



Parahyangan Catholic University
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences
Department of International Relations

Accredited UNGGUL

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Motivations for Escalation:
The Successes of Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch on
Turkey's Armed Conflict Escalation by Peace Spring
in Northern Syria

Undergraduate Thesis

By
Maria Agatha Kunti Trinanganti
6091901057

Bandung
2023



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International Relations Undergraduate Program



Thesis Validation

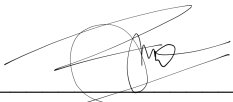
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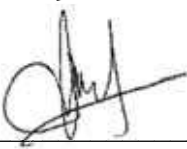
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1. Perbaikan Judul Skripsi menjadi (**Judul harus ditulis lengkap menggunakan huruf besar kecil/Title Case**)

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2. Perbaikan Umum (meliputi : cara merujuk, daftar pustaka, teknis editing) :

1. Abstrak = obyektif +
2. Skripsi dikurangi halamannya kecuali data-data yang signifikan

3. Perbaikan di Bab 1

Bab 1:
a. Goal incompatibility bisa jadi LBM saja dan IM bisa tunjukkan eskalasi-nya dan alasan Turki terus melakukan eskalasi itu (harus kontradiktif).
b. Problems: spesifik saja.
c. RQ fokus ke 1 hal saja
d. LBM : hindari historis dan data sejarah bisa dimasukkan ke bab 2.
e. Hilangkan kata-kata "will" atau "akan".
f. Litrev: carilah tentang literatur yang temanya dekat dgn eskalasi dan goal compatibility.
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Tunjukkan operasi-operasi militer Turki sebelumnya yang benar dengan data primer

5. Perbaikan di Bab 3

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Jawab RQ secara lebih concise

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Hereby assert that this thesis is the product of my own research, and it has not been previously proposed by any other academics or parties in order to attain an academic degree. The works or opinions gained and gathered from other parties are officially and academically cited in accordance with valid scientific writing methods.

I make this statement with my fullest intent and responsibility and am willing to accept any consequences under applicable regulations that may rise as a result of future discoveries that prove this statement otherwise.

Bandung, July 11th, 2023




Maria Agatha Kunti Trinanganti

ABSTRAK

Nama : Maria Agatha Kunti Trinanganti
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Judul : Motivasi Eskalasi: Kesuksesan Euphrates Shield dan Olive Branch dalam Eskalasi Konflik Bersenjata Turki melalui Peace Spring di Suriah Utara

Tujuan Turki di Suriah utara dan ketidaksihinggaannya dengan tujuan pasukan bersenjata Kurdi menyebabkan terjadinya konflik bersenjata di antara mereka dengan Turki melakukan dua operasi militer—Operasi Euphrates Shield and Operasi Olive Branch—ke Suriah utara untuk mencapai tujuannya dalam menghadapi kelompok Kurdi Suriah yang berafiliasi dengan PKK dan melakukan perluasan wilayah untuk melakukan relokasi pengungsi. Operasi ini terbukti berhasil dengan memberikan Turki hasil menguntungkan yang berkontribusi pada proses pencapaian tujuannya. Hal ini diikuti dengan operasi militer lain, Operasi Peace Spring, untuk menghasilkan kesuksesan yang lebih menguntungkan setelah keberhasilan operasi sebelumnya, memberikan implikasi akan pengaruh mereka terhadap berjalannya Operasi Peace Spring. Hal ini menimbulkan pertanyaan akan pengaruh kesuksesan Operasi Euphrates Shield and Operasi Olive Branch terhadap motivasi eskalasi konflik bersenjata Turki dengan pasukan bersenjata Kurdi melalui Operasi Peace Spring. Melalui metode penelitian kualitatif studi kasus yang dipandu oleh teori eskalasi oleh Forrest Morgan *et al.* serta Otomar J. Bartos dan Paul Wehr, khususnya mengenai pengaruh hasil positif dari konflik terhadap keputusan untuk eskalasi. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa hasil menguntungkan dari Operasi Euphrates Shield and Operasi Olive Branch—terutama pada peningkatan sumber daya dalam wilayah, otoritas, dan dukungan—memberi motivasi Turki untuk mengeskalasi konflik bersenjatanya dengan pasukan bersenjata Kurdi melalui operasi militer, Operasi Peace Spring, karena Turki memiliki keunggulan atas Kurdi dengan kemungkinan untuk mendapatkan kesuksesan yang lebih banyak.

