and even by politicians, in Chapter 4 I suggested that *VoW: Ambush* has created an intertextual meaning.

Second, In Chapter 4, I also showed that *VoW: Ambush* has a similar ideology to that of the AKP. The first seasons of *VoW* had a nationalist character, but in the following seasons it became more conservative and Islamist. The series has involved characters with religious features more, and Ottomanist features have become an important part of the story-line of the series. Patriotism is also very important in the ideology in the series and it has both religious and nationalist meanings. The heroes in the series, Polat Alemdar and his friends, put the homeland (*vatan*) first, even when they encounter important situations. They are even prepared to sacrifice themselves and their families in order to save the homeland. The concept of homeland is defined with religious features such as the hero's mother's headscarf and a copy of the Quran hanging on the wall. So as a nationalist concept, the homeland has a religious connotation for the ideology in the series. Another example is that, in the series, the words of the Turkish national anthem were sung to a religious tune rather than the original tune. Both of these examples are important for showing that the ideology in the series is similar to the AKP ideology which has Turkish-Islamic features.

There are also Ottomanist features in the series. There are many Ottoman symbols and images, such as the coat of arms and the Sultan's signature (*tughra*). These scenes are always related to the heroes and their relatives. For instance, Alemdar's father runs an antique shop full of Islamic and Ottoman objects. In the later seasons, the operational area of Alemdar's team expands to the old Ottoman territories and they carry out missions with Ottoman objects such as a pistol from the nineteenth century. There are also many scenes shot in heritage sites in Istanbul from the Ottoman Era. Thus, the ideology in the series is a combination of nationalist, Islamist and Ottomanist features.

In Chapter 4, I also investigated the series as a means of the articulation of the meaning and interpellation because it is my contention that articulation of the meaning and interpellation to the subject positions are the two most important processes for the creation of consent. *VoW: Ambush* articulates nationalist features with religious and Ottomanist features. For

instance, as described above, a nationalist concept, homeland or national anthem, is articulated with religious and Ottomanist features.

I also considered how the series has articulated Turkey and the 'others' in order to understand the security imaginary in the series. The series, just as the AKP has done, chose Kemalists as an 'other' and created an antagonism between the Kemalist ideology and its own ideology. It did that through its heroes and villains: the evil characters have Kemalist features and symbols and use the discourses of the Kemalist political party, the CHP; but the heroes and their relatives and friends use the discourses of the AKP.

VoW: Ambush constructs Turkey through the heroes depicted in the series. Alemdar and the leader and members of the Committee of Elders represent Turkey and they reproduce the discourse of the AKP. Thus, the series articulates Turkey in the same position as the AKP whereas it articulates Kemalism as the enemy of Turkey by showing the Kemalists as cunning and traitorous. It also articulates international powers such as the US, the EU, the UK, Israel and Russia as enemies of the state. According to the series, Turkey has no friends except the peoples in the region, and the west has evil plans to prevent Turkey from becoming a regional and global power. The west is portrayed as morally degenerate, selfish and evil. Thus, here again, the series is on the same side as the AKP ideology when we remember Davutoglu's ideas about the west discussed in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 4 too, I demonstrated that particular characters are important for the process of interpellation. The most important character is Polat Alemdar, the superhero of the series. Alemdar is the idol of the young audience, he is very famous among the Turkish public for his aphorisms; he has created his own fashion following and people reproduce what he says, his ideas, and even his violence. People watching the series align themselves with his discourse, his way of thinking and his ideas so his scenes constituted the most important part of the analysis in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. But there are other characters such as Kara, Omer Baba and Akif with whom individuals can align themselves with, and these were also investigated.

In terms of the TFP, *VoW: Ambush* shows a neo-Ottomanist approach which gives Turkey a pro-active role in the neighbouring regions. Alemdar and his friends conduct operations in the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus with a young team consisting of a group of people in their twenties who are from countries in the region such as Bosnia, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

The series strongly opposes the ideas of the Kemalist party which claimed that Turkey should not be involved in regional issues. Instead, the series is pro-interventionist in terms of issues in the neighbouring regions. So *VoW: Ambush* reproduces the neo-Ottomanist identity and the same security imaginary as the AKP. Weldes stated that if a popular culture product reproduces the same representations, it can produce consent for foreign policies. Weldes (1999a: 119) suggested that “Popular culture ... helps to construct reality of international politics for officials and non-officials alike and, to the extent that it reproduces the content and structure of the dominant foreign policy discourse, it helps to produce consent for foreign policy and state action”. Van Veeren (2009: 364) explained that a television series “can be considered an important and useful example in the production of intertextual meaning ... By both (re)constituting and drawing on the same (re)presentations of ‘reality’, the intertextuality of popular culture and world politics helps to make the world intelligible”. Addressing Weldes’ and Van Veeren’s approaches, in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, I showed that *VoW: Ambush* reproduces the three representations related to the TFP. For this reason, it can be regarded as one of the sites for consent production.

