

Erasmus University Rotterdam, Erasmus School of Social and Behavioral Sciences,
Department of Public Administration and Sociology
Master's in Governance of Migration and Diversity – Public Administration

**Unending Puzzle: Social Constructions of Syrian Immigrants in Turkey and Their
Influence over Policy Implementation in the Context of 2019 Local Elections and
'Operation Peace Spring' from the Perspective of the Discursive Practices of
Governmental Elites and Media Narratives**

M.A Thesis

Author: Mert Türkmen

Student Number: 549115

09/08/2020

Word Count: 18910

First Reader: Asya Pisarevskaya

Second Reader: Ilona van Breugel

ABSTRACT

Incessant arguments and discussions regarding the legal status of Syrians and the policies addressed to them are the basic point of the origins of this study. The temporariness and vagueness of the legal status is stressed as the leading puzzle that opens the identities and imagery of Syrians to unceasing negotiations. Being one of the primary areas which circumscribes the policymaking and implementation processes, discursive sphere is considered as a substantial environment where the “symbolic politics” and “social constructions of target populations” are prominently manifested and affected the policy changes. Constant alterations and oscillations between the different framings of Syrian immigrants are simultaneously followed by transformations in policy implementation. A significant inference in this study that the policy implementation is quite flexible and malleable that social constructions of target groups can be heavily influential in legitimizing the policy programs is derived from the empirical observation. This research initiates the empirical study by carefully selecting the relevant newspaper narratives and the statements of governmental elites, which are considered to be the preeminent directors of the social constructions and eventually the changes in the implementation of the policies. ‘Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)’ is used as the primary method in order to understand the power relations between elites and the Syrian population, which is concretized with the policy approaches mostly against the favor of Syrians. This paper discusses the tangible effects of social construction of target groups to two interrelated policy implementations, which are “resettlement” and “voluntary repatriation”, with a qualitative approach based on interpretation of social framing, contextual determinants and the policy outcomes.

Keywords: Social constructions, Policy implementation, Discursive practices, Resettlement, Voluntary repatriation

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1. INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of the first influx of Syrians to Turkey in 2011, the reactions and the initial responses were relatively liberal, and followed an unconditional “open door policy” approach that were portraying Syrian refugees as the “victims” escaping from the conflict in their home country. Primary discourses by the governmental elites accompanied the arrival of Syrians were based on humanitarian scope, and accentuated a religious solidarity with the immigrants (Polat, 2018). Syrians were framed positively, and mostly vulnerable and dependent subjects of the majority with a huge emphasis on the concept of “guests”. Even though the introductory framing of Syrians were quite categorical and absolute, the general references to positive characteristics of the same target groups is not indisputable and always contested especially during the political transition periods such as elections or the military operations to Syria. This initial discourse emphasized the temporary aspect of their displacement, with serious absences about their legal status (Memişoğlu, Ilgit, 2016; Koca, 2016). Nevertheless, concrete policy actions which moderately shifted from the overall chaotic and unsystematic migration regulation approach can be observed in the first years of the crisis.

The Law of Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP, Law no.6458) in 2013, and the Temporary Protection Status (TPR) in 2014 have been inaugurated as ad hoc responses, however relatively systematic and still are being maintained as the central policy framework (Belanger, Saraçoğlu, 2018). However, the existing legislations create numerous problems for refugees such as the unclear status, absence of lasting residence permits and pathways for naturalization. (Baban et.al, 2016; Kutlu-Tonak, 2016; Yıldız, Uzgoren, 2016).

Besides this problematic mechanism, the temporariness and vagueness of the status, and the strong emphasis on “guests” which further intensify the tendency towards oscillations between different constructions of the target population. “Guest” rhetoric is aligned with the religiously affiliated descriptions such as “fellow Muslims” and “victims”, but more importantly an attentive self-restraint from calling Syrians as “refugees” provided a great sphere for continuous negotiations upon their identities, due to the inadequacy of a solid legal basis (Erdogan, 2014; Polat, 2018). The reason for the avoidance of Turkish authorities to call Syrians as “refugees” and treat them under certain rules is the geographic limitation condition of the 1951 Convention. Accordingly, Turkish government only takes the legal responsibility of the Europeans, but do not give the refugee status to non-Europeans (Baban et.al, 2016; Polat, 2018).

In this study, the policy changes will be discussed and scrutinized in the aftermath of 2019 local elections of Turkey which has finalized with a defeat of AKP in the key cities of Turkey. Following the local elections, the ongoing debate in policy changes and implementations will be followed through the military interventions to Syria, which is called ‘Operation Peace Spring’. With regard to that, the alterations of the social constructions of Syrian refugees in Turkey will be questioned with the essential indicators of media discourses and the discursive practices of governmental elites from Schneider and Ingram’s framework of ‘social construction of target populations’ (Schneider, Ingram, 1993; 1997; 2005). The relations between the social constructions, and the transformations in the policy implementation process will be examined closely.

The social constructions of the target groups are separated from the policy designs and program itself, however evaluated as separately evolving components with different media narratives. Therefore, this particular study highlights social constructions as a major impact in justifying the policy implementation procedure. The basic research question with regard to that is: *“How did the social constructions of Syrians change the policy approaches of the governmental elites in the time period between the re-run of Istanbul elections and the ending of the ‘Operation Peace Spring’?”*

Considering that the policy is the collective of discursive practices (Schram, 1993), the overall aim of the prior policy actions and the followings can be interpreted as a reflection of the discourses aggregated on the grounds of moral superiority of Turkish government over the “victimized” Syrians, and the historical responsibility given to the government due to the Ottoman heritage of generosity to protect and guard the refugees (Polat, 2018). However, tense political context sometimes caused slight oscillations between multiple constructions that would be both functional in depicting Syrians. Such actions of the governmental elites can manipulate the overall public discourse, or the contradicting public discourse may induce governmental elites to reformulate their discursive practices without exceeding the concrete boundaries of existing social constructions.

Seeing the flexible dynamics of the discursive practices regarding Syrian immigrants, one of the most compatible areas of research would be the aftermath of 2019 local elections, which the results indicated a significant defeat for the ruling AKP (Justice and Development Party) in Istanbul and Ankara (McKernan, 2019). Especially, the loss of Istanbul was highly shocking and unexpected for the AKP cadres. Political, economic and symbolic importance of the loss of Istanbul has also been significantly reverberated into the decisions of the governing elites by defending the re-run of elections by articulating alleged election corruption even

though it was a risky strategy (BBC, 2019). Insisting for a re-run in Istanbul also pushed Syrians more into the political stage between elections and the military operations. Both in these periods, the presence of Syrian immigrants and their social and economic rights have been opened up to negotiation more.

Accordingly, despite the comparatively permanent positive social constructions of Syrians, and the clear emphasis on the “guests” rhetoric, reformulation of alternative discourses targeting Syrians such as referring the security issues were originated after 2019 local elections, and during the discussions about a possible military operation. Even though the overall policy rhetoric has not been deviated dramatically, the discursive practices of the governmental elites changed into a relatively hostile edge with more contestations and disputes over the categorization of the “other”. Accompanying this background information, which highlights the embeddedness of social constructions in the policies (Schneider et.al, 1993), official actions of the Turkish government also adjusted to dispersal program that demanded Syrians stringently to reside in their registered cities. This was not turned into an official policy document except the press releases of the Governorship of Istanbul (Governorship, 2019), and the statements of Minister of Interior Suleyman Soyly, which was supported by the policies of deportation of illegal migrants. Besides the domestic struggle against irregularities, which solidified with a dispersal program, discourses regarding the ‘voluntary and secure return’ of Syrians was objectified and as well.

Following that, the major purpose of this study is to comprehend the changing patterns of the social constructions of Syrian immigrants after the 2019 election period, and accordingly to assess the societal effects of the changing social constructions in terms of policy change and implementation. In order to understand the alterations in the social constructions of Syrians, critical discourse analysis is selected as the leading methodology.

1.1 Societal and Theoretical Relevance of the Research

The unprecedented flow of Syrian refugees stimulated diverse academic researches and precipitated the concerns over the initiatives of harmonization, integration or alternative policy formulations targeting both the immigrant groups.

Considering Syrians’ ambiguous relationship with the host society and with the elites, discourses and social constructions of Syrians gain importance since the discursive sphere as being the encircling and main area for social constructions to be produced. As one of the most pressing and acute problems, discursive sphere mostly guides the directions of the applied policies, and since the dominant narratives are being circulated by the government-controlled media and directly by the statements of the governmental elites the societal consequences of

this relationship is huge. Therefore, the social dynamics that genuinely and integrally influence the daily lives of Syrian immigrants are being emanated from the discursive sphere as they reflect on the policies.

Besides, with an official 3.6 million registered Syrians in Turkey, their social constructions are highly substantial because their effects would not be exclusively demonstrated in the policy implementations, however would be critically important in shaping the public perception and public discourse. Exclusionary, discriminatory and xenophobic behaviors of the native populations are being affected severely from the practices within the discursive sphere, and conducting a research with a detailed focus on how social constructions affect the daily lives of Syrians from a perspective of policy implementation process would shed light to the ongoing societal dynamics.

Alongside that, the major body of the theoretical approach, social constructions of target groups have been a key factor in public administration literature. Social constructions of Syrians can be used to explain the policy initiatives and the policymaking and implementation processes. Looking at the case in Turkey, since the migration governance and the public policy initiatives are heavily relied on the discursive sphere, social constructions would be an eminently relevant tool to comprehend the oscillations and negotiations over different social framing. The paper discusses and applies the leading approaches and notions of this theoretical framework to the policy changes in Turkey during and after the re-election of 2019 local elections in Turkey. This theoretical background is highly authentic for this study, and presents the accurate paths for grasping the policy changes and the relation between them and the social portrayal of the refugees.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory's fundamental rationale is grounded on the social constructions of specific target groups in terms of positive or negative connotations, and their reflections in the policy designs. (Pierce et.al, 2014). Social constructions are intricately associated with the public discourse, and they are open to be exploited and manipulated through symbolic discourses, and rhetoric used by the governmental elites. The symbolic language can be institutionalized and legitimized by the policies, and this process ensures a permanency to the social construction to some extent (Schneider, Ingram, 1993; Pierce et.al, 2014). These discourses as the cardinal elements in institutionalizing and reframing the social reality have a performative role, and may affect the social outcomes encountered by the immigrant groups (van Ostaijen, 2016). Social constructions indicate an underlying comprehension of the social world, which

situates meaning making at the center, and relies on the interpretations of humans about a given social reality (Schneider, Sydney, 2009).

As it has been underscored above, social constructions of specific groups can be maneuvered and adjusted according to the contextual determinants for achieving diverse political interests of the governmental elites or governmental elites, which stresses the malleable nature of constructing social portrayals for specific target groups (Schneider, Ingram, deLeon, 2019). These constructions reflect the relatively permanent cultural, moral or traditional hallmarks of the society, and drawing upon these characteristics, certain popular images are created. These popular images can depict these groups in positive or in negative terms, aligning to symbolic discourses, rhetoric of political ideology, or strong metaphors (Schneider et.al, 1993; deLeon, 2005). Accordingly, social constructions possess the capabilities of influencing policy designs. However, governmental elites also possess the necessary and compatible instruments for manipulating the social constructions which can be observed in the overall policy rhetoric.

2.1 Schneider and Ingram's Social Construction of Target Populations

Schneider and Ingram's conceptualization (1993; 1997; 2005) explains four different sets of social constructions, which are consequently structured through the reciprocal interaction construction and political power. Positive or negative packages that are being used in framing the target populations are in line with political power influence (Husmann, 2015). The first one, among the positively constructed groups is the "advantaged" category, which are inclined to receive material benefits, possess more discretion, and gets greater assets from the implementation of policies. Aside from "advantaged" groups, "dependents" are the second category, that are constructed on emotional grounds, with the feelings of sympathy and pity. Even though they are not represented as the proactive subjects of the society and essentially, they are portrayed as good, and deserving (Schneider et.al, 2009). On the contrary, "contenders" category is the first among the negatively constructed groups, which are illustrated as untrustworthy, selfish and morally ill subjects despite their relative proximity to the political power. Lastly, "deviants" are constructed as a group that is totally discarded from the policy initiatives, and they are mostly exposed to punishment policy or burdens (Schneider et.al, 2009; 2019).

Specifically, in the case of Syrian immigrants, the dominant image constructs being a Syrian immigrant is extremely associated with the passive and obedient position, which turns them into solely demanding and destitute subjects. This needy position has been mostly reinforced and stiffened by the discourses underscoring the religious and cultural similarities.

Even though Syrians have been widely portrayed positively, discrepancies between negatively and positively constructed target groups are not concretely fixed, therefore transitions between detached groups with hazy distinctions can be observable. For the Syrians in Turkey, it is accurate to argue that, an oscillation between “dependents” and “deviants” is commonplace. Transitions between social constructions between these two categories occur due to the ambiguity target group constructions. In that sense, the theory which has been offered by Schneider and Ingram (1993; 1997; 2005) is incredibly useful in analyzing these shifts since it ensures significant insights, for instance framings of different target populations impact the choice of differing policy tools for the policy implementation (Schneider et.al, 1993; 2005). Therefore, it is significant to pinpoint that the preferences of social construction deeply impact which issues would be undertaken by the policy implementors by resetting the agenda (Pierce et.al, 2014).

As a complementary approach to the prior theoretical framework of Schneider and Ingram (1993; 1997; 2005), this ambiguity in constructing different portrayals provides an expanded ground for the governmental elites and policy makers to oscillate and maneuver across different social constructions (Kreitzer, Smith, 2018).

2.2 The Concept of “Other”

In her study of Kenya and the identity formation of conflicting ethnic groups, Jenkins (2012) mentions how the geospatial imaginaries have helped to construct oppositional identities through ethnic others by the governmental elites. Similarly, the same approach can be accommodated to the Turkey’s political context, while analyzing the oscillating discursive practices of the governmental elites towards Syrian immigrants. As Jenkins (2012) underscores, the concept of “other” is widely open and highly exposed to negotiation. This notion of “other” can be filled with positive or negative connotations towards the immigrant populations both by the governmental elites and the public, so the public opinion in the social construction of the “other” population can be considered as an interwoven phenomena with the elites framing of the same “other” (Portes, Rumbaut, 2001; Topçuoğlu, 2018).