Kata kunci: eskalasi konflik, hasil sebagai motivasi, operasi militer Turki, pasukan bersenjata Kurdi, Suriah utara

ABSTRACT

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Turkey's goals in northern Syria and its incompatibility with the Kurdish armed forces had led to an armed conflict between them as Turkey conducted two military operations—Operation Euphrates Shield and Operation Olive Branch—into northern Syria in order to achieve its goals in confronting PKK-affiliated Syrian Kurdish groups and conducting territorial expansion for refugee relocation. These operations proved to be successful as they provided Turkey favourable outcomes that contributed to the process of achieving its goals. This was followed by another military operation, Operation Peace Spring, to attain more success after the successes of the previous military operation, providing implications of their influence towards conducting Operation Peace Spring. This brought forth the question on the influence of successes in Operation Euphrates Shield and Operation Olive Branch towards motivating Turkey's conflict escalation with the Kurdish armed forces through Operation Peace Spring. Through a case study qualitative method of research guided by the theory of escalation by Forrest Morgan *et al.* as well as Otomar J. Bartos and Paul Wehr, particularly on the influence of positive outcomes in conflict towards the decision to escalation. This research finds that the favourable outcomes of Operation Euphrates Shield and Operation Olive Branch—specifically on increased resources in land, authority, and support—motivated Turkey to escalate its armed conflict with the Kurdish armed forces by conducting another military operation, Operation Peace Spring, as Turkey gained an advantage over the Kurds with possibilities to gain more.

Keywords: conflict escalation, outcome as motivation, Turkey military operations, Kurdish armed forces, northern Syria

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AANES	Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria
AKP	Justice and Development Party (<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i>)
ATGM	Anti-Tank Guided Missiles
CAS	Close-Range Support
DFNS	Democratic Federation of Northern Syria
EU	European Union
FSA	Free Syrian Army (also known as the Syrian National Army)
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IS	Islamic State
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
MEDEVAC	Medical Evacuations
MLRS	Multiple-Launch Rocket Systems
OES	Operation Euphrates Shield
OOB	Operation Olive Branch
OPS	Operation Peace Spring
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (<i>Partiya Karkêren Kurdistan</i>)
PYD	Democratic Union Party (<i>Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat</i>)
SDC	Syrian Democratic Council
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SIG	Syrian Interim Government
SNA	Syrian National Army (also known as the Free Syrian Army)
SNC	Syrian National Council

TAF	Turkish Armed Forces
US	United States of America
YDGH	Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (<i>Yurtsever Devrimci Gençlik Hareketi</i>)
YPG	People's Protection Unit (<i>Yekîneyên Parastina Gel</i>)
YPJ	Women's Protection Units (<i>Yekîneyên Parastina Jin</i>)
YPS	Civil Protection Units (<i>Yekîneyên Parastina Sivîl</i>)

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

Turkey's goals, and evident incompatibility with the Syrian Kurdish groups, led to the country conducting several military operations from 2016 to 2018 known as Operation Euphrates Shield (OES) and Operation Olive Branch (OOB). These military operations themselves resulted in an armed conflict to occur between Turkey and the previously mentioned Syrian Kurdish groups—further identified as the Kurdish armed forces, which consist of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and People's Protection Unit (*Yekîneyên Parastina Gel* or YPG; the military group of *Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat* or Democratic Union Party, abbreviated as PYD)—in northern Syria. These military operations were deemed successful by Turkey as it has provided the country outcomes that created favourable conditions for escalation to occur.