In Chapter 5, I looked at the representation of the leader of the Middle East in the series and demonstrated that first, the series has reproduced this representation ideologically. According to the ideology in *VoW: Ambush*, Turkey is the leader of the region and can act without hesitation, is a moral leader, has obligations and duties, and acts altruistically because it has historical and cultural ties with the peoples in neighbouring regions due to their shared Ottoman past. In this sense, the series shares and reproduces the AKP’s ideology in exactly the same way.

Second, I focused on the articulation of this representation. The first seasons of the series did not contain a leadership representation for Turkey and dealt only with Turkey’s internal issues such as the Mafia problem. However, when Turkey’s regional power ambitions emerged in Turkish politics, this representation became part of *VoW: Ambush*. The series articulated the regional power concept to the nationalist feature and then to the Ottomanist feature. Moreover, in Season 7, by creating an antagonism between two characters, *Aksacılı* and Sencer Bey, it made Kemalism the opposite of the AKP by aligning Sencer Bey with negative concepts such as fear, lack of self-confidence and betrayal. On the other hand, it aligned *Aksacılı*’s ideology, ideas and approaches with foreign issues by concepts such as justice, self-

confidence, peace and stability in the Middle East by making the character represent the AKP ideology and use the AKP discourse. As a result, the leadership representation of the AKP might have positive meanings for the viewers.

I also investigated the interpellation process in order to understand how viewers could be interpellated to the subject positions and identities which share the same representation. Because of the antagonism created between *Aksacli* and Sencer Bey in Season 7, viewers were expected to identify with the perspectives of the AKP on this representation. The scenes depicting the antagonism could evoke positive feelings for *Aksacli* who was in the same position as the AKP, and negative feelings for Sencer Bey who had exactly the same approach as the Kemalist party. After examining some specific scenes, it is possible to say that the series could have had an influence to interpellate viewers to the leader of the Middle East feature of the state identity created by the AKP hegemony.

In Chapter 6, I looked at the TFP's representation of the defender of the oppressed in *VoW: Ambush* and showed that ideologically, the series reproduced the very same ideology as the AKP and approached the issue of the defender of the oppressed from the same perspectives. Visually, it can be seen that Alemdar and his friends were on the same side as the oppressed peoples in the Middle East, especially in Syria. This can be understood from the scenes in which Alemdar and his team helped oppressed Syrian people and saved them from the oppressors. Discursively, there was the same vigorous reiteration of the oppressed/oppressor dichotomy as in the discourse of the AKP politicians. Therefore, Chapter 6 demonstrated that *VoW: Ambush* had reproduced the representation of defender of the oppressed both discursively.

In Chapter 6, I also looked at how the series articulated this representation. Islamist and nationalist features were successfully articulated to this representation as a part of the neo-Ottomanist identity in the series. For instance, the Black Flag organisation established by Alemdar and Kara constituted an important element of this representation in the series since the aim of this organisation was to protect oppressed people in the Middle East and it had nationalist and Islamist features. This articulation overlapped with speeches of the AKP politicians and helped the interpellation process. Therefore, viewers were exposed to those articulations and subject positions in the series and in the speeches of the politicians at the same time.

Moreover, I also demonstrated that viewers identified themselves with the perspectives related to this representation in the series. I examined the reception of the series, and stated how the lead actor Necati Sasmaz and the script writers reproduced this representation and how this was reported in the Turkish media. I also showed that the Black Flag organisation was widely accepted by the viewers and became very popular among them. Bearing in mind the aim of this organisation, it can be said that the viewers approved of the representation of the defender of the oppressed in the Middle East.

In Chapter 7, I examined the representation of self-confident Turkey in the series. Ideologically, the series put an emphasis on the struggle against the external powers which were attempting to harm Turkey. It saw Turkey as a strong nation and it can therefore be argued that it created this representation through concepts such as a strong nation and a self-confident state. Alemdar and his team confounded the games of these external powers by having such a nationalist identity. However, it can also be seen that in the series, Alemdar and his men not only spoiled their games in Turkey, they also did the same in Syria, Iraq, Israel, the Balkans and the Caucasus. They even carried out operations in the US and the UK. Therefore, the neo-Ottomanist feature in the series approaches this representation from a perspective in which Turkey's imperialist ambitions have given the country the self-confidence to spoil the games of external powers. This ideological approach led to the causality of 'all unfortunate events happen because of the external others'. In the world of *VoW*, external powers cause problems and Alemdar and his friends solve them.

