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**Conflict Analysis and Resolution, MA Thesis**

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**LESSONS LEARNED FROM TURKEY'S INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION  
EFFORTS IN SYRIAN- ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN- ISRAELI CONFLICTS  
SINCE 2002:  
IMPACT OF IMPARTIALITY OF THE MEDIATOR  
ON THE MEDIATION OUTCOMES**

**by  
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## **ABSTRACT**

# **LESSONS LEARNED FROM TURKEY'S INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION EFFORTS IN SYRIAN- ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN- ISRAELI CONFLICTS SINCE 2002: IMPACT OF IMPARTIALITY OF THE MEDIATOR ON THE MEDIATION OUTCOMES**

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Keywords: International Mediation, Impartiality, Israeli- Palestinian Conflict, Israel- Syrian Conflict, Turkish Foreign Policy

The thesis aims to explore influence of impartiality of the Turkey's mediation efforts since 2002 in the conflicts of Israel-Syria and Israel-Palestine on the Turkey's mediation outcomes perceived by the disputants which are Israel, Palestine and Syria. This research examines the mediation process as a triangular process rather than dyadic by taking every disputants' perception towards the mediator into account.

To this aim, comparative case study is used which is Turkey's mediation efforts in Syrian- Israeli and Israeli- Palestinian conflicts since 2002. The research consists of a textual analysis and in depth interviews. Most of the data used in this study derived from the official declarations of high level policy makers of Turkey, Israel, Palestine and Syria since 2002 as well as qualified newspaper accounts and academic writings. In order to complement those sources, interviews were conducted with the high level foreign policy makers of Turkey.

Based on the research, the findings show that Turkey as a mediator could utilize its partiality by establishing a balanced relative bias towards disputants in order to achieve successful outcomes. Secondly, the distinction should be made between impartiality in

attitude and impartiality in behavior. Accordingly, Turkey's impartiality in behavior, not necessarily impartiality in attitude; has a more positive influence on achieving successful outcomes

## ÖZET

# 2002'DEN İTİBAREN İSRAİL- SURIYE VE İSRAİL- FİLİSTİN UYUŞMAZLIKLARINDA TÜRKİYE'NİN ARABULUCULUK GİRİŞİMLERİNDEN ÖĞRENİLENLER: ARABULUCUNUN TARAFSIZLIĞININ ARABULUCULUK SONUÇLARINA ETKİLERİ

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Uluslararası Arabuluculuk, Tarafsızlık, İsrail- Filistin Uyuşmazlığı, İsrail-Suriye Uyuşmazlığı, Türk Dış Politikası

Bu tez, Türkiye'nin 2002'den itibaren İsrail- Suriye ve İsrail- Filistin uyuşmazlıklarındaki arabuluculuk rolünde, arabulucunun taraflar açısından algılanan tarafsızlığının, başarılı arabulucuk sonucu almaya etkisini bulmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırma, arabuluculuk sürecini ikili bir ilişki yerine iki tarafında arabulucu algısını dikkate alarak üçlü bir süreç olarak inceleyecektir.

Bu doğrultuda, Türkiye'nin Suriye-İsrail ve İsrail- Filistin uyuşmazlıklarındaki arabuluculuk girişimleri karşılaştırmalı durum analizi methoduyla incelenecektir. Araştırmada metin analizi ve kapsamlı mülakat teknikleri kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada kullanılan veriler Türkiye, İsrail, Suriye ve Filistin politika karar vericilerinin 2002' den itibaren olan resmi açıklamaları, nitelikli gazete metinleri, ve bilimsel makalelerdir. Bu kaynakları desteklemek için Türk Dış Politikası karar alıcılarıyla mülakatlar yapılmıştır.

Arařtırmaya gre, Trkiye arabuluculuk giriřimlerinde iki taraf iinde dengeli bir eęilim gsterebilirse, tarafllılıęından yararlanarak bařarılı sonulara ulařabilir. İkinci olarak, davranıřta tarafsızlık ve tutumda tarafsızlık arasındaki fark belirtilmelidir. Bu doęrultuda, Trkiye'nin arabuluculuk giriřimlerinde davranıřtaki tarafsızlıęı, tutumundaki tarafsızlık gerekli olmaksızın, basarılı sonular almasına olumlu etki gstermiřtir.

*Anneme ve Babama, herşey için...*  
*To my Mom and Dad, for everything...*

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship about the influence of impartiality of the Turkey's mediation efforts since 2002 in the conflicts of Israel-Syria and Israel-Palestine on the Turkey's mediation outcomes perceived by Israel, Palestine and Syria.

Since Turkey's AKP (Justice and Development Party) Government came to power in 2002, international mediation has become one of the main foreign policy tools of the government. In the last eight years, Turkey has initiated numerous mediation attempts to resolve the deep rooted conflicts in the Middle East region such as between Israel-Syria, Israel-Palestine, Pakistan-Afghanistan, Hamas-Fatah and Iran-the USA. Turkey's active involvement to the Middle East as a peace builder, however, brings suspicion especially after Turkey's pro- Palestinian stance in the Israel's Gaza War against Hamas on December 2008. The following verbal spat in 2009's Davos meeting between Turkey's Prime Minister Recep T. Erdogan and the president of Israel Simon Peres has severely damaged Turkey's credibility as an impartial mediator from the view of Israel and the international community. Therefore, the discontent with Turkey's mediation reveals many questions about the disputants' expectations from a mediator in terms of its strategies and partiality: What makes a mediation process successful? What do disputants expect and desire from a mediator who employs facilitator/communicator strategies? What is the role of impartiality to initiate successful mediation? To what extent escalation of the conflict has impact on the mediation process? This research has aim to explore the answers of those questions in the context of Turkey's mediation efforts in the conflicts of Israel-Syria and Israel-Palestine.

Since 2002 Turkey's AKP government has adopted a new regional vision which is coined as "zero problem" policy with the neighborhoods. The policy embodies the desire to have stable and peaceful relations with the neighboring countries in Middle East as well as in, Asia, the Balkans and Transcaucasia. To reach this aim, AKP has a mission to institute peace in the Middle East which would bring stability and peace not only to the disputed territories but also in return will enhance its own security. In this respect, Turkey actively involved as a third party to Syrian-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts which have been previously attempted to mediate by various actors such as the U.S.A, France, Egypt, Norway, and Saudi Arabia. While, some of those mediation efforts had a short term aim such as forcing countries to get into direct negotiations, the other mediation attempts had motivation of establishing

long lasting peace among the parties. Turkish government involved the process as a facilitator in the Syrian- Israeli conflict and hold series of indirect talks among Syrian and Israeli officials in 2008. In the Palestinian- Israeli conflict, Turkey has initiated mediation efforts many times which has been welcomed and accepted by the disputants.

Turkey's impartiality has been always the key determinant to be a mediator for the disputants of both conflicts. However, Turkey's fair mediator image has been damaged severely after its strong criticisms against Israel's violent attacks to Gaza Strip on December 2008. Since impartiality is a main source of influence on the disputants for Turkey, the key question is how a mediator could utilize its impartiality to achieve successful mediation outcomes and what are the ways to sustain its impartiality throughout the process?

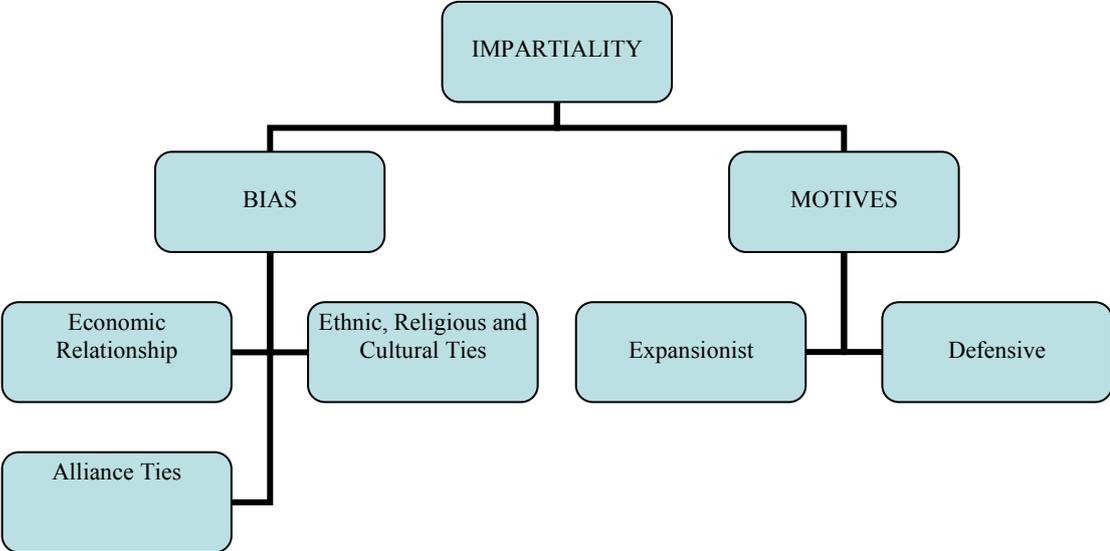
I use a comparative approach to analyze the research question. Accordingly, the relationship between impartiality of the mediator and the outcome of the process are analyzed in two cases: Turkey's mediation attempts in the conflicts of Syrian-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian since 2002. In this respect, content and narrative analysis techniques are used to reveal the degree of impartiality of Turkey as well as understanding the satisfaction of the disputants from the process. Most of the data used in this study are derived from the official declarations of high level policy makers of Turkey, Israel, Palestine and Syria since 2002. In addition to the main data sources, I analyze the interviews conducted with high level policy makers of Turkey in order to complement the information that was obtained via the study of official declarations.

To analyze the mediator characteristics, international mediation literature focuses on three mediator attributes; impartiality, leverage and status. Among those variables, leverage and status are more likely used by powerful mediators and the influence of impartiality could be less likely affecting the process and outcome. On the other hand, influence of impartiality would be more likely perceived by the disputants in least intrusive mediation strategies; holding a role of conveying messages, and establishing confidence among the parties. For this reason, as Turkey prefer facilitator role in its mediation efforts, the influence of the impartiality become more conspicuous and enable the researcher to analyze the impact of impartiality on the outcome.

Impartiality, in the international mediation literature is defined as not supporting any disputants and the term is associated with both the bias of the mediator holds towards the disputants and motives of the mediator to initiate the mediation. Based on this approach, bias and motives of the mediator would be determinant factors to find out the impartiality of the mediator. Bias is defined as the cultural, economic and strategic closeness of the mediator

with the disputants. Therefore, bias of the Turkey would be revealed by focusing on the three variables; a) Alliance Ties, b) Economic Relationship, c) Ethnic/ Religious and Cultural Ties. Turkey’s relations with the disputants would be analyzed through those variables. Turkey’s motives to initiate a mediation in Syrian- Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts is operationalized by employing Zartman and Touval’s distinction of motives of mediator as defensive vs. expansionist which constitute the expectations of the mediator as a reward from the mediation process( Diagram 1). Lastly, disputant’s satisfaction with the outcome is associated with the subjective criteria coined by Bercovitch as fairness, efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, any mediation outcome perceived by the disputants as either fair, efficient or effective will be regarded as successful mediation process.

**Diagram 1. Impartiality**



To examine how impartiality of the mediator operates for the particular mediation strategy requires also including other crucial dimension which is the stage of the conflict the mediator intervenes. The impact of impartiality of the mediator on the disputants’ outcome perceptions could change as the level of violence escalates. Since this research focuses on the perceptions of the disputants about the mediation process, stage of the conflict has a vital role on shaping and distorting the disputants’ perceptions of outcome through stereotyping, selective perception, projection and perceptual defense.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the changes in the level of violence should be elucidated to examine the role of impartiality in the Turkey’s mediation process and how it is viewed and perceived by Israel, Syrian and Palestine. Moreover, escalation of violence in the conflict between Israel and Palestine in the late 2008 which also

<sup>1</sup> Roy Lewicki, Litterer Joseph, Minton John and Saunders David. *Negotiation*. Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin, 1994, 184-190.

affect the peace process in Israel- Syrian conflict, has enabled the researcher to elaborate the impact of the stage of the conflict on the disputants' perceptions towards the mediator and the outcome.

On the other hand, it can be argued that an exclusive focus on the relation between characteristics of mediator perceived by the disputants might limit our understanding of the subject matter, as mediation outcomes are influenced by also other factors such as characteristics of the dispute and disputants.<sup>2</sup> However, I argue that there is more value added contribution to examine the characteristics of the mediator since those variables are not fixed unlike to nature of the dispute and disputants so that practitioners of international mediation can adjust their foreign policies accordingly. The research, therefore, will be able to give more useful insights to improve international mediation efforts in foreign policy making, if we focus on the impartiality of the mediator on the process.<sup>3</sup>

There are certain reasons to conduct this research mainly derived from the undeveloped nature of the international mediation theory. Many unresolved questions remain about what makes for successful mediation. One of the most salient of these debates is about the impact of the mediator's impartiality on the mediation process. In addition to that, very little work has been done about how a mediator is perceived by the disputants. The question of why the disputants involve the process of mediation, and why they accept it, is vital in determining how they will view the mediator with respect to his initial role.<sup>4</sup> Despite the fact that international mediation is conceptualized as a reciprocal process; most of the studies tend to present the process as static and one way. Yet mediation often fails when the disputants make different assumptions about the process and have different expectations regarding its outcome.<sup>5</sup> Concerning the drawbacks of the international mediation literature, this research examines the mediation process as a triangular process rather than dyadic. The research examines mediator's relations with the conflicting parties as well as taking disputants' perception towards the mediator into account. The research question, therefore, has value added contribution to the current literature on the understanding of international mediation in a holistic approach.

Furthermore, in the literature of international mediation, there is lack of consensus on the indicators of success and lack of conceptual definition on the success of third party

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<sup>2</sup> Burcu Savun, "Information, Bias and Mediation Success," *International Studies Quarterly*, 2002, (52), 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Oliver Richmond, "Devious Objectives and the Disputants' View of International Mediation: A Theoretical Framework," *Journal of Peace Research*, 1998, 35(6), 707-22.

<sup>5</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, ed, *Resolving International Conflicts: The Theory and Practice of Mediation*. London: Lynne Rienner, 1996, 6.

intervention and identifying relevant external contingencies that may influence the outcomes. Thus, conducting this research aims to narrow the gap on the understanding of successful mediation by taking the disputant's perceptions about the behavior and attitudes of the mediator as a starting point to evaluate the process. Apart from theoretical implications, the research has also policy implications by filling a gap in the literature on Turkey's foreign policy particularly on Turkey's mediator role in the Middle East. The reasons could be discussed as firstly, non systematic policy report analyses dominate the literature on initiatives of Turkey's mediation in the era of AKP and those are lack of conflict resolution approach to the subject matter except a few studies. Secondly, there is no systematic evaluation of Turkey's mediation initiatives in the sense that to what extent Turkey is successful to play that role.

# CHAPTER 1

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Starting from the end of Cold War, international mediation has gained prominence as a conflict resolution mechanism in the foreign policies of states. Both initiation and acceptance of mediation have had direct and indirect purposes such as reducing tension, reaching an agreement or gaining reputation, time and credit. Since mediation is one of the intervention techniques in conflict resolution, there has been enormous literature on mediation not only on the international level but also on the inter-personal, inter-group and inter-communal level.

Third parties according to Young<sup>6</sup> are actors which become significantly involved in a conflict without total identification with either of the parties. According to Sandole<sup>7</sup>, a third party intervention is an attempt to facilitate processes leading to quite different, albeit potentially interrelated outcomes. The conflict resolution literature offers a plethora of third party activities, organized under different categories such as preventive intervention, crisis management, conflict management, peace enforcement, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Apart from third part activities, there are various techniques in third party intervention such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration and mediation. Among those techniques, mediation particularly on international level, specifically constitutes the main focus area of this thesis.

### **1.1. Definition of mediation**

As mediation literature is a cross disciplinary endeavor, attracting work in psychology, political science, international relations and conflict resolution, the diversity of approaches has therefore led to variety of definitions of mediation.

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<sup>6</sup> Oran, Young, *The Intermediaries: Third parties in international crises*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Druckman and Sandra, Cheldelin, Fast, L.; and Clements, Kevin (Eds.), *Conflict: From Analysis to Intervention*, London: Continuum, 2003, 49

Mediation is assistance to two or more interacting parties by third parties who usually have no authority to impose an outcome.<sup>8</sup> In the literature of mediation, so far there are certain questions that have been discussed such as how precisely does the context of a conflict affect mediation behavior? How do mediators relate to different parties? What kind of mediator should intervene in different conflicts? Is the conflict ripe for intervention? What are the ideal conflict and party characteristics for success? Is mediation successful because certain preconditions were present or because the strategy relevant for these conditions has been employed?<sup>9</sup> The answers to those questions have an effect on improving the definition of the mediation. Among the attempts to conceptualize the mediation, Young<sup>10</sup> develops a more specific definition, describing it as an action aimed at reducing the problems of bargaining and facilitating the termination of a crisis through the action of an actor not a direct party to the crisis, Skjelsbaek,<sup>11</sup> on the other hand, emphasizes not only its role in fostering agreement between disputing parties, but also in reducing conflict between them by describing mediation as "efforts by third parties to prevent the eruption or escalation of destructive conflict behavior and to facilitate a settlement which makes renewed destructive behavior unlikely." Bercovitch<sup>12</sup> links mediation and negotiation by defining mediation as an extension and continuation of the parties' conflict management efforts.

In the field of international relations, however, the longstanding role of third parties has only begun to receive frequent attention, with the work by Young<sup>13</sup> leading the way to further developments.<sup>14</sup> The issue of international mediation became an important topic after the end of the cold war in the field of international relations due to its refreshed visibility in that era.<sup>15</sup> International relations defines mediation as a process of conflict management where disputants seek the assistance of, or accept an offer of help from, an individual, group or state,

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<sup>8</sup> Kenneth Kressel and Dean G. Pruitt, *Mediation research*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass • Lund, M. (1996). Early warning and preventive diplomacy. In C.A. Crocker & F. O, 1989, pp 24.

<sup>9</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, Allison Houston, Why Do They Do It Like This?: An Analysis of the Factors Influencing Mediation Behavior in International Conflicts, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*; 2000, 44; 170

<sup>10</sup> Young, O. R. 1967. *The Intermediaries: Third parties in international crises*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

<sup>11</sup> Skjelsbaek, Kjell. 1991. "The UN Secretary- General and the Mediation of International Disputes." *Journal of Peace Research* 28(1): 104

<sup>12</sup> Bercovitch, Jacob. 2002. "Introduction: Putting Mediation in Context." *In Studies in International Mediation*, ed. Jacob Bercovitch. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 3-24.

<sup>13</sup> Oran Young, *The Intermediaries: Third parties in international crises*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.1996

<sup>14</sup> Ronald J. Fisher, *Interactive Conflict Resolution*. Syracuse,NY: Syracuse University Press. 1997

<sup>15</sup> Marieke Kleiboer, Understanding Success and Failure of International Mediation, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Jun 1996;40,2; p 360-390

or organization to settle their conflict or resolve their differences without resorting to physical force or invoking authority of law.<sup>16</sup>

International mediation studies mainly focus on how successful conflict management can be improved. For this reason scholars have tended to focus their attention on mediation outcomes rather than causes of mediation.<sup>17</sup> What kind of motives will lead the third party to intervene the conflict and the reasons for the disputants to accept the mediation offer is crucial to establish the link between the causes of the mediation and achieving successful outcomes. Among the variables that affect the success of conflict management; nature of the dispute, the parties and their relationships are concerned.<sup>18</sup> However, despite an extensive literature on the subject, many unresolved questions remain about what makes for successful mediation. One of the most salient of these debates is about the impact of the mediator's impartiality on the mediation process.<sup>19</sup> In this regard, the focus of the research on the motivation and bias of the mediator is a field which is relatively studied less. The research, with the aim of addressing the issue, would fill this gap. Accordingly, it is necessary to elaborate the ongoing debate in the literature of international mediation on the impartiality of the mediator and its effect on process and outcome of the mediation.