The two military operations into northern Syria had the purpose to address Turkey's security concerns. The stated goals Turkey aims to achieve through these military operations are to maintain its border security, to counter terrorism along its border, and secure an environment in northern Syria to create a "safe zone" for the relocation of Syrian refugee—which would hopefully discourage the influx of Syrian refugees into Turkey—and

maintain the sustainability of the region through the restoration of security.¹ However, two main goals can be derived from these stated goals, which are to counter terrorism in the form of Syrian Kurdish groups affiliated to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkêren Kurdistan* or PKK) and conduct territorial expansion.

The PKK has long been in a conflict with Turkey since its insurgency in 1984 on Turkish soil. Its affiliations with several Kurdish groups in northern Syria are a cause of security concern for Turkey, especially due to their aspirations for a Kurdish autonomous administration in the proximity of Turkey's southern border and creating a 'corridor of terror'. This was made possible by the chaos of the Syrian War which created a power vacuum in northern Syria following the withdrawal of Syrian forces from the area, filled by these Kurdish groups and the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS).²

Turkey's desire to conduct territorial expansion was motivated by the decline of living conditions in several Turkish cities due to the influx of Syrian refugees settling in Turkish soil. This territorial expansion is to establish a safe zone for refugee relocation back to Syrian soil that also operate as a buffer zone against further negative impacts of the Syrian War.³ The success of this goal would also push back Syrian Kurdish groups from the Turkish-Syrian border as these zones are to be established in the territories of Syrian Kurdish.⁴

¹ Murat Aslan, *Turkey's Reconstruction Model in Syria* (Ankara: SETA Publication, 2019), 7.

² Lacin Idil Oztig, "Syria-Turkey: Border-Security Priorities," *Middle East Policy* 26, No. 1 (2016): 120.

³ Oztig, "Syria-Turkey: Border-Security Priorities," 120, 122.

⁴ Federico Donelli, "Syrian Refugees in Turkey: A Security Perspective," *New England Journal of Public Policy* 30, Issue 2 (2018): 3.

With these goals, Turkey's military operations resulted in an armed conflict with the Kurdish armed forces, which are the PKK-affiliated SDF and YPG (the armed wing of PYD), especially due to the second military operation specifically targeted towards confronting these Kurdish groups. This conflict was evidently resulted from the incompatibility experienced between Turkey and these Kurdish groups regarding their goals in northern Syria. As Turkey aims to confront these Kurdish groups and conduct territorial expansion in northern Syria, the Kurdish groups have long desire to gain their own independence which has shifted into establishing a Kurdish autonomous area in their host country, coincidentally in the areas along the Turkish-Syrian border.⁵

The military operations in 2016-2017 and 2018 have proven to be fruitful for Turkey as these goals continued to be partially achieved through the successes of attaining their respective objectives.⁶ Through these, Turkey's armed conflict with the Kurdish armed forces in northern Syria evidently provided the country positive outcomes of conflict that have contributed to Turkey's effort in acquiring its goals.

⁵ Schmidinger, *The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria: Between A Rock and A Hard Place*, 3.

⁶ Francesco Siccardi, "How Syria Changed Turkey's Foreign Policy" (working paper, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2021), 4-5, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Siccardi_-_Turkey_Syria-V3.pdf.; "Turkey's Political Relations with Syria," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye*, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/reasons-between-turkey%E2%80%93syria.en.mfa>.

1.2. Identification of Problem

After more than a year of OOB ending in 2018, Turkey conducted another military operation into northern Syria to confront the Kurdish armed forces, known as Operation Peace Spring (OPS) in 2019. The objectives of this operation were still aligned to Turkey's two main goals of confronting the terrorism brought by the PKK-affiliated Kurdish groups and conducting territorial expansion.