Accordingly, in the context of Turkey, these imaginaries are embedded in the historical and geopolitical connections with Syria and the very abstract notions referring to the elevated and highly exalted humanitarian values of Turkish nation such as generosity, and hospitality which have been used extensively (Polat, 2018). Specifically, in the context of Turkey, “guest” discourses have been heavily used in order to attest the consent of the native population regarding the presence of Syrians in Turkey, and to alleviate their discontent. Offering a “guest” discourse, which distances itself from certain stigmatization has saliently

utilized the narratives of generosity, hospitality and Islamic references addressing the benevolent heritage of Muslim Turkish community that would undoubtedly embrace their Muslim siblings from Syria (Donelli, 2018; Polat; 2018). At this point it is important to note that, “discourse” as the constructive cement of the social reality can never allow the meaning to be fixed with regard to a social phenomenon but rather, constant struggles on identifications, interpretations and explanations of a group identity or social construction would continue with possible problematic consequences (Jorgensen, Phillips, 2002). Having a concrete connection with the arguments about the struggles of different interpretations of a group identity, this study aims to look forward to new interpretations and social constructions of Syrian immigrants after 2019 elections.

In the context of Turkey, the concept of “other” is highly contested, and is situated at the intersection point of the disputes between the discourses emanated from the public opinion, and the discourses of the governmental elites. Wittingly exercised discursive practices of the government authorities should not be disdained due to their prevailing and substantial effects in manipulating the cognitions and emotions of the general public (van Dijk, 1995; Jenkins, 2012). Hence, elite involvement would be one of the most imperative elements to be discussed and involved into the analysis, because of the effectiveness in organizing, enacting and maintaining policy (Jenkins, 2012). The crystallization of this influence is mostly observed with cultural and historical attributions and framing.

2.3 Symbolic Politics and Distortion of the Reality

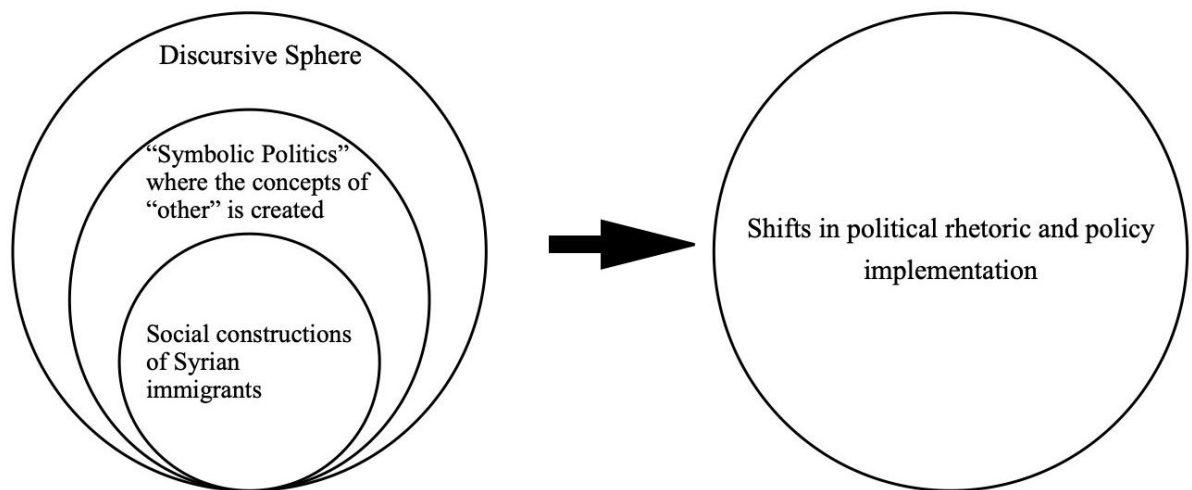
Dramatic levels of cultural framing and politicization is quite influential on the decisions taken by the executives within the policy terrain, which lead up to social constructions that permeate into the public discourse (Statham, 2003). Extensive framing and pervasive usage of cultural elements in the discourses of governmental elites infuse to the public opinion regarding immigration and immigrants, which can be called as “symbolic politics”. This strategy decouples and dwindles the considerable and substantive meaning of the issue, and it may deviate the reality and construct new realities for political purposes by functioning in the symbolic level (Faist, 1994; Statham, 2003).

Governmental elites have a noticeable autonomy in their decisions and practices about the immigration related matters, and these motivations in realizing these actions shape the level of anti-immigrant or pro-immigrant stances discernibly (Statham, Geddes, 2006). Considering this leverage both in formulating discourses and taking actions, the attitudes of policy makers and the elites in highly intense political transition points are well-deserved to be analyzed, which in this study would be the 2019 local elections of Turkey.

Political transition periods, such as elections are significant contextual determinants when the concept of “other” can be enlarged and broadened by the governmental elites in order to develop and expand the political capital that was already held by them (Jenkins, 2012). Political contexts, when the “symbolic politics” become predominant with an inter-subjective nature and distancing itself from the reality and objective circumstances, shape social constructions, which would be eventually embedded and built into policy designs, shifts in the policy rhetoric or affect policy implementation (Lieberman et.al, 1995).

Figure 1

Impact of Social Constructions



Social constructions, whether positive or negative, are also influential in institutionalizing and legitimizing the policy implementation procedures. Regarding the figure above, the discursive sphere is treated as an all-encompassing dimension of policymaking in Turkey. This is highly dynamic and allows elites to manipulate the social constructions of immigrants, pulling them into positive and pushing them into marginalized sides. Within this area, the identity of the “other” is reproduced steadily, and it is both fluctuant and incalculable because it is greatly critical in shaping the policy implementation. This is also influenced very much from the external factors. Considering that, 2019 local elections in Turkey was one of the epitomes of the mentioned political transitions, and it is significant to amplify the research by analyzing the discourses that have circumscribed the Syrian immigrants during these periods. It is important to restate that, governmental elites are the key actors in negotiation and dispersion of the discursive reality (DiAlto, 2005; Jenkins, 2012), and considering the figure above this sets into logical ground. Altered discursive reality affects the social constructions of target groups, and shifts may occur in between different established frames or

a relatively new one can be constructed. As a result, these shifts may have consequences for minority population due to the changes in the policy approaches.

Socially constructing a target group or framing them from a definite perspective such as negative or positive designates an aspect of an anticipated reality (Ihlen, Thorbjørnsrud, 2014), and that is also connected what Faist (1994) stresses regarding symbolic politics due to the fact that a specific form of framing would lead to a deconstruction in the reality and the would also shape the policies. Hence, this study attempts to understand the position of social constructions in attributing new nuances and content to the reality regarding Syrians, and their impact over the policy changes. Social constructions are considered separately from the policies and as the key elements that provide justifications in implementing the practices. Considering that aspect of the study, including symbolic politics and the effect of the social constructions in policy implementation can be theoretically enriching and can be quite influential for the potential accompanying research studies.

Lastly, to quickly go over, the prior research regarding analyzed and indicated some findings regarding the social construction of the Syrian immigrants, mostly by studying their media representations from the public discourse perspective. (Doğanay, Keleş, 2016; Koca, 2016; Topçuoğlu, 2018). However, the major expectation of that study expecting to deepen the previous academic studies from a distinct theoretical perspective from the public administration literature, and will attempt to include the effect of governmental elites to the social constructions of Syrian immigrants. By this way the gaps in the previous literature can be compensated through a more dominant lens facing to the side of the government authorities and their effectiveness solely. One of the distinct contributions of this study would be clarifying the logic and the grift functioning mechanism of policy implementation and the significant position of symbolic politics and social constructions within the discursive realm.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1 Method

The selected method for the study is ‘Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)’. A detailed research with CDA requires an understanding between the text, talk and society as a whole (Mogashoa, 2014), and according to Locke (2004), a systematic usage of CDA would explore the relationships between the discursive practices, social events and wider social processes (Mogashoa, 2014). Particularly this method would be efficient in figuring out the relationship between the discursive practices of governmental elites and the social constructions of Syrians.

Following that, the relational explanations with social constructions, contextual and structural determinants and the chances in the policy approach can be plainly pursued. During the eight-month period, in which the policy implementation has been studied, most of the changing policies have occurred within the discursive sphere without systematic material and legitimate legal basis, which will be further discussed in the following chapters (Amnesty Association, 2019). Mostly the statements of the governmental elites or the narratives in the media guided the policy decisions, or they complemented the already executed political practices. This is one reason why CDA has been selected due to its power of disclosing the unequal relational dynamics between the government authorities and Syrians from a discursive perspective.

CDA questions the power relations behind the text, and the language, it attempts to reveal the concealed and unrealized aspects of the discourses (van Dijk, 1995; Wodak, 2011; Polat, 2018). With CDA, the discursive practices, which constitute a ground for the construction of a social fact, can be decoded, and the power relations behind the notions that create “deserving” and “undeserving” categories can be comprehended (Polat, 2018). Therefore, this particular method is crucial in comprehending the dominant discourses and how they constitute a power relation between the authorities and immigrants.

3.2 Research Question

In this study the focus is on the information and images produced by the newspaper articles and the statements of the governmental elites. Presumably, the selected newspapers have been conveying the information regarding Syrians by integrating the statements and argumentations of different actors of government. So, the statements of the authorities are carved out of the analyzed newspapers, because most notably the selected newspapers also include the major and critically important statements of the governmental elites being the leading guider of the discursive politics.

Having said that, the policies projected in the selected time frame of the study have not been actualized formally or undertaken systematically. These deficiencies regarding formality, legal inaction and reproducing Syrians once again from an analogously pejorative stand point, incarcerated the policy approaches to the discursive sphere mostly. That is also another reason why the social constructions are not totally embedded into the policies, but mostly the negotiated components in the discursive sphere. Considering the changes and the debated characteristics of the social constructions, which are also an intrinsic part of the distorted reality, and symbolic politics their effects to the policy discourses are more reliable

and secure to be analyzed. Regarding these justifications, the research question and the sub-questions of the study can be found as:

“How did the social constructions of Syrians change the policy approaches of the governmental elites in the time period between the re-run of Istanbul elections and the ending of the ‘Operation Peace Spring’?”

3.3 Sub-Questions

- 1- What were the initial social constructions of Syrian immigrants, after the mass influxes began?
- 2- What are the discernible discourses and the narratives of selected newspapers between 31st of March and 25th of November 2019?
- 3- How did the discursive practices of governmental elites and the selected newspapers change within this eight-month period, between 31st of March and 25th of November?
- 4- How did the policy initiatives targeting Syrians change accordingly?

As it can be comprehended from the theoretical overview, a relational network exists between the social constructions of Syrian immigrants and the discursive practices of the governmental elites. The reflections of the discursive practices are mostly observable within the domain of mass media due to its range of capabilities in following and creating the political agenda, and including the daily statements of governmental elites. Hence, disseminating particular information can be facilitated through media channels.

Considering the importance of the media in forming the public opinion for the justification of certain political actions or agenda setting (McCombs, Shaw, 1972; Watson, 2011), discursive practices of the governmental elites will be detected and analyzed by searching through newspaper databases. By doing that, the tailored language conveyed to the public with regard to the social constructions of Syrians can be comprehended. Particular language used by the governmental elites can be traceable in the content of center-right or far-right religious papers, which also have organic political, ideological and economic relations with the governmental elites (Topçuoğlu, 2018). The reason for choosing these newspapers is due to the extreme consolidation of political power over the media outlets. It is appropriate to claim that, elites’ presence and prominence in media coverage is quite observable, and due to the fact that governmental elites are the imminent and proximate sources of information that is shared with the public, they are highly competent and effective to influence public opinion regarding immigration issues (Zaller, 1987; Watson, 2011).

In the context of Turkey, especially the dominant and the historically respected media groups had been sold to different companies which are known with their political and

economic proximity to the government (Corke et.al, 2013) Changes in the media ownership, and acute marketization of the media domain in Turkey severely affected the reliability of the news presented, and restricted the essential democratic right of accessing to true knowledge. Therefore, the organic associative linkages push these media outlets to reinforce or solidify the discursive practices of the governmental elites via highlighting their ideological stance, or support the policy initiatives without bringing too much questioning. As the big conglomerates dominated the media outlets, control of these institutions by the governmental elites became smoother and easier.

Having this particular disciplining power and leverage, Turkish media has been instrumentalized increasingly by the interests of marketization, and the interest of governmental elites in reinforcing their political perspective (Kaya, Çakmur, 2010). This sharp turn in privatization in the media sector helped the government to maintain its influence over different newspapers, and this mutual relationship bolstered the presence of the discursive practices of governmental elites in pro-government newspapers (Corke et.al, 2013). Accordingly, the written media channels selected for reviewing are center right *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*. These two newspapers are owned by Demirören Media Organization, which is known for its political and economic relations to government, and the religiously affiliated right-wing newspapers, *Sabah*, *Yeni Şafak*, and *Yeni Akit*.

The media coverage of these newspapers, with specific selections of the arguments, concepts and the general narrative regarding a certain aspect of the reality can be considered as significantly close to the overall positions of the governmental elites, and always changeable in different contexts with different instruments for legitimization. As the mediums of powerful communication and persuasion, these media narratives can also be massively influential in guiding public behavior or legitimizing the implementation of the current policy programs. Through following these media channels, readers receive conscientiously prepared news content with important attachments to it associated with the portrayals of Syrian immigrants. Therefore, both the discursive practices of the elites' and the media language of the selected newspapers are very conspicuous in using this political power and justifying the actions of the political actors with regard to the social constructions of immigrant groups.

Relying on that discursive practices generating the social constructions, governmental elites may shift in between different definitions and indicative categories of a target population, hence the discursive power is mostly dominant in changing the constructions or oscillating between different constructions of the identical target group. As a result of that

relationality, policy itself can be considered as an ensemble of discursive practices, which is the output of the discursive products (Schram, 1993).

3.4 Research Design and Data Description

In order to conduct a research on that angle, CDA will be used that covers the government-led newspaper articles and the statements of key public officials. The main goal of CDA is to analyze the literary devices and the overall narrative strategically and deeply. Considering that the social constructions do not float, but mostly connected to specific institutions or actors, and how they conceptualize the world (Hajer, 1993), CDA would be also useful to illuminate the relationship between discursive practices of governmental elites and the social constructions of Syrian immigrants. Alongside that, it would also present relevant and convincing information about the relationship between the selected discourses, their influences on policy approaches and the contextual determinants by highlighting the unequal power relations between the governmental elites and Syrian refugees. As it has been mentioned, one of the essential features of CDA is to emphasize the relationship between the text and the context, so political context and the politicization of the issue during the selected time period would be convenient to place the discourses within a broader and extensive web of relations.