## **1.2. The Role of Impartiality in International Mediation**

Conceptualization of impartiality in mediation literature is still a debated phenomenon and there is no achieved compromise. As mediation is very much a matter of influence by affecting the disputing parties and their attitudes, perceptions and behaviours about the conflict, impartiality is regarded as the main source of the mediator's influence. Impartiality, in general, refers to lack of preference in favor of one or more parties in conflict.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, impartiality implies an unbiased stance of the mediator toward the disputants. Rather than mediator's attitudes towards the conflicting parties, the mediator's stake in the substance of issues in the conflict also constitutes impartiality. In international mediation literature, those

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<sup>16</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, The structure and diversity of mediation in international relations. In *Mediation in international relations: Multiple approaches to conflict management*, edited by Jacob Bercovitch and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, 1-29. New York: St. Martin's, 1992

<sup>17</sup> Michael J. Greig, "Stepping Into the Fray: When Do Mediators Mediate?" *American Journal of Political Science*, (49),2005, 249-66

<sup>18</sup> Jacob Bercovitch (ed.). *Resolving International Conflicts: The Theory and Practice of Mediation*, London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Kydd, "Which Side are You On? Bias, Credibility, and Mediation." *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(4): 2003, 597-611.

<sup>20</sup> Christopher Moore, *The mediation process*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 1987.

stakes and expectations are often discussed within the definition of motives of the mediator. Based on these distinctions, it could be argued that the bias and the motives of the mediator are the constituents of the generic term “impartiality”.

Accordingly, the ongoing debate on bias and the motives of the mediator needs clarifications. Bias is defined in terms of having preferences about how two disputants distribute the contested resources by allowing personal opinions to influence judgment<sup>21</sup>. Preferences of the mediator are also emphasized due to the fact that mediator is closer to one side than the other politically, economically and culturally.<sup>22</sup> In this sense, biased mediator cares not only for ending the hostilities but also for resolving the dispute in a particular way that is commensurate with its interests.<sup>23</sup> Political alliance, economic relationship and cultural ties are used in this research to analyze the bias of the mediator towards the disputants. Those dimensions include not only direct behavioral acts of the states but also the fixed and latent factors such as cultural, religious and ethnic affiliations.

Since impartiality is in the eye of the beholder, the bias of the mediator towards the first disputant vis-à-vis the other disputant should be taken into consideration. At that point the conceptual distinction was attempted by Savun between “absolute” and “relative” bias which is described as “that the degree of bias a mediator has toward one of the disputants depends not only on the relationship between the mediator and the disputant but also on the mediator’s relationship with the other disputant.”<sup>24</sup>

*If we focus only on the direct relationship between a mediator and a disputant, what we will be measuring is the absolute bias. Absolute bias between state A and state B captures the bias state A holds toward state B independently of the former’s relationship with state C. However, I argue that it is the relative bias, not the absolute bias, which is more relevant in a mediator’s effectiveness. Relative bias represents the degree of closeness between two states in relation to a third state; relative bias reflects a triangular relationship. Relative bias implies that state A’s bias toward state B is not absolute; it depends on the kind of relationship between state A and the other disputant, state C. The degree of bias a mediator has toward one of the disputants depends not only on the relationship between the mediator and the disputant but also on the mediator’s relationship with the other disputant.*<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Burcu Savun, “Information, Bias and Mediation Success,” *International Studies Quarterly*, (52), 2008, pp 3.

<sup>22</sup> Peter J Carnevale and Sharon Arad, “Bias, Neutrality and Power in International Mediation.” In Bercovitch, Jacob. Houston, A (Eds) *Bias and Impartiality in International Mediation*, 1996, 40-53.

<sup>23</sup> Burcu Savun 2008. “Information, Bias and Mediation Success,” *International Studies Quarterly*, (52), 4.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 13

I apply this distinction to analyze the comparative bias of the mediator holds towards each disputant. It enables to reveal the disputant who has closer relations with the mediator.

The confusion on the impartiality of the mediator is not only limited to the conceptual issues, but also the impartiality on the outcome or success of the process. Therefore, the question requires close analysis of how impartiality would influence mediation process.

Impartiality might actually increase a third party's ability to bring peace, as impartial mediators are accepted by the disputing parties to bring fair outcomes through honest mediation process. Mediators are often thought to be more effective if they are unbiased or impartial<sup>26</sup>. Young argues that, "the existence of a meaningful role for a third party will depend on the disputant's perception of the mediator as an impartial."<sup>27</sup> A mediator must have no personal preference that the dispute be resolved in one way rather than other.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, some scholars question the validity of these assumptions.<sup>29</sup> Touval and Zartman argue that "mediators are seldom indifferent to the terms being negotiated. Even when they seek peace in the abstract, they try to avoid terms not in accord with their own interests."<sup>30</sup> Kydd<sup>31</sup> argues that a mediator needs to be partial toward the receiver of the information in order to be able to convey information in a credible way. Kydd<sup>32</sup> formally shows only information provided by a mediator who shares your policy preferences to some extent, is credible. Therefore it could be suggested that impartiality plays a role in mediation, and both can add to a mediator's ability and desire to influence and to the disputant's willingness to be influenced.<sup>33</sup> As the influence of impartiality on the outcome is associated with credibility of the mediator from the perspective of the disputants, the ongoing debate leads us to conclusion that impartiality is essential a matter of perceptions of the parties in conflict.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ronald J. Fisher, "Pacific, Impartial Third-Party Intervention in International Conflict: A Review and Analysis." In *Beyond Confrontation: Learning Conflict Resolution in the Post-Cold War Era*, ed. John A. Vasquez, James Turner Johnson, Sanford Jaffe, and Linda Stamato. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995, 39-59.

<sup>27</sup> Oran Young, *The Intermediaries: Third parties in international crises*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1967

<sup>28</sup> Stulberg, Joseph B. 1987. *Taking Charge: Managing Conflict*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

<sup>29</sup> Touval Saadia, and William Zartman, "Introduction: Mediation in Theory." In *International Mediation in Theory and Practice*, ed. Saadia Touval and William Zartman. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 1985, pp 118

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 118

<sup>31</sup> Andrew Kydd, "Which Side Are You On? Bias, Credibility, and Mediation." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(4): 2003, 597-611.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 607

<sup>33</sup> Peter J. Carnevale and Sharon Arad, "Bias, Neutrality and Power in International Mediation." In Jacob Bercovitch, Houston, A (Eds) *Bias and Impartiality in International Mediation*, 1996, pp 40-53.

<sup>34</sup> Saadia Touval, "Biased Intermediaries: Theoretical and Historical Considerations." *Jerusalem, Journal of International Relations* 1(1): 1975, pp 51-69.

Based on the debate, perceptions of the disputants on the impartiality of the mediator can be taken as an indicator due to the fact that the mediation efforts are mainly initiated by the desires and demands of the disputants which necessitate taking their perceptions into account. The relationship between the negotiators and the mediator and the rewards and costs that emanate from the complete process of mediation, are in part a product of the perceptions of the two parties.<sup>35</sup> The implication of this is that the perceptions of the three parties as to each other's position and power, aims and relationships, plus the process of mediation, are vital determinants not only of the role that the disputants want the mediator to play, but also of the success of the process.<sup>36</sup> However, mediation studies often neglect to examine the view of the disputants and much of the literature tends to present the process as static and one way.<sup>37</sup> Our understanding of mediation could be enhanced by incorporating disputants' viewpoint into analyses. The impartiality of the mediator could be operationalized better if it is argued in relation with the perceptions of the disputants. The issue is discussed in the mediation literature as the role of trust disputants holds towards the mediator. Yet disagreement prevails as to whether disputants trust to only impartial mediators<sup>38</sup> or they could work with "partial" ones too.<sup>39</sup> Mediators that have strong interests in ending a conflict are said to be perceived by the disputants as more committed and thus, more reliable third parties. Such mediators are perceived as more motivated and subsequently, more prepared to expend the necessary resources to exert their influence on the parties in order to obtain the desired results. Yet highly committed mediators may also have very specific solutions in mind that do not coincide with the interests of the disputants.<sup>40</sup>

### **1.3. Motives of the Mediator**

While the aim of the thesis is to focus on the role of the motivation and bias of the mediator on the disputants' perceptions, it is essential to draw the distinction between motivation and bias of the mediators. As Conceptualization of the bias refers to the

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<sup>35</sup> James A Wall, Stark B. John, and Standifer Rhett L. Mediation: A current review and theory development. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45 (3): 2001, 370-391.

<sup>36</sup> Oliver Richmond, "Devious Objectives and the Disputants' View of International Mediation: A Theoretical Framework," *Journal of Peace Research*, 35(6), 1998, 707-22.

<sup>37</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, Understanding mediation's role in preventative diplomacy. *Negotiation Journal* 12 (3): 1996, 241-247

<sup>38</sup> Oran Young, *The Intermediaries: Third parties in international crises*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1967

<sup>39</sup> Andrew Kydd, "Which Side Are You On? Bias, Credibility, and Mediation." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(4): 2003, 597-611.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Princen, *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, Princeton University Press, 1992

characteristics of the mediator and relationship with the disputants, motivations of the mediator could be defined as the possible rewards or achievements the mediator expect from the mediation process. These rewards can take variety of forms. As Mitchell points out; achieving some form of settlement, reputation or other non-material good regarded as a desirable reward.<sup>41</sup> Touval and Zartman distinguish between “defensive” and “expansionist” motives.<sup>42</sup> Defensive motives may emerge when a conflict between two states threatens a mediator’s interest. Partial mediators may also engage in mediation for expansionist motives: the desire to extend and increase their resources, influence and power<sup>43</sup>. Based on debate about the conceptual definition of motivation, I use Touval and Zartman’s theoretical distinction between defensive and expansionist motives to analyze the aims and expectations of the mediator in the case studies. Most of the scholars argue that a mediator’s interests should be aligned with the receiver of the advice for the latter to believe the credibility of the message. For instance, Kydd asserts that

*only a mediator who shares your policy preferences to some extent could be trusted to tell you that your opponent is likely to back down even in the absence of a significant concession. Similarly, it could be trusted if it informs you that the adversary has high resolve and you should therefore give in. Only information provided by a mediator who shares your interest is credible.*<sup>44</sup>

However, the discussion on the influence of motivation in the mediation process is largely speculative and limited to shortage of statistical studies in international and other arenas of mediation.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the incorporation of the dimension of motivation into research question enables to contribute to a contested area in which scholars have argued.

In the literature of international mediation, bias and motivation of the mediator are also discussed in relation with type of the role the mediator plays. Kydd<sup>46</sup> claims that information provision, that some scholars have argued properly belongs to “neutral” weak mediators rather than powerful, and potentially biased, mediators and a certain degree of bias

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<sup>41</sup> Christopher, Mitchell, eds. 1988. *New Approaches to International Mediation*. New York Greenwood.

<sup>42</sup> Saadia Touval, and William Zartman, “Introduction: Mediation in Theory.” In *International Mediation in Theory and Practice*, ed. Saadia Touval and William Zartman. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985.

<sup>43</sup> Marieke Kleiboer, Understanding Success and Failure of International Mediation, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Jun 1996;40,2; p 360-390

<sup>44</sup> Andrew Kydd, “Which Side Are You On? Bias, Credibility, and Mediation.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 2003, 47(4): 597–611.

<sup>45</sup> Peter J. Carnevale, Sharon Arad, “Bias, Neutrality and Power in International Mediation.” 1996 In Bercovitch, Jacob. Houston, A (Eds) *Bias and Impartiality in International Mediation*, 40-53.

<sup>46</sup> Andrew Kydd, “Which Side Are You On? Bias, Credibility, and Mediation.” *American Journal of Political Science* 47(4): 2003, 597–611.

is not only acceptable but is actually necessary for some roles that mediators play. Princen also holds the same perspective with Kydd by stating that while impartiality is appropriate for the weak mediator, bias is seen as acceptable, perhaps inevitable, for the powerful mediator.<sup>47</sup> Also Touval and Zartman state that “Successful outcomes could be best achieved not when a mediator is unbiased but when he possesses resources that either or both parties value.”<sup>48</sup>

The process of the mediation may also require the mediator to play the role of power mediation in terms of bringing additional resources to the table; consequently, impartiality could be considered subordinate to the possession of leverage.<sup>49</sup> Given the wide diversity of activities that are considered as mediation, it is theoretically plausible that mediator bias might hinder some types of mediation activities while facilitating the success of others.<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, examining the role of bias and motivation of the mediator necessitates focusing on the least intrusive strategies rather than playing power mediation. In order to distinguish the appropriate roles the mediator can play in which bias and motivation have much more value, the one should review the current discussion on the varieties of strategies and behaviors that mediator can play.

#### **1.4. Mediation Style**

Scholars of international mediation have established two different typologies of mediation strategies. The first typology was constructed by Kressel<sup>51</sup> as indicated in the following: 1) Reflective Behavior 2) Nondirective behavior 3) Directive Behavior. Reflective Strategies are the most category dealing with producing knowledge and information about the conflicting parties. Nondirective behavior is more proactive and involves efforts at controlling conflict management environment and the resources. Directive Behavior involves strategies seeking to manipulate the parties directly into ending the dispute.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Thomas Princen, *Intermediaries in International Conflict*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992, 18.

<sup>48</sup> Saadia Touval and William Zartman, “Introduction: Mediation in Theory.” In *International Mediation in Theory and Practice*, ed. Saadia Touval and William Zartman. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 1985.

<sup>49</sup> Burcu Savun, “Information, Bias and Mediation Success,” *International Studies Quarterly*, (52), 2008, 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Kenneth Kressel, *Labor Mediation: An exploratory survey*. Albany, NY: Association of Labor Mediation Agencies, 1972.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 23

Another common typology, categorizes mediation strategies into three groups: communication facilitation strategies, procedural strategies and directive strategies.<sup>53</sup> This categorization is based on a continuum ranging from the least intrusive to the most intrusive mediation styles. Fisher and Keashly<sup>54</sup> have developed the contingency model. According to that, third party interventions consist of the following: conciliation, consultation, pure mediation, power mediation, arbitration and peacekeeping. According to Kriesberg, certain third parties are more apt to play one or more of these roles which may be incompatible for a specific third party at a specific time<sup>55</sup>. For example, when a third party agenda is required leverage and resources, manipulator/power mediator mode could accomplish it better than the weak mediator. On the other hand, helping to arrange an agenda and suggesting options are roles more suitable for a formulator type mediator. Providing a safe space and conveying information are some of the important roles often best played by a communicator type mediator.<sup>56</sup>

The type of a mediator that the disputants look for lies at the heart of the discussion on the relation between type of the mediation behavior and disputants' satisfaction.<sup>57</sup> Some scholars<sup>58</sup> emphasize the mediators' possession of leverage and resources as something that disputants look for in a mediator. Therefore, mediators with relevant 'moving power' are more capable of putting a settlement in place. On the other hand, some scholars argue that communicator/ formulator type of mediators are more effective in facilitating successful outcomes strategy.<sup>59</sup> Based on the discussion, for the analyzing the role of bias and motivation of the mediator, formulator/communicator strategies perfectly fit since the effect of those dimensions could be more clearly seen.

### **1.5.Outcome of Mediation and Its Evaluation**

There is lack of clarity and coherence on how to determine the success of mediation, since disputants and mediators may have different goals in mind when they enter conflict

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<sup>53</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, Allison Houston, Why Do They Do It Like This?: An Analysis of the Factors Influencing Mediation Behavior in International Conflicts, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*; 44; 2000, 170.

<sup>54</sup> Ronald J. Fisher, Loreleigh Keashly, A Contingency Perspective on Conflict Interventions: Theoretical and Practical Considerations, Bercovitch, J.(eds) 1996, *Resolving International Conflict*.

<sup>55</sup> Louis Kriesberg, "Mediation and the Transformation of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", 378.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 380

<sup>57</sup> Esra Cuhadar, "Turkey as a Third Party in Israeli- Palastenean Conflict: Assessment and Reflections," *Perceptions* ,2007, pp 6

<sup>58</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, Allison Houston, Why Do They Do It Like This?: An Analysis of the Factors Influencing Mediation Behavior in International Conflicts, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*; 44; 2000, 170

<sup>59</sup> Andrew Kydd, "Which Side Are You On? Bias, Credibility, and Mediation." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(4): 2003, 597-611.

management. Some may focus on the content of interactions or others on decision making processes. The definition of success may also vary with the standpoint of the judge. The principles to the conflict, various interested third parties and representatives of international and nongovernmental organizations may all have different criteria of success. However, assessment of the mediation based on subjective criteria raises certain criticisms which are: whose goals are to be taken into account? Given that goals are often vague, implicit, and liable to change, which of the stated goals are taken as crucial? Another pitfall of that goal based approach is that many settlements have winners and losers, and in such cases the winners are likely to consider the settlement more successful than the losers are.<sup>60</sup>

Other than the goal based approach, some scholars accept the extent of change during the mediation process as criteria to assess the effectiveness of the mediation. For instance, Terris and Maoz argue that mediation could be regarded successful if the process of the mediation brings utility of outcome exceeding the utility of continued conflict.<sup>61</sup> Or parties may benefit from the fact that a mediator act as a guarantor for an agreement and reduce the chances of future costly conflicts.<sup>62</sup>

In order to embrace both of the approaches, Bercovitch proposes two broad evaluative criteria that are subjective and objective. For subjective criteria, parties' satisfaction, fairness, efficiency and effectiveness are the key parameters. For objective criteria, extent of the change determines the outcome such as the cessation of violent behavior and opening of dialogue are the determinants.<sup>63</sup> For Bercovitch, fairness is associated with the equal treatment of the mediator to both parties, efficiency is concerned with the time mediation takes and the costs to those involved and lastly, effectiveness is considered as the implementability and permanence of a settlement.<sup>64</sup> Consequently, all those three factors determine the satisfaction of the disputants from the outcome. In the thesis, since I am interested in examining disputant's satisfaction with the outcome, I employ Bercovitch's

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<sup>60</sup> Paul Stern, and Daniel Druckman, "Evaluating Interventions in History: *The Case of International Conflict Resolution*" in Stern and Druckman (2000) *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*. National Research Council, USA.

<sup>61</sup> Terris Lesley and Maoz Zeev., Rational Mediation: A Theory and A Test. *Journal of Peace Research*, 42(5):2005, 563-583

<sup>62</sup> Jonathan Wilkenfeld, Kathleen Young., Victor Asal, David Quinn, Mediating International Crises: Cross-National and Experimental Perspectives, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol 47 No:3,2003, pp 279-301

<sup>63</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, The structure and diversity of mediation in international relations. In *Mediation in international relations: Multiple approaches to conflict management*, edited by Jacob Bercovitch and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, 1-29. New York: St. Martin's.1992.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 23

subjective criteria to assess the effectiveness of the mediator. Based on that, the mediation process is categorized as successful if it is perceived either fair, efficient or effective.

Another dimension in this research is the effect of the stage of the conflict on the interaction between motivation/ bias of the mediator and the disputant's satisfaction with the outcome.