OPS was one of Turkey's first step into acquiring north-eastern Syria areas for the proposed 30-km deep and 480-km wide safe zone, directly in the areas where the Kurdish armed forces had withdrawn to after OES and OOB.⁷ This showed a different element between OPS and the previous military operations from 2016 to 2018, which is the targeted area of the conflict. Unlike OES and OOB, OPS was conducted to the areas in the east of Euphrates River rather than west of the river. Regardless, the 2019 military operation was evidently an escalation action by Turkey in its armed conflict with the Kurdish armed forces.

Turkey began its initial shelling and airstrikes on October 9th into several areas of northern Syria, which are Manbij, Kobani, Tal Abyad and Suluk, Ras al-Ayn, Al-Dirbasiyah, Amuda, Al-Qamishli, and Al-Malikiyah.⁸ Within one

⁷ Doga Eralp, "The Safe Zone for Undesirables on the Turkey-Syria Border," *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 32 (2020):185.; Karen DeYoung and Liz Sly, "U.S.-Turkey deal aims to create de facto 'safe zone' in northwest Syria," *Washington Post*, July 26, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/new-us-turkey-plan-amounts-to-a-safe-zone-in-northwest-syria/2015/07/26/0a533345-ff2e-4b40-858a-c1b36541e156_story.html.; Muhammet Faruk Alagas, "'Güvenli bölge"nin çerçevesi netleşiyor," *Anadolu Ajansı*, October 16, 2014, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/guvenli-bolgenin-cercevesi-netlesiyor/110451>.

⁸ Immap, *Operation Peace Spring and Potential Turkish Intervention Scenarios*, Thematic Report 6 (Washington D.C.: iMMAP, 2022), 18.

month, Turkey successfully captured Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ayn and agreed to a ceasefire.⁹

OPS is evidently an escalation action by Turkey to acquire its goals in northern Syria. However, OPS was conducted for more than a year after OOB in a different area of northern Syria, after acquiring several favourable outcomes from OES and OOB. Therefore, there is a possibility that Turkey's previous military has likely contributed to the escalation itself by providing favourable outcomes through achieving their respective objectives that operate as motivations behind OPS as it desires the achievement of its goals and repeat the successes of OES and OOB.

1.3. Scope and Limitation of Problem

This research focuses on examining Turkey's previous military operations, OES and OOB, and its successes as a possible motivator for the country to conduct an escalation of its armed conflict with the Kurdish armed forces in the form of the military operation, OPS, in 2019.

There are two specific actors identified as the main actors of this research: Turkey and the Kurdish armed forces. However, the research focuses particularly on Turkey. More so, the government of Turkey under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which is represented in the conflict by Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) along with the Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA; also known as the Syrian National Army or SNA) and Turkey's

⁹ Salim Çevik, "Turkey's Military Operations in Syria and Iraq," *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik Comment* 37 (May 2022): 3.

special forces; also identified as Turkish forces. The Kurdish armed forces refer to the SDF and YPG—can also be referred as Kurdish groups consisting of PYD/YPG and SDF—who are identified as Syrian Kurdish forces with affiliations to the terrorist group, PKK.

The research is limited to the timeframe of 2016 to 2019. This is due Operation Euphrates Shield conducted in the period of 2016 to 2017 and Operation Olive Branch conducted in 2018 with outcomes that possibly occurred well into 2019.

1.4. Research Question

With the elaboration provided, the author seeks to further understand the influence of Turkey's military operation, OES and OOB in 2016 to 2018, and its successes on the decision to conduct an escalation in the armed conflict through another military operation, OPS, in 2019 by answering the research question of "How does the successes of Operation Euphrates Shield and Operation Olive Branch provide motivations for Turkey's conflict escalation with the Kurdish armed forces through Operation Peace Spring?"

1.5. Objective of Research

This research examines the motivations of Turkey's conflict escalation in Operation Peace Spring that are provided by the successes of its previous military operations in 2016 to 2018. From this, the research elaborates the outcomes of OES and OOB, particularly the positive outcomes of these

military operations which define their successes. This is further examined to the context of Turkey's conflict escalation through OPS as motivations of escalation, especially in connection to acquiring Turkish goals in northern Syria.