The essential perspective while analyzing these contents through CDA is, how the social constructions have been formed and reformed during the inauguration of new policies intending to coordinate and oversee the daily lives of Syrians. As Jenkins (2012) stresses, the attitudes of the governmental elites and transformations in the policy rhetoric are both substantially affected by the contextual determinants. The context is also significant in shaping the discourses, because both the statements and the narratives can be maneuvered, and manifested in a distinctive way.

In order to trace and understand the shifts in the discursive practices of both the governmental elites and to detect and ascertain their usage of relevant discourses in the newspapers, relevant items were selected from the direct statements of the politicians and from the editorial contents or columns of the indicated newspapers. The news coverage principally contains the news related to Syrians between the indicated time periods. In total, an eight-month period was involved into the research and examined thoroughly by applying critical discourse analysis (CDA) in order to interpret the relationship between the political context and the structural determinants, and both the discourses and the appropriate social construction of Syrian refugees. The eight months begin with 31st of March, when the local elections for all cities except for Istanbul finalized, and ended with 25th of November, when

'Operation Peace Spring' concluded. Within this politically strained time period, a re-run for the Istanbul elections were held on 23rd of June and AKP's defeat in Istanbul became definite.

As it has already been explained, the loss in the elections would not stand as an independent domestic political issue, however considering it with the bigger context, this defeat has also been linked to the deprivation of the political ground of AKP regarding Syrian refugees. Therefore, this political failure accelerated the governmental elites to discuss more on Syrian refugees and their fate in Turkey.

The relevant newspaper articles between the previously indicated eight-month time periods were found through extensive usage of "Twitter Advanced Search" that provides a sufficient and reliable searching method. All of the selected newspapers post the headlines of their content with a link for the people who are interested to get the whole information. After the time period was decided firmly, through using "Twitter Advanced Search" engine, keywords were typed regarding Syrians, which are "Suriyeli" (Syrian), "Suriye" (Syria), "Göçmen" (Immigrant), "Mülteci" / "Sığınmacı" (Refugee), "Misafir" (Guest), and "Geçici Koruma" (Temporary Protection). "Twitter Advanced Search" provides the researcher the opportunity to access all the articles within a selected time frame with keywords. Since all the newspapers use Twitter actively and daily to publish all the content, it has been preferred as the research engine for bringing out the relevant content. This process was implemented one by one for each newspaper for a total 8 months term, and the relevant articles were chosen after an introductory superficial reading just to make sure that they are associated with the context and the questions. The statements of the elites are also found in these selected newspapers, because they are both conveyed in direct quotations or as interpretations. Since debates and the articulations over immigrants by the elites were reverberated totally in the newspaper content, this study benefited from them empirically for obtaining the key statements regarding the scrutinized issues.

After this process was done, a detailed CDA was started by deeply going through all paragraphs and sentences, and underlining the key words and distinguishing the essential discourses utilized both in the media content and in the governmental elites that have been included into the content. Instead of pursuing a highly systematic method, basically the texts were interpreted based on the material itself and its factual and substantive link with the political context and the cases.

Besides decomposing the material into small units by focusing on words and sentences, also the overall structure of the text and the portrayal of Syrians in general were concentrated extensively. Since CDA was selected as the method, the major attempt was to

find out concrete evidences of unequal power relations between governmental elites and Syrians throughout the research, and to explore the dynamics of social construction of Syrians with their possible effects to policy change. In total 281 newspaper articles, including the statements of the government officials were analyzed from five different newspapers which are *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah*, *Yeni Şafak* and *Yeni Akit*. Respectively, 42 articles, 66 articles, 47 articles, 60 articles and 66 articles were found in the papers.

3.5 Operationalizations

Social constructions are specifically associated with the discursive practices of the governmental elites which are indeed quite fundamental in giving a concrete meaning to a non-salient, complicated or perplexing phenomenon. According to Hajer (1993), discourses frame noticeable political problems, which is immensely substantial for the political process. Discourses are the aggregate of concepts and packages of ideas that gives meaning to a phenomenon. According to this definition, discourses frame particular problems, and they differentiate and prioritize specific expressions of a situation rather than others (Hajer, Versteeg, 2005).

Discourses, or other linguistic practices used by governmental elites and the newspapers can be highlighted as an aspect of a social practice, in which the power relations between the government, native populations and Syrians are being constantly reproduced and debated (Cabannis, Cameron, 2017). Hence, the discourse chosen is highly important in creating a meaning and affecting the social construction of a target group. Therefore, discourses will be treated as the mediums that are being used in functioning the symbolic politics of the governmental elites due to their power in shifting the meaning of the content, and stimulate various understandings extracted from a particular event (van Dijk, 1993; Cabannis et.al, 2017). Hence, while studying the social constructions, discursive practices will be the directive elements.

Since discourses are operating within the sphere of symbolic politics, and sometimes used to distort the reality, they have an immanent connection with social constructions. This relationship is being recreated and consolidated by portraying Syrians positively or negatively, and the discourses used in migration politics of Turkey are essentially linked to the social understanding of immigrant groups. So, discourses are quite crucial in facilitation of attributing different implications or nuances to different social categories (van Dijk, 1993; Cabannis et.al, 2017). Having said that, the discourses will be the key units to analyze and categorize the social constructions.

That is a major reason for preferring the textual units as the narratives of newspapers and the statements of governmental elites, because elite actors are occasionally accepted as the elementary forms of portrayal and social image (Nordberg, 2004). Considering the economic and political relationship between AKP and the selected newspapers, the media coverage of the events about Syrians are usually consistent with the external imagery formulated by the elites. Regarding refugees, the government authority over the selected newspaper articles and the implicit control over the content shapes and guides the ultimate meaning given to Syrians. Especially the textual choices and the overall narrative in the papers are convenient to perpetuate the shared meaning over Syrians to a certain extent. Hence, in this study discourses will be held as the indispensable component of social constructions of immigrant groups, and they will be analyzed and linked to social categorizations of immigrant groups.

Regarding that usage of them as distinguishing categorizations of a phenomenon, the aftermath of 2019 local elections would be an appropriate case in order to grasp the changes in the operationalization of discourses to comprehend how they were effective in changing the portrayal of Syrians, and in differentiating the prior situation from the former one with new selections of categorizations. According to Hajer and Versteeg (2005), discourse analysis is endowed with strengths especially with its function of revealing the embeddedness and role of language in politics. This particular approach to discourse analysis would be efficient in answering the changes in language and their direct reflections on the immigration politics, particularly social constructions Syrian immigrants, and would be a competent and decisive tool in analyzing the alterations in the policy approaches to find out whether there have been dramatic changes in 2019.

In the context of Turkey, social constructions of Syrians are subjected to unceasing contestations about their meaning and functionality. Consequently, it would result different social constructions which are operated as legitimizing instruments for the public policies and may result in intended deviations from the initial policy implementation program. With regard to that, Lahav (2004) indicates that the major factor influences public discourse about the immigrants is how the public is informed about the newcomers. So, she clearly gives a particular responsibility to the governmental elites in shaping the public opinion, and inclines to explain the escalating hostility towards the newcomers from the discursive perspective, simply focusing on how the meaning is created by the elites (Watson, 2011). Discursive practices would be indicators to understand how the meaning is created and how is that related to the social constructions of Syrians.

Most of the discursive acts of governmental elites can be observable in text and talk, and typically various discursive practices that are being inconsistently put or positioned are helpful in manipulation of the social constructions that have been established previously (van Dijk, 2006). Besides the role in manipulating the minds of the citizens cognitively, discourses as a form of talk, a written piece or an interaction, imply unequal power relations which can be vivid within the relationship of the governmental elites and Syrians. Therefore, both the newspaper narratives and the elite statements would be the sharp indicators of social constructions.

Having been used from the beginning of the mass influx, in the analysis of the media outlets, particular indicators as the visible literary elements would be the signifiers of the “guest” rhetoric, religious affiliations, and the affirmative portrayals of Syrians by using connotations such as ‘siblings’, ‘brothers’ or fellow Muslims’ Alongside that, due to the increasing public hostility towards Syrians, some changes is expected in using or neglecting these positive prior literary elements. Therefore, relatively adverse discursive practices will be traced and categorized such as using securitization narrative, associating Syrians with crime, and picturing them as the subjects deserved to be punished. Specifically, these categorizations are indispensable with positive or negative portrayals. For instance, when religious motifs are used exceedingly, then the categorization would be positive, however if the securitization or crime related concepts or patterns are vastly present, then the categorization would be negative. These preferences are expected to be able to deliver convincing results for the interpretation of the shifts in the policy implementation, since this process can be discretionary and sometimes inconsistent, and highly open to manipulation of social constructions.

3.6 Expectations

Providing concrete evidences with regard to the changing discursive practices of the media narratives and elites and their reflections in social constructions of Syrians would be the major expectation of this particular study. Following that, the analytical link between the policy implementation process and the shifts in social portrayals are expected to be brought into the surface. Due to the TPR and the “guests” rhetoric which sort of incarcerated the policy initiatives to the discursive sphere, and the absence of a systemic and highly protective legal grounds, the major expectation would be an objectively and empirically seen impact of the social constructions over policy implementations.

It is well known that, even though some even during 2013 and 2014, the migration governance in Turkey has been constituted and designed around the temporariness (Erdogan,

2014; Baban et.al, 2016). Considering that the temporariness is still invading an extensive space in both narratives and statements, the symbolic politics (Faist 1994; Statham, 2003), and within that, the constant negotiation of “other” (Jenkins, 2012) are expected to facilitate alterations in the policy field. With the loss of elections and the beginning of the discussions on military operations, the anticipated result is the further aggression in the attitudes of the governmental elites and the media narratives towards Syrians. Benefiting from the temporariness and its enlarged space for unceasing negotiations of the social constructions, a negative tone is foreseen with “undeserving” and “unentitled” imagery (DiAlto, 2005).

Besides, the discursive sphere is quite encompassing and within that the reality regarding Syrians can be misconstrued and disfigured. So, after the loss of elections, a slight shift towards positive imagery is expected due to the possible reasons of legitimizing the military interventions.

Due to this dynamism in shifting between social constructions, in the eight-month period a predictable consequence would be the changes between negative and positive. However, in order to observe this dynamic mobilization, an analogy is necessary between the prior social portrayal and the following ones in 2019. Also, with regard to the first-sub question, the general pattern of religiously affiliated discourses attached to Syrians is expected to persist. This is because the grand narrative of the governmental elites in constituting the justification of the presence of Syrians were initially established on the religious proximity and moral superiority.

Nevertheless, the strained political environment in Turkey, the general expectations would be to increase in the negative connotations attaching to Syrians especially in the aftermath of the local elections. The fundamental reasons for that expectation are the endeavors of the public officials in constructing a new reality for the resentful native population. It is obvious and quite understandable that the ruling party and its cadres comprehended the loss in the mayoral elections as outcome of the policies targeting Syrians, and the foreign policy approach which both have been disapproved and criticized (Gorvett, 2019). So, the impact of the external determinants is anticipated to be extensive in explaining the shifts in the social constructions. However, depending on the categorizations of Syrians, some precise alterations of policy implementations is foreseen. The major reason for that is the already existing discrepancies in establishing solid, comprehensive and adequate policies. As it has been underscored already, discourses and discursive sphere is highly elemental and cardinal in shaping policies, which ensure them to be highly alternating and baseless sometimes.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Syrian immigrants in Turkey have been exposed to disciplinary measures and the ad hoc leniency of the governmental elites that is far from bringing unconditional, and structurally adapted policy reflexes for solving the social and economic problems. Hence it means that the unequal relationship has been deepening and institutionalizing more and more with the unequivocal dependency of Syrians to the government elite. Keeping that in mind, understanding the dynamics of this context would be valuable and substantial. From the perspective of Syrians, their limbo position and the absence of a strong political agency due to the nonappearance of a right-based approach have been making this unequal power relationship more pernicious. Seeing that problem could create some bias during the research about the real objectives of the policy actions since the researcher also positions himself near Syrians and looking to the reality from their point of view.

3.8 Case Selection

The time period between 2019 local elections and the “Operation Peace Spring” will be taken as the object of inquiry to assess the dynamic oscillations between “deserved/dependents” and “undeserved/deviant” categories of Syrian immigrants. These categories are not static, and structured with fixed and stagnant concepts, but mostly susceptible to interventions and reconstructions. Having conducted under a very tense political atmosphere, this election period and the aftermath can be evaluated as critical turning points, that the government officials have mostly attempted to negotiate the formulations and categories regarding Syrians and to instrumentalize them for the desired political outcomes, neglecting the needs and insecure and ambiguous position of them.

The election period taken as political context in this research represents a radical change in Turkish political life that epitomizes the loss of political power and deinstitutionalization process of AKP (Justice and Development Party) with a transition of executive power of the two biggest cities in Turkey. The importance of this turn can also be stressed as a process of degrading the hegemonic rule of the government party and the governmental elites. Therefore, AKP experienced a historical loss of the two major cities which are highly critical and vital as cultural and economic metropolises for the government to the main opposition CHP (Republican People’s Party) (Kiniklioglu, 2020). Concurrently, one of the preconditions which should have been realized for the AKP cadres, was not to lose the dominant control in the local governments. The local networks in managing clientelist distribution had to be protected in order to maintain the imperative popularity of the party

which can be defined in terms of conveying economic stability more or less to all salary groups (Esen, Gumuscu, 2019).

This loss has degraded the economic abilities of the party, which has also been facilitated with the overall economic recession, and shaken the hegemonic power over the constituents. This economic downfall that have been hitting Turkey severely since 2018 also was linked to the presence of Syrians among constituents and increased the hostility of public towards Syrians which gave some permanent damages to the political hegemony. Hence, the failure of hegemonic restitution has been concretized in 2019, and the loss of these two cities triggered a tighter and resilient stance towards Syrian immigrants (Kiniklioglu, 2020). This change can also be explained by underlining the influence of public debate on government's decisions, due to the massive potential of it in sending signals to the government regarding immigrants either inclining to inclusive behavior towards them or excluding (Topçuoğlu, 2018). Especially the effects of economic regression the false perception that Syrians have been taking advantage of what native Turkish population have been deprived of can be observable in the dynamic shifts in elite discourse in the aftermath of 2019 local elections.