### **1.6. Stage of the Conflict**

Keashly and Fisher suggested, in their "contingency approach," that the type of third party intervention should match the characteristics of the conflict and what is needed for that conflict at that particular stage and time.<sup>65</sup> The reason behind that was each stage of the conflict (i.e. discussion, polarization, segregation, and destruction), requires a different type of third party technique. At the discussion stage, escalation of the conflict will just start and it will eventually set barriers in the communication between the conflicting parties. Yet, at this stage their relationship is still in a good shape. So, a third party could serve best if it facilitates communication between the parties and clarifies the substantive issues.<sup>66</sup> At the stage of polarization, the conditions could cause deterioration of the relations, decrease in the mutual trust and construction of negative stereotypes and enemy perceptions. In this stage, rebuilding trust and relations should be priority of the mediator which would fit for the procedural type of mediators.<sup>67</sup>

At the third stage of conflict escalation- segregation- hostility between the parties dominates the situation. The enemy images begin to solidify and parties see each other as a threat to their security and existence.<sup>68</sup> Keashly and Fisher recommend power mediation would fit best to prevent the conflict escalation and to force parties that an agreement rather than resorting violence is possible. At this stage, third parties use their leverage on the parties through positive and negative inducement. In the last conflict escalation stage, destruction, parties could resort to violence and it is argued that the appropriate form of third party intervention at this stage is peacekeeping in order to separate the fighting parties and to bring the violence under control before moving on to negotiations. Thus, the third party intervention is likely to result in failure if undertaken with inappropriate interventions at the wrong conflict

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<sup>65</sup> Ronald Fisher, Loreleigh Keashly, A Contingency Perspective on Conflict Interventions: Theoretical and Practical Considerations, Bercovitch, J.(eds) 1996, Resolving International Conflict

<sup>66</sup> Esra Cuhadar, "Turkey as a Third Party in Israeli- Palastenean Conflict: Assessment and Reflections," *Perceptions*, 2007, 5.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 5

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 6

stage.<sup>69</sup> Bercovitch gains empirical support for the hypothesis that as the number of fatalities in a dispute increases, the likelihood that mediation will prove successful suffers a corresponding decline. Protracted and intense conflicts should therefore be managed in a different way.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, some argue that the greater the intensity of a conflict, the higher the likelihood that mediation will be both accepted and successful as a method of minimizing losses.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ronald Fisher, Loreleigh Keashly, A Contingency Perspective on Conflict Interventions: Theoretical and Practical Considerations, Bercovitch, J.(eds) 1996, Resolving International Conflict

<sup>70</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, and Lamare James, The Process of International Mediation: An analysis of the determinants of successful and unsuccessful outcomes. *Austrian Journal of Political Science* 28:1993, 290-305.

<sup>71</sup> Oran Young, *The Intermediaries: Third parties in international crises*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967.

## CHAPTER 2

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I present in detail the research methodology used in order to answer the research question. First I present the research question, conceptualizations and the operationalizations of the terminology and then I explain the comparative case study methodologies used.

#### **2.1. Research Design**

The research question I examine is that

- 1) What is the influence of impartiality of Turkey's mediation efforts in Israeli/Syrian and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts since 2002 on the outcomes of Turkey's mediation perceived by Israel, Palestine and Syria.

In order to examine the research question, this thesis undertake structured-focused comparative case study. In the research, I examine two cases which are Turkey's mediation efforts in Syrian- Israeli and Israeli- Palestinian conflicts. In case study, many features of a few cases are examined in depth over a duration of times<sup>72</sup> and it is useful for the purposes of theory development and theory refinement.<sup>73</sup>

The primary focus of the thesis is to examine a little understood issue or phenomenon, to develop preliminary ideas and move toward refined research questions by focusing on the "what" question.<sup>74</sup> This is an exploratory research since the goal here is to develop pertinent hypotheses and propositions for further inquiry, The research aims to explore the relationship between the dependent variable that is perceptions of the disputants on the mediation outcome and the independent variable that is impartiality of the mediator as well as their contingency of that relationship on the intensity of the conflict.

Accordingly, I shall use structured focused comparative case approach. I choose two cases which are international mediation efforts of Turkey in the conflicts of Syria-Israel and Israel- Palestine. The comparison is focused because it deals selectively with only certain

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<sup>72</sup> Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Pearson Education, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., 2006, 97

<sup>73</sup> Robert Yin, *Case Study Research: Design & Methods*, 2nd edition, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1994, 35-41

<sup>74</sup> Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Pearson Education, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., 2006, 97

aspects of the case and structured because it employs general question to guide the data collection analysis in that case.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, while structured nature of a case enables the researcher to have systematic comparison of the data derived from the cases, the focused nature provides a selective theoretical focus.

The comparative case study method I use is the Most Similar System Designs (MSSD) in which cases are chosen because they are similar in most of the aspects. The cases differ on only one or two independent variables.<sup>76</sup>

In this research, the cases are similar most of the aspects and differ in certain respects. The difference of Turkey's mediation efforts between Israel- Syrian and Israel- Palestinian conflicts are related to Turkey's degree of impartiality to those disputants. While Turkish Government, AKP has religious affiliations with the Syria and Palestinian political actors, the support of Turkish public opinion in Palestinian cause enhance the bias of the Turkish government towards Palestinians more strongly than the Syria. In addition to that, Turkey's motivations to initiate the processes of both cases differ in the sense that Turkey is more security oriented in Israel- Syria conflict, but more expansionist oriented in the Palestine-Israel conflict. The similarities of the cases are, Turkey employ facilitator/communicator mediation strategies in both conflicts which take place in the region of Middle East, and involved the conflicts in similar time frame. Related to the nature of the dispute, both conflicts are deeply rooted and involve strict psychological barriers such as enemy perceptions, mistrust and prejudices. Lastly, intensity of the conflict in Palestine- Israel conflict has escalated during the mediation process from December 2008 to January 2009, while that conflict have also indirect effect on the Israel- Syrian conflict and cause the suspension of the negotiations.

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<sup>75</sup> Beasley Kaarbo, Kaarbo Juliet and Beasley Ryan, "A Practical Guide to the Comparative Case Study Method in Political Psychology," *Political Psychology* (1999), Vol.20, No.2, pp 372.

<sup>76</sup> Daniel Druckman, *Doing Research: Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis*, Sage Publications, London, 2005, 210

**Table 1. Most Similar Systems Design: Turkey's Mediation Efforts  
In Israel- Palestine and Israel- Syria Conflict**

	<b>Mediation in Israel- Palestine Conflict</b>	<b>Mediation in Israel- Syria Conflict</b>
<b>Differences</b>	Different degree of impartiality- ( Different degree of bias and motivations)	Different degree of impartiality- ( Different degree of bias and motivations)
<b>Similarities</b>	Turkey assumes facilitator/ communicator mediator role	Turkey assumes facilitator/ communicator mediator role
	Initiation of mediation in same time frame	Initiation of mediation in same time frame
	Same characteristics in terms of nature of the conflict- deeply rooted, involves strict enemy perceptions	Same characteristics in terms of nature of the conflict- deeply rooted, involves strict enemy perceptions
	Escalation of conflict to destructive stage in 2008	Escalation of conflict to destructive stage in 2008

The next section develops operational measures of mediator's characteristics, disputant's perceptions of the outcome and the stage of the conflict (intensity of the conflict).

## **2.2. Operationalizations of the Concepts**

Mediator characteristics are defined in the literature in three categories that are impartiality, leverage and status.<sup>77</sup> As the research focus on communicator/facilitator type of mediator, leverage and status are not the prominent attributes; rather impartiality is the core attribute to determine the successfully employing facilitator type of mediation. I focus on the impartiality of the Turkey as a mediator. For this aim, bias and motives of the Turkey would be the focused variables.

In the process of mediation, the interaction between the mediator and the disputants are also contingent upon the intensity of the conflict between the disputants. The intensity of the conflict are described in the mediation literature in four stages; discussion, polarization, segregation, and destruction. Accordingly, impartiality of the mediator would be analyzed in relation with the stage of the conflict

### **2.2.1 Bias and Motives as the Attributes of Impartiality**

I define mediator's impartiality as not supporting any disputants in the mediation process. Impartiality has two facets. Bias as a first-facet identifies the closeness of the relationship between the mediator and the disputants. Motives of the mediator as the second-facet reveal whether expected rewards of the mediator are in alignment with the preferences of the disputants or not. In order to qualify as an impartial, mediator needs to be in equal distance to the disputants and its motives to initiate the mediation needs to be compatible with the interests of the disputants.

#### **2.2.1.1 Bias**

I define bias in terms of having preferences about how two disputants distribute the contested resources by allowing personal opinions to influence the judgment due to its political, economic and cultural closeness. Therefore, I start with the assumption that states are biased towards states that have similar outlooks and share similar characteristics. Based on the conceptual definition, the bias could be operationalized as having a close relationship with the disputants. To create a valid and reliable estimator of bias, I measure the absolute bias between a mediator and a disputant based on three dimensions of their relationships:

- 1) Alliance ties
- 2) Economic relationship

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<sup>77</sup> Marieke Kleiboer, Understanding Success and Failure of International Mediation, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Jun 1996;40,2; p 360-390

### 3) Ethnic/ Religious and Cultural ties

I code the bias of the mediator on three categories as positive dependence, negative dependence and neutral which is borrowed by Savun.<sup>78</sup> I argue that nature of the relationship determine how they perceive each other whether gain by one of them is perceived as a threat or an asset by the other state. The more cooperative relationship between two states, the more likely a positive dependence flourishes. The more conflictual relationship between two states are, the more likely that a negative dependence prevails.

Positive dependence implies the structural relationship and continuity of relations which is supported by the bilateral agreements. Neutral dependence refers the lack of high or low intensity of the relations. The relations, which is not structured via bilateral agreements and the changes of relationship which is temporary due to the international conjuncture will be codified as neutral too. Negative dependence refers to the low intensity of the relations and lack of bilateral agreements between the parties. By examining the types of relationships between a disputant and a mediator, we can estimate that how closely a mediator's preferences are aligned with those of a disputant.

Focusing only on the direct relationship between a mediator and a disputant reveal the absolute bias. However, since mediation process is a triangular process, effective mediation requires assessing the relative bias which represents the degree of closeness between two states in relation to a third state.

After I calculate the absolute bias of the mediator with respect to each of the disputants, I create a relative bias score. The relative bias score is based on a comparison between the absolute bias score of a mediator with respect to one of the disputants and its bias vis-a-vis the other disputant. In essence, relative bias represents the (dis)similarity between two absolute biases.

Relative Bias of a Mediator = (Absolute bias towards State A) – (Absolute Bias towards B)

**1) Alliance ties** could be defined in terms of having military agreements between the mediator and the disputants. The parties can either share strong military agreements or neutrality pacts or lacks any type of alliance. Conflict history also affects the quality of the alliance ties. It includes number of militarized disputes a disputant and a mediator have been involved in against each other.

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<sup>78</sup> Burcu Savun, "Information, Bias and Mediation Success," *International Studies Quarterly*, (52), 2008, 8

2) **Economic Relationship** includes the trade links and agreements between the parties which could be categorized as the strong economic relationship (positive dependence), limited trade (neutral) or having lack of economic relations ( negative dependence).

3) **Ethnic/ Religious and Cultural ties** are operationalized as sharing same ethnicity, language, religion or sect.

**Table 2. Bias of Mediator Towards Disputants**

	<b>Alliance Ties&amp; Conflict History</b>	<b>Economic Relationship</b>	<b>Ethnic/ Religious Ties</b>
<b>Positive Dependence</b>			
<b>Neutral</b>			
<b>Negative Dependence</b>			

### **2.2.1.2 Motives to Initiate the Mediation**

The conceptual definition of mediator’s motives is the possible rewards or achievements the mediator will expect from the mediation process. As the motive forces are operationalized as either defensive or expansionist, firstly the kind of rewards the mediator may gain should be discussed and then I distribute those kinds of rewards based on whether they include expansionist or defensive motives. According to Mitchell,<sup>79</sup> sources of rewards could be related to material, influence support, security and status/reputation.

For the sources of rewards, Mitchell divided them in 5 categories and described them as

**1- Material rewards**, which may include restoration or increase of previous transfers of goods and resources between other parties(not necessarily the adversaries) and the intermediary, or the denial of goods and resources to others.

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<sup>79</sup> Christopher Mitchell, “ Motives for Mediation” in C. Mitchell & K. Webb (eds) *New Approaches to International Mediation*. NewYork: Greenwood Press, 1988, p29-51

**2- Influence rewards**, which can include tangible benefits, such as base rights, rights to information or of passage, and less tangible goods such as promises of future support, greater wishes of the intermediary, a decline in reliance upon a rival of the intermediary and greater openness to the goods, information and personnel of the intermediary. In short, greater interdependence between the intermediary and the other party

**3- Support rewards**, If influence rewards involve an increase in the intermediary's ability to have an effect on another party, rewards of increased support involve a benefit that takes the form of active help, and approval for the future actions of the intermediary.

**4- Security rewards** is the intermediary's ability to eliminate the overt conflict via settlement agreement. The achievement of local peace and stability, plus an enhanced perception of security, is often a benefit that arises unambiguously from playing the intermediary role

**5- Status or reputational rewards** which take place after a successful mediation and bring expectation that the intermediaries naturally take up the mediator's role.

As I define expansionist motives in terms of gaining rewards which increase the power of mediator in the region or expand its influence over the disputants, material, influence and support rewards fit in this category. Whereas, defensive motives involves establishing the stability in the region which generate the security of all the parties involve in the conflict, status/reputation and security rewards would be concerned as defensive motives.

**Table 3: Motives to Initiate the Mediation**

	<b>Mediator</b>
<b>Expansionist Motives (material, influence and support rewards)</b>	
<b>Defensive Motives (status/reputational and security)</b>	

( Touval, Zartman, 1985)<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Saadia Touval and William Zartman, ‘‘Introduction: Mediation in Theory.’’ In International Mediation in Theory and Practice, ed. Saadia Touval and William Zartman. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 1985

### **2.2.2 Satisfaction of the Disputants from the Outcome**

The concept of the satisfaction from the outcome is operationalized in terms of perceiving the outcome as fair, efficient or effective. If the high level officials of the disputants refer any of those terms about the mediation process, the disputant is regarded as satisfied from the mediation process. Fairness is related with the expression of concern with the process. Efficiency can be thought in terms of the time mediation takes and costs to those involved. Effectiveness refers to the implementability and permanence of a settlement.<sup>81</sup>

### **2.2.3 Stage of the Conflict**

Stage of the conflict is divided into four clusters as discussion, polarization, segregation, and destruction. Those concepts are operationalized as in the following:<sup>82</sup>

- 1) Discussion: Negotiation which aims to mutual compromise regarding the relationship
- 2) Polarization: Misinterpretation of actions with less direct interchange and eventually framing the interaction as win-lose game.
- 3) Segregation: Using of threat without having any hope of good improvement in the relations.
- 4) Destruction: Absence of direct communication combined with violent attacks on the adversary.

The impact of level of violence in the relationship between impartiality of Turkey towards the parties and perceived outcomes by the disputants will be elaborated through conceptual definitions discussed above. If the disputants resort violence or mobilize their armed units to attack the adversary throughout the conflict, the conflict is regarded as in destructive stage. If the disputants don't commit violence but both were in fraught with possibility of armed clash, the conflict would be regarded as in segregation stage. When the parties get in direct negotiations while having mutual strict problems, it would be categorized in either discussion or polarization depends on the problems within the parties. Accordingly, in Israel-Syria and Palestine- Israel conflicts, Israel's Operation Cast Lead started on 27 December 2008 was the turning point to label the stage of the conflicts as destructive. The

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<sup>81</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, The structure and diversity of mediation in international relations. In *Mediation in international relations: Multiple approaches to conflict management*, edited by Jacob Bercovitch and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, New York: St. Martin's, 1992, pp 1-29.

<sup>82</sup> Ronald Fisher, Loreleigh Keashly, A Contingency Perspective on Conflict Interventions: Theoretical and Practical Considerations, Jacob Bercovitch, (eds) 1996, Resolving International Conflict.

attacks of Israel began a wave of air strikes on the Gaza Strip with the stated aim of stopping rocket fire of Hamas and arms smuggling into the territory of Israel. The war ended on January 18 2010, when Israel first declared a unilateral ceasefire, followed by Hamas' announcement of ceasefire. The casualties of Gaza War were between 1,166 and 1,417 Palestinians and 13 Israelis.<sup>83</sup> Since Palestine-Israel conflict usually had spill over effect on the escalation of the wide Arab-Israel conflict, the relations between Israel and Syria has also soured and ended up with the suspension of indirect negotiations. Therefore, The Gaza War on December 2008 would be the event, which shifted the conflicts of Israel-Palestine and Israel- Syria from the stage of segregation to stage of destruction. Accordingly, the relationship between Turkey's mediation and outcomes of the mediation processes in both conflicts will be analyzed in two stages as pre 2009 and post 2009.

### **2.3. Data Collection**

The research of this thesis is based on two types of sources. The first type is primary sources such as archival and official news sources published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Syria, Israel and Palestinian National Authority such as briefings, declarations, reports, official publications and press meetings which are publicly available. The second type is the secondary sources: academic writings as well as qualified newspaper accounts and chronologies. In order to complement those sources, three interviews were conducted with the high level policy makers of Turkey. In the interviews, the target group includes people who were directly or indirectly involved in the decision making processes.

### **2.4. Quality of Research Design**

While conducting a comparative case study, quality of the research could be achieved by establishing reliable and valid measures. Those factors are salient to reach logical set of statements. Therefore, in this part, I argue how to deal with issues of reliability, construct validity, internal and external validity.

To establish construct validity, correct operational measures for the concepts needs to be established. As the operational measures have discussed above, I measure Turkey's

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<sup>83</sup> IDF Releases Cast Lead Casualty Numbers, *The Jerusalem Post*, March 26 2009, <http://fr.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1237727552054&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>, Retrieved on 22 May 2010.

impartiality and the outcomes of the mediation process perceived by Israel, Palestine and Syria. For this aim, I borrowed from international mediation literature the concepts of bias and motives of the mediator to reveal the impartiality of the mediator. During the data collection I aim to look into the impartiality and outcomes from multiple points of views to establish triangulation. In this regard, multiple sources of evidences are necessary so that I benefit from primary sources such as archival and official news, secondary sources such as newspaper accounts, and three interviews to demonstrate that the selected measurements reflect the relationship between impartiality of Turkey and the outcomes of the mediation process.

In the issue of internal validity, the concern is over making true inferences. Therefore, it is more about whether a particular event resulted from certain set of reasons. Using multiple sources of evidences and careful data analyses minimize the rival explanations and possibilities in the interferences of the relationship between Turkey's impartiality as a mediator and the outcomes perceived by the disputants.

The external validity issue deals with the problem of knowing whether a study's findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study. As the nature of the research question brings case specific knowledge rather than generic knowledge, but the findings achieved in this research test the already existing theories about the impartiality of the mediator. In addition to that the findings help to theory buildings and open the way for the future researches to replicate the findings.

In order to ensure the reliability of the research, I use multiple data sources to analyze the impartiality of the Turkey and the mediation outcomes perceived by the disputants. The data set includes official declaration of the high level officials of the disputants and mediator. To ensure documentation of the research, I develop case study data set which enables other researchers to replicate the findings.