1.6. Significance of Research

The research has two specific significances:

1. The research allows the author to fulfil the requirements of the author's academic education in pursuing a degree on Bachelor of Arts in International Relations. The research has also provided the author an opportunity to apply concepts, theories, and methodologies into a research which examines the escalation of Turkey's armed conflict with the Kurdish armed forces through a military operation that is motivated by the successes of previous military operations.
2. The research provides insights for enthusiasts of conflict studies related to escalation, Turkey's military operations into northern Syria, and its armed conflict with the Kurdish armed forces in northern Syria. The author hopes that this research can be considered as a reference material.

1.7. Literature Review

In *Turkey's Military Operations in Syria and Iraq* by Salim Çevik,¹⁰ the military operations conducted by Turkey, particularly in Syria and Iraq, had two specific aims (or goals) specified to addressing the PKK and its affiliates. The first is to ensure that they are kept away from Turkish territory by preventing it from amassing power near Turkey's border. The second is to ensure that they cannot create a corridor of power along the southern Turkish border from Iraq to the Mediterranean, connecting PKK territories of Iraq to Syria. These aims were encouraged by Turkey's own motivations in its domestic politics to create division among oppositions of Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* or AKP), securitize the Kurdish question, and rally support for the AKP. These series of military operations in foreign soils have been considered as a partial success as some positive outcomes of these operations, although not as much as Turkey hoped, have encourage Turkey to conduct more.

Francesco Siccardi's working paper, *How Syria Changed Turkey's Foreign Policy*,¹¹ presented a similar goal behind its decision to conduct military operations in Syria. However, rather than security-focused goals, Siccardi presented a goal focused on its domestic politics. The military operations into Syria were a strategy for President Erdoğan and his AKP to preserve their power by weakening the power of the Kurds and oppositions in Turkey to strengthen its authoritarianism while gaining domestic support for Erdoğan and his AKP. Resulting in the straining of Turkey's relationship

¹⁰ Çevik, "Turkey's Military Operations in Syria and Iraq," 1-8.

¹¹ Siccardi, "How Syria Changed Turkey's Foreign Policy," 1-33.

with the US and Russia in certain matters of Syria, while gaining leverage on the European Union. Similar to Çevik, the successes of Turkey's military operations in Syria gave Turkey, or more so President Erdoğan and his AKP, positive outcomes to continue conducting more military operations that resulted in similar positive outcomes.

Differing from Çevik and Siccardi, Arzu Yilmaz in *Turkey's War in Syria: Prevention or Expansion*¹² suggested that Turkey's security pursue against the Kurds in Syria through its military operations were to justify its true goal in the eyes of the international society, which is to pursue its territorial expansion aspirations in the region. Yilmaz examined this through Turkey's position in Middle East on the Kurdish question prior and during the Syrian War and the utilization of the Kurdish question on the 2018 Afrin invasion, which was essentially an escalation of Operation Euphrates Shield. By identifying the Kurds as a threat near its border and the necessity to address it, Turkey's entrance into Syrian soil through its military operations is perceived as legitimate, within the rights of Turkey to defend its border security.

The three literatures demonstrated the various goals Turkey had in conducting its military operations into Syria, which its achievements encourage the decisions to conduct more military operations. Evidently, these goals contradict the goal of the Kurdish people in Syria, whether PKK or others, which is to establish their own autonomous area in northern Syria.

¹² Arzu Yilmaz, "Turkey's War in Syria: Prevention or Expansion," in *The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria: Between A Rock and A Hard Place*, ed. Thomas Schmidinger (London: Transnational Press London, 2020), 117-132.

Therefore, these various contradicted goals presented themselves as a possible root of the armed conflict, which provided conditions in the form of favourable outcomes in the military operations to conduct more operations. However, the literatures lack deeper discussion on Operation Peace Spring as an escalation to the conflict with implications to previous military operations. It is here, this research aims to examine.