Alongside the local elections, the military intervention called as "Operation Peace Spring" to Northern Syrian territory Rojava was launched by Turkey. This operation aimed at People's Protection Units (YPG), and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), both which are being constantly labelled as terrorist groups threatening Turkey (Todeschini, 2019; Sami, 2019). Even though the military attacks have been defended luminously by the government officials with a legitimate reasoning of terrorist threats on Turkey's southeastern border with also appealing to the nationalistic sensitiveness of people, one obvious but not as much articulated point in the agenda that can be evaluated as an accompanying intention of the local election loss was the purpose of the government to resettle the Syrians to the created "safe zone" areas (Todeschini, 2019). Hence the military assault to Syria cannot be solely interpreted from the perspective of terrorist threat, but other political imperatives such as bringing solutions to the existing refugee crisis was also one of the drivers of government's foreign policy initiatives.

In that sense, this research focuses more on how the hegemonic discourse has changed, and how that affected the social constructions of Syrian immigrants and how the political link between the policies and social constructions of target populations has been established. This transformation can be traced within the discursive practices of the governmental elites and the discourses selected and applied by the government supported media to align with the nationalistic responsiveness in the public discourse after the elections have been held.

These shifts eventually contributed to the construction of relatively bitter and contentious picture of Syrians, which restricted them more to enjoy their rights. Therefore, this case is significant to understand the crystallization of the oscillation between positive and negative constructions. This period can be considered as an indicative and convincing occasion that public discourse against Syrians and elite discursive practices are integrated and introduce shifting social constructions that alter or influence the policy implementation conspicuously, and open up new paths to shape, design and utilize the constructed portrayals instrumentally.

4. CONTEXT

Before beginning the analysis of the data and reveal the findings, a clear demonstration of the past years' experiences regarding migration governance in Turkey is necessary. Without underlining the significant milestones, the shifts in the policy practices cannot be understood distinctly.

Considering the historical background of the transition period of Turkey becoming an emigration to an immigration country, the lack of experience in these stages still can explain the absence of officially formulated all-inclusive and efficient integration policies even though a rising number of refugees have been entering to Turkey for settlement (İçduygu, 2015; İçduygu, Şimşek, 2016). Even though Turkey has adopted an open door policy for the Syrian refugees enabling them escape from the inner conflicts, more formal measures of refugee management started with around 2013 with the pioneer legislation of Law of Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP, Law no.6458), and the establishment of Directorate General Migration Management (DGMM) to implement the mentioned law (Kirişçi, Ferris, 2015). LFIP did not offer concrete resolutions for integration however, intentionally uses the term “harmonization” instead of “integration” (İçduygu et.al, 2016). The political stance of Turkish government with attentive and cautionary language about integration would explicitly underline the predominant appearance of Syrians in Turkey, who were “siblings” and “guests of God”, however the inevitable end would be the return of them.

Alongside LFIP, DGMM is a smaller entity under the scrutiny of Ministry of Interior, however the initiatives for establishing this unit were to civilize the migration management in and closely related to the deregulation and decentralization with more authorization to a new and civil institution (İçduygu, Aksel, 2013; Sarı, Dinçer, 2017). Following the institutionalization of the DGMM, Temporary Protection Regime (TPR) was initiated on October 22 2014, and expected to be a mechanism that provides adequate protection and humanitarian assistance to Syrians during their stay in Turkey (İçduygu, 2015; Kirişçi et.al,

2015). This specific regulation delineated provisions especially for the documentation practices of refugees, ensuring them a lawful stay in the host country until the reliable and protected return conditions are developed.

Overall, registration of Syrians to responsible authorities in their city of residence provided them major needs, which was believed to improve their state of living in a competitive and hostile urban environment, such as access to varying social and public services, health and education, also shelter, job and humanitarian assistance (Baban et.al, 2016; Yıldız, Uzgoren, 2016; Belanger, Saraçoğlu 2018). Highlighting that, being the fundamental policy initiative that regulates the daily lives of Syrian immigrants, this particular regime indeed committed to the principle of nonrefoulement, however it also did not propose any long-term measures underscoring the need of integration that left these groups in an uncertain position (Corabatir, 2016). This policy regime entitled the government authorities to legitimately discipline the movement of Syrians inside Turkey by compelling them to reside in the assigned province, where they were firstly documented (Corabatir, 2016).

Both LFIP and TPR as the overall scheme of the migration management in Turkey can be considered as the policy initiatives that abstained to formulate and implement efficacious and inclusive integration measures and prioritized the temporariness concept. Especially TPR enabled Syrian immigrants to benefit from the formal economic and social rights under conditional protection (UNHCR, 2016).

Considering the initial response of the Turkish government as “guests”, the temporary protection status could be linked to that approach because of its inauguration after the numbers highly increased in two years (Dinçer et.al, 2013). However, although a conditional status was bestowed to Syrian refugees that facilitated their harmonization, guest rhetoric was protected without significant compromises. However, the connotations affiliated to the “guest” or the expectations from the “guest” were negotiated and the social constructions of the target groups could be considered as dynamic.

The vagueness and flexibility of this particular “guest” concept provided a highly mutable space for reinterpretations, and the social constructions of Syrian refugees is still being highly affected due to the vulnerability that this concept have been generating for the refugees. Addressing refugees from the “guests” angle and accentuating the temporariness of their stay by becoming oblivious to the urgent necessities of integration measures always open their presence to criticism and facilitates societal polarization to a great extent.

One may argue that, this accustomed rhetoric on the temporariness of Syrian refugees did not carry out a solid policy based on the legal rights and integration of refugees, but rather provided an approach based on ‘generosity’ (Ozden, 2013; Polat, 2018). The generosity narrative has been constructed on the basis of positive imagery of Syrians and divided the representation of Syrians and the governmental elites as ‘us’ and ‘them’. Accordingly, ‘us’ was attributed with superior connotations referring the moral superiority of the Turkish authorities and the Turkish people compared to Syrians in embracing and guiding them during the destructive course of events that they had been experiencing. Contrary to the superior position of ‘us’, ‘them’ was associated with generally positive meanings. However, the formulation of this affirmative overtones was performed by emphasizing the inferiority and dependent position of Syrians.

Having said that, the social construction of Syrian refugees as the reliant subjects subordinated them under the moral authority of Turkish government, which reinforced the generosity approach of the government by undermining the right-based approach. As a consequence of that, this polarization would also clarify an unequal power relationship that was established between the refugees and the government authorities from the very beginning of the mass influx.

One of the reasons which might explain the insistence on continuing with the positive depiction of Syrians is the Islamist nationalism that visualizes an all-encompassing identity founded on a shared Ottoman heritage and belonging to the same religion, so one of the most noteworthy hallmarks of AKP’s reinvented concept of nation and nationalism is the function given to the Muslimhood as a roof characteristic that influences and shapes the meaning of identity and the capacity of the nation (Saraçoğlu, Ozkol, 2014; Saraçoğlu, 2018). This transformation addresses an inclusive Muslim identity emphasizing the religious commonalities of the ethnicities in the region. Even though the neighboring regions and the people are not narrated or pictured as the organic part of the Turkish nation, the genuine depiction is that they feel the presence and the influence of Turkey over these territories by the virtue of cultural and historical influence of Ottoman Empire (Saraçoğlu et.al, 2014).

This broadened understanding of the nation became one of the integral parts of the ideological orientation of the party and permeated into the capillary of the society and reinforced in social relations (Saraçoğlu et.al, 2014). Attempts to dissolve the signification of the borders and the national territories shows the desire of AKP cadres to exercise its political influence beyond its boundaries (Aras, Polat, 2007; Saraçoğlu et.al, 2014; Saraçoğlu, 2018).

Therefore, the ideological reformulation of the meaning, interests and mission of the nation inevitably considers Syrians as the “siblings” and the subjects that should be under the guardianship of Turkey which has been fortified constantly by the governmental elites. Deriving inspiration from the Ottoman past chiefly portrayed the native population as just, tolerant and righteous (Ergin, Karakaya, 2017). These discourses were intricately related to the overall attitude towards Syrian immigrants that have come and settled in Turkey, and pointed the responsibility of Turkish government to keep these immigrants safe and ensure them the sufficient protection (Polat, 2018). Discursive practices that have been shaped around the geographical imagining, and Ottoman nostalgia further encouraged the governmental elites to position themselves in strong solidarity with the Syrian immigrants and to construct a mutual identity by emphasizing the historical commonness (Aras et.al, 2007; Polat, 2018)

Hence, the positive construction of the target populations from a vigorous dependency approach is both advantageous for the government institutions to maintain their savior role, but also presents Syrians as if they were totally dependent. Remembering the deservingness frame (DiAlto, 2005), Syrians could be conceived as the target groups whom are deserving to reach out the benefits allocated by the government as long as they remain and accept their absolute dependent positions. This all-encompassing conception of nation that was also expanded to the people who live in the former Ottoman territories solidified this unequal power relationship by highlighting the historical responsibility of Turkey over the predecessors, and provided a positive imagery of Syrians. Besides, this new conception has become one of the intrinsic parts of AKP’s political strategy in policymaking that could be also observed aforementioned examples, also could be considered as quite indispensable in consolidating the religiously referenced and grounded hegemony (Saraçoğlu et.al, 2014).

Even though this religious hegemony has been quite useful that it ensured positive social constructions, and legitimized the actions of the governmental elites both in foreign and domestic policy, the intensifying economic downturn and the increasing presence of Syrians in big cities started to disintegrate the elements of this hegemony by demanding these refugees to leave. As the temporariness has become enduring and always referred by the statements of the governmental elites, the public hostility and concerns have also increased about the loss of jobs, rise in the prices of the rents and disruptions in public services. Hence, among the society, negative attitudes started to thrive against the hegemonic and religiously associated portrayal of Syrians conventionally prioritizing the vulnerabilities and victimization (Korkut, 2016; Polat, 2018).

As İçduygu and Diker (2017) conveys from the study of Del Carpio and Wagner (2015), the influx of Syrians especially with the initiation of the encampment policy caused a massive displacement of the native workforce from the labor market, which has been working efficiently as a rationale for the local labor force that convinces them that the Syrians induced the economic regression of Turkey, and taken their jobs. Therefore, despite the efforts of the AKP cadres for maintaining the positive social imagery of Syrians relying on the religious references, anti-Syrian sentiments, and resentment towards minority populations heightened due to subjective and objective damages that the native population has encountered. Economic loss and deep concerns about the depleted and impoverished pre-conceived status vis a vis Syrians could be considered as the two fundamental reasons for that (Saraçoğlu, Belanger, 2019).

Alongside the economic anxieties, reducing the apathy and cynicism that grew against Syrians to a sole economic determinant would be a mistake, however in their ethnographic study, which has been conducted in four different neighborhoods of İzmir, Saraçoğlu and Belanger (2019) reveal that loss of urban space and national cohesion are also specifically relevant with the hostile public attitude. One may argue that the positive social construction of Syrians by the government officials to mitigate the deep antagonism generated by the public discourse collapsed. Therefore, the attributes which were and still used to be convenient to describe Syrians as “vulnerable people” and “victims” turned into appropriate connotations for the native population as well due to the economic regression and the substantial reflections of that to the daily lives of the native population.

With respect to that, the nation conception which was reformulated and redefined by the governmental elites has been defeated and lost its function gradually, and resentment towards Syrians started to rise. Alongside that, the victimization and vulnerability of the native population nourished the anti-immigrant sentiments and expanded nativism (Saraçoğlu et.al, 2019). This discrepancy between the elite and public discourse especially disclosed its dynamics in the 2019 local elections, when the two biggest cities of Turkey, Istanbul and Ankara were lost and the hostility aggravating towards Syrians immensely was pointed as one of the fundamental reasons of this turning point in Turkish political history.

The loss of elections was followed by the preparations for the third military operations, ‘Operation Peace Spring’, in Syria. The first two of them respectively were the ‘Euphrates Shield’ between 2016 and 2017, and ‘Olive Branch’ in 2018. Prevailing in the first two and the last military operations, the security priorities of Turkey were articulated most of the time due to the presence of the region in the northern Syria which is governed by the Kurdish

Democratic Union Party (YPG) (Stanicek, 2019). However, the last one included another top priority to the general agenda of the military intervention which was both to eliminate the security threat next to the Turkish border and to establish a ‘safe zone’ in the conflict areas to send settle Syrian refugees from Turkey.

The increase in the trend of nurturing the animosity towards Syrians during and aftermath of the election periods by some opponent politicians such as CHP’s mayoral candidate Ekrem Imamoglu (Yinanc, 2019), pushed President Erdogan and other government officials to express their objectives to establish a ‘safe zone’, to which Syrian refugees in big numbers could go back and which could curtail the political and societal pressure over the government (Stanicek, 2019). According to some evaluations the defeat in the municipal elections both in Istanbul and Ankara can be comprehended as an explicit message from the constituents to AKP cadres (Cohen Yanarocak, 2019). This unceasing rise in the numbers of Syrians and the more observable presence of Syrians in big cities of Turkey has concluded with increasing social tensions, and that has been considered as one of the major obstacles that Erdogan government faced. As an eventual outcome, the third military operation began as an “insurance policy” that hinders the deficient refugee management practices inside (Cohen Yanarocak, 2019; Stanicek, 2020). In this study, the discursive practices of the governmental elites, and the overall discursive efforts of the government supported media outlets will be traced in order to grasp the dynamics of the social constructions of Syrian population, and the relation between the dynamic social constructions and the policymaking and implementation process.

5. FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The positive social constructions are inherently connected to the “guests” rhetoric and the discourses circumscribed with the religiosity and religious proximity however this rhetoric has been regularly challenged (Erdoğan, 2014). Even though the primal confrontation with the discursive practices of the governmental elites have been emanated from the backlash of the native population, the 2019 election loss and the economic destitution incited governmental elites to join the unsympathetic chorus against Syrians.

5.1 The Re-election Period

Even though the re-run decision was given by the ‘Supreme Election Council’ on 5th of July, the tense political environment started to grow after the first objection was made regarding the cancellation of the Istanbul elections by the AKP officials. Following this process, during these two months between 31st of March and 23rd of June, government officials remained relatively silent and restrained in targeting Syrians from a negative point of view. Only

Milliyet referred Syrians in its content affiliating them with individual criminal cases, attributed them as being associated with terror activities and organizations, and cited them as involving in irregular entry and exit that have been causing security problems for Turkey. Most of the articles from *Milliyet* were related to the abovementioned content. Some of the discernible words were “suspect/suspicious”, “illegal” and “irregular” (*Milliyet*, 11.04.2019; 25.04.2019; 21.05.2019; 18.05.2019; 24.06.2019) The security rhetoric, and the signals for further regulations and disciplining measures were quite conspicuous in these articles.