## CHAPTER 3

### TURKEY'S MEDIATION EFFORTS in the ISRAEL-SYRIA CONFLICT

#### 3.1. General Overview of Israel- Syria Conflict

Syrian/Israel conflict could be described as a deep-rooted conflict which dates back to 1948 first Arab-Israel war in 1948. Syria has been one of the Arab countries that engaged in armed conflict against Israel since its foundation in 1948. Syria was involved the first Arab-Israeli War at 1948. Likewise, Syria had mobilized its armed forces against Israel in 1967 allied with Jordan, Iraqi and Egyptian forces but severely destroyed by Israel in Six Day War<sup>84</sup>. At this war, Israel captures the area known as the Golan Heights from Syria and that development changed the content of the peace negotiations dramatically between Israel and Syria and negotiations have began to centered on the strategic occupation of the Golan Heights, a narrow strip of land that borders the Sea of Galilee and one of Israel's main water sources. The territory is home to both Israelis and Druse Arabs, who consider themselves to be Syrian nationals<sup>85</sup>. In 1973, contrary to attempts of Syria to recapture the Golan Heights, Israel defended the area and signed an armistice with Syria in 1974. The treaty created a narrow demilitarized zone on the territory's eastern border, patrolled by the U.N. The armistice was followed by the annexation of the region by the Israel in 1981 despite the strong criticism of the international community. The peace negotiations had began in 1991 at Madrid but little progress could be achieved and eventually the negotiations were cut off in 1996 after a series of Palestinian suicide bomb attacks in Israel. Today, there is no final agreement

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<sup>84</sup>Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel- Syrian Negotiations  
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel-Syria%20Negotiations>

<sup>85</sup>Timeline- Israel and Syria- Conflict and Negotiation. *New York Times*, 21 May 2008,  
[http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2008/05/21/world/middleeast/20080521\\_MIDEAST\\_PRIMER.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2008/05/21/world/middleeast/20080521_MIDEAST_PRIMER.html),  
Retrieved on 25 March 2010.

between the parties. In addition to that, Israel accused Syria of harboring Hamas and Hezbollah which are labeled as terrorist organizations by the US and Israel. Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Olmert stated in 2007 about the position of the Israel regarding Syria as in the following:

*“that although Israel is interested in peace with Syria, that country continues to be part of the axis of evil and a force that encourages terror in the entire Middle East. In order to conduct serious and genuine peace negotiations, Syria must cease its support of terror, cease its sponsoring of the Hamas and Islamic Jihad organizations, refrain from providing weapons to Hizbullah and bringing about the destabilizing of Lebanon, cease its support of terror in Iraq, and relinquish the strategic ties it is building with the extremist regime in Iran.”<sup>86</sup>*

The indirect negotiations have started between the parties in February 2007 but suspended after the resignation of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in September of that year. The attack of Israel to Gaza in early 2009 has damaged peace process severely, and since then, there hasn't been any direct or indirect negotiation between the parties. In the light of developments throughout the last decade, stage of the conflict was in segregation phase as the parties refused to get in direct negotiations and use the military threat as a way of getting concessions. However, despite the good intentions in 2007 by getting into indirect negotiations, the increase in the intensity of the conflict in Gaza Strip has suspended even indirect negotiations and shifts the stage of the conflict into a more destructive phase.

### **3.2. Third Party Mediation Attempts in Syrian- Israeli Conflict**

#### **3.2.1. US Mediation**

Since Israel-Palestinian conflict has spillover effect in the whole region Middle, most of the third party involvements to the Israeli- Syrian conflict have been discussed in relation with Israeli- Palestinian conflict. Middle East peace negotiations began in Madrid, on 30 October 1991 between Syria and Israel and the negotiations was co-sponsored by the USA and the USSR. While, main aim of the conference was to address the Israel- Palestinian issue, it also expands its agenda by including Syria, Lebanon and Jordan into the agenda of the

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<sup>86</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel-Syrian Negotiations  
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel-Syria%20Negotiations>

conference. The framework of objectives in the conference was formulated by the U.S.A and the Soviet Union. In fact, despite the extensive efforts of the international community, little progress on the main issues of borders and water rights could be achieved and consequently the negotiations were suspended after the Palestinian suicide bomb attacks in Israel.

Another US mediation attempt was initiated in December 1995 and January 1996 through the Wye River Conference, focusing on both security and other issues. On December 1999, President Clinton announced that Prime Minister Barak and President Assad agreed to relaunch Israel-Syrian peace negotiations which were halted since January 1996. The talks began at a summit meeting with President Clinton in Washington on December 15, with Prime Minister Barak and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk a-Shara, followed by a round of negotiations held in West Virginia in January 2000. During the negotiations, US mediation is highly supported by the Israeli high diplomats as Israeli US ambassador asserts that

*United States therefore has been not just a co-sponsor, but the third partner to these negotiations... the prime minister has encouraged the United States to take an even more active role in the negotiations.*<sup>87</sup>

However, likewise the outcomes of the Madrid Conference, Wye River's understandings and goals remain un-implemented and didn't result in any agreement<sup>88</sup>.

### **3.2.2. Turkey's mediation attempts to Israeli- Syrian conflict**

Turkey involved Syria-Israel conflict as a third party in February 2007. Before getting into details of the process, the transformation of the severe bilateral relations to strategic and economic cooperation between Syria and Turkey needs to be elucidated.

Turkey has a troubled history with the Syria in the 1990's and even the situation was driven into the brink of war in 1998. The water dispute in Euphrates and Orontes Rivers as well as Syrians explicit support to PKK which is declared as terrorist organization by Turkey and European Union, are the core reasons for the deterioration of the bilateral relations. The tension was eased and opened the way for a gradual improvement in economic and diplomatic relations after the expulsion of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999 who was based in

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<sup>87</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel- Palestinian Negotiations, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel-Palestinian%20Negotiations>

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

Syria<sup>89</sup>. The rapprochement between Turkey and Syria has crystallized with the 1998 Adana Agreement and afterwards Turkey's relation with Syria has considerably improved in the last decade. In this time period, the developments in international environment also precipitate the improvement of bilateral relations. The US invasion in Iraq in 2003 had impact on the impoverishment of the central government in Iraq which enabled Kurdish regional government in North Iraq enjoying relatively more autonomy. The situation met with suspicion by the Turkish and Syrian policy makers because Kurds' achievement of more autonomy in North Iraq would trigger Kurdish separatism within their countries since those countries have also large Kurdish communities. Therefore, the common interest to deal with Kurdish separatist after the US invasion in Iraq was another reason for the rapprochement.

Today, both states have gone so far as to develop a de facto diplomatic mechanism by means of frequent high-level visits.<sup>90</sup> For instance, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's visit to Ankara in January 2005 was the first trip by a Syrian president to Turkey since Syria gained independence in 1946.<sup>91</sup> Also both Tayyip Erdogan and Abdullah Gul have paid visits to Damascus as prime ministers.<sup>92</sup>

The improving bilateral relations between Syria and Turkey along with the military and economic cooperation with Israel enable Turkey to play a mediator role in Syrian- Israeli conflict. Ankara started brokering indirect Syrian-Israeli negotiations in February 2007. In May 2008 these talks were made public and they have intensified<sup>93</sup>. Israel and Syria held four indirect rounds of peace talks with Turkish mediation in 2008, but they were suspended following the resignation of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on September 2008. Subsequently, the relations between Turkey and Israel have deteriorated after Turkey's criticism against Israeli policies on Palestine and Israeli attacks to Gaza on December 2008. Turkey's pro-Palestinian declarations and policies met with suspicion in some Israeli politicians about Turkey's suitability to play an impartial mediator role. The recent declarations of high officials of Israel and Syria show that<sup>94</sup> Syria welcomes Turkey as a

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<sup>89</sup> Allon Bar, "Turkish Foreign Policy Survey, Directions and Dilemmas in 2007". *Perceptions*, Autumn-Winter 2006, pp 37-57

<sup>90</sup> Gokhan Bacik, "Turkey-Syria: a Belated Friendship," *Insight Turkey*, July 2007.

<sup>91</sup> Omer Taspinar, "Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo Ottomanism and Kemalism. Carnegie Papers." Number 10, 2008.

<sup>92</sup> Allon, Bar, "Turkish Foreign Policy Survey, Directions and Dilemmas in 2007". *Perceptions*, Autumn-Winter 2006, pp 37-57

<sup>93</sup> Omer Taspinar, "Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo Ottomanism and Kemalism. Carnegie Papers." Number 10, 2008.

<sup>94</sup> Turkey sees positive signs for Israel- Syria talks, *Reuters*, March 2010, [http://news.reuters.com/s/nm/20100309/wl\\_nm/us\\_turkey\\_mideast](http://news.reuters.com/s/nm/20100309/wl_nm/us_turkey_mideast), Retrseved on 30 March 2010.

mediator role again in contrast with Israel's reservation on Turkey's mediation role. Disputants' different views are also mentioned by Prime Minister of Turkey; "Syria wants Turkey's mediation. Israel sometimes gives positive signals on it. However, no formal request for mediation had been received from the Israeli government."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 4

### TURKEY'S MEDIATION EFFORTS in the ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

#### **4.1. General Overview of Israel- Palestine Conflict**

On this section I provide a chronological order of the historical background in the conflict between 1948 and 2000. Then a synopsis of the conflict from 2000 to 2010 is described which is followed by the analysis of the previous and ongoing third party involvements in the conflict.

- **1948-1967:** The period is started with the declaration of the State of Israel and the Six-Day War. Upshots of the events were the inception of the State of Israel, Egypt's control over Gaza Strip and annexation of West Bank by Jordan.
- **1967-1993:** The period between the Six-Day War and the Oslo Accords, in which the conflicted parties reside in the areas addressed by the UN Partition Plan that were under the control of the State of Israel.
- **1993-2000:** The period between the Oslo Accords and the Second Intifada, in which Israel existed alongside the semi-sovereign political autonomy - the Palestinian Authority.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is one of the most enduring and explosive of all the world's conflicts. It forms part of the wider, and generally earlier, Arab-Israeli conflict which has been lasting for more than 60 years. Since it is long lasting and deeply rooted conflict, there have been many turning points in the course of the conflict. In fact, despite the many peace initiatives, there was no improvement in the core of the issues such as mutual recognition, borders, security, water rights, control of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements and legalities concerning refugees.

After the second Intifada in 2000, the most promising development was the Israel's unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005, which inadvertently led to strengthening of Hamas in the region. Hamas which is recognized as a terrorist organization by the Israel and international community took the control of Gaza Strip from Fatah in 2007

after the free elections.<sup>96</sup> Emergence of Hamas as a political actor creates division within the Palestinian sovereignty in which Fatah controls West Bank while Hamas is in charge of Gaza Strip. However, that division aroused after the death of longtime PLO leader Yasser Arafat on November 2004 and intensified after Hamas won the elections of 2006 in Gaza Strip.

After the elections in the Gaza Strip, Israel adopted a dual strategy towards the Palestinians, maintaining pressure against Hamas and the extremists while not closing the door to dialogue with the moderates among the Palestinians towards a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>97</sup>

The military operation of Israel against Hamas in the winter of 2008-2009 has severely deteriorated bilateral relations, and extensively criticized by the international community. The upshot of the war was that between 1,166 and 1,417 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed, and tens of thousands of people were left homeless.<sup>98</sup>

After Israeli attacked on Gaza led by Hamas, the current controversial issue between Israel and Palestine has been on the expansion of Jewish settlement into Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem, which Palestinians see as the capital of their would-be state. Despite the criticism of the US President on the settlements, Israel announced that 1,600 Jewish homes would be built to East Jerusalem just as the vice-president, Joe Biden, was visiting Jerusalem on 10 March 2010.<sup>99</sup>

The indirect negotiations have started between Israel and the Palestinians on May 2009 but Palestinians pledged that there will be no direct talks unless the building stops completely in East Jerusalem as well as the rest of the West Bank.<sup>100</sup>

Concerning the stage of the conflict, the relations between Israel and Palestinians could be categorized as segregation until the rise of the conflict in early 2009 which is defined as Using of threat without having any hope of good improvement in the relations. The attacks in Gaza Strip have led to destructive stage which is referred as the Absence of direct communication combined with violent attacks on the adversary.

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<sup>96</sup> UN condemns war crimes in Gaza, *BBC News*, 16 Sep 2009, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8257301.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8257301.stm), Retrieved on 30 March 2010.

<sup>97</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel-Palestinian Negotiations, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel-Palestinian%20Negotiations>.

<sup>98</sup> Scale of Gaza Destruction emerges, *BBC News*, 19 Jan 2009, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/7836869.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7836869.stm), Retrieved on March 30 2010.

<sup>99</sup> Israel, America and the world: A wall of Suspicion, *The Economist*, 25 Mar 2010, [http://www.economist.com/world/middle-east/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=15770905](http://www.economist.com/world/middle-east/displaystory.cfm?story_id=15770905), Retrieved on 3 May 2010.

<sup>100</sup> "Israel and Palestine: An inevitably edgy start," *The Economist*, 13 May 2010, [http://www.economist.com/world/middle-east/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=16117248](http://www.economist.com/world/middle-east/displaystory.cfm?story_id=16117248), Retrieved on 15 May 2010.

## **4.2. Third Party Mediation Attempts in Israel- Palestine Conflict**

### **4.2.1 US Mediation in Israel- Palestine Conflict**

The most important mediator in the Israeli- Palestinian conflict has been the U.S.A despite its traditional military, economic and strategic alliance with Israel. U.S.A has extensively involved in the conflict especially during the Clinton era.

Oslo Accords were the first direct, face-to-face agreement between the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the 1990s. In this process, Norway played a prominent role as a facilitator in secret Oslo talks in early 1990s. The Oslo Accords set also a framework for the future relations between the two parties by providing the creation of a Palestinian National Authority and the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from parts of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Accords were subsequently officially signed at a public ceremony in Washington, DC on 13 September 1993, in the presence of PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and US President Bill Clinton. However, the peace process eventually was halted after assassination of Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin in 1995.

On December 1998, The Wye River Memorandum was signed between Israel and the PLO( Palestine Liberation Organization) led by Yasser Arafat in a summit held in the White House and the negotiations were brokered by the U.S.A. The Camp David negotiations in July 2000, was also hosted by the U.S.A under Clinton administration.<sup>101</sup> In order to overcome the deadlock over Jerusalem and the right of return, the US employed all three types of mediator roles- manipulator, formulator, and communicator simultaneously.<sup>102</sup> However, both Wye River's and Camp David's understandings and goals remain unimplemented and failed to reach a final status settlement.

The peace process was followed by the rise of II. Intifada in 2000 and caused the suspension of the negotiations. The core of the criticisms of the mediation attempts under Clinton Administration was that its stance toward the conflict was not honest due to its one-sided pressure on the Palestinians and of blaming Arafat publicly as the sole reason of failure.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel- Palestinian Negotiations, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel>

<sup>102</sup> Esra Cuhadar, "Turkey as a Third Party in Israeli- Palastenean Conflict: Assessment and Reflections," *Perceptions*, 2007,8

<sup>103</sup> Malley, Robbert and Agha,Hussein. 2001, "Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors." New York Review of Books, Vol:48 Number13

Despite those criticism to the Clinton era, during the George W. Bush administration, the U.S.A hold more pro-Israeli stance in its mediation efforts due to the changing of the international context such as 11 September attacks of Al-Qaeda in New York and Washington DC and subsequent invasion of the U.S.A to the Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>104</sup> Along with the sticking to one sided approach to the conflict, the US also lost its ambition and interest to solve the conflict. Change of the position in the U.S.A was crystallized by abolishing the special Middle East coordinator position and by dropping the use of the term “peace process.”<sup>105</sup>

In the last decade, first attempt of the US as a mediator was in 2002 by presenting a plan for an Israeli-Palestinian settlement based on the two-state solution and introduced a timeline for the establishment of a Palestinian state.<sup>106</sup> In April 2002, the Quartet was formed by four states; USA, Russia, EU, and UN establish a “Road Map” in September 2002 with an aim to restart the negotiations. The Road Map was first outlined by U.S. President George W. Bush in a speech on June 24, 2002, in which he called for an independent Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace.<sup>107</sup> However, efforts of the Quartet remain limited due to the US’s reluctance to push the parties to follow the principles of Road Map.

Direct negotiations could not be re-launched until the Annapolis conference that was held in the USA, on 26-27 November 2007. The conference took place with the participation of 46 countries and a number of international organizations. At Annapolis, a compromise between Israel and Palestine was reached by articulating a two-state solution<sup>108</sup> and issuing of a joint statement from all parties. Despite the participation of Saudi Arabia and Syria, two Arab states that do not recognize Israel, the absence of Palestinian faction Hamas increase the suspicion on the prospect of the conference. Nevertheless, Annapolis Conference was welcomed by the leaders of the participants and consolidated the consent of the international community to resolve the conflict.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Esra Cuhadar, “Turkey as a Third Party in Israeli- Palastenean Conflict: Assessment and Reflections,” *Perceptions*, 2007,8

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 10

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 13

<sup>107</sup> U.S.Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, 16 July 2003. “Roadmap For Peace in the Middle East:Israeli/Palestinian Reciprocal Action, Quartet Support,”

<http://20012009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20062.htm>, Retrieved on 22 May 2010.

<sup>108</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Middle East Process, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/middle-east-peace-process.en.mfa>, Retrieved on 22 April 2010.

<sup>109</sup> “New Mid-East Peace Drive launched,” *BBC News*, 28 November 2007, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/7114396.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7114396.stm), Retrieved on 22 May 2010.

In the light of the mediation efforts of the U.S.A in the Bush era, it could be argued that the U.S.A employed the strategy of a formulator and communicator by proposing peace settlements and bringing the parties into direct negotiations.

Obama's inauguration to the presidency in January 2009, started with the Israeli attacks to the Gaza Strip, and followed by the declaration of ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. Having the goal of resuming indirect, talks between the two parties in the conflict, Obama administration began a series of meetings on May 2009 to bring new momentum to the Middle East peace process<sup>110</sup>, as it is stated by the US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell:

*I'm pleased that the Israeli and Palestinian leadership have accepted indirect talks. As we've said many times, we hope that these will lead to direct negotiations as soon as possible. We also again encourage the parties, and all concerned, to refrain from any statements or actions which may inflame tensions or prejudice the outcome of these talks.<sup>111</sup>*

On the other hand, the US incentive to initiate indirect negotiations has been delayed due to Israel's ongoing construction of buildings in East Jerusalem, which is internationally regarded as part of Palestinian territory which eventually caused The Palestinians promptly called off the talks. Nevertheless, partial freeze of the settlement buildings after the US's strong pressure and criticisms of international community leads to the resumption of indirect negotiation with mediation of US Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell on May 2010<sup>112</sup>.

#### **4.2.2. Mediation Attempts by Arab Countries**

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan are the countries that aim to facilitate the negotiations between different stakeholders of the conflict such as among Palestinian factions, between Israel and the Palestinian Authority as well as between the Palestinian Authority and the US. During the last few years Egypt and Jordan mostly took on a communicator role in the

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<sup>110</sup> Boston.com, May 18 2009, Obama Focuses on Israeli- Palastenean Conflict, [http://www.boston.com/news/politics/politicalintelligence/2009/05/obama\\_focuses\\_o\\_3.html](http://www.boston.com/news/politics/politicalintelligence/2009/05/obama_focuses_o_3.html)

<sup>111</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace%20Process/Guide%20to%20the%20Peace%20Process/Israel-Palestinian%20Negotiations>

<sup>112</sup> Palestinians Say Indirect Talks have Begun with Israel, Reuters, May 9 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6471AL20100509>, Retrieved on 13 May 2010.

conflict<sup>113</sup>. During the Israeli's disengagement from Gaza Strip in 2005, Egypt also involved the conflict by placing guards in the Gaza- Egypt border. After the Gaza attacks of Israel in the winter of 2008-2009, Egypt played a highly active role by engaging round of mediation talks among the Palestinians, Israel and international parties concerned for a durable truce in the Palestinian enclave. Apart from launching talks with Israelis and Palestinian factions, Egyptian leaders had a series of talks with a number of visiting senior officials of the European Union (EU), the international Quartet and the United States on the Palestinian issue, particularly the Gaza ceasefire.<sup>114</sup> Egypt's efforts were also encouraged by the international community, and furthermore, the U.S. President Barack Obama's special envoy to the Middle East George Mitchell and International Quartet's envoy to the Middle East Tony Blair also visited Cairo for talks with Egyptian leaders on the Gaza ceasefire in order to show their support to Egypt's mediation efforts.