1.8. Theoretical Framework

Conflict can be understood depending on its form. In general, a conflict as pursuit or strive to acquire contradicting goals of the same resource by two or more actors as seen in the definition provided by Galtung in “actors in pursuit of incompatible goals” and Wallensteen’s “a social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set of scarce resources.”¹³ This can be expanded with the definition of armed conflict which “exists whenever there is a resort to armed force between States or protracted armed violence between governmental authorities and organized armed groups or between such groups within a State.”¹⁴ Therefore, a pursuit to acquire contradicting goals of the same resource by two or more actors by a resort to armed force.

¹³ Johan Galtung, *Theories of conflict: Definitions, Dimensions, Negations, Formations* (United States of America: TRANSCEND University Press, 2009), 44, https://www.transcend.org/files/Galtung_Book_Theories_Of_Conflict_single.pdf; Peter Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace and the Global System* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2002), 16.

¹⁴ The Prosecutor v. Duško Tadić a/k/a “DULE”, IT-94-1-AR72, 37 (1995), <https://cld.irmct.org/assets/Uploads/full-text-dec/1995/95-10-02%20Tadic%20Interlocutory%20Decision%20on%20Jurisdiction.pdf>.

Conflict itself can be followed by an escalation(s) through the increase of intensity or scope of said conflict that is considered significant by the actors of the conflict, which can be conducted unilaterally or as a response to the action(s) of opponent.¹⁵ This is visible through Turkey's Operation Peace Spring in 2019 as an unilateral escalation which increased the intensity and scope of its conflict with the Kurdish armed forces in northern Syria.

Forrest E. Morgan *et al.* suggested several important points of escalation in their book *Dangerous Thresholds: Managing Escalation in the 21st Century*, in which some can contribute to the discussion of this research. The first is the motivations of escalation in deliberate escalation. In its essence, deliberate escalation indicates intentional actions of an actor to escalate the conflict as it is recognized as a decision that provide prospects of conflict success or increase in fortunes.¹⁶ Due to this, there must be motivations behind a deliberate escalation. However, motivations behind escalation can vary as there are many reasons actors influence the decision to escalate a conflict.

Morgan *et al.* suggested two broad categories of escalation motivations, which are instrumental and suggestive. In its essence, instrumental escalation suggests that an escalation is deliberately conducted due to the advantage it can provide the actor, such as improving the actor's conditions, by achieving victory or avoid defeat.¹⁷ It is in instrumental escalation, an escalation is likely

¹⁵ Forrest E. Morgan *et al.*, *Dangerous Thresholds: Managing Escalation in the 21st Century* (United States of America: RAND Corporation, 2008), 8-9.

¹⁶ Morgan *et al.*, *Dangerous Thresholds: Managing Escalation in the 21st Century*, 20-21.

¹⁷ Morgan *et al.*, *Dangerous Thresholds: Managing Escalation in the 21st Century*, 30.; Forrest E. Morgan *et al.*, "Managing Escalation in Crisis and War," in *Confronting Emergent Nuclear-Armed Regional Adversaries* (United States of America: RAND Corporation, 2015), 31.

to occur through the use of force. This form of motivation can be further examined with Otomar J. Bartos and Paul Wehr's escalation due to conflict feedbacks.

Bartos and Wehr suggested several factors of a conflict feedback that can encourage escalation to occur. This research focuses on the increase of actor's resources as a factor. An increase of actor's resources is an example of a positive and favourable outcome from a conflict that can serve as an escalation motivation due to the rise of confidence in actor's ability with the hopes of prevailing further in attaining its goal in the conflict as its increases the actor's capacity in conflict.¹⁸

When combined with Morgan *et al.*'s instrumental escalation, Bartos and Wehr's increase of actor's resources can expand the understanding of deliberate escalation to advance actor's conditions in its conflict against an opponent(s). The increase of actor's resources can increase confidence and hopes of truly attaining its goals in its conflict, which meant that there is an increase of actor's believe on its ability and capability. As the conflict itself is not over due to the goals not yet achieved, it is possible to assume that the conditions of the actor can continuously be improved if the situation allows. Due to this, the confidence and hopes of prevailing gained from the increase of resources can encourage the decision to escalate just by the assumption that an advantage can be gained by the actor through escalation.