In Chapter 7, I also looked at the articulation in terms of this representation. *VoW: Ambush* articulated this representation by showing western civilisation as evil. I demonstrated that the series had approached international issues from a civilizational perspective and that the west was portrayed as pragmatic and inhumane when its own interests were at stake. Therefore, the series created an 'other' which came into existence in the organisation of The Templars. The Templars in the story were responsible for all the unfortunate events which occurred in Turkey and in the neighbouring regions. The series set Alemdar and his men to oppose the Templars. Then, Turkey became the actor which could stop these unfortunate events in the region with the self-confidence which she had acquired. By creating this us/them dichotomy, *VoW: Ambush* reproduced the representation of a self-confident Turkey again.

The series reproduced the discourse of the AKP about 'external powers' and 'the games played against Turkey' and created an intertextual meaning. I also showed that some scenes in the series had been reported in the Turkish media as if they actually represented current Turkish politics. Also, the conspiracy theories in the series and even some of the arguments related to international politics have been used in the Turkish media and by the state elites. This reception of the series can increase the intertextuality between the series and real-life Turkish politics because it can blur the lines between fiction and reality.

Thus, I have shown in this thesis that the rise of the AKP involved a specific sort of counter-hegemonic process. When the AKP made its counter-hegemonic movement against the Kemalist hegemony, it did not simply oppose Kemalism, it re-articulated some concepts of Kemalism, especially nationalism. Although nationalism is an important constitutive part of Kemalism and is defined as Turkism anchored to western civilisation and without religious and Ottomanist values, the AKP re-articulated it with not just Islamism but also the culture and history which makes Turkey an important actor in the Middle East, rather than Europe. For this aim, the AKP has made the west the 'other' and to balance Turkey's position between the west and the east, Ottomanism became the lynchpin of the AKP ideology and gave Turkey a unique position in the neighbouring regions and attributed Turkey with the representations and features discussed in Chapter 3. These representations become a part of intersubjective understandings in Turkey and *VoW: Ambush* shows that these representations can find a place in popular culture as well.

VoW: Ambush has dramatized all of the elements discussed above and has linked them to current issues in Turkey as a 'fantasy'. It has reproduced the representations belonging to the neo-Ottomanist identity in the TFP ideologically in the form of discourse. It has successfully articulated these representations with nationalist and Islamist features which can also be seen in the AKP's ideology and the discourse. In some scenes, the series has used the very same discourse as AKP politicians such as Erdogan and Davutoglu. Alemdar as the main character, the hero of the series, has become a kind of ideal Turkish man connected to his history and to Islam and so to traditional conservative values. He is at the same time modern in the sense of his dress and his use of technology. He is clear-sighted when it comes to understanding Turkey's problems and the enemies of Turkey. He knows about every plot against Turkey and he is strong in dealing with these fantasised enemies. When he is dealing

with enemies, he is transformed into an ideal Turkish man who reproduces the ideology, the discourse and the representations of the AKP. Thus, this study has demonstrated that *VoW: Ambush* is a site where the ideas, thoughts, meanings and representations of the AKP have found a place and where they have been reiterated often. As a part of the AKP hegemony in the media, *VoW: Ambush*, along with its production company, its actors and the Turkish media, has reproduced the state identity created by the AKP hegemony in the last decade. Together, they all create intertextual meanings and understandings and this inter-subjectivity can affect the common sense of Turkey in terms international politics.

Suggestions and Recommendations for Future Research

This study has examined the TFP using the constructivist approach in IR and has addressed popular culture in order to understand the identities which have changed in the last decade as a result of a hegemony change in Turkey. The research concentrated on *VoW: Ambush* as a text to understand how state identities can be reproduced by a popular culture product and how a television series might lead to the production of consent for foreign policies. I sought to find intertextual meanings created by Turkish politicians, *VoW: Ambush* and the Turkish media.

However, this project has of necessity been limited to a relatively small sample of texts, examining only two seasons of *VoW: Ambush*. Ideally, if space and time were not an issue, the selection of series would have included more than one popular television series. There are other television series such as *Resurrection: Ertugrul*, *Filinta* and *Payitaht: Abdulhamid* which would be good candidates for further research. In addition to television series as a popular culture product, alternative popular culture products could be the next target for further study. As Ted Hopf (2002) did in his book *Social Construction of Foreign Policy: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999*, other texts such as popular novels and school textbooks could be selected for further study to understand common sense. As well as considering texts such as these, a future study could show how foreign policy discourse can be reproduced not only by television series but also by other popular culture products.

Another suggestion is that, methodologically, further research could use audience research in Turkey to analyse the influence of *VoW: Ambush* on the audience and its role in the production of consent for foreign policies. Possible targets could be university students and ordinary people who watch the series. The viewers could be divided into groups on the basis of their political orientation, their territory and age. Through this kind of research, it might be possible to understand how they construct opinions on and reactions to scenes related to the TFP.

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