Saudi Arabia also has been active in the mediation role by introducing proposal named as Arab Peace Initiative which first proposed in 2002 at the Beirut Summit of the Arab League, and re-endorsed at the Riyadh Summit in 2007.<sup>115</sup> The initiative had an aim to end the Arab-Israeli conflict, which supports normalization of the relations between the entire Arab region and Israel, in exchange for a complete withdrawal from the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem.<sup>116</sup> Despite the strong support of Palestinian Administration to the Arab Peace Initiative, Israeli state is yet to formulate an official response either positive or negative<sup>117</sup>. In addition to that, Hamas officials also have not been in unity to respond the proposal. While some officials give negative responses, some has optimistic stance.<sup>118</sup>

US Administration during the Bush era had certain reservation about the content of the plan and eventually did not support the proposal sufficiently.<sup>119</sup> However, during the tenure of Obama, George Mitchell, the United States special envoy to the Middle East, declared that

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<sup>113</sup> Esra Cuhadar, "Turkey as a Third Party in Israeli- Palastenean Conflict: Assessment and Reflections," *Perceptions*, 2007, 15

<sup>114</sup> Egypt launches new rounds of mediaiton efforts for durable Gaza truce, China View, 29 January 2009, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-01/29/content\\_10731885.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-01/29/content_10731885.htm).

<sup>115</sup> Arab Leaders Re-launch Peace Plan, BBC News, 28 March 2007, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/6501573.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6501573.stm), Retrieved on 22 May 2010.

<sup>116</sup> "Text: Beirut Declaration," *BBC News*, 28 March 2002, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/media\\_reports/1899395.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/media_reports/1899395.stm), Retrieved on 22 May 2010.

<sup>117</sup> "Not one Refugee can Return," *Jerusalem Post*, 14 January 2009, <http://www.jpost.com/s/nm/20100309>, Retrieved on 22 May 2010.

<sup>118</sup> "Schenerio Nither Side Wanted," *Egypt Daly News*, 8 January 2009, <http://dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=18933The>, Retrieved on 22 May 2010.

<sup>119</sup> "US Envoy: Arab Peace Initiative will be Part of Obama Policy," *Haaretz*, 05 April 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/u-s-envoy-arab-peace-initiative-will-be-part-of-obama-policy-1.273534>, Retrieved on 22 May 2010.

President Barack Obama's administration intends to incorporate the initiative into its Middle East policy.<sup>120</sup>

Apart from peace initiatives to reconcile the disputants in Israel-Palestine conflict, Qatar also involve the conflict within the Palestinian fractions. In 2006, Qatar's Foreign Minister shuttled between the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, of Fatah, and Prime Minister Ismail Haniya, of Hamas. However, Fatah and Hamas leaders could not reach any agreement.<sup>121</sup>

In general, based on the mediation efforts of the Arab countries it could be argued that the mediating capabilities of the Arab states hardly went beyond suggesting ideas and proposals and conveying information between the parties. Despite their lack of leverage over the disputants, their efforts are most of time failed.

#### **4.2.3. Turkey's Mediation Attempts**

Turkey with its predominantly Muslim population, throughout its history, maintains its good relationship with Israelis and Palestine. Turkey is not only among the first group of countries that recognized the Palestinian State established in exile in 1988, but it is also the first country with a Muslim population that recognized the State of Israel in 1949 following its foundation.<sup>122</sup> "As such Turkey is among one of those rare countries which both the Israelis and the Palestinians trust."<sup>123</sup> Turkey has a claim that "as a facilitator in the search for peace, remains at equal distance to both parties with regard to the conflict and this is mainly why Turkey enjoys the confidence of both Israelis and Palestinians."<sup>124</sup> Turkey has given her full support to the efforts for the success of the peace process since 1991 and especially welcomed the first and the second Oslo arrangements of 1993 and 1995 that followed the 1991 Madrid Conference<sup>125</sup>. After the outbreak of the second Intifada, Israel and Palestinian Administration had different motivations to call Turkey for mediation. While, Israeli government aims to convince Palestinians to renounce terrorism, Palestinians demands Turkey's facilitation to convince Israel to turn to direct negotiations and stop resorting violence.

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<sup>120</sup> Esra Cuhadar, "Turkey as a Third Party in Israeli- Palastenean Conflict: Assessment and Reflections," *Perceptions*, 2007, 16

<sup>121</sup> "Qatar Emrges as a Mediator Between Hamas and Fatah." *The New York Times*, 10 October 2006, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/10/world/middleeast/10mideast.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/10/world/middleeast/10mideast.html?_r=1), Retrieved on 22 May 2010.

<sup>122</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's Political Relations with Israel, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-political-relations-with-israel.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-israel.en.mfa)

<sup>123</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/middle-east-peace-process.en.mfa>

<sup>124</sup> Ibid

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

Turkey's main stance on the conflict could be described in terms of settling the conflict through negotiations "on the basis of a vision of two states living side by side within secure and recognized borders, and in the framework of the relevant Resolutions of the UN Security Council, the principle of land for peace, the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative."<sup>126</sup> The lack of confidence is the main reason that lies beneath the current crisis according to declarations of the Foreign Ministry of Turkey. Since Turkey set its mediation agenda on confidence building, it could be stated that a facilitator/ communicator type of mediation is the strategy Turkey has employed. Unlike the Arab and the US mediations which use more procedural strategies by introducing proposals, Turkey is more likely to play the role of facilitating the interactions between the parties.

Over the last few years, Ankara has also begun to adopt a more active policy on the Palestinian question. Those efforts bore fruit with the concurrent visits of President of the State of Israel Shimon Peres and President of the PNA Mahmoud Abbas as the official invitees of President Abdullah Gül. Those visits marked a distinctive meaning since they took place prior to the Annapolis Conference. Turkey supported the convention and the political process started by the Annapolis Conference was reached on the "Common Understanding" document, the text of which was read by President Bush. Furthermore, Turkey gave utmost importance to the establishment of economic infrastructure in Palestine. The most apparent indicator of Turkey's contribution for this aim was the Ankara Forum held in 2005 with the participation of businessmen from Turkey which aims to establish industrial zones in Palestine. For instance, an office of Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) was opened in Ramallah in May 2005<sup>127</sup> and TOBB (the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges) initiated small and medium size projects to support the institutional development of Gaza Strip.<sup>128</sup> Those initiatives of Turkey show that Turkey's mediation approach includes not only to facilitate the interaction between the conflicting parties but also to transform the region economically which eventually brings prosperity and wealth to the region.

Despite Turkey's efforts to mediate the conflict, there were certain incidents and particular attitudes of the AKP Government towards Israel that soured the relations with Israel and jeopardized Turkey's mediator role. Since the AKP government came to power in 2002,

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations with Palestine. [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-palastine.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-palastine.en.mfa)

<sup>128</sup> İbrahim Kalın, 2009, "Debating Turkey in the Middle East: The Dawn of a New Geo-Political Imagination". *Insight Turkey*, Vol 11, Number 1, 83-96

President Erdogan has been highly critical of Israeli policy in the West Bank and Gaza, calling the assassinations of Hamas officials acts of “state terror.”<sup>129</sup> The second event which caused estrangement between Turkey and Israel was the Turkey’s hosting of the Hamas leader Halid Meshal in Ankara who won the parliamentary elections in Gaza Strip in January 2006. The meeting was arranged without consulting Washington and Jerusalem and irritated both governments, who wanted to isolate Hamas until it met a series of specific conditions, including acceptance of Israel’s right to exist.<sup>130</sup> The other incident that soured the relations, took place after the Israel’s operation against Hamas in Gaza on December 2008. Turkey responded to the Israeli attack on Gaza by strongly criticizing the operation. Even Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan denounced the attack as a “crime against humanity,” and declared a suspension of talks with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.<sup>131</sup> The tension reach a peak when Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey walked off the stage after an angry exchange with the Israeli president, Shimon Peres, during a panel discussion on Gaza at the World Economic Forum on January 2009 when Secretary General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations and Amr Moussa, the Arab League’s secretary general were present<sup>132</sup>. Even, in that meeting, Prime Minister of Turkey, Erdogan directly accused of President of Peres due to the attacks in Gaza by saying “When it comes to killing, you know well how to kill” in the discussion

The anger and frustration of the Erdogan reflects overwhelming sympathy of the Turkish public opinion and politicians towards the cause of Palestinians.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, the attitude of Turkey’s Prime Minister could be regarded as the continuity Turkish foreign policy which has always been responsive to Israel’s policies and military operations in the Palestinian territory as PM Bülent Ecevit described the Israeli attacks on the Jenin refugee camp in 2002 as “genocide.”<sup>134</sup> These incidents jeopardize communicator/facilitator mediator role and has distort the impartial image of Turkey from the perspective of the Israel which is utterly crucial to maintain Turkey’s mediator role.

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<sup>129</sup> Omer Taspınar, “Turkey’s Middle East Policies: Between Neo Ottomanism and Kemalism.” *Carnegie Paper*,. Number 10, 2008.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid

<sup>131</sup> Selin M. Bölme, 2009, “Charting Turkish Diplomacy in the Gaza Conflict” *Insight Turkey*, Vol (11),1 ,23-31

<sup>132</sup> In Davos, Turkey’s Erdogan and Israel’s Peres Clash over Gaza, *The New York Times*, Jan 29 2009

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/30/world/europe/30clash.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/30/world/europe/30clash.html?_r=1)

<sup>133</sup> Esra Cuhadar, “Turkey as a Third Party in Israeli- Palastean Conflict: Assessment and Reflections,” *Perceptions* 2007, 4.

‡ Murat Yetkin, Ankara’da soykırım paniği, *Radikal*, 6 April 2002

<http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=34083>, Retrieved on 20 May 2010.

## CHAPTER 5

### TURKEY'S IMPARTIALITY AS a MEDIATOR

As it is discussed in previous chapters, the impartiality of the mediator is analyzed by focusing on the bias and motives of the mediator. As the bias of the mediator is associated with three variables; a) economic relations b) alliance ties c) Ethnic, cultural, religious ties, firstly, based on those variables I reveal the absolute bias of the mediator holds towards each disputant. Subsequently, I compare the absolute bias of the mediator with each other to find out the relative bias mediator holds towards the disputants whether it is neutral or in favor of one of the disputants.

I define mediator's impartiality as not supporting any disputants in the mediation process. Impartiality has two facets. Bias as a first-facet identifies the closeness of the relationship between the mediator and the disputants. Motives of the mediator as the second-facet, reveal whether expected rewards of the mediator are in alignment with the preferences of the disputants or not

#### **5.1. BIAS**

I define bias in terms of having preferences about how two disputants distribute the contested resources by allowing personal opinions to influence the judgment due to its political, economic and cultural closeness. Therefore, the bias of the mediator is analyzed by looking into three variables: a) Economic relationship, b) Alliance ties c) Ethnic/ Religious and Cultural ties. I expect that if a mediator and a disputant have strong economic, strategic and cultural ties, a mediator is likely to benefit from the disputant's gain from a conflict with another state and thus is likely to be biased toward the disputant.

##### **5.1.1. Economic Relations**

Economic relations implies the trade links and agreements between the parties which could be categorized as the strong economic relationship (positive dependence), limited trade (neutral) or having lack of economic relations (negative dependence).

### **5.1.1.1 Turkey's Economic relations with Palestine**

After the establishment of Palestinian Administration in 1994, despite intensity of the international economic aids, the administration still heavily rely on the support from the outside resources. For instance, GDP of Palestine grew %5 in average between 2002 and 2005 which is mostly occurred due to the annual injection of net current transfers (mainly donor funds) of about \$1.3 billion, or some one third of annual GDP.<sup>135</sup> Those international funds were suspended after the Hamas election victory in Jan 2006 leading to an unprecedented deterioration of the local economy, especially in Gaza.<sup>136</sup> For the more accurate analysis, the distinction between Gaza Strip and West Bank should be made in terms of economic development. Especially the Israeli-imposed crossings closures and fighting between HAMAS and Israel during December 2008-January 2009, resulted in the near collapse of most of the private sector, extremely high unemployment, and high poverty rates<sup>137</sup>. Currently shortages of many goods are met through the HAMAS-controlled black market tunnel trade that flourishes under the Gaza Strip's border with Egypt. In 2009, unemployment rate of the Gaza Strip is around % 40 and in additionally %70 of the population is under poverty rate. On the other hand, West Bank controlled by Fatah has relatively better economic conditions which are also reflected in economic dates. In 2009, West Bank has achieved % 7 growth rate and has % 17.7 unemployment rates.<sup>138</sup>

Throughout the peace process, Turkey has motivation to improve the daily lives of the Palestinians with the establishment of sustainable socio-economic infrastructure. Within this framework, Turkey announced a comprehensive economic and social action plan for Palestine in December 2003.<sup>139</sup> The economic relations gained ground in 2004 when the Free Trade Agreement was signed between Turkey and Palestinian National Authority. Moreover, an office of Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) was opened in Ramallah in May 2005 in order to initiate small and medium-size projects to support the development of Palestine.<sup>140</sup> The major action plan adopted by Turkey in 2005, was through

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<sup>135</sup> Embassy of the State of Palastine to the Turkish Republic- Economy, [http://www.embpalestine-tr.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=54&Itemid=44](http://www.embpalestine-tr.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=54&Itemid=44), retrieved on 13th April .2010.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> CIA- World Factbook- Gaza Strip, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gz.html>, retrieved on 13th April 2010.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's Political Relations with the Palestinian National Authority, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-political-relations-with-the-palestinian-national-authority.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-the-palestinian-national-authority.en.mfa), retrieved on 13th April 2010

<sup>140</sup> Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations with Palastine. [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-palastine.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-palastine.en.mfa), retrieved on 14th April 2010.

the Ankara Forum with the participation of the businessmen from Turkey (Union of Stock Markets and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey-TOBB), Israel (Israel Manufacturers' Union) and Palestine (Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Trade). After the several meetings, the Forum reach a final agreement signed by Turkey's President Abdullah Gül, President of the State of Israel Shimon Peres and the President of the PNA Mahmoud Abbas in November 2007. Based on the final agreement, the parties agreed on establishment of an Erez industrial zone located in Gaza Strip. During the construction, TOBB has taken over the management of the Erez industrial zone in order to attract investment in the area that will provide employment to hundreds of Palestinians.<sup>141</sup> However, Erez Industrial Zone had been suspended due to the conditions following the takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas.<sup>142</sup> After the Hamas takeover in Gaza, the project was moved to Tarqumia in the West Bank.<sup>143</sup> The project aims to contribute to the Palestinian economy by creating up to 7,000 jobs.

Apart from initiating economic projects, Turkey is also one of the danor to the Palastine by pledging to fund 150 million USD to Palestine in the following three years starting from December 2007.<sup>144</sup> Moreover, there are some civil exchange programs and in this regard, for instance Turkey brought 750 Palestinian police officers for training in Turkey.<sup>145</sup>

**Table 4. Bilateral Trade Relations between Turkey and Palestine**

(1000 USD)				
Years	Exports	Change	Import	Change
2002	4.729	-21,2%	13	-86,7%
2003	6.489	37,2%	454	3392,3%
2004	8.900	37,2%	545	20,0%
2005	9.133	2,6%	304	-44,2%
2006	21.153	131,6%	500	64,5%
2007	21.247	0,4%	761	52,2%

<sup>141</sup> Esra Cuhadar, "Turkey as a Third Party in Israeli- Palastenean Conflict: Assessment and Reflections," *Perceptions*, 2007, 8.

<sup>142</sup> Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations with Palastine. [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-palastine.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-palastine.en.mfa), retrieved in 14th April 2010.

<sup>143</sup> Meliha Altunışık, "The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey's Soft Power in the Middle East," *Insight Turkey*, Vol.10, No 2, 2008, 52.

<sup>144</sup> Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations with Palastine. [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-palastine.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-palastine.en.mfa), retrieved in 14th April 2010.

<sup>145</sup> "Turkey and Middle East Ambitions and Constraints" *International Crisis Group*, 7 April 2010, Europe Report No 203.

2008	20.690	-2,6%	428	-43,8%
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Republic of Turkey Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry for Foreign Trade<sup>146</sup>

The table indicates that the economic relations between Turkey and Palestine depends on the goods and facilities Turkey provides to Palestine and the intensity of the trade has significantly increased especially after 2005, the time when Turkey initiated Ankara Forum to establish industrial zones and signed a free trade agreement. Concerning the dysfunctional economical structures of Palestine due to the armed conflict with Israel, increase the importance of Turkey for the well being of Palestine National Authority and daily lives of the people. Despite the economic initiatives of Turkey concerning the bilateral free trade agreement and establishment of industrial zones, the low intensity of the numerical value in import rate between Turkey and Palestine makes the economic relationship one sided. economic relationship between Turkey and Palestine, therefore, falls in the neutral category since it is mainly based on the Turkey's exports and its economic initiatives in the reconstruction of Palestine.

#### **5.1.1.2 Turkey's Economic Relations with Israel**

Turkey and Israel has engaged in close economic relations since mid-1990s. The amity between both countries crystallized with the numerous agreements which form the legal bases of bilateral economic relations such as Free Trade (1997), Agreement on Trade, Economic, Industrial and Scientific Cooperation (1997), Agreement on Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investment (1998), Agreement on the Prevention of Double Taxation (1998), Cooperation Agreement on Military Industry (1996) and the Cooperation Agreement in Agriculture (1999)<sup>147</sup>. The intense economic relations maintain and reached its peak by 2005, Turkey was Israel's largest regional trading partner, importing \$900 million in Israeli goods and exporting \$1.2 billion in goods to Israel.<sup>148</sup> In 2007, the trade volume with Israel was 2,7 billion USD, while total trade volume between Turkey and Israel in 2006 was 2,3 billion

<sup>146</sup> Republic of Turkey Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry for Foreign Trade, General Overview of Bilateral Relations, <http://www.dtm.gov.tr/dtmweb/index.cfm?action=detay&yayinID=244&icerikID=347&dil=TR>, retrieved from 14 April 2010.

<sup>147</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations with Israel," [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-israel.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-israel.en.mfa)

<sup>148</sup> David Schenker, "Syria and Turkey: Walking Arm in Arm Down the Same Road," *Jerasulem Center for Public Affairs*, Vol 9, No 13. 2009.

USD<sup>149</sup>. In addition, the volume of civilian exchanges in terms of number of tourists, academics, sports and cultural activities has increased during the 2000s<sup>150</sup>.

**Table 5. Bilateral Economic Relations between Israel and Turkey**

(1000 USD)

<b>Years</b>	<b>Export</b>	<b>Import</b>
2002	861.434	544.467
2003	1.082.998	459.488
2004	1.315.292	714.143
2005	1.466.913	804.691
2006	1.529.158	782.149
2007	1.658.195	1.081.743
2008	1.935.243	1.441.760

Republic of Turkey Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry for Foreign Trade<sup>151</sup>

Based on the figures of the table, there have been structural economic relations between Turkey and Israel as the trade volume increases and develops consistently in every year. Moreover, the balance in the value of export and import articulates the mutual dependence of the economic relations, eventually leads the relationship to be categorized as positive dependence.