The crime affiliated events and the content can be considered as a legitimate foundation for sustaining and hardening the disciplinary action and a justification for changing the policy approach for the government. Especially incorporating the words “citizens of Syria” and the terror related events and irregular breaches in the same paragraphs dissolved the conventional rhetoric targeting Syrians as being the passive persons demanding their rights solely from the government.

Increase in the security rhetoric imputed negative connotations to refugees, and to some extent put them into an active position that they may be dangerous. The crime related events were also supported by the news from *Hürriyet*, about the journeys of Syrians to their country during the religious holidays, and their returns to Turkey (*Hürriyet*, 21.05.2019; 26.05.2019; 29.05.2019). Both the crime related events, and the unproblematic mobilization of Syrians through the borders functioned as a mechanism that escalates the nativist feelings and resentment. These contents nourished the deviant and undeserving perceptions of Syrians.

Except *Milliyet* and *Hürriyet* other three newspapers *Sabah*, *Yeni Şafak* and *Yeni Akit* portrayed Syrians still relatively affirmative. Even though these newspapers also referred irregular migration phenomenon and associated it with Syrians with a persuasive rhetoric supporting the struggle of the government against that, they also conveyed information from both Syria regarding the military operations of the regime targeting civilians, and the discriminatory and exclusionary practices that Syrians had to encounter in Turkey. (*Sabah*, 24.05.2019; *Yeni Akit*, 29.05.2019; 23.06.2019; *Yeni Şafak*, 11.04. 2019; 23.04.2019). These narratives can be pointed out as the continuation of the victimization portrayal of Syrians with religious connotations emphasizing the importance of empathy and humanitarian focus on the needs of the refugees. With an observable emphasis on the words “oppressed”, “victims”, “siblings/brothers”, and “trust”, these three newspapers differentiated their content. Also, the considerable contribution to the Turkish economy was accentuated quite often working as a medium to legitimize their presence. As referring to these words and upholding the

uninterrupted religiously formulated rhetoric shaping the positive construction of Syrians, Erdogan's speech on the 'World Refugee Day' on June 20th would a suitable example:

“No one can provoke refugee hostility for the sake of their ideological obsessions. These people are running away from hunger, conflict and poverty. Helping these people is one of the necessities of human dignity. (Yeni Şafak, 20.06.2019; Yeni Akit, 20.06.2019)”.

Therefore, it is quite obvious that even though security related issues enhanced and increased to a large extent, the overall positive, demanding, and deserving portrayal of Syrians was also protected by extensively recapitulating the discourses around victimization.

As Castells (2003) suggests that the focus of mass media towards the spectacular news is often originated by crime and victimization. About the particular case of Syrians, one may argue that the positive social construction of Syrian immigrants in Turkey have mostly been derived out this ideal victimized role. Especially the discourses used in the selected newspapers can be pointed has concrete evidences proving and substantiating this argument.

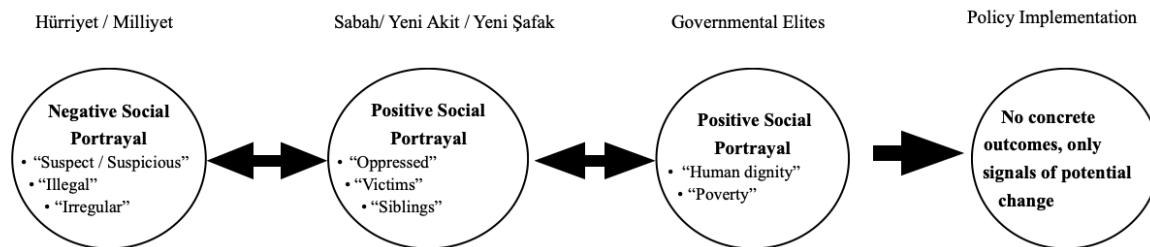
This idealized victimized role has been attached to the intense utilization of the moral, religious and historical language, which was also aligned with the liberal policy initiatives initiated in 2013 (Koca, 2016). Therefore, the victimhood reproduced in *Sabah*, *Yeni Akit* and *Yeni Şafak* could be considered as complying with the comparatively liberal initiatives began during 2013 with the LFIP, and during 2014 with TPR. The positively affiliated religious connotations mostly operated as the source of legitimization of the performative practices of the government authorities. The abovementioned three newspapers relatively protected their stance in depicting Syrians as the “deserved” and “entitled” groups in Turkey who need constant supervision and moral support.

As it is evident in the media portrayals, the ideal victim, who is respectable and deserving for sympathy, chiefly portrayed as innocents and primarily as women and children (Sunata, Yıldız, 2018). Looking at this three-month period, the overall positive depiction of Syrians, especially by emphasizing the civilian deaths and the unjust treatment they had to encounter in Turkey has been continued during the election period. Comparing to *Milliyet* and *Hürriyet* which nourished a relatively negative portrayal of Syrian refugees, *Sabah*, *Yeni Akit* and *Yeni Şafak*, used the traditionally accustomed, religious and positive narrative immensely, and these newspapers created a dichotomy and accordingly, a hierarchy among the Syrians emanated as the deserving and non-deserving victims (Davies et.al, 2007; Sunata et.al, 2018). Accordingly, Syrians are also divided into the one who have been seeking to opportunities to

leave Turkey “irregularly” or to enter Turkey “illegally”, and the ones who have been genuinely attempting to harmonize with the native populations and have saliently declared their commitment to the Turkish government as the sole savior.

Figure 2

Re-election Period



The figure above presents a comparatively simplistic illustration of the prominent discourses and the social constructions during the re-election period between 31st of March and 23rd of June. As it can also be understood, social constructions are compatible however dominant emphasis upon “human dignity” by the governmental elites reinforced the moral superiority of them, which indeed concretized and established a power relationship between the elites and Syrians. Accordingly, the elites declare this superiority as being the sole authority for recognizing and realizing the demands of Syrians via putting them into a passive position, which will be evaluated the following chapter. Additionally, within this period, newspapers are divided into two groups due to the discernible differences in their textual choices, however the following months a relative intermingling between the discourses would be observable.

5.2 Resettlement/Dispersal Policy Period

One of the comparatively new attitudes of the government, after the election results finalized on 23rd of June was the crystallization of the deviant categories (Schneider et.al, 1993; 1997; 2005). Despite the oscillations between “deserving” and “deviant”, the presence of the discourses regarding securitization which ultimately approximates Syrians to the deviant categories has started to increase. In order to obviate the antagonistic attitudes originated from the public, both the discursive practices of the government officials and the media language referred more on the obligations of Syrians who have been legal and have been circulating in Turkey without significant restrictions. Also, the irregular migration phenomena itself was prioritized, which has been a very critical and severe problem to be struggled assiduously.

Minister of Interior Suleyman Soyly's statements would be critical in highlighting the approach of the Turkish officials during July and August:

“Last year 268 thousand irregular migrants have been captured, and this year until now, the number of irregular and illegal migrants have exceeded 165 thousand. This means that we will continue with our operations (Sabah, 28.07.2019)”.

Even though the emphasis is mostly on irregular migrants and the struggle against illegality as a major and acute problem, Syrians have been greatly influenced from this turn of securitization due to their numerical outgrowth and the inclination of the native population to match the refugee notion with Syrians. So, even though articulations have been concentrated and praised around the struggle against illegality, the overall negative depiction also opened the social constructions of Syrians to negotiation as well. Discourses aggregated around the concepts of “fight” and “struggle” against irregular migration inadvertently conveyed a false knowledge and bolstered the antagonistic perception towards Syrians, because Syrians constituted the biggest portion of refugees in Turkey, and the overall tendency is to equalize all belittling and deprecatory connotations with the presence of Syrians.

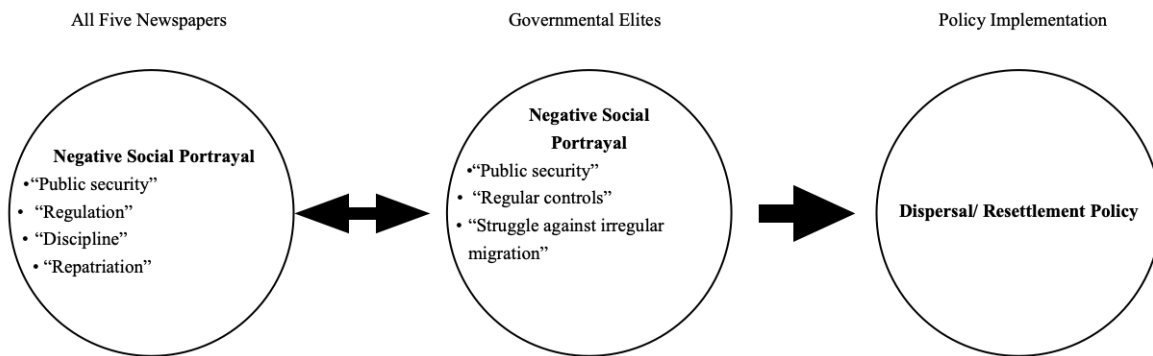
In the middle of July, discourses emphasizing the responsibilities and obligations of Syrians with a more menacing tone on the disciplining measures have emerged in the statements of Minister of Interior, Governorship of Istanbul and DGMM, and in the content of five newspapers. In the light of these developments, comparatively liberal policy approaches and the religiously affiliated discourses have been interrupted and disarrayed within the side of government officials. Related to that, one of the conspicuous turns after the election period was the continuous shifts in the discursive practices of the governmental elites targeting Syrians from a comparatively pejorative angle without justifying their presence in Istanbul.

This shift pointed out the slight erosion in the initial functionality of the “guest” metaphor that addressed generosity of the government institutions and hospitality of the host society (Topçuoğlu, 2018). Therefore, the comprehensive and predominant religiosity in constituting the images of Syrians within the “guest” rhetoric were abandoned marginally, and the obligations emanated from being a “guest” put forward. One of the materialized outcomes of this slight shift is the dispersion program for Syrians from Istanbul to the cities where they were first registered and documented (Hürriyet, 22.07.2019; Milliyet, 22.07.2019). The program was officially announced with a press release from the Governorship of Istanbul and some statements of the Minister of Interior Suleyman Soyly

(Press Release 2019-44 22.07.2019; Yeni Şafak 24.07.2019; Yeni Şafak 28.07.2019). These official documents were followed by a supportive rhetoric from the five examined newspapers. The figure below is another simplified illustration of the changes after the election period, with a particular focus on July and August, explains the preferred discourses and the social constructions in a plainer way.

Figure 3

Resettlement/ Dispersal Policy Period



Especially during July and August, all five of the newspapers included much of the declarations coming from the government officials, but also specifically used the literary devices emphasizing the irregularities, while at the same time underscoring the determined struggle of Turkey against illegal circulation of immigrants and the overall efforts to end the phenomenon of migrant smuggling. So, a discourse introducing a disciplinary aspect started to be common in the media narrative.

A common narrative for all five newspapers was the actualized returns of Syrians to some of the rescued areas of Syria, and covered the political will of the Turkish government that would be to encourage the return of more Syrians (Yeni Akit, 18.08.2019; Sabah, 01.07.2019; 25.07.2019). It is also interesting to notify that, the return objectives were both constituted by a comparatively contentious and adverse tone accentuating the repatriation of irregular migrants, and presented as a desirable outcome of the struggle of the government against illegal mobilization of migrants. However, argumentations regarding the “safe zone” and its urgency have also been articulated at the same time, as the first step of the fresh policy of voluntary repatriation (Hürriyet, 29.07.2019). Besides that, the return objective for Syrians was also comprised by the emphasis on encouragement, willingness and readiness of legal and documented Syrians in Turkey. So, the positive attitude towards the documented Syrians, at least in the discursive level, has been persisted, which was followed with the voluntary

repatriation policies that intermingles with the foreign policy initiatives as creating a “safe zone” in Northern Syria. It can be highlighted that the social constructions within the newspapers are highly crucial in shaping and legitimizing the policies.

Alongside the enduring positive attitude towards the documented Syrians, comparatively aggressive and confrontational attitude of the governmental elites was reflected over refugees through certain practices, mostly this contentious approach was reiterated in the discursive sphere. Delving into the discourses of AKP elites and most notably Minister Soyly, disclose the hostile tones towards refugees were preferred most of the time by giving Syrians certain messages that they would encounter with abnormal levels of restraint of suppression. However, both the actions of dispersal and deportation, which have stigmatized Syrians and exacerbated their living conditions in Turkey, did not have systematically formulated logical and legitimate grounds (Amnesty International, 2019).

As a prevailing and highly observable pattern of behavior of the public institutions, there have been an abstaining attitude in executing absolute and standardized policies. Rather, the whole execution process of dispersal, and regular controls over Syrians were capricious. Therefore, it would be appropriate to conclude that the absence of formality in execution of the policy caused diverse and alarming problems for Syrians. Ambiguities and lack of organized and definitive implementations were present, and the lack of information from the public authorities triggered the suspicions with serious allegations of deporting Syrian immigrants unlawfully to the areas in Syria, where the military conflicts have been ongoing. The detailed report of Amnesty International (2019), regarding the cases of unlawful and forced practices of deportation of twenty people revealed the arbitrariness of how the dispersal program of Turkey have been operated. The negative social constructions of Syrians during July and August clearly expedited the process of implementing a dispersal regime by accentuating the struggle against the unregistered and irregulars as the focal point of the new policy.

Quintessentially, the consciously pursued dispersal policy should not have been contentious with deportation initiatives, due to the fact that TPR did not allow government to practice repatriations, but according to the report of Amnesty International (2019), twenty unlawful cases of forceful return of Syrians occurred between May and September, and fourteen of them were sent back without any consent during July 2019. The numbers in this report did not reveal any statistical data or an official release from the government authorities, however the emphasis on the “fight” against the illegal and unregistered immigrants

contoured the general inclination of the new policy, which may also disclose the anew direction of the government against Syrian immigrants.