The form of resources itself can also vary. Resources do not necessarily mean a tangible form—such as money and land—as resource essentially can

¹⁸ Otomar J. Bartos and Paul Wehr, *Using Conflict Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 112, 118.

be anything of the actor desires to attain. Wallensteen included matters of justice, moral norms, and guilt, with examples of “demands for recognition, acceptance of responsibility for destructive actions or psychological retribution exemplify intangible values” as examples of non-economic-related resources.¹⁹ To Bartos and Wehr, resources are categorized as wealth, power, and prestige.²⁰ Due to the unrestricted form of resources that an actor can gain, the increase of resources motivating an escalation can correspond to the original goal of actor in its conflict or it can also evolve as it adjust to the ongoing conflict.

If an increase of resources corresponds to the actor’s goal in the conflict, the actor itself has experience a favourable outcome in the process of attaining its goal. In this case, the escalation that occurred is undeniably connected to the actor’s original goal, meaning that the goal (and its incompatibility) formed a conflict that produced an advantageous outcome(s) in the form of increased resources which encourage an escalation that is, in its core, motivated by the desire to truly attain its goals.

The second point suggested by Morgan *et al.* is the role of escalation dominance in an escalation. Escalation dominance itself is the ability of an actor to escalate a conflict in a way that will be disadvantageous for the opponent while it cannot do the same. Through this dominance, the actor can essentially decide the outcomes in a conflict, not only by the ability to conduct escalation with minimal cost, but also to conduct de-escalation. However,

¹⁹ Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace and the Global System*, 17.

²⁰ Bartos and Wehr, *Using Conflict Theory*, 30-32.; Thomas Matyók *et al.*, *Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2011), 25.

escalation dominance is more apparent as an act of exploiting the vulnerabilities of the opponent due to the asymmetry of influence between actors in order to gain an advantage.²¹

It should be noted that normal escalation is among states as actors. In this research, the actors are state and non-state. A conflict between these two actors is seen as irregular warfare by Morgan *et al.* which meant an existing asymmetry of power between the actors as states have the advantage in its forces, such as conventional force. Due to this, the state might seek escalation dominance over the non-state actor to essentially end the conflict.²² This is an example of what Morgan *et al.* suggested in irregular warfare escalation, in which it is more likely for state actor to conduct escalation rather than the nonstate actors.²³ Therefore, it is evident that a state actor is likely to have escalation dominance in a conflict due to the asymmetry of power between the state and non-state actor. Due to this, the state actor is likely the one to conduct the escalation, rather than the non-state actor.

With the assumption brought in the first point, there is a possibility of influence due to the outcomes of conflict in this escalation dominance, particularly regarding the symmetry and asymmetry of power between actors. As escalation dominance aims to exploit vulnerabilities of the opponent to gain advantage, the outcomes of the conflict gained prior to the escalation can have certain influence in the decision to escalate. An example: with the logic

²¹ Morgan *et al.*, *Dangerous Thresholds: Managing Escalation in the 21st Century*, 16-17.; Tim Sweijts, Artur Usanov, and Rik Rutten, "Crisis and Escalation," in *Back to The Brink: Escalation and Interstate Crisis*, HCSS StratMon 2016 (Den Haag: Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 2016), 47.

²² Morgan *et al.*, *Dangerous Thresholds: Managing Escalation in the 21st Century*, 131.

²³ Morgan *et al.*, *Dangerous Thresholds: Managing Escalation in the 21st Century*, 118.

of increase resources, the opponent is likely to experience a decrease of resource. This would empower the actor's escalation dominance, especially in an irregular warfare in which a power asymmetry already exists. Therefore, conducting an escalation is well within the actor's ability as the possibility of retaliation from the opponent to respond the escalation is less threatening compared to the potential gain.