Compared to Turkey's economic relations with Palestine, Turkey and Israel has been in economic interaction almost 150 times more than the trade volume with Palestine which have led the conclusion that Turkey has relatively positive economic dependence in favor of Israel.

### **5.1.1.3. Turkey's Economic Relations with Syria**

Turkey's frozen relations with Syria have normalized starting from the early 2000s. In this recent period, with commercial steps in the forefront, common projects in many fields,

<sup>149</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations with Israel," [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-israel.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-israel.en.mfa).

<sup>150</sup> Embassy of Israel-Ankara, "Turkey and Israel Bilateral Relations," <http://ankara.mfa.gov.il/mfm/web/main/document.asp?SubjectID=18367&MissionID=65&LanguageID=0&Stat usID=0&DocumentID=-1>.

<sup>151</sup> Republic of Turkey Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry for Foreign Trade, General Overview of Bilateral Relations, <http://www.dtm.gov.tr/dtmweb/index.cfm?action=detay&yayinID=244&icerikID=347&dil=TR>, retrieved on 14 April 2010.

including culture, tourism, security, customs, transportation and agriculture, have been initiated in parallel with the improvement in political relations between Syria and Turkey<sup>152</sup>.

There have been many bilateral economic agreements signed by the countries such as Agreement on Cooperation in Health (2003), Agreement on the Prevention of Double Taxation (2004), Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investment (2004), Protocol on Railway Cooperation (2004), Agreement on Air Transportation (2004), Maritime Cooperation Agreement (2004), Free Trade Agreement (2007)<sup>153</sup>. With the Free Trade Agreement which entered into force at the beginning of 2007, the trade volume between the two countries was expected to increase significantly in the foreseeable future. The recent indicators showed that both countries achieved this aim as it could be seen in the change of the export and import values between 2007 and 2008.

**Table 6. Bilateral Economic Relations between Syria and Turkey**

Years	Export	Change (%)	Import	Change (%)
2002	266.772	-5,1	506.247	9,2
2003	410.755	54,0	413.349	-18,4
2004	394.783	-3,9	357.656	-13,5
2005	551.627	39,7	272.180	-23,9
2006	608.140	10,2	187.006	-31,3
2007	797.766	31,2	376.959	101,6
2008	1.113.026	39,5	639.212	69,6

Republic of Turkey Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry for Foreign Trade<sup>154</sup>

Moreover, in late 2009, visa requirements were lifted for free circulation of civilians between Turkey and Syria and two sides had signed 51 protocols by March 2010 on trade, development and cultural exchanges<sup>155</sup>. Therefore, despite the poor economic relations with Syria in the early years of Turkey's AKP Government, economic relations reached the peak after 2008. Turkey deepens its economic relation with Syria especially afterwards Israel get in

<sup>152</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations with Syria," [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-syria.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-syria.en.mfa), retrieved on 15th April 2010.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Republic of Turkey Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry for Foreign Trade, General Overview of Bilateral Relations, <http://www.dtm.gov.tr/dtmweb/index.cfm?action=detay&yayinID=244&icerikID=347&dil=TR>, retrieved from 14 April 2010.

<sup>155</sup> *International Crisis Group*, 7 April 2010, "Turkey and Middle East Ambitions and Constraints" Europe Report No 203.

fraught with the Muslim countries in the region due to the its attacks in Gaza Strip from December 2008 to January 2009. Based on that, I argue that Turkey’s estrangement from Israel boosts the intensification of the relations between Turkey and Syria. Therefore, the economic relations between Syria and Turkey would be categorized as neutral until 2009 and as positive dependence after 2009.

Based on the comparison of Turkey’s economic indicators vis-à-vis Israel and Syria, the relative dependence of Turkey was economically more close to Israel. On the other hand, it is balanced and could be categorized as neutral after the rise of Palestine- Israel conflict in 2009 which leads to increase of economic developments between Syrian and Turkey.

In the Palestinian-Israeli conflict setting, relatively positive dependence between Israel and Turkey exists consistently.

**Table 7. Economic Relations of Turkey vis-à-vis Israel, Syria and Palestine Between 2002 and 2010**

	Israel- Palestine		Israel- Syria		
<b>Absolute Dependence</b>	<b>Israel</b>	<b>Palestine</b>	<b>Israel</b>	<b>Syria</b>	
	Positive Dependence	Neutral Dependence	Positive Dependence	<b>Until 2009</b>	<b>After 2009</b>
				Neutral Dependence	Positive Dependence
<b>Relative Dependence</b>	Positive Dependence with Israel		<b>Until 2009</b>		<b>After 2009</b>
			Positive Dependence with Israel		Neutral Dependence with both Parties

**5.1.2 Alliance Ties/ Conflict History**

Alliance ties could be defined in terms of having military agreements between the mediator and the disputants. The parties can either share strong military agreements or neutrality pacts or lacks any type of alliance. Conflict history also affects the quality of the alliance ties. It includes number of militarized disputes a disputant and a mediator have been involved in against each other.

**5.1.2.1 The Alliance between Turkey and Palestine**

Turkey established official relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1975 and was recognized the Palestinian State established in exile on 15 November 1988.

Turkey has utterly given importance to its relationship with Palestinian National Authority which was established in 1996 and the intensity of the relations have crystallized by paying various bilateral visits at all levels.<sup>156</sup> While examination of the alliance between Turkey and Palestine, the distinction should be made between the Hamas based in Gaza Strip and the Palestinian National Authority located in West Bank. As Hamas took the control of Gaza Strip after the elections in 2006, Fatah remains as the legislative power in West Bank which cause a dual structure over the sovereignty of the Palestinian people. The division in the representation of Palestinian people has complicated the third party involvements in the greater Palestine- Israel conflict. Because international mediation efforts in the interstate level creates ambiguity on the counterpart of the Israel due to the political division of Palestinian side.

Since the division in Palestinian community has come to surface since 2006, Turkey initiated mediation between Hamas and Fatah<sup>157</sup>, Hamas and Israel and Fatah and Israel. In fact, Turkey has put much effort to mediate the conflict between Israel and Hamas especially after the Gaza attacks in the late 2008 and it was the Hamas which is main rivalry of the Israel in the recent years as it is declared by the Foreign Ministry of Israel:

*After the elections in the Palestinian Authority (January 2006) resulting in the establishment of the Hamas-led government, Israel adopted a dual strategy towards the Palestinians, maintaining pressure against Hamas and the extremists while not closing the door to dialogue with the moderates among the Palestinians towards a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.*

Therefore, I focus on the alliance between Fatah and Turkey before 2006 elections, and then the alliance between Hamas and Turkey is the focused relationship to reveal the alliance between Turkey and Palestine.

Turkey's alliance with Hamas has intensified after the invitation of Hamas leader Khaled Mishal to Ankara in 2006 which causes serious criticisms from the U.S.A. and Israel since Hamas is declared as a terrorist organization and refused to be conducted official negotiations by the U.S.A. and Israel. The meeting between the officials of Turkish and Hamas took place after the legislative victory of Hamas in Gaza Strip. Turkey's main principle to conduct direct dialogue with Hamas is that the political entity which derives its

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<sup>156</sup> Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's Political Relations with the Palestinian National Authority, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-political-relations-with-the-palestinian-national-authority.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-the-palestinian-national-authority.en.mfa), retrieved on 20 April 2010.

<sup>157</sup> "Turkey wants to mediate Hamas- Fatah reconciliation talks," Haaretz, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1104100.html>, retrieved on 20 April 2010.

legitimization from the results of the free elections, is qualified to engage in direct negotiations. Accordingly, isolation of Hamas from the international community and imposed economic measures in Gaza Strip is interpreted by Turkey as an attempt to weaken the democratically elected order<sup>158</sup>. Turkey's expectation to include Hamas into political process was requesting from Hamas to declare a ceasefire with Israel in exchange for Israel's lifting blockade of Gaza<sup>159</sup>. However, the leader of Hamas made no announcement of moderation or a change in policy while he was in Turkey in 2006, and thus the whole saga served only to legitimize Hamas.<sup>160</sup>

Israel's attacks on Gaza Strip on the December 2008, has also intensified the degree of alliance between Turkey and Hamas. Turkey not only responded to the Israeli attack on Gaza immediately, strongly criticizing the operation but also in the aftermath of the attacks,<sup>161</sup> but also AKP government has called on Western countries to "recognize Hamas as the legitimate government of the Palestinian people."<sup>162</sup> The efforts of Ankara is interpreted by Hamas leaders as the sign of close relations with Turkey as it is indicated by the deputy chairman of the Hamas; "Turkey stands right in the middle of our problems playing a remarkable role in negotiations between Al Fatah and Hamas as well as for rebuilding Gaza. We are negotiating about captive Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Ankara has been trying with us to end the war in the region. Moreover it is Turkey telling about what we think, our approach regarding the peace or our thoughts on resistance to the other countries."<sup>163</sup> Considering the perception of Hamas leaders regarding the Turkey's efforts and the increasing interaction since 2006 between Hamas and Turkey, the alliance ties could be categorized as neutral dependence before the conflict escalated in 2008. For the time after the Gaza Attacks of the Israel, the alliance maintains its neutrality despite the closer relation between Turkey and Hamas compared to the time period before the December 2008. The reason is that still there is no structural alliance between the parties while having lack of mutual military agreements or pacts.

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<sup>158</sup> Fikret Bila, "HAMAS'ın Ankara Ziyaretinin Hassas Yönleri," *Milliyet*, February 17, 2006

<sup>159</sup> Bülent Aras, "Davutoglu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy," *Insight Turkey*, Vol 11, No 3, 2007

<sup>160</sup> Meliha Altunışık, The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey's Soft Power in the Middle East, *Insight Turkey*, Vol 10, No 2, 2008, p 46.

<sup>161</sup> İlker Ayturk, Between Crises and Cooperation: The Future of Turkish- Israeli Relations, Vol 11, No 2, 2009, pp 57-74.

<sup>162</sup> Turkey and Middle East: Ambitions and Constraints, *International Crisis Group*, 2010, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/203\\_turkey\\_and\\_the\\_middle\\_east\\_ambitions\\_and\\_constraints.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/203_turkey_and_the_middle_east_ambitions_and_constraints.pdf), retrieved on 20th April.

<sup>163</sup> On Turkey, Middle East and Israeli soldier with Abu Mrzook of Hamas , Haberturk, 13 April 2010, <http://www.haberturk.com/general/haber/507696-on-turkey-middle-east-and-israeli-soldier-with-abu-marzook-of-hamas>, Retrieved on 04 May 2010. The interview conducted with Mousa Mohammed Abu Marzook who is the deputy chairman of Hamas Political Bureau.

### **5.1.2.2. Alliance between Israel and Turkey**

Turkey was among the very first states that recognized Israel on March 1949 and upgraded its diplomatic envoy to ambassadorial level in 1992.<sup>164</sup> The relations between Turkey and Israel have developed in many areas such as political, economic, technological, scientific as well as military spheres<sup>165</sup>. Both countries attach utmost importance to its mutual strategic partnership stem from certain reasons. Firstly, from the Israeli point of view, international legitimacy and recognition by its neighbors are the priorities of Israeli foreign policy which enhance the importance of Turkey's alliance as a Muslim country with international stature. Due to the numerous enemies of the Israel in the region, maintaining full diplomatic ties with Turkey serves tangible interests of Israel<sup>166</sup>. Secondly, the military cooperation has been playing enormously crucial role between Israel and Turkey. That cooperation is also embedded in the military agreements such as defense and cooperation agreement signed in 1996 which was boosting security ties dating back to the "Peripheral Pact" of the 1950s.<sup>167</sup> Base on the agreement, several Israeli fighter planes train at the Konya Airbase in Turkey every year, and both countries conduct joint naval exercises with the participation of American warships in the Mediterranean.<sup>168</sup> Moreover, in 2005, Turkey purchased three unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) systems from Israeli companies and announced the development of seventeen new joint Turkish-Israeli military projects.<sup>169</sup>

Another reason for the close strategic alliance stem from the fact that Israel lobby supports Turkey in the American Congress to battle repeated attempts by American Armenians to have the events of 1915 recognized as a genocide. The role of Israeli lobby in the US, therefore, enhance the strategic cooperation between Turkey and Israel.

On the other hand, despite the structural nature of the alliance, the close relations between Israel and Turkey has strained at certain times during the tenure of the AKP

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<sup>164</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Turkey's Political Relation with Israel," [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-political-relations-with-israel.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-israel.en.mfa), retrieved on 21 April 2010.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> İlker Aytürk, Between Crises and Cooperation: The Future of Turkish- Israeli Relations, Insight Turkey, Vol 11, No 2, 2009, 57-74.

<sup>167</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Turkey's Political Relation with Israel," [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-political-relations-with-israel.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-israel.en.mfa), retrieved on 21 April 2010.

<sup>168</sup> İlker, Aytürk, 2009. Between Crises and Cooperation: The Future of Turkish- Israeli Relations, Vol 11, No 2, 57-74.

<sup>169</sup> Schenker David, 2009. "Syria and Turkey: Walking Arm in Arm Down the Same Road," Jerasulem Center for Public Affairs, Vol 9, No 13, <http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=1&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=442&PID=0&IID=3205&TTL=Syria and Turkey: Walking Arm in Arm Down the Same Road>, retrieved on 20 April 2010.

Government. The first major setback was the Turkey's invitation of Hamas leaders to Ankara. The meeting between Hamas leaders and Turkish diplomats was arranged without consulting Washington and Jerusalem and irritated both governments who aim to isolate Hamas and name it as a terrorist organization. Even if AKP argued that the aim of meeting was to convince Hamas on the accepting the Israeli's right to exist, Turkey's attempt was highly criticized by Israeli officials<sup>170</sup> and the relations were severely soured.

Israel's operation against Hamas in Gaza has been another the turning point in the Turkish-Israeli relations which reach its lowest points particularly after the verbal spat between Israeli President Shimon Peres and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at Davos in 2009.

The ramifications of the bitter relations were especially seen in the military sphere. After the Gaza attacks, Turkey disinvited Israel from Anatolian Eagle, an annual Turkish air force exercise that it had held with Israel, NATO, and the United States since the Defense and Cooperation Agreement signed in 1996.<sup>171</sup> Instead, Turkey announced that military training would be conducted with Syria.<sup>172</sup> Even if the replacement of Israel with Syria took place after the Israel's Gaza attacks on the December 2008, Turkish officials avoid making this connection. Nevertheless, regardless of the aim of the Israel's withdrawal from the military training, those events followed by the ending of the Turkey's mediator role in the Syrian-Israeli conflict.<sup>173</sup>

The relations hit the bottom when the nationalist Turkish television soap opera "Valley of the Wolves" showed fictional scenes of Israeli agents killing old people and kidnapping babies. Further to that, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister made a statement publicly how he treat Turkish ambassador in an inappropriate manner by noting how the Turk's sofa was lower than his and not putting Turkish flag on the table. Consequently, the events followed by

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<sup>170</sup> Ömer, Taşpınar, "Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism," Carnegie Papers, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Number 10, September, 2008, p14

<sup>171</sup> Soner Cagatay, Is Turkey Leaving the West, *Foreign Affairs*, 26 August 2009, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65634/soner-cagatay/is-turkey-leaving-the-west>, retrieved on 21 April 2010

<sup>172</sup> David Schenker, "Syria and Turkey: Walking Arm in Arm Down the Same Road," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Vol 9, No 13, 2009. [http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=1&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=442&PID=0&IID=3205&TTL=Syria\\_and\\_Turkey:\\_Walking\\_Arm\\_in\\_Arm\\_Down\\_the\\_Same\\_Road](http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=1&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=442&PID=0&IID=3205&TTL=Syria_and_Turkey:_Walking_Arm_in_Arm_Down_the_Same_Road), retrieved on 20 April 2010.

<sup>173</sup> Turkey and Middle East: Ambitions and Constraints, International Crisis Group, 2010, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/203\\_turkey\\_and\\_the\\_middle\\_east\\_ambitions\\_and\\_constraints.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/203_turkey_and_the_middle_east_ambitions_and_constraints.pdf), retrieved on 20th April.

the Turkey's threat to withdraw its envoy but agreement is generated by the Israelis public apology.<sup>174</sup>

Based on the developments, positive dependence of the alliance ties between Israel and Turkey turn to neutral dependence especially after the escalation of the conflict in 2009 Gaza Strip.

### **5.1.2.3. Alliance Between Turkey and Syria**

During 1990s, Turkey and Syria got through bitter relations and even got very close to resort direct violence to each other. The deteriorated relations in that decade were mainly triggered by the Syria's explicit support for the Kurdistan Workers' Party, the PKK, and its violent atrocities against Turkish military units. Syria was demanded to prosecute the militants of PKK and to extradite its leader Abdullah Ocalan, in fact developments on this issue until 1998 did not take place along the interests of Turkey. On October 1998, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel declared that Turkey's patience for Syria ended and mobilized the Turkish troops in the Syrian- Turkish border<sup>175</sup>. The Turkey's threat of resorting armed violence was responded by Syrian officials with complying with the Turkish demands. Subsequently, 1998<sup>176</sup> Adana Agreement has been accepted and within this framework, Syria has recognized the PKK as a terrorist organization and agreed not to support it as well as extraditing its leader Abdullah Ocalan from Syria. Eventually, 1998 Adana Agreement has been accepted as the beginning of rapprochement in Syrian- Turkish relations and both parties initiate mutual constructive approaches leading to close alliance.

Another major event leads to close alliance was the US invasion to Iraq which creates common Kurdish threat for the both parties since sizable Kurdish minorities within those countries could follow an separatist agenda after Kurds in Northern Iraq getting more autonomous administration.<sup>177</sup> Both Ankara and Damascus worry that the Iraq war has unleashed a serious threat of Kurdish nationalism that both must work together to contain.<sup>178</sup>

Enhanced strategic ties were fruitful especially in 2004 when Syria was being accused by the US of the assassination of Refik Hariri of Lebanon. Despite the fact that the US demanded Turkey to act along with its side, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer disregarded the

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Öner Pehlivanoglu, "*Ortadoğu ve Türkiye*," İstanbul, Kastaş, 2004.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Gökhan Bacık, "Turkey-Syria: a belated relationship," *Insight Turkey*, Vol 9, No 3, July 2007.

<sup>178</sup> Ömer Taşpınar, "Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism," *Carnegie Papers*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Number 10, September, 2008, p12

US's implications, and refrained from asking Syria publicly to withdraw her troops from Lebanon in order to avoid a disturbance in the Syrian- Turkish relations.<sup>179</sup>

Another major breakthrough in bilateral relations took place as Turkish-Israeli ties entered a period of crisis after the Gaza attacks in the late 2008. In April 2009, Turkey and Syria engaged first ever joint military exercises and agreed to end visa requirements. In addition to that, as Turkey cancelled Israeli participation to the joint military exercises, Ankara announced another round of military exercises with Syria which is followed by the Syrian Turkish meeting of their Strategic Cooperation Council.<sup>180</sup>

Despite the difficulties in addressing key issues on water regarding the Euphrates, the parties managed to surmount those issues to prevent the good will and constructive approaches both parties' shares.<sup>181</sup>

Concerning the continuity of close relations since the last decade, the alliance between Turkey and Syria could be categorized as neutral until 2009. However, joint military exercises and establishment of Strategic Cooperation Council shift the neutrality to positive dependence after 2009.

