



ISSUE OF HATAY IN TURKEY-SYRIA RELATIONS AND GEOPOLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF HATAY*

Kadir SANCAK**

ABSTRACT

Today, there are eight countries that Turkey shares a land border with and one of them is Syria. However relations between people live in both sides date back to ancient times, relation history of both countries as an independent states is much more closer. Syria which was ruled under mandate government by France together with the Ottoman Empire had fallen down, gained it's independence in real terms afterwards World War 2. In addition to this, relations and problems between both countries have started in the periods when Syria was under the mandate. One of the primary problem titles has been Issue of Hatay and this problem has continued to date even putting on the back burner depending on the conjuncture on occasion.

Hatay, beyond being a problem source between both countries, is a significant region in terms of geopolitics with it's prevailing geographical location on the East Mediterranean. This situation has come to the front together with the civil war occurred in Syria after 2011. In addition to these, getting positive outcomes from researching operations of oil and natural gas in Mediterranean recently is considered as an another factor rising Hatay's importance.

In this paper, first of all, effects of the Hatay Question, which is an important problem title in Turkey-Syria relations, on both country's relations in the historical context will be handled. Then, Hatay's geopolitical location and rising importance of this location together with the war has been going on in Syria will be marked.

Key Words: Turkey, Hatay, Geopolitics, Syria, Mediterranean Sea.

TÜRKİYE-SURİYE İLİŞKİLERİNDE HATAY MESELESİ VE HATAY'IN JEOPOLİTİK ÖNEMİ

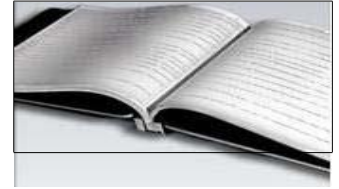
ÖZ

Bugün Türkiye'nin karadan sınır komşusu olduğu sekiz ülke vardır ve bunlardan biri de Suriye'dir. İki ülkede yaşayan insanların birbirleri ile olan ilişkileri çok eski zamanlara kadar uzanmakla birlikte bağımsız devletler olarak iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin geçmişi çok daha yakın zamanlarda başlamaktadır. Osmanlı Devleti'nin yıkılmasından sonra Fransa tarafından manda idaresi altında yönetilen Suriye, gerçek anlamda bağımsızlığını İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasında elde etmiştir. Bununla birlikte iki ülke arasındaki ilişkiler ve sorunlar Suriye'nin manda yönetimine tabi olduğu dönemlerde başlamıştır. İki ülke arasındaki temel sorunlardan biri Hatay Meselesi olmuş ve bu sorun konjonktürel olarak zaman zaman geri plana itilmiş olsa da bugüne kadar devam etmiştir.

Hatay, iki ülke arasında bir sorun kaynağı olmanın ötesinde Doğu Akdeniz'e hakim konumu ile jeopolitik açıdan önemli bir coğrafyadır. Bu durum 2011 yılından sonra Suriye'de başlayan iç savaşla birlikte daha fazla ön plana çıkmaktadır. Bunlara ilave olarak son dönemde Doğu Akdeniz'deki petrol ve doğalgaz arama faaliyetlerinden olumlu sonuçlar alınması da Hatay'ın önemini artıran bir başka faktör olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

* It is presented as a manifest in International Economics and Administrative Sciences Congress held on May 2-4, 2019 at Şırnak University.

** Dr. Öğretim Üyesi, Gümüşhane Üniversitesi, İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü, Gümüşhane, kadir sancak@gmail.com.



Bu çalışmada öncelikle Türkiye-Suriye ilişkilerinde önemli bir sorun olan Hatay Meselesi'nin tarihi süreçte iki ülke ilişkilerine etkisi ele alınacaktır. Devamında ise Suriye'de yaşanan savaş ve Doğu Akdeniz'deki enerji kaynakları bağlamında Hatay'ın artan jeopolitik önemine işaret edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye, Hatay, Jeopolitik, Suriye, Akdeniz.

INTRODUCTION

Some of the new countries established on the soils, which were owned by Ottoman Empire, when Ottoman Empire collapsed after the First World War became neighbors of the new State of the Republic of Turkey. Turkey established relations with these new states, with whom she has a part under the political roof of the same state, within the framework of equal sovereign states perception. State of Republic of Turkey tried to build her foreign policy on peaceful basis within the framework of *peace at home, peace in the world* principle after the state is established. She based her relations with all her neighbors on this principle. However, she was obliged to deal with some issues on the recently arisen political map as an heir of a great empire.

When State of Republic of Turkey was established, she became neighbors not with states of Iraq and Syria on the southern borders but with mandate governments. England and France, which were the mandate states in the region, took the decision to divide the Middle Eastern lands where predominantly Arabian population lived among themselves with the secret agreement made in the year of 1916 and that is known as Sykes-Picot Agreement (Cleveland, 2008:182). The political map of the region was finalized at San Remo Conference held in the year of 1920 during the post-war period, and lands of Syria and Lebanon were left to mandate government of France (Kaştan, 2017:272).

Although Syrian lands were started to be governed under French mandate government post-First World War era, French interest in the region dates back to older times. French missionaries opened schools in Syria and started to engage in activities as of the last quarter of 19th century and took particular interest in Catholic Christians (Maronite Church) in the