One of the interpretations that can be extracted from the arbitrariness of the situation, and a change in the policy logic would be the imperceptible correlation between the social constructions of Syrians, and the policy implementation. Government actions that induced vulnerabilities and virtually positioned Syrians and the government into warring sides highlighted that the implementations were in intransigence with the social constructions of the same migrant group.

During July and August, especially all five newspapers contained too many announcements of governmental elites and framed the political performance and response of the government as a legitimate objective in order to perpetuate and preserve the public order and public security. Considering the discourses of government officials, Suleyman Soylu indicated:

“No one should ever reside in my country without registration. We registered these people and updated the registration once again. What did that provide us? Under ‘Temporary Protection Status’ Turkey created a strategy and notified that they would only be accepted in the cities where they were registered (Sabah; Yeni Şafak; Yeni Akit, 24.07.2019)”

Accordingly, security rhetoric became one of the most prominent substance of the ongoing policy shifts. Appropriately, subsequent press releases and declarations from both the Governorship of Istanbul and Ministry of Interior were publicized regarding the progress in fighting with irregular immigration, the progress in sending the Syrians back to their registered cities, and the struggle against illegal entrances and exits. Especially the press releases of the Governorship of Istanbul would be quite meaningful when the selection of words and the approach is being considered with the choices of words and the overall approach of the newspapers. In this sense, the formal documents indicating the policies, statements of the government authorities and the narratives in the newspapers do not bifurcate gravely.

The Governorship released these official statements, firstly on July when it first expressed the urgent necessity for Syrians to go back in one month (Press Release 2019-44 22.07.2019). Afterwards, these press releases about domestic struggles against the immigration related matters were published regularly (Press Release 2019-48 27.08.2019; 2019-65 18.10.2019; 2019-71 15.11.2019). These press releases presented the numbers and of

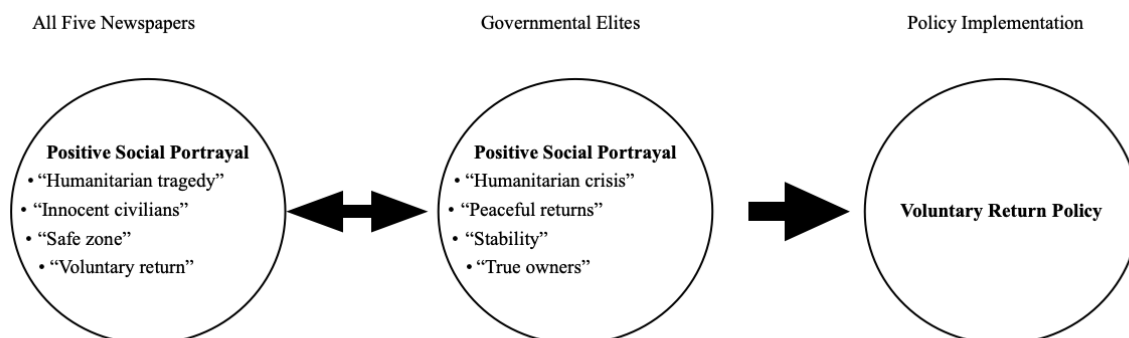
the irregular migrants sent back to the repatriation centers, and the illegal Syrians sent back to temporary sheltering facilities out of Istanbul. These official documents and the discourses were upheld and bolstered with the narrative in the media, especially by framing the actions of government as fundamental (Hürriyet, 07.07.2019; 25.07.2019; Yeni Şafak; 23.07.2019). Nevertheless, the narratives of *Sabah*, *Yeni Akit* and *Yeni Şafak* could be considered as balancing the hostile tone in the official documents and the statements of the authorities, due to their insistence in showing Syrians as a Muslim folk who have been suffering desperately. So, even though the policies have been shifted towards a damaging edge, the overall positivity in the Syrian imagery has remained.

5.3 Voluntary Repatriation Policy Period

Aside from that, substantial occupancy of referencing the security and interest of the general public was not solely applied in the domestic policy. Reposition and reformulation of securitization by clear attributions related to the threats against the national territory would be used in defining justifications for the return of Syrians and the policy of ‘voluntary and secure return’. The figure below illustrates the aggregated discourses of newspapers and reveals the common statements of the governmental elites in a simplified way.

Figure 4

Voluntary Repatriation Policy Period



As it can be seen from the figure, besides the arguments on national security, discourses around “humanitarian tragedy/crisis”, and “innocence” of the people that are stuck in Idlib region, and the concerns regarding the organized assaults of the Assad regime to innocent civilians have been circulated once more. With the forthcoming and planned military operations, the positive constructions of Syrians within the discourses of government authorities resurged again. This time, the “entitled” Syrians have been depicted as the groups who deserve to go back to their country. It is obvious that, this turn to positive delineation

was basically for smoothing the practices of the government in the foreign policy agenda. One of the statements that Erdogan gave during August used a discourse that interlaced both the security apprehensions of Turkey and the concerns for the civilians in the region:

“The assaults of Assad Regime to civilians and the regional infrastructure in Idlib disrupted the tranquility that Turkey maintained there. Over 500 innocent civilians died, and hundreds of thousands of them started their journey to Turkey leaving their homelands...Incitements of the regime and the terrorist organizations in Idlib are also threatening the safety of our soldiers there (Milliyet, 27.08.2019)”.

Evidently, during the process of institutionalization of the legitimate discourses regarding the return initiatives, Syrians have not been signified or manifested from a solely negative perspective. However, this minor transition to securitization extinguished the functionality of their positive portrayal in practice and returned them as disadvantageous policy initiatives such as not enhancing their living conditions but to instrumentalize them in attempting to achieve the objectives of Turkish foreign policy. Despite the discursive practices of the governmental elites that imperceptibly displayed Syrians as the subjects to be regulated and disciplined, media narratives did not stop reproducing the positive narrative by continuing the victimized framing. However due to the extensive securitization, the dependent positions of Syrians did not bring them materially rewarding policies, rather it curtailed the opportunities of refugees by giving them messages that the government would insist on the disciplining measures and regular controls.

Following the dispersal program of the government, the cross-border operations and the relevant argumentations for that appeared and started to be circulated in the media narratives. All five newspapers began to disseminate the information and the position of the governmental elites about a ‘peace corridor’ around the Idlib region. Even though discussions about the military intervention and ‘peace corridor’ started around April (Hürriyet, 29.04.2019; Yeni Şafak, 09.04.2019; 18.04.2019), these discussions intensified and expanded with the increasing diplomatic relations between Russia, the USA, and Turkey starting with July. With the beginning of July and until the beginning of October, when the ‘Operation Peace Spring’ started, most of the media contents were consisted of the crisis in Idlib, the situation of civilians in Syria, new refugee groups that may reach out Turkey, and the discussions about the ‘safe zone’. Regarding the issue of the ‘safe zone’, Erdogan’s and the spokesman of the Presidency Ibrahim Kalin’s insistent discourses regarding no tolerance to a

terror corridor that would threaten the territorial integrity of Turkey were highly present (Hürriyet, 13.09.2019; 25.10.2019).

The discourses of all five newspapers were formulated around the concepts of “humanitarian crisis”, “voluntary return”, “peace”, “stability in the region”, and “national security”. As *Sabah*, *Yeni Şafak* and *Yeni Akit* approached the issue from a relatively religious point of view with a more dramatic tone like referring Syrians as the “true owners” of the lands where Turkey is conducting military operations, and accentuating the material aids to the “religious fellows”, *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* mostly included official statements and analyses regarding plans of ‘security zone’. However, there was no strict and intransigent differences between the newspapers as was the case in the re-election period. In October Erdogan said:

“Besides clearing the region from terrorist groups, our other major intention is the return of Syrians to their home. ‘Owners of this land’ should go back. We can build residential areas, so that the ‘true owners’ would settle there (Sabah; Yeni Akit; Yeni Şafak; Hürriyet; Milliyet, 27.09.2019)”.

Similar statements also came from the Ministry of Defense by accentuating secure and voluntary return of the ‘siblings’ and from the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlut Cavusoglu, indicating that the Turkish government would not want to delay the creation of the ‘safe zone’ and just desire to hasten the initiatives that would eventually provide a permanent return of the Syrian ‘siblings’ (Sabah, 27.04.2019).

Especially with the beginning of the solemn and deliberate discussions on a potential military operation to Syria, the “symbolic politics” (Faist, 1994; Statham, 2003) interceded once more as a powerful medium for deconstructing the actual, structural problems which have been causing the detrimental outcomes against integration and the will of social inclusion. Accordingly, the noticeable autonomy of the governmental elites in decision making once more has been realized via depicting the solution of the Syrian problem as the “voluntary return”.

Symbolic politics which is also mentioned in the theoretical framework is quite useful to understand the inherent relationship between the social constructions and the policy implementation regarding the return of Syrians. According to Yavcan (2019), return initiatives are not quick strategic turns adopted after the election loss, however authorities have already taken some measures to facilitate and improve the returning conditions, for instance by giving Syrians opportunities to return Syria for religious holidays with the

assurances that their temporary protection status would be secured consequent to their return to Turkey. The major aim of that policy was to encourage Syrians to cohere with their home country, and seek for new paths for adaptation, however according to the border records, re-integration with Syria failed to a large extent, because approximately 76% of Syrians have returned to Turkey after their short visits of Syria (Yavcan, 2019).

Considering these observations, one may argue that the voluntary return initiatives, which have been put into words with high-pitched discourses addressing the “desire” and “right” of Syrian immigrants to return, are at odds with the general attitude of Syrians who have been preferring to come back to Turkey. This appears to be one of the examples of shifting reality by framing the situation differently and detached from the social context, and the positive connotations attached to Syrians and the actions of the governmental elites eased the way of articulating the policy initiatives. At this point the national security interests intermingled with the policy of voluntary return and the positive framing of Syrians was operated in justifying how right the Syrians in wanting to go back their ‘home’.

It is obvious that during the period where the internal disciplining measures were first introduced, the evidences from the media narratives and the statements of government officials suggested that a unilateral decision-making mechanism on the dispersal of Syrians would be implemented. Afterwards, the modest erosion in depicting Syrians as completely deserving subjects compensated with the discussions about the military operation and the possibilities of return. Once again, this meager attribution of deviants converted to a comparatively positive one and framed the actions of government as the savior of Syrians from the oppression of Assad regime, and an entity that would realize every desire of its dependent subjects in Turkey, such as delivering them a land from their country.

6. DISCUSSION

In the light of this detailed analysis of the findings, the analytical link between the social constructions and the altering policy implementation procedure can be based plainly. The overall theoretical background that accentuates the comprehensiveness of discursive sphere and symbolic politics, and social constructions as the minor component of it crystallized more precisely.

As Jenkins (2012) mentions in her study, the guest metaphor itself is clearly a very flexible area to manipulate repeatedly. Therefore, boundaries between stranger and friend are too fragile and can be reproduced continuously depending on the political contexts. In this study, the general expectation from the governmental elites would be to alter their discursive

practices to a great extent due to the possible disorder and discomfort of their constituents from the Syrians.

The loss of political influence in two big cities can be attached to the disintegration or dissolution of the positive imagery of Syrians, which had been highly prevalent showing them as the deserving subjects of the society due to their vulnerability and unexpected arrival. Considering that the perceived deservingness of the target populations is an imperative element in designing policy and allocating policy benefits and burdens (Bell, 2019), the deteriorating image of Syrians as “guests” also shifted the direction in implementing the policy. Clearly indicated in the data analysis, the long-term “guest” rhetoric and the comprehensive victimization of Syrians prevailed during this eight-month period, which is also consistent with the initial expectations. The familiar attitude of the government officials and the selected newspapers did not alter dramatically towards Syrians, at least within the discursive plain. Especially within the election re-run period government, governmental elites did not refer to Syrians from a negative perspective, as the public opinion was exacerbating the aggression and resentment. As Esen and Gumuscu (2019) indicates, a survey made in 2016 noted that 79 percent of AKP constituents have already seen refugees as the biggest sources of the economic crisis, and 74 percent of concurred that there should be no Syrian inflow again into Turkey (Konda, 2016), which could also give hints that unfavorable views towards Syrians have situated into the minds of people already.

This long-lasting antagonism and discontent of the native population to both Syrians and the policies of the government converted into one of the fundamental reasons of the defeat of the government in the local elections (Esen, Gümüşcü, 2019). After the loss of Istanbul election has become definite on 23rd of June, the media presence of Minister of Interior, Süleyman Soylu, has increased due to his announcements prioritizing and emphasizing the struggle of Turkey in order to prevent irregular migration, and constructively framing the efforts of the government that the responsible institutions are in control and would discipline Syrians and other refugees.

According to Grosvenor (1997), dispersal is a system of exclusion such as detention and deportation. The general method of dispersal and its implementation suggests hindrance and interruption towards immigrants’ freedom of choice on where to settle. By performing such an act, the social networks of immigrants in a particular space in a given country would be stamped out with also the elimination of their material attachment to the same space (Bloch, Schuster, 2005). When casual and unplanned arrival of immigrants happens in the host country, most of the time the majority of immigrants would like to obtain a sufficient

location, most preferably close to the family, friends or where their intimate community ties have established at the first place (Bloch et.al, 2005). Increase in the statements regarding the assiduous endeavors against irregular migration with quite menacing narratives, unveiled certain messages towards Syrians with regard to the newly adopted policy measures targeting them. Standardized forms of social constructions regarding Syrians as completely positive, were derived from the religiously ideational position of the governmental elites, and diffused into the institutions of the government (Schneider et.al, 2005). However, the defeat in the local elections slightly changed the typology of Syrians as solely positive subjects of the bigger context to a marginally negative one, and strengthened the disciplinary power of the governmental elites over the refugees once again for re-gaining the confidence of them about the migration policies.

This minimal transition of the framing conveyed a powerful message to both the target groups and the constituents about who signify an importance to the society and who do not, and who is ignored and who is not (Schneider et.al, 2005). According to Schneider and Ingram's theoretical framework, with their planned dispersal out of Istanbul, and the debates about their possible return to the conflict areas gave a certain message that they would not be probably treated as they were anymore, and their presence would be bargained.

The institutionalization of these messages was relatively abrupt and could be observed in the practices of increasing routine controls over them and establishing an extra disciplinary force, and finally expanding the capacity of the government against irregular migration (Günaydın, 2019). Even though the governmental elites did not deliberately endeavor to portray Syrians as undeserving subjects, the existing statements indicated a problematic policy formulation for the Syrians, especially the ones who have been living in Istanbul for years. Hence, the comparatively negative social construction of Syrians during this process had influences over the policy implementation that basically increased the regular daily controls over refugees, obliging them to carry their identification documents all the time as a precautionary measure for any abrupt police supervision. However most importantly, the disciplinary characteristics of the new dispersal policy repeatedly reproduced the illegality of the migrants with these material practices and the sequence of discursive formations of the media and governmental elites (De Genova, 2013).