**Table 8. Alliance Ties of Turkey vis-à-vis Israel and Palestine Between 2002 and 2010**

Absolute Dependence	Israel		Palestine	
	Pre- 2009	Post 2009	Pre- 2009	Post- 2009
	Positive Dependence	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Relative Dependence	Pre- 2009		Post- 2009	
	Positive Dependence with Israel		Neutral	

<sup>179</sup> “Sezer Suriye’de” *Sabah*, 13.04.2005, <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2005/04/13/gnd92.html>, Retrieved on 21 April 2010.

<sup>180</sup> Schenker, David, 2009. “Syria and Turkey: Walking Arm in Arm Down the Same Road,” *Jerasulem Center for Public Affairs*, Vol 9, No 13, [http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=1&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=442&PID=0&IID=3205&TTL=Syria\\_and\\_Turkey:\\_Walking\\_Arm\\_in\\_Arm\\_Down\\_the\\_Same\\_Road](http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=1&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=442&PID=0&IID=3205&TTL=Syria_and_Turkey:_Walking_Arm_in_Arm_Down_the_Same_Road), retrieved on 20 April 2010.

<sup>181</sup> Kibaroglu, Mustafa, 07 January 2010. “Turkish- Syrian reapprochement: Key to Peace in the Middle East,” *Middle East Roundtable*, <http://www.bitterlemons-international.org/inside.php?id=1223>, retrieved on 21 April 2010.

**Table 9. Alliance Ties of Turkey vis-à-vis Israel and Syria  
Between 2002 and 2010**

Absolute Dependence	Israel		Syria	
	Pre- 2009	Post 2009	Pre- 2009	Post- 2008
	Positive Dependence	Neutral	Neutral	Positive Dependence
Relative Dependence	Pre- 2009		Post- 2009	
	Positive Dependence with Israel		Positive Dependence with Syria	

### **5.1.3. Ethnic/ Religious Ties**

Turkey is a secular country with a predominantly Muslim population, has been locating itself among the Western countries. The traditional approach of Turkey, however, has been in transformation since the AKP's tenure as the government. In order to examine the ethnic and religious ties of the Turkey with the conflicting parties, therefore, the identity of the Turkey ought to be conceptualized as dynamic term instead of static and fixed. In this regard, the elaboration of identity of AKP Government and transformation in Turkish Foreign Policy since 2002, is necessary condition to reveal the ethnic and religious ties of Turkey with the primary parties of the conflicts.

Since the inception of the new Turkish Republic, Turkey pursued Western-oriented foreign policy which centered on the promotion of national interests vested in the West. Turkey maintained non-involvement and noninterference policy towards the Middle East Region in the majority of 20th century.<sup>182</sup> On the other hand, this conventional foreign policy approach has been experiencing a fundamental transformation after the AKP Government came into power by adopting a multi-dimensional foreign policy. This new approach includes diversifying foreign policy options and trying to solve problems with its neighbors called "zero problem policy"<sup>183</sup> The core question in this point is that whether that transformation is caused by the normalization of foreign policy perspectives or ideological re-configuration, de-

<sup>182</sup> Kılıç, Kanat, "AK Party's Foreign Policy: Is Turkey Turning Away from the West," *Insight Turkey*, Vol 12, No 1, 2010, p 205-225.

<sup>183</sup> Ufuk Ulutaş, " Turkish Foreign Policy in 2009: A Year of Pro-Activity," *Insight Turkey*, Vol 12, No 1, 2010, pp1-12.

Westernization, or “Middle Easternization” of Turkish foreign policy which puts Islamic values as determinant factor in establish relations with the countries of the Middle East.

Even if founders of the party were sympathetic to Islamism and current Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and President Abdullah Gül were previously prominent figures in the religious oriented former Welfare Party ( Refah Party), the AKP party and its founders are highly critical to that party’s policies and argued that the AKP was no longer Islamist but rather conservative democrat, plus, it supported Turkey’s membership in the EU, unlike its Islamists predecessors.<sup>184</sup>

Despite, AKP officials claim that they are also pro-European Union, the declarations of the high officials and foreign policy attempts during 8 years indicate that AKP Government is more enthusiasm to establish more close relations with not only moderate Islamist countries but also hardliner Middle East actors such as Hamas, the president of Sudan Omer al-Bashir and Syria. For instance, in a visit to Saudi Arabia, Erdogan gave a statement that cooperation with Riyadh was for him just as important as EU membership.<sup>185</sup> Another incident was the Prime Minister Erdoğan’s criticized visit to Iran in which prime minister gave a statement on the Iran’s controversial nuclear program, saying “members of United Nations Security Council primarily should take steps towards the disarmament.”<sup>186</sup> Moreover, president of Sudan, Omer al- Bashir who was convicted of atrocities in Darfur by the International Court of Justice, paid visits three times to Turkey during the tenure of AKP Government.<sup>187</sup>

Lastly, there are certain incidents shows the public support in Turkey to the Palestinian cause and widespread discontent over the Israel’s policies towards Palestinian people. For instance, the mass demonstration organized across the country in protest of Israeli’s Gaza attack and spectacular welcome-home ceremony that the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip

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<sup>184</sup> Turkey and Middle East: Ambitions and Constraints, *International Crisis Group*, 2010, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/203\\_turkey\\_and\\_the\\_middle\\_east\\_ambitions\\_and\\_constraints.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/203_turkey_and_the_middle_east_ambitions_and_constraints.pdf), retrieved on 20th April.

<sup>185</sup> AB Ne Kadar Önemliyse Arabistan’da O kadar,” *Radikal*, 20.01.2010. <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Default.aspx?aType=RadikalHaberDetay&Date=20.01.2010&ArticleID=975606>, Retrieved on 22 April 2010.

<sup>186</sup> “Yüzümüzü Hem Batıya hem Doğu’ya Döndük,” *Radikal*, 29.10.2009, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalHaberDetay&ArticleID=961652&Date=26.04.2010&CategoryID=100>. Retrieved on 26 April 2010.

<sup>187</sup> “Beşir Üçüncü Kez Türkiye’ye Geliyor” *Radikal*, 26 March 2010, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalHaberDetay&ArticleID=962800&Date=26.04.2010&CategoryID=100>. Retrieved on 26 April 2010.

Erdogan received after the verbal spat with Israeli President Shimon Peres during a panel at the World Economic Forum in Davos, were the significant examples of the public opinion<sup>188</sup>.

Taking the changing nature of the identity of Turkish foreign policy since AKP Government came into power into account, ethnic and cultural ties of the Turkey with Syria and Palestinians could be categorized under positive dependence. On the other hand, neutral nature of the ethnic and cultural ties between Turkey and Israel turns into negative dependence after the Israeli attack on Gaza Strip in 2009. Therefore, Turkey's relative dependence with the disputants of Israel- Palestine conflict is more close to Palestine. In addition to that, in Israel-Syria conflict, Turkey holds a position in favor of Syrians. The relative dependence between Turkey and its counterparts Syria and Palestine have been even consolidated after the rise of violence in Gaza Strip after 2009.

**Table 10. Ethnic and Religious Ties of Turkey vis-à-vis Israel, Syria and Palestine Between 2002 and 2010**

Absolute Dependence	Israel- Palestine			Israel- Syria		
	Israel		Palestine	Syria	Israel	
	Pre- 2009	Post- 2009	Positive Dependence	Positive Dependence	Pre- 2009	Post- 2009
Neutral	Negative Dependence	Neutral			Negative Dependence	
Relative Dependence	Pre- 2009		Post- 2009	Pre- 2009		Post- 2009
	Positive Dependence with Palestine		Positive Dependence with Palestine	Positive Dependence with Syria		Positive Dependence with Syria

<sup>188</sup> Hero's Welcome for Turkish Leader after Davos Walkout, *New York Times*, 30 January 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/31/world/europe/31turkey.html?scp=1&sq=davos%20erdo%C4%9Fan%20welcome&st=cse>, Retrieved on 26 April 2010.

**5.1.4. General Overview of the Bias Turkey holds towards the Disputants**

**Table 11. Turkey’s bias towards Disputants in Israel- Palestine Conflict**

	<b>Until 2009</b>	<b>After 2009</b>
<b>Economic Relations</b>	Positive Dependence with Israel	Positive Dependence with Israel
<b>Alliance Ties</b>	Positive Dependence with Israel	Neutrality
<b>Ethnic&amp; Cultural Ties</b>	Positive Dependence with Palestine	Positive Dependence with Palestine

The table shows that Turkey had relatively positive dependence to Israel in economic relations and alliance ties, in fact had relatively positive dependence to Palestine before escalation of the conflict in early 2009. The rise in the intensity of the conflict had impact on the alliance ties and causes a shift from Israeli dependence to neutrality.

**Table 12. Turkey’s bias towards Disputants in Israel- Syria Conflict**

	<b>Pre- 2009</b>	<b>Post- 2009</b>
<b>Economic Relations</b>	Positive Dependence with Israel	Neutrality
<b>Alliance Ties</b>	Positive Dependence with Israel	Positive Dependence with Syria
<b>Ethnic&amp; Cultural Ties</b>	Positive Dependence with Syria	Positive Dependence with Syria

As the table indicates, escalation of the conflict had great impact on changing Turkey’s relative bias towards the disputants. After the Israel’s attacks on Gaza Strip in early 2009, the relative dependence Turkey holds in alliance ties turns to in favor of Syrians and shifts the positive Israeli dependence to neutral in economic relations. Also Turkey maintains its pro Syrian stance in ethnic and cultural ties after 2009.

## **5.2. Motives of Turkey to Initiate Mediation**

During the AKP Government, Turkish Foreign Policy has been in transformation in terms of regional priorities and diversification of the foreign policy tools and strategies followed in the international arena. The key Turkish foreign policy actor of the government is current Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu since 2009 and was previously chief policy adviser to Prime Minister Erdoğan. Turkey has begun to structure its policies on the basis of his principles such as proactive foreign policy, zero problem with neighbors and act as a peace builder in Middle East Region. The new vision has its roots in heritage of the Ottoman Empire and as well as the opportunities and responsibilities of its geo-strategic location.

According to him, Turkey should get benefit of this potential to establish peace and security in its neighborhoods by taking on a more active and constructive role.<sup>189</sup> The ultimate aim of this approach is to transform Turkey from a periphery country to central power.<sup>190</sup> The historical responsibilities inherited from Ottoman Empire and being located in the edge of Muslim and the Western World provides Turkey to embark on new foreign policy towards Middle East. This approach includes willingness to play a policy maker role in Middle East region which makes a shift in Turkey's long-standing policy of non-intervention in regional conflicts of the Middle East Region.

Eventually, the proactive peace builder role aimed by Turkey necessitates foreign policy tools and strategies, compatible with this new vision. Accordingly, third party mediator role has been employed to intervene the conflicts since Turkey has credibility in the Middle East region regarding its position of having good relations with the parties of different conflicts.

### **5.2.1. Turkey's Motives perceived by the disputants in Palestine- Israel Conflict**

The deep rooted conflict between Palestine and Israel has devastating effects not only for its own people but also the countries within the region. In addition to that, conflict has a spill-over effect on the other regional conflicts and the continuation of the conflict intensifies the extremism around the globe.

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<sup>189</sup> Ahmet Davutoglu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007," *Insight Turkey*, Vol 10, No 1, 2008, pp 77-96.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*,563.

In the Arab- Israel conflict, Turkey has been actively supporting the peace process and offer mediation many times to both sides of the conflict.<sup>191</sup> Despite Turkey's initiatives to play a mediator role, both sides haven't officially declared Turkey as an official mediator. Rather, Turkey has been playing this role unofficially by facilitating the unofficial dialogue between Hamas and Israel. The reason of this ambiguity is that, official peace negotiations have suspended most of the time due to the intensification of the conflict in the last decade. In addition to that Israel and the U.S.A classify Hamas as a terrorist organization and avoid engaging official negotiations. Turkey has been following a strategy of empowering Palestinian side by giving economic aid and reconciling the dual structure of the Palestinians.<sup>192</sup> This strategy, in fact, is a continuity of Turkey's traditional support to Palestinians throughout the Arab- Israel conflict. Turkey's officials are also outspoken critic of Israel's use of asymmetric military power against Palestinians and raised those critics to international media to get the attention of international community.<sup>193</sup>

Turkey's foreign policy initiatives as a mediator role in the Israel/ Palestine conflict are combination of defensive and expansionist motives. It is obvious that resolution or settlement of Palestine- Israel conflict would provide security in the whole region by preventing or containing other conflicts of Middle East. Therefore, as Israel- Palestine conflict lie at the heart of the problems in the Middle East, Turkey's motives includes establishing security around its borders as well as in the region. Secondly, As current Foreign Minister of Turkey Ahmet Davutoglu has argued, Turkey has a great potential of influence in the region achieved by the Ottoman Heritage, therefore, international mediation efforts as foreign policy tool is used to achieve greater interdependence with the Palestinians and get the support of Palestinian fractions by limiting Iran's influence on them particularly on Hamas. Moreover, proactive role of Turkey would enhance reputation of Turkey as a regional peace builder in the international realm. Turkey even emphasizes its motivation to play a central role in global issues outspokenly in international meetings.<sup>194</sup>

As Turkey's mediation efforts were welcomed by both disputants before the escalation of the conflict on the December 2008, its aim was perceived by Israel to establish the stability and security within the region. However, Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East

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<sup>191</sup> Abdullah Gül, "The Speech of Abdullah Gül in Palestine Legislative Assembly," Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy In the New Century, T.C Dışişleri Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2007, pp 468

<sup>192</sup> Abdullah Gül "The Speech of Abdullah Gül in Organization of Islamic Conference," Horizons of Turkish Foreign Policy In the New Century, T.C Dışişleri Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2007, pp 476.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., pp 505.

<sup>194</sup> Türkiye Küresel Sorunlarda Merkez Rol İstiyor, *Radikal*, 08.12.2009

<http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalHaberDetay&ArticleID=968072&Date=26.04.2010&CategoryID=98>

especially after the escalation of the conflict in 2009 and its overt influence on the Hamas, perceived by Israel as expansionist oriented.

**Table 13. Perceived Motives of Turkey Perceived by the Disputants in Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

	<b>Pre- 2009</b>	<b>Post- 2009</b>
<b>Israel</b>	Defensive	Expansionist
<b>Palestine</b>	Defensive	Defensive

### **5.2.2. Turkey's Motives perceived by the Disputants in Syria- Israel Conflict**

Turkey has a unique position in Middle East which is able to have relations with all the parties in equal distance. Although, Turkey and Syria had bitter relations in the last decade, today, the level of interaction between both parties stands almost as a model of progress for the rest of the region. Turkey got benefit of its close relations with both of the parties by being mediator in the indirect negotiations held on May 2008. Turkey facilitates the indirect negotiations aiming to initiate direct negotiation between Israel and Syria. Despite the efforts of Turkey, the negotiations were suspended just after Israeli attack on Gaza Strip in the late 2008-early 2009. Even if both parties would start direct negotiations, achievement of full settlement would be highly difficult and long term process. Therefore, Turkey's mediator role provides a peacebuilder status and enhances its reputation in international environment. Turkey was perceived by Israel and Syria as security-exporter country which has capacity and legitimacy to establish peace and order in the region. The tension between Turkey and Israel which came to surface after the war in Gaza brings suspicion in the Israeli side about the appropriateness of the Turkey as a mediator in indirect talks between Israel and Syria. However, the suspicion caused due to the Turkey's soured relations with Israel and its pro Palestinian stance<sup>195</sup> rather than alignment of Turkey's motives with the Israel's preferences.

As a result, I conclude that Turkey's mediation efforts were perceived as defensive motives such as achieving reputation and status rather than expansionist motives.

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<sup>195</sup> "Netanyahu: Turkey can't be honest broker in Syrian talks," *Haaretz*, 18 October 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/netanyahu-turkey-can-t-be-honest-broker-in-syria-talks-1.5940>, Retrieved on 23 May 2010

**Table 14. Motives of Turkey Perceived by the Disputants in Israeli-Syria Conflict**

	<b>Pre- 2009</b>	<b>Post- 2009</b>
<b>Israel</b>	Defensive	Defensive
<b>Syria</b>	Defensive	Defensive

## CHAPTER 6

### OUTCOMES OF THE MEDIATION PROCESS PERCEIVED BY THE DISPUTANTS

#### **6.1. Syria and Israel's Perceptions of Turkey's Mediation Efforts**

Turkey's attempts at mediation have grounded starting from 2004 and both parties expressed their interest in Turkey's facilitator role in February 2007. United States and Israel were endeavor to introduce Turkey as a mediator due to the Turkey's leverage and developing relations with Syria<sup>196</sup>. Previously, Syria and Israel avoid from direct negotiations since US-brokered peace talks in 1999-2000. In the indirect negotiations Turkey's role was to convey the messages of both parties to each other. The meetings were announced and started in December 2008. In overall, five rounds were held, and both parties express their content for getting into indirect negotiations. The goal of the negotiations was to move to next phase which was the initiation of direct negotiations in order to achieve long-lasting peace in the region. President Bashar al-Assad of Syria said that indirect talks his country has held with Israel could move to direct talks and conclude with a peace deal<sup>197</sup>. The latest round of indirect negotiations between the states had been postponed because of internal Israeli politics, and that the outcome would depend on who becomes Israel's next prime minister in the coming elections there<sup>198</sup>. Despite the good intentions of both parties from the process and their statements on the possibility of the direct negotiations in the near future, however, the negotiations were permanently suspended after the Israel's Operation Cast Lead started against Gaza in the late 2008. Turkey's explicit support to the Palestinians during the operations and the verbal spat in the Davos meeting, damage to Turkish image as a mediator from the perspective of Israeli high officials. Turkey is even declared as dishonest broker by Israeli diplomats due to its close relations with Islamic countries. Although the structural

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<sup>196</sup> Allon Bar, Turkish Foreign Policy Survey: Directions and Dilemmas in 2007," *Perceptions*, Autumn- Winter 2006, 37-57

<sup>197</sup> Syrian Leaders Says Direct Talks with Israel are Possible, *New York Times*, 22 November 2008.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/22/world/africa/22iht23syria.18872426.html?scp=59&sq=israel.%20turkey.%20mediator&st=cse>

<sup>198</sup> Says Peace Talks have been Postponed as the Israelis Prepare for Elections, *New York Times*, September 5, 2008 Syria  
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C00E6D71E31F936A3575AC0A96E9C8B63&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=1>

alliance of the both parties is strong enough not to reduce the level of interaction to a minimum level, the credibility of Turkey as a mediator is highly reduced.<sup>199</sup>

Following the operation of Israel to Gaza Strip, Hamas and Israel has declared the truce and peace process has again come to agenda of the leaders of Middle East. Turkey also declared its eagerness and readiness to resume its mediator role in Syrian- Israeli conflict. The dissatisfaction of Israeli policy makers from the mediator role of Turkey, was crystallized by Israeli's official preference of French mediation rather than Turkey.<sup>200</sup> Despite the fact that, various high level officials of Israel has declared that Turkey's mediation in Syria- Israel conflict is nearly impossible,<sup>201</sup> Turkey's mediation is also appreciated and demanded by certain political figures of Israel such as Defense Minister Ehud Barak, Trade Minister Benyamin Ben Eliezer.<sup>202</sup> The ambiguity of Israel's stance on the Turkey's mediation efforts is also indicated by the Turkey's high level policy makers.<sup>203</sup> In fact, criticisms made by president and prime minister of Israel as well as discontented Israeli public opinion against Turkey shows the dissatisfaction of Israel on the mediation process even though there are certain positive remarks of some political figures within Israel policy makers.

