Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

Due to Turkey's desire in retaining an unitary state, The Turkish government and military has always preferred to deal the Kurdish issue using security-oriented approaches. Prior to 2002, the securitization of the Kurdish issue did not just affect the Kurdish separatist groups, but it impacted the whole Kurdish society in Turkey. The Kurds were subjected to harsh Turkish laws and policies such as the Anti-Terror Law or the 'state of emergency'. Extraordinary measures were deliberately taken by the government to further suppress Kurdish traits or character and secure a homogeneous Turkish identity within the country. However, things changed for the better during Turkey's accession to the European Union and when the Justice and Development Party (AKP) were formed, as both laid out the framework of normal politics where the normalization process of the Kurdish issue can occur.

Within the process of normalization, previously securitized issues have begun to be perceived in the realm of normal politics. Through the three attempts explained in the previous chapter, the author argued that the normalization process involved three attempts enacted by the Turkish government: (1) Prime Minister Erdoğan's speech in Diyarbakir in 2005, which marked the first attempt in history for the Kurdish issue to be publicly acknowledged and discussed; (2) The Kurdish Opening in 2009, in which a set of initiatives was launched for the betterment of the Kurdish

well-being; (3) Oslo Process in 2012-2013, where open dialogue between the Turkish state and PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan have take place.

It is argued that the main traits and characteristics of desecuritization are present within each of these attempts. These characteristics are the reconstruction/deconstruction of identity, widening of actors involved in the issue, and passing on new legislation over sensitive issues. Only after these steps have been taken, can the Kurdish issue be successfully desecuritized. In the context of Turkey, the government has managed to calm down the tensions that were contributed by the Kurdish issue for decades. Unlike its predecessor, the Erdoğan-led party (AKP) has sucessfully initiated the desecuritization process of the Kurdish issue that was born since Turkey's declaration of independence. Although the party encountered many setbacks and received harsh criticisms from opposing parties, AKP was comitted to restore the rights of Turkey's minorities simply because it also believed the ways in which the Kurdish issue used to be dealt with by the previous government was wrong. If it wasn't for AKP and its alignment to join European Union, it is safe to say that the Kurdish issue will still be securitized today.

Now, the Kurds in Turkey can enjoy the same privileges as other minority groups and Turkish population that live in Turkey. As of today, the Kurds can finally speak their own native language without the fear of being prosecuted, revert their names back to Kurdish, enter Turkey's political arena and viewed as an equal opponent, etc. However, if the Turkish government does not maintain its methods of

cooperation and negotiation, the Kurdish issue may emerge again and the normalization process, thus, reversed.

The author has some recommendations of how the issue can be maintained within the sphere of 'normal' politics, which is outlined as follows: Turkish authorities can move from a military to a law-enforcement approach to armed opponents, aiming to capture insurgents alive whenever possible; prepare a full amnesty program; create programs for the rehabilitation of ex-combatants; train police in non-violent methods to deal with protests in the south east; and fully investigate all murders and atrocities in the conflict. As for the government, one of the measures they can take is to commit to dialogue and compromise with the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey, especially its legitimate representatives in parliament. Another one is to ensure equal treatment of and financial disbursements to all municipalities, especially to Kurdish cities in Turkey.

If the government takes all of these steps after the Kurdish issue is fully desecuritized, the author believes that the Kurdish issue can never be securitized again. This way, insecure actors can no longer search for potential threats from the Kurds and reverse the desecuritization process that has happened. Therefore, the author thinks it is necessary for a new set of research to be made—in regards to maintain the Kurdish issue within the realm of 'normal' politics—in order to avoid the re-securitization of the issue. Hopefully in the future, other academicians or university student can create this research, which would potentially secure the

position of the Kurds in the realm of political sphere, where it could only be addressed by means of cooperation and negotiation.

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