Evidently, the discursive practices of the government officials targeted the irregular refugees alongside the legal Syrian refugees, and reiterated the determined relationship of the government against irregular migration and their intolerance to lack of control and regulation. Referring the struggle against irregular migration and the resettlement of the registered,

therefore legal Syrian refugees, in the same statements or sentences without unambiguous distinctions enhanced the general negative perception of Syrians. Soylu's general tone in his statements can be pointed out as menacing and threatening, that is against the interests of the target group, occasionally situating Syrians into the deviants classification by not promising beneficial policies towards immigrants (Schneider et.al, 1993; 1997; 2005), but prioritizing the interests of native population and the state entity (T24, 2019). Also, the negative framing of Syrians functioned as a tool that facilitate the implementation of the dispersal policy, with legitimate reasoning and fast actions. So, as the adverse connotations have been transmitting negative messages to Syrians, at the same time it has shaped the policy approach which distances itself from a deficient but existing purpose of integration. Moreover, Erdogan's statements against the European countries about Turkey's decreasing capacity of sheltering 3.6 million refugees, and threats to 'open the gates' for millions of both influenced the relatively negative portrayal of the refugees and were influenced by it. Heightening of the stiff discourses on allowing refugees to go to Europe by 'opening the borders' jeopardized the already tense relations with Europe, but also gave another significant message to Syrians that they would be possibly used as political leverages, but would not be addressed any more advantageous policies (Schneider et.al 1993; 1997; 2005).

Considering the political defeat in the local elections, a relatively aggressive attitude towards Syrians can be understood by the governmental elites, however the interesting point here to be emphasized is, even though government officials attempted to gain credibility and to build a desirable image that the responsible institutions are still in control of the Syrians, the religiously affiliated victimized picture of Syrians have still been protected. It is clear that the governmental elites shifted their rhetoric moderately with a meager emphasis on the discourse on securitization migration, but these discursive practices were compensated by the newspaper articles by maintaining the overall positive depiction. This can be considered as an interesting finding, since it is quite unambiguous that the governmental elites and their ideologically and materially supported newspapers unceasingly retained the positive image of Syrians, nevertheless this positive social construction did not reflect to the process of policy implementation with constructive and affirmative outputs for Syrians. So, even though a positive construction of the target populations has been perpetuated, institutional practices and the policy implementation towards Syrians did not go along with the affirmative connotations.

The insistence on the dispersal policy during July and August was also supported with the increasing discourses on securitization which was utilized as a foundational base for the rational explanation for the ongoing debates around the new cross-border military operations

towards Syria. The oscillating dynamics between the positive and negative social constructions of Syrian immigrants is even more discernible especially considering the link between the dispersal policy started on July, and the gradual deportation initiatives with military operations started on October.

One of the distinctly observable choice in the language of both the governmental elites and the newspapers was to present one of the major aims of the operation as actualizing the sole and unique wishes of Syrians that was accentuated as going back home. A substantial interpretation that could be derived from that hard evidence is the perpetuation of the conventional practices in constructing the positive portrayal of Syrians was functioned as a convenient dynamic to pursue the foreign policy objectives. Even though with the dispersal policy, the negative construction manifested and epitomized itself clearly with the signals directed to Syrians that they may lose their advantaged positions, the legitimate and positive social constructions that save them from the marginalized levels of the society have been brought back by the governmental elites during the debates about the military operations. The dependent, persecuted and exploited victim portrayal of Syrians was once more reinforced, but now by emphasizing the moral responsibility of the Turkish government to give Syrians their land back. Although Syrians received quite affirmative and progressive signals from the governmental elites with the numerical increase in the positive portrayal of refugees, the discursive practices did not match with the concrete policy initiatives.

In spite of the fact that, the repatriation objectives of the government officials were presented as a voluntary return, this could hardly be evaluated as a political action that would affect the Syrians positively. On the contrary, the eagerness of the government to execute this particular program of establishing a security zone and ensure the safe and voluntary return of Syrian refugees should not be considered by underestimating the long-term foreign policy objectives, because the discourses on voluntary return accompanied with the arguments for the justification of the military intervention. Hence even though the social construction of Syrians were positive, governmental elites instrumentally manipulated this representation for the justification of military intervention.

Following that, as Faist (1994) and Statham (2003) stress, these discourses on a military intervention also operated as “symbolic politics” which constructed a new reality for the native population that government has the capacity to resettle 3.6 million refugees in the security zone. Hence, by corroborating their cross-border actions with genuine evidences, government officials constructed a new reality for their constituents by showing that Syrians would able to be sent out of Turkish territories. In order to alleviate the exacerbated nativism

and xenophobia against Syrians due to deepening economic downturn, the feeling of the lost social status, government officials referred too much on a possible return of the refugees to the ‘allegedly’ safe zones within the boundaries of the conflict areas.

Alongside that, there have been an increase in the delineation of Syrians as the absolute victims of the unrestricted bombings of the regime forces and the unceasing assaults of the Kurdish militants. During these tense weeks, Turkish authorities were depicted as the saviors of these innocent civilians, which can be quite often detected in the discourses of the governmental elites and in the analyzed newspapers, so the civilians were positively constructed as the dependent groups that are destitute and needy. While the Syrians outside of the borders were pictured as deserving due to their distressed and troubled condition, Syrians within the country were also illustrated as deserving from the angle of “guests”, and pointing the Turkish state as the only responsible entity that can accomplish the desire of Syrian refugees which is going back home in any case. However, while 96 percent of Syrians diffused to different cities of Turkey, and an unintentional but spontaneous integration process began in eight years, return conditions would not thrive immediately with a military operation (İçduygu, Ayaşlı, 2019).

The policies on deportation or encouragements to refugees for voluntary return cannot be considered as well-thought initiatives that would be efficacious and adequate for the current demands of Syrians. As it can also be comprehended from the ongoing discussion, the policies directed to Syrians in order to provide their return to Syria are not independent and comprehensive, but an indispensable component of the foreign policy. Efforts to create a ‘security zone’ and striving for a return of the Syrians to these artificial areas were quite problematic as it would cause artificial livelihoods in the conflict areas which is meant to be another migration process for these immigrants since they could not make to their homes at the end (İçduygu et.al, 2019).

As a final remark, Syrian refugees in Turkey, as the target populations have been mostly constructed positively, and the prior mentioned LFIP and TPR could be shown as the evidences that regulate the integration measures, the permissions regarding labor market accessions and other social services to some extent. However, the increased public hostility with the intensification of economic crisis, loss of status and national cohesion (Korkut, 2016; Esen et.al, 2019; Saraçoğlu et.al, 2019; İçduygu et.al, 2019) governmental elites also shifted their rhetoric to another distinct level in which they began to utilize the security related measures regarding Syrians and to give messages both to Syrians and the native population that they could return, only voluntarily, as far as the military operations would succeed

Nevertheless, the unceasing repetition of returning possibilities did not significantly transform the positive social construction of Syrians. The deserving minority image was not subverted or debilitated however, there were no distinct positive reverberations in the public policies. Rather this protected positive image brought either dispersion or deportation as restrictive initiatives in front of the Syrians whom have been constantly striving to protect themselves and their livelihoods in Turkey (Şimşek, 2019). Therefore, unlike what the theoretical framework of Schneider and Ingram (1993; 1997; 2005) asserts, the social construction of target populations was not embedded or reflected in the public policies during 2019. On the contrary, positive social constructions and the deservingness discourse functioned antithetically and only operated as the legitimizing force for the government either in justifying the military interventions to Syria or to consolidate and mobilize the resentful constituents by strictly disciplining Syrian refugees.

6.1 Possible Alternative Policies or Recommendations

In the light of this discussion, the clear linkage between the framing practices and the policy implementation can be observed plainly. However, the discrepancies in the legal status, and the temporariness without recognizing a comprehensive refugee status augmented and further reinforced the dominant position of social constructions. Being one of the substantial determinants of policy implementation, the power of social constructions can lead to arbitrary practices.

Firstly, the temporariness which comparatively monopolized the prior policy practices should be reconsidered and its orbit should be decreased with solid and legal reflections of policies regarding social acceptance and permanency of Syrians. For instance, the protracted discourses regarding voluntary return of Syrians during September and October 2019 can be considered within the impact area of temporariness. Even though this has not been realized beforehand (Yavcan, 2019), the insistence on actualizing the previously attempted patterns damage the social acceptance and initiatives for integration. Considering the Syrian population in Turkey, the desired inclination should be towards the discourses of permanency rather than temporariness.

A breakthrough towards social acceptance would also be critical for the accompanying attempts of total social integration, which indeed should be inaugurated with the beginning of a struggle to curb the antagonistic feelings of the native populations. Therefore, securitization rhetoric and the accustomed discursive practices around “guests” should be constrained and hampered, with valuable alternatives such as including Syrians to the natural mosaic of the host society. The subordinate position of Syrians can be overcome through inducing them

effectively in joining social life, and a stable and healthy partnership between national and local NGOs should be once more established.

As it has been mentioned in the introduction part, policies targeting Syrians are highly important for a harmonized and reciprocally respectful society, because their area of impact is mostly exceeding Syrians and affecting the host society as well. Hence, socially relevant and also applicable policies can be generated or formulated through discarding discourses derived from the temporariness concept, and leaving oscillations between social constructions but produce a comprehensive legal framework for a standardized recognition of Syrians. Otherwise, the existing regime would continue facilitating polarization between the native and immigrant groups.

7. CONCLUSION

This research reveals that Syrian immigrants in Turkey have been encountered with numerous policy initiatives that were inconsistent and disconnected to each other from 2011 to 2019, however mostly reshaped and reformulated with the political context and other structural determinants, depending mostly to the political will of the governmental elites.

From a general perspective, the conventional positive social construction patterns which have been already constituted with the solid cement of religiosity and moral superiority of the Turkish nation were maintained and reinforced mostly during this eight-month period. However, the discursive practices of the governmental elites and the media discourse that implied the necessity for an improved disciplining mechanism for the Syrian refugees bolstered and supplemented the already alive arguments targeting Syrians as relatively “undeserving”.

The integral relationship between the social constructions and the policy implementation is distinguishable in the former’s functionality in legitimizing the policy implementation procedure. The quintessential components of the antecedent policy targeting Syrians were also chaotic and deprived of strategy (Hoffman, Samuk, 2016). Additionally, the legally defenseless rhetoric on “guests” created an unequal power relationship between the authorities and Syrians, that have been making the social constructions of Syrian refugees susceptible to negotiation. During the eight-month term, this pattern of constant negotiation was immensely conspicuous, with uninterrupted oscillations between positive and negative imagery of Syrians, and they have operated without being unsuccessful in justifying the policy implementations. The reason for the general inclination towards preserving the religious connotations despite slight erosions and attenuations could be considered as the meta-narrative that governmental elites once set during the first influx of the refugees. Since

the whole public perception also attempted to be established over the vulnerabilities and destitute position of Syrians, the defense of this meta-narrative was important for the elites to not unconditionally and completely deviate from their initial statements and viewpoint. Having said that, the prior social constructions of Syrians had a palpable tendency towards observing and constituting Syrians as the “guests of God”, and loading the responsibility of moral and material support and liability of recognizing them as the temporary groups in the country, whom should be treated in dignity. Different interpellations addressing Syrians were produced, including the most common and dominant one that is circumscribed with religious elements that reiterate the cultural closeness of Syrians.

Yet, the social constructions and the preferred discourses, which could be cogitated as the fundamental components of the social portrayals are not independent from the external impetuses and motives. These can be pointed out as the processes of local elections and the military intervention to Syria. In this study, after answering to the question with regard to the preceding social portrayal of Syrians, the overall designation of the identical refugee group during 2019 local elections and ‘Operation Peace Spring’ were pulled into the focal point. Especially, the result of the local elections is one of the leading and primary reasons for a substantial shift within the meta-narrative, however it still could not completely transform the rhetoric or utterly revamp the whole policymaking and implementing process. The linguistic representation of the immigrants was not completely altered, however palpable shifts towards using securitization rhetoric challenged the positive images of Syrians perceivably, which affected the policy implementation and transformed the approach of the government institutions. Especially between July and August, when the dispersal/resettlement policy has been first executed, a significant deterioration of the positive imagery occurred. Even though it was not highly negligible, it was also not greatly drastic. This shift was mostly observable in the statements of the governmental elites.

Nevertheless, one other question which should be answered after observing the changes in the social constructions was if there had been a change within this eight-month period. At this point, the media discussions on ‘Operation Peace Spring’ could bestow clear information. The turn from positive to negative social construction immediately after the election period, once has been restored towards the positive with the statements. The media narrative with the moral responsibility of Turkish authorities to create a safe area for Syrians in the Syrian territory has been prioritized. In addition to that Syrians have been pointed out as the groups whose sole aim was to leave Turkey and resettle in their homelands. Having seen the impact of the external determinants, this last instance can also be related to the

“symbolic politics” which has been numerous times accentuated. Especially after August until November, the positive constructions of Syrians were associated with a refracted reality regarding Syrians, and the social constructions were shaped and reformed within that bended reality. Interlacing of the foreign policy aims and the increasing hostility towards Syrians caused different narratives and textual choices that address a quick, legal and voluntary repatriation.

Considering the statements of the government officials and the narratives of newspapers, the last question to be answered was the analytical link between the social constructions and the policy implementations. The shifts in the social constructions, the discourses and implementation of policies have been actualized simultaneously. Migrant “illegality”, the discourses of devoted, self-sacrificing and decisive struggle over irregular migration were followed by a dispersal/resettlement policy, which could be considered as a concrete reflection of transferring Syrians to “unentitled” category with negative social constructions. Despite a consistent avoidance and self-restraint from targeting Syrians with pure racist narratives, the accustomed implications aggregated around the discourses that objects Syrians as risky groups. Especially their removal period from Istanbul was explained by emphasizing the attempts of restoring “tranquility”, “security” and “safeness” of the country, which were to be destroyed by potential acts of “irregular” migrants or “undocumented” Syrians.