1.9. Research Methodology

1.9.1. Type of Research

This research utilizes a qualitative research method of case study analytic approach. Qualitative method is an intuitive and systematic research technic which is utilized to yield understanding in an efficient and coherent manner by focusing on process, meaning, and understanding of individuals or groups in connection to a problem or issue.²⁴ The analytic approach of case study allows the research to conduct, describe, and produce a comprehensive analysis of a specific case or phenomenon, which is Turkey's armed conflict with the Kurdish armed forces in northern Syria, by gathering information using data collection.²⁵ Through this qualitative method, an understanding is gained in the research.

²⁴ Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2016), 294.; Umar Suryadi Bakry, *Metode Penelitian Hubungan Internasional* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2016), 62.

²⁵ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2018), 51; John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 17.

1.9.2. Source of Data

Data of this research are from secondary sources in the form of documents. Documents cover a wide range of written, visual, digital, and physical material, which include public records and personal documents to visual documents.²⁶

Documents in the research consist of offline and online documents. Offline documents take form of physical documents, such as physical reports or books, while online documents are documents that can (only) be accessed through the Internet, such as reports, news articles, and previous researches, collected through official websites of governments, institutions, and organization, online databases of literature such as ProQuest and Google Scholar, and others. These documents are collected based on their relations with the topic as well as its scope and limitations.

1.10. Research Structure

Chapter I: Introduction aims to introduce the basis of the research by elaborating the manner in which the academic process of the research is conducted. As the background of the research is provided, identifying the research problem is followed by a set of limitations to aid research question elaboration. Objectives and contribution of the research is set soon after. In addition, a literature review is conducted with the theoretical framework and

²⁶ Merriam and Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 162-163.

research methodology elaborated. Lastly, the research structure is decided to determine the research's discussion in following chapters.

Chapter II: Turkey's Goals and Its Military Operations into Northern Syria explores several conditions surrounding Turkey's escalation in its armed conflict with the Kurdish armed forces. Sub-chapter **2.1. Turkey's Goals in Its Armed Conflict in Northern Syria** delve into the conditions that resulted on Turkey's goals in northern Syria, particularly regarding Turkey's concern on the growth of PKK-affiliated Kurdish groups and the safe zone establishment for refugee relocation. This is followed by the description of Turkey's military operations, particularly the operations prior the escalation (OES and OOB) as well as the operation that is the escalation (OPS), in **2.2. Turkey's Military Operations from 2016 to 2019**.

Chapter III: Favourable Outcomes of Operation Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch as Turkey's Escalation Motivation examines the escalation by Turkey through OPS in its armed conflict with the Kurdish armed forces in northern Syria that is encouraged by the outcomes of previous military operations, OES and OOB, in connection to Turkey's efforts to acquire its goals, utilizing the elaborated theoretical framework. The first sub-chapter **3.1. The Favourable Outcomes of OES and OOB: The Increased Resource in Land, Authority, and Support** elaborates the favourable outcomes of OES and OOB in the forms of increased resources, particularly on land, authority, and support. Sub-chapter **3.2. Continuous Benefits in Military Operations: The Deliberate Escalation by Operation Peace Spring** focuses on the influence of increase in resources as an instrumental

motivation from OES and OOB on the deliberate escalation in OPS. This is followed by **3.2. Escalation by Operation Peace Spring: The Power Asymmetry of Turkey and the Kurdish Armed Forces**, which examines the effects of favourable outcomes in OES and OOB towards the escalation dominance, specifically on the symmetry/asymmetry of power, between Turkey and the Kurdish armed forces and the influence on the decision to escalate in OPS.

Chapter IV: Conclusion presents the conclusion of the discussions conducted in the previous chapters in accordance with the theoretical framework and methodology determined in the first chapter to answer the research question. This chapter further emphasize the arguments connected to the question previously brought forth, particularly on the contributions of OES and OOB through their favourable outcomes to Turkey's escalation by another military operation in 2019, known as OPS.