On the other hand, Syria's stance on the issue was totally different than Israel and has insisted on a resumption of the Turkey to its mediator role. The president of Syria Besar Esad, has declared many times that Turkey is the only capable mediator in the conflict, and Syria will do its best to reach the peace if Turkey would be the mediator.<sup>204</sup> In the light of those developments, it seems unlikely that Turkey can resume its role with the current Israeli government for the time being, although Syria put pressure to resumption of Turkey's role. Therefore, it could be argued that the mediation of Turkey in Israeli-Syrian indirect

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<sup>199</sup> Gaza War Created Rift Between Israel and Turkey, *New York Times*, February 4 2009, [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/05/world/europe/05turkey.html?\\_r=1&scp=3&sq=israel,%20turkey,%20mediator&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/05/world/europe/05turkey.html?_r=1&scp=3&sq=israel,%20turkey,%20mediator&st=cse). Retrieved 1 May 2010

<sup>200</sup> Netanyahu Fransa'yı arabulucu istiyor, *Radikal*, 8 December 2009, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalHaberDetay&ArticleID=968068&Date=26.04.2010&CategoryID=100>, Retrieved on 1 May 2010

<sup>201</sup> "Arabulubu Erdoğan'a İsrail sıcak bakmıyor," *Radikal*, 24 July, 2009, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalHaberDetay&ArticleID=946372&Date=26.04.2010&CategoryID=100>, Retrieved on 1 May 2010.

<sup>202</sup> "İsraili Bakan Burnundan Kıl Aldırmıyor," *Radikal*, 29 December 2009, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalHaberDetay&ArticleID=971649&Date=26.04.2010&CategoryID=100>, Retrieved on 1 May 2010.

<sup>203</sup> The interviews conducted with General and Deputy General Middle East Directorate of Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 21 April 2010.

<sup>204</sup> "Esad Türkiye'de ısrarlı," *Radikal*, 14 November 2009, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalHaberDetay&ArticleID=964289&Date=26.04.2010&CategoryID=100>, Retrieved on 1 May 2010.

negotiations is initially perceived as successful by Israelis but after the stage of the conflict has escalated in 2008, mediation efforts of Turkey has been perceived as unsuccessful because of Turkey’s close alliance with Syria which damages its impartiality and credibility. On the other hand, Turkey is continuously perceived as a successful mediator by the Syrians

**Table 15. Syria and Israel’s Perceptions of Turkey’s Mediation Efforts**

	<b>Until 2009</b>	<b>After 2009</b>
<b>Israel</b>	Satisfaction	Dissatisfied: Unfair
<b>Syria</b>	Satisfaction	Satisfaction

**6.2.Palestine and Israel’s Perceptions of Mediation Outcomes**

Israeli government has been welcoming Turkish mediation efforts in the Palestine-Israel conflict by demanding from Turkey to convince the Palestinians to renounce terrorism and stop resorting to violence. However, invitation of Hamas leader to Ankara in 2006 and Turkey’s pro-Palestinian stance in the Israeli’s Gaza attacks on December 2008 were viewed with suspicion by Israeli officials.<sup>205</sup> Due to the fact that Turkey is perceived as a dishonest broker by Israelis, the mediation of Egypt is preferred over Turkish efforts by Israel and the U.S.A. Egypt fulfilled the mediation efforts during Israel-Hamas conflict in 2009 by organizing a summit at the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheik was jointly chaired by French President Nicolas Sarkozy and his Egyptian counterpart Hosni Mubarak. The truce between the parties was achieved after the summit in which Turkey is refrained from taking a major role in the peace process.

Despite the discomfort of Israelis from the mediation efforts of Turkey, Palestinians appreciate the Turkey as a mediator particularly after Prime Minister of Turkey criticize Israeli attacks and bring the issue to the concern of international community. Traditionally, Palestine demand Turkey to persuade Israel to conduct direct negotiations, and stop resorting violence and military operation to Palestinian territory. Turkey’s approach to the Gaza attacks was also welcomed and appreciated by Arab leaders and societies. Public opinion in the Arab world has been broadly appreciative of Turkey’s appearance on the regional stage. According

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<sup>205</sup> Reuters, February 1 2010, “Israel urges Turkey to rethink ties with Hamas,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE51010520090201>, Retrieved on 04 May 2010.

to a recent survey on the perception of Turkey in the Arab world, Turkey should be more interested in the Palestine problem but should also play a bigger role in the Arab world<sup>206</sup>. Current disclosure of Hamas leaders shows that Turkey is successful in mediation by raising the demands of Hamas from the peace process to the international community and media.<sup>207</sup>

**Table 16. Palestine and Israel's Perceptions of Mediation Outcomes**

	<b>Until 2009</b>	<b>After 2009</b>
<b>Israel</b>	Satisfaction	Dissatisfied: Unfair
<b>Palestine</b>	Satisfaction	Satisfaction

<sup>206</sup> Akgün, Mensur., Perçinoğlu, Gökçe., Gündoğar, S. Sabiha., 2009. "Perception of Turkey in the Middle East," Foreign Policy Analysis Series, TESEV Publications, December

<sup>207</sup> Haberturk, 13 April 2010, On Turkey, Middle East and Israeli soldier with Abu Mrzook of Hamas , <http://www.haberturk.com/general/haber/507696-on-turkey-middle-east-and-israeli-soldier-with-abu-marzook-of-hamas>, Retrieved on 04 May 2010. The interview conducted with Mousa Mohammed Abu Marzook who is the deputy chairman of Hamas Political Bureau.

## CHAPTER 7

### ANALYSIS of the FINDINGS

The aim of the chapter is to analyze the findings reflected in the previous chapters. In this regard, the findings on the bias and motives of the mediator as well as outcomes of the mediation process in both conflict cases are clustered individually and analyzed accordingly. Then, both clusters are combined together which enable to posit an integrated model for analysis.

#### **7.1. Israel- Palestine Conflict**

**Table 17. Integrated Findings in Israel- Palestine Conflict**

		<b>Pre- 2009</b>	<b>Post-2009</b>
<i>Relative Bias Turkey holds towards the disputants</i>	<b>Economic Relations</b>	Positive Dependence with Israel	Positive Dependence with Israel
	<b>Alliance Ties</b>	Positive Dependence with Israel	Neutrality
	<b>Ethnic&amp; Religious Ties</b>	Positive Dependence with Palestine	Positive Dependence with Palestine
<i>Motives of Turkey Perceived by the Disputants in Israeli-Palestinian Conflict</i>	<b>Israel</b>	Defensive	Expansionist
	<b>Palestine</b>	Defensive	Defensive
<i>Palestine and Israel's Perceptions of Mediation Outcomes</i>	<b>Israel</b>	Satisfaction	Dissatisfied: Unfair
	<b>Palestine</b>	Satisfaction	Satisfaction

As the table indicates, until the eruption of the conflict in Gaza Strip on December 2008, the disputants perceive the mediation efforts of Turkey as fair, efficient and effective. Although, Turkey is biased in favor of Israel in terms of its economic and alliance ties, Turkey's mediation was welcomed by the Palestinians for the fact that Turkey with its Islamic roots has positive religious and cultural dependence with Palestinians and could play the role of facilitator by gaining trust and confidence of them. Turkey's perceived balance of partiality combined with its defensive motives, have led to expectation for the disputants to involve fair mediation process. Until the violence of the conflict intensified, successful outcomes of the mediation were mainly derived from the Turkey's balanced bias towards the disputants which doesn't challenge the asymmetric power relations between Palestine and Israel. As Turkey benefit from its geographical position with embracing western values in predominantly Muslim population, perfectly fits to the impartial mediator role which aims the sustainability of the indirect negotiations between the disputants belongs to different cultures. While Israel utilize Turkey's ethnic and cultural ties with the Palestinians, in return, Turkey's structural relations with Israelis in the sphere of commerce and military were benefited by the Palestinians to send their messages via a reputable mediator.

Nevertheless, disputants' perception of fair mediator role for Turkey has changed after the conflict passed through destructive stage on December 2008. In this stage, Turkey's positive dependence in alliance ties with Israel has shifted to neutrality which causes Israelis to start to perceive the motives of Turkey as an expansionist. As nature of the conflict in Gaza Strip in 2009 between Israel and Palestine involves asymmetric power relations, Turkey's attempts to empower Hamas by raising concerns and critics of it to the international community, put Turkey's impartiality in jeopardy.

Incorporating the disputant's view on the motives of the mediator shows that mediation outcomes could be perceived divergently and reveals the fact that mediation process is a dynamic process that the mediator ought to take every disputants' view into account. So the results on the outcomes of the mediation have value added dimension that mediation should not be seen as one way static approach but rather, contingent and reciprocal process.

Apart from that, the results give insights on the boundaries of communication-facilitation strategies where the mediator has little control over the process or substance of mediation. As Turkey was expected to play facilitator role by Israel, Turkey's manipulative

strategy in the conflict by empowering Hamas to create more fair negotiation setting between the disputants, led Israel to see the mediator as dishonest. The reason of framing the mediator in that way lie in Israel's perception of Turkish mediation leading to direct or indirect recognition of their adversaries' claims. Arguably, it can be assumed that the stronger bias of the mediator towards the weak disputant would increase mediator's credibility to convince the weak party to compromise. However, Turkey's leverage is not capable enough on Hamas to deny terrorism and to recognize state of Israel. Turkey's lack of leverage was experienced in the Hamas leader's visit to Ankara in 2006 which doesn't change the strict position of Hamas at all. Findings show that, partial mediator pursuing manipulative strategies would not be accepted by the relatively disfavored party, if the mediator has not sufficient resources and leverage on the relatively biased party.

Findings of the research are in alignment with what Princen (1992) states; while impartiality is appropriate for the weak mediator, bias is seen as acceptable, perhaps inevitable, for the powerful mediator<sup>208</sup>. In conjunction with Princen, I argue that the mediator who plays facilitator-communicator role needs to be perceived as impartial and needs to act in a way that is compatible with the interests of both disputants. In other words, if the mediator is expected to act as a facilitator, it should not follow manipulative strategies, otherwise would lead to dissatisfaction of the disputants.

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<sup>208</sup> Thomas Princen, *Intermediaries in International Conflict*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992, 18.

## 7.2. Israel- Syria Conflict

**Table 18. Integrated Findings in Israel- Syria Conflict**

		<b>Pre-2009</b>	<b>Post-2009</b>
<i>Relative Bias Turkey holds towards the disputants</i>	<b>Economic Relations</b>	Positive Dependence with Israel	Neutral
	<b>Alliance Ties</b>	Positive Dependence with Israel	Positive Dependence with Syria
	<b>Ethnic&amp; Religious Ties</b>	Positive Dependence with Syria	Positive Dependence with Syria
<i>Motives of Turkey Perceived by the Disputants in Israeli-Palestinian Conflict</i>	<b>Israel</b>	Defensive	Defensive
	<b>Syria</b>	Defensive	Defensive
<i>Palestine and Israel's Perceptions of Mediation Outcomes</i>	<b>Israel</b>	Satisfaction	Dissatisfied: Unfair
	<b>Syria</b>	Satisfaction	Satisfaction

Until the stage of the conflict pass to the destructive stage on December 2008, the findings of the Israeli- Syria conflict are in parallel with the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Likewise the first case, Turkey's mediation has been perceived as successful by both adversaries due to its defensive motives and balanced bias towards the disputants. Maintaining its impartiality through the mediation process is both welcomed and Turkey's culturally close relations with Syrians and its strategic and economic alliance with Israel had seen as an asset by both parties which enable Turkey to play facilitator role in the indirect negotiations in 2007.

The course of mediation process, however, has changed after the Gaza attacks on December 2008. The conflict between Israel and Hamas had an indirect effect on the ongoing indirect negotiations between Syria and Israel. Even if the negotiations were suspended, there is a prospect in the near future to restart the indirect negotiations again. However, Turkey's mediation initiatives in this process are not welcomed by the Israelis unlike to positive responses of Syria for Turkish mediation. The findings show that dissatisfaction of Israel and along with satisfaction of the Syria from the mediation process mainly originated from Turkey's positive relative bias with the Syrians. On the other hand, as Israeli officials agree with the idea that Turkey has defensive motives, it doesn't have any impact on the partial image of the Turkey for Israelis either in positive or negative way. In other words, based on the findings, the motives have less effect than the relative bias of the mediator for being seen as partial.

If the analysis of the cases is expanded by incorporating of the both tables, it could be argued that the changes in the variables of relative bias the mediator holds towards the disputants cause a shift in the disfavored party's mediation outcome perception from successful to unfair and unsuccessful. Since the changes in the relative bias cause dissatisfaction for the relatively less biased disputant, it can be deduced that the definition of impartiality should be re-conceptualized by making the distinction between impartiality as attitude and impartiality as behavior. The distinction answer an important question that why Turkey is welcomed by Israel while it has already declared that it traditionally supports Palestinians and Syrians in Arab- Israel War, correspondingly why Turkey's mediation is not desired by the Israelis after the war in Gaza on 2009. The answer lies in the fact that even if Turkey was partial in attitude before 2009, its impartial behaviors have enabled Turkey to play a mediator role. However, its partiality evokes and met with suspicion by Israelis when Turkey changes its strategic alliance in favor of Israel's adversaries and act in close economic cooperation with the Syrians. In other words, when Turkey's partiality turns into behavior, it has no longer been accepted as a fair mediator which eventually brings unsuccessful outcomes for the relatively less biased disputant's point of view.

The analysis also shows that partial mediators are less likely to be perceived as successful by disfavored disputant as the degree of violence has intensified during the mediation process. In the research, as stage of the conflict passed to destructive phase in addition to Turkey's pro-Palestinian and pro-Syrian stance in the escalation of the conflict, the relations with Israel and Turkey was deteriorated and entails the decrease in the mutual trust as well as construction of negative stereotypes and enemy perceptions. Based on the findings,

I argue that relatively negative biased disputant by the mediator in the mediation process is more susceptible and more likely to view the mediation process as unfair when the stage of the conflict passed to destructive phase.

## CONCLUSION

This study examines following research question: What is the influence of impartiality of the Turkey's mediation efforts since 2002 in the conflicts of Israel-Syria and Israel-Palestine on the Turkey's mediation outcomes perceived by Israel, Palestine and Syria. The research question focuses on a particular area of disagreement in the mediation literature which pertains to the role of impartiality in facilitator/communicator strategies.

The ongoing debate on the influence of the impartiality has divided into two tiers in the literature of international mediation. First tier scholars imply that impartiality is a necessary condition to be effective mediator (Young 1967, Haig 1984, Fisher 1995, Carnevale and Pruitt 1992). For them effective mediation could be achieved only through impartial mediator who has no preference as to how a dispute resolved. On the other hand, second tier scholars argue that (Carnevale and Arad 1996, Touval 1982) impartiality may diminish the credibility of the mediator since the disputants would not see their interests parallel with the mediator's interests. According to this view, common interests among the disputant and the mediator will be helpful for the mediator to get concessions from a disputing party. If a mediator has close ties with one of the disputants, it is easier for such a mediator to convince the disputant on the fact that mediator's proposal will serve their interest.

The findings of this research indicate that the ongoing discussion about the influence of the impartiality on the effective mediation outcome is not sufficient enough to capture all the aspects of the mediation process. Because in the literature, main shortcomings of the ongoing discussions stem from the fact that both scholars of pro- and against impartiality discuss the relationship between a mediator and disputants as if mediation is a dyadic process. If mediation process is analyzed as a triangular process, bias is an influential dimension to be accepted and welcomed as a mediator while, same bias at the same time may be regarded as a liability when the other disputant's perceptions would be included. Therefore, based on the findings of the research, I argue that impartiality single-handedly is not solely enough to initiate a successful mediation, rather a mediator ought to have balanced bias with each disputant and motives of the mediator needs to be align with the preferences of the disputants. A mediator can utilize its partiality to every each disputant by establishing a balance in terms of relative bias it holds towards disputants. It would enable the mediator not only to have influence on the both disputants but also would be perceived as an impartial. The analysis also shows that partial mediators are less likely to be perceived as successful by disfavored

disputant as the degree of violence has intensified during the mediation process. Based on the findings, I argue that relatively negative biased disputant by the mediator in the mediation process is more susceptible and more likely to view the mediation process as unfair.

Second theoretical implication as this study demonstrated that the distinction between impartiality in behavior and attitude should be differentiated. Accordingly, the mediator who employs facilitator/ communicator strategies needs to be impartial in behavior in order to influence both disputants. Moreover, even if partiality in attitude is an asset for the mediator, when the behaviors of the mediator is determined by its partiality, the mediation would be rejected or framed as unfair by the disfavored disputant. In general, the theoretical implications discussed above emphasize on the importance of incorporating disputants' view into account since mediation outcomes may be perceived and in return defined very differently by the parties involved.

Apart from theoretical implications, the research has also several policy implications relating to Turkey's foreign policy towards Middle East and international mediation efforts as foreign policy tool.

Findings show that Turkey sometimes employs manipulative strategies which are not expected as a mediator by the disputants. As long as those strategies involve changing asymmetric power relations in the Middle East, its mediation is not accepted and appreciated by the Israel and Western powers. The role which is expected from Turkey is to ensure the continuation of conveying messages between the two sides, opening communication channels between the parties and providing safe space for track two exchanges. The manipulative strategies Turkey followed such as empowering Hamas against Israel, is beyond the Turkey's level of leverage on the region which eventually creates an expectations-abilities gap<sup>209</sup>. Based on the research, I argue that Turkey needs to employ a mediator role which is compatible with the power dynamics of the region in order to achieve effective mediation outcomes. Otherwise, it would cause further polarization of regional politics, and a rift between Turkey and influential powers in the region such as Israel and Western powers.

Appropriate role of Turkey as a mediator is also related to Turkey's motivations and expectations from the mediation process. As it is shown in the analysis of the findings, when Turkey had expansionist aims by implying either explicitly or implicitly the rhetoric of Turkey's historical heritage on the Middle East, its mediation is not accepted by Israel and cause suspicion. Turkish policy makers need to publicize the mediation process to its

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<sup>209</sup> Altunışık, B. Meliha, 2008. "The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey's Soft Power in the Middle East," *Insight Turkey*, Vol.10, No 2, 59.

constituents efficiently explaining the possible rewards would be achieved related to reputation, status and security matters during this process. However, high level officials of Turkey sometimes attempt to exploit its mediator role by directly involving to the conflicts as if Turkey is a primary party. Those policy attempts mainly stem from the fact that Turkish public opinion traditionally supports Palestinians and Syrians against Israel and therefore, Turkey's expansionist motives by influencing Islamic parties in the region gains appreciation among AKP Governments' constituents. Based on that, it can be deduced that a mediator who employ facilitator/ communicator strategies need to prevent from expansionist motivations in order to be seen as a fair mediator. Lastly, Turkey needs to be at least impartial in behavior, not necessarily in attitude, during the mediation process; otherwise its partial behaviors will jeopardize Turkey's impartial image.

As this study focused on the facilitator/ communicator type of mediators, crucial avenue for future research is to assess the role of impartiality on the outcomes in the other types of mediators such as in the mediators who intends to employ manipulation or formulation strategies. The comparison of the influence of impartiality in different mediation techniques would enable the policy makers and scholars of the international mediation to have holistic approach on the impact of the impartiality on the outcome of the mediation process. In addition to that, another future research can be about examining the influence of impartiality on the successful outcomes by conducting multivariate data analysis method. Therefore, the relationship could be measured in the historical record of several international mediation efforts. This research will enable use to reach a generic knowledge on the role of impartiality in international mediation.

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