Accompanying that, the increase in the debates over military operation and the potential of acquiring and controlling a small portion of Syrian territory mildly shifted negative portrayal to the positive. During this specific instance, discourses on the profound generosity of Turkish nation and the government and their moral responsibility towards Syrians merged and converted into a major policy which de-emphasized the stay, but return. The significance of this whole process lies on the fact that, the positive constructions of these immigrants did not change nevertheless, the entire policy actions and perspectives of the government institutions were constituted and legitimized by referring this predominantly with either negative or positive social constructions.

This eight-month process disclosed that the power hierarchy and the status quo which was built on this unequal power relationship between Syrians and the Turkish government. The prevailing position of the governmental elites was always maintained, and Syrians solely asked to conform and align with the policy initiatives. The dependent position and the absence of agency reinforced this passivity. Also, the religious motivations in depicting Syrians created the roles of ‘savior’ to the government and the ‘needy’ to Syrians, which

eventually gave the moral supremacy to the former one. This particular feature of this relationship left the character to Syrian immigrants who comply and reconcile with every decision, even though it is deeply unfavorable. This superior-subordinate relationship was quite strong and in order to preserve the dynamics of that unilateral and unequal relationship that always getting worse during the tense political contexts, positive or negative framing of Syrians were cultivated depending on the situation.

Having said the significant impact of social constructions on policy implementations, in the case of Turkey the lack of strategy and the absence of solid migration governance mechanism further bolstered this influence. However, this may not be always to the right and desirable direction. This thesis study ensures information regarding the dramatic shifts and highly flexible area of changes between policies. The enlarged sphere for the governmental elites and newspapers to reformulate the social constructions can be manipulated in order to justify the upcoming policy implementation processes. So, for the public administration discipline, even though social constructions of target groups are exceedingly important in policymaking and implementation, it may cause certain and intense vulnerabilities when it intermingles with contextual elements. Therefore, it is significant to underline that in public policy making social constructions could sometimes cause undesired, unlawful or inconsistent consequences which should be coped more in order prevent troublesome or unsatisfactory outcomes for the minority populations.

With the insights presented in this paper, a further research could focus more on alternative policymaking and implementing schemes that reduce the orbit of social framing and discursive practices, in case it generates a huge unequal relationship between the policy makers and the immigrant groups.

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9. APPENDIX

Yeni Akit

April

Balıkesir’de yasa dışı bahis ve kaçak göçmen uygulaması (2019, April 07). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Bakan Süleyman Soylu ülkesine dönen “Suriyeli” sayısını açıkladı. (2019, 16 april). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

CHP'li başkandan skandal açıklama: Suriyelileri kovacağız (2019, April 25). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Düzensiz göçmenlerin ülkelerine geri dönüşleri hızlandırılacak (2019, April 24). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Edirne'de 309 göçmen yakayı ele verdi (2019, April 16). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

İzmir'de 23 düzensiz göçmen ve aranan 11 kişi yakalandı (2019, April 07). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Katil Esed'den İdlib'e bir saldırı daha! Ölüler var (2019, April 27). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd

van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Piyasaya sahte para süren Suriyeli tutuklandı (2019, April 09). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Suriyeli genç, yol kenarında 10 yerinden bıçaklanmış halde bulundu (2019, April 25). *Yeni*

Akit. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Suriyeli iş adamından Türkiye ekonomisine milyonlarca dolarlık katkı (2019, April 23). *Yeni*

Akit. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Suriyeli 9 çocuk ailesine kavuştu (2019, April 11). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

May

Bakan Soylu ülkesine dönen Suriyeli sayısını açıkladı (2019, May 26). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Erdoğan'dan 'yeni operasyon' mesajı: 4 milyon Suriyeli evine dönebilecek (2019, May 26).

Yeni Akit. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Esed rejiminden İdlib'de bir saldırı daha! Ölüler var (2019, May 26). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd

van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Göç İdaresi, söylentilere son noktayı koydu: Suriyelilerin artık ekonomiye de katkısı var.

(2019, May 23). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Katil Esed rejimi, İdlib'e yine saldırdı! 4'ü çocuk 12 sivil öldü (2019, May 20). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

İdlib'de bir saldırı daha! Çok sayıda ölü var (2019, May 22). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

İdlib'de zulüm devam ediyor! Sahurdan bu yana 13 sivil öldü (2019, May 29). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

İdlib'te 6 ayda 400 bin kişi göç etti! Avrupa'ya uzanacak (2019, May 12). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Yine hastaneleri hedef aldı... Türkiye sınırına göç sürüyor (2019, May 06). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Yola çıktılar! Türkiye sınırına doğru geliyorlar (2019, May 07). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

June

Akben, A. (2019, June 23). Suriyeli Mustafa Salih *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Bakan Ruhsar Pekcan Türkiye'deki Suriyeli şirket sayısını açıkladı (2019, June 14). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Başkan Erdoğan'dan "mülteci" mesajı! "Çok büyük bir tehdittir" (2019, June 20). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

El Bab'da bombalı saldırı! Çok sayıda yaralı var (2019, June 22). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Esed rejimi İdlib'e saldırdı! 4 sivil yaşamını yitirdi (2019, June 13). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd

van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

O belediye Suriyelilerin denize girmesini yasakladı (2019, June 11). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd

van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Türkiye'den 'Suriye' açıklaması... 'İhlaller artıyor!' (2019, June 19). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd

van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Varol, A. (2019, June 21). Dünya Mülteci Günü. *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

July

AK Parti'den dikkat çeken Suriyeli açıklaması! (2019, July 27). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Alpay, K. (2019, July 26). "Sokaklarda mülteci kovalayan ülke profili" bize yakışmaz. *Yeni*

Akit. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

- Atalay, O. (2019, July 23). Suriyeli göçmenleri nasıl iade edelim? *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- Başkan Erdoğan talimatı verdi! Bundan sonra Suriyeliler... (2019, July 13). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- Huzur ve Güven uygulamasında onlarca göçmen yakalandı. (2019, July 14). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- İçişleri Bakanı Süleyman Soylu'dan kritik "Suriyeli" açıklaması! (2019, July 28). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- İstanbul Valiliği'nden flaş Suriyeli açıklaması! 20 Ağustos 2019 tarihine kadar... (2019, July 22). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- İzmir Dikili'de 52 Suriyeli kaçak göçmen yakalandı. (2019, July 27). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- Karataş, İ. (2019, July 15). S-400'ler ve Suriye'ye yeni operasyon. *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- Mülteci düşmanlarına sert tepki: Suriyeliler ülke ekonomisine yük değil. (2019, July 16). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- Osmaniye'de DAESH operasyonu! 5 Suriyeli gözaltında. (2019, July 13). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- Öztürk Yılmaz'dan Suriyeli düşmanlığında yeni boyut! 'Yurdumuzu işgal ettiler'. (2019, July 17). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- Savaş bittiğinde Suriyeli kalmaz! (2019, July 30). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- Suriyeliler ne yapsın? Düzgün giyinse bu mu mülteci? Yırtık giyinse dilenci. (2019, July 09). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- Suriyeli sığınmacıların hepsi mi gönderilecek? İçişleri Bakanı Süleyman Soylu açıkladı. (2019, July 23). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- August
- Barış koridoru 620 bin Suriyeli için umut. (2019, August 18). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- Bursa'da Suriyeli genç, yolda bulunduğu cüzdanı sahibine teslim etti. (2019, August 08). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>
- Dikili açıklarında göçmen mesaisi devam ediyor. (2019, August 24). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Hatay'da Suriye uyruklu 83 düzensiz göçmen yakalandı. (2019, August 16). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Muğla'da 38 kaçak göçmen enselendi. (2019, August 13). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Suriyelilere kayıtlı oldukları şehre gitmeleri için verilen süre uzatıldı. (2019, August 09). *Yeni*

Akit. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Suriye ve Filistin uyruklu 35 göçmen yakalandı. (2019, August 28). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd

van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

330 düzensiz göçmen yakalandı. (2019, August 19). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

September

İzmir'de birkaç saatte 324 göçmen yakalandı. (2019, September 22). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd

van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Jandarmadan düzensiz göçmen operasyonu! Suriye uyruklu şahıs gözaltında. (2019,

September 17). *Yeni Akit*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Kuzey Ege'de 31 bin 641 düzensiz göçmen yakalandı. (2019, September 16). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Soylu açıkladı: İstanbul'dan gönderilecek Suriyeli sayısı... (2019, September 06). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Üçlü Suriye Zirvesi başladı! Liderlerden kritik açıklamalar. (2019, September 16). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Zeytinlikte saklanmak isteyen mülteciler jandarmadan kaçamadı. (2019, September 16). *Yeni*

Akit. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

200 binden fazla Suriyeli Türkiye sınırına dayandı. (2019, September 09). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

October

AK Parti'den Suriye'de Güvenli Bölge açıklaması! (2019, October 24). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Durdurulan lastik botlarda onlarca Suriyeli yakalandı. (2019, October 29). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Skandal raporu utanmadan yayınladılar! Türkiye'ye 'Suriyeli' suçlaması. (2019, October 25).

Yeni Akit. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

November

Akçakale - Tel Abyad gümrük kapısı 7 yıl sonra açılıyor. (2019, November 25). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

İdlib'de sivil katliamı! 100 kişi hayatını kaybetti. (2019, November 25). *Yeni Akit*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr>

Tel Abyadlı İbrahim, 5 yıl sonra vatanına kavuştu! Şükürler olsun. (2019, November 22).

Yeni Akit. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yeniakit.com>.

Yeni Şafak

April

'Anzak Günü'nü kana bulayacaktı. (2019, April 24). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

CHP'de ırkçılık yarıştı. (2019, 26 april). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: İdlib Suriye'nin can damarlarından biri. (2019, April 08). *Yeni*

Şafak. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Esed rejiminden İdlib'e yeni saldırı: 7 ölü. (2019, April 23). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

İdlib'e hava ve kara saldırıları devam ediyor. (2019, April 28). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

Kalın: Münbiç'e kadar güvenli bölge fiilen oluştu. (2019, April 18). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd

van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Suriyeli kadın çirkin muameleye bir cümle ile cevap verdi: Allah bizi zayıf etmez. (2019, April

11). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Türk ve Suriyeli çocuklar bisiklet turunda buluşuyor. (2019, April 25). *Yeni Şafak*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

250 bin mülteci umutla bekliyor. (2019, April 09). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

May

Dolmuşta yere oturtulan Muhammed ve ailesine yardım. (2019, May 25). *Yeni Şafak*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Esed İdlib'e saldırıyor: 17 ölü, 35 yaralı. (2019, May 27). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

Gözaltına alınan DEAŞ üyesi itiraf etti. (2019, May 07). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

Hulusi Akar: Suriye rejimi Astana sürecini ihlal ediyor. (2019, May 10). *Yeni Şafak*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Suriyeli mülteci bulduğu 17 bin 500 lirayı sahibine iade etti. (2019, May 28). *Yeni Şafak*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

250 bin mülteci umutla bekliyor. (2019, April 09). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

June

Bayram sevinci yaşamadılar. (2019, June 05). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan Dünya Mülteciler Günü mesajı. (2019, June 20). *Yeni Şafak*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Esed İdlib'e saldırmaya devam ediyor: 10 sivil hayatını kaybetti. (2019, June 19). *Yeni Şafak*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

İdlib'de bayram bombardıman altında geçiyor. (2019, June 04). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

Milyonlar bayramı unuttu. (2019, June 04). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

July

BM'den Suriye çağrısı: Bu yerlerin kazayla vurulması mümkün değil. (2019, July 26). *Yeni*

Şafak. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Bu oyunu gördük. (2019, July 23). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: S-400'ler tarihimizin en önemli anlaşmasıdır. (2019, July 14). *Yeni*

Şafak. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Çirkin bir provokasyon. (2019, July 23). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

Geri kabul iptal edilsin. (2019, July 27). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

İdlib'e saldırılar devam ediyor: 14 ölü. (2019, July 27). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

İstanbul Valiliği: Kaydı bulunmayan Suriyeler 20 Ağustos'a kadar başka illere gönderilecek.

(2019, July 22). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Soylu: Kayıtsız Suriyelileri sınır dışı yapmıyoruz kamplara gönderiyoruz. (2019, July 24).

Yeni Şafak. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Teşkilata Suriyeli talimatı. (2019, July 29). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

August

Erdoğan ve Putin telefonda görüştü. (2019, August 23). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

İdlib'de Esed Rejimi ve Rusya saldırısı: 9 ölü. (2019, August 25). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd

van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

İstanbul'da 16 bin 423 kaçak göçmen geri gönderildi. (2019, August 27). *Yeni Şafak*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Mülteciliğin nedeni ABD müdahalesi. (2019, August 25). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

Sanatıyla hayatlara dokunuyor. (2019, August 19). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

Suriye'deki sağlık çalışmaları durdu. (2019, August 25). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

Tekirdağ'da Suriye uyruklu PKK'lı yakalandı. (2019, August 26). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd

van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Trump 20 mil sözü verdi. (2019, August 16). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

2 milyon ayağa kalkar. (2019, August 15). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

September

Çobanbey'de bombalı terör saldırısı: 11 sivil öldü. (2019, September 15). *Yeni Şafak*.

Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

Güvenli bölgede ilk konutlar. (2019, September 25). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

İç para dolu cüzdanı yolda bulan Suriyeli genç, cebinde para olmadığı için yürüyerek gittiği

karakola cüzdanı teslim etti. (2019, September 28). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

Zeytin Dalı bölgesine 3 fakülte. (2019, September 19). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van

<https://www.yenisafak.com>

October

AK Parti Sözcüsü Çelik: Barış Pınarı Harekatı DEAŞ ile mücadeleyi güçlendirdi. (2019,

October 28). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>

- Barış Pınarı'ndan bereket fişkıracak. (2019, October 27). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>
- Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan mutabakat açıklaması: Putin 'biz bunları buralardan kesinlikle atarız' dedi. (2019, October 23). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>
- Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Mazlum denilen kod adlı kırmızı bültenle aranan teröristi Amerika'nın bize teslim etmesi lazım. (2019, October 24). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>
- İnsani yardımda Türkiye'nin tek rakibi kendisi. (2019, October 24). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>
- MSB: Mevcut hareket alanımız dışında yeni bir hareket icra edilmesine gerek kalmamıştır. (2019, October 23). *Yeni Şafak*. Geraadpleegd van <https://www.yenisafak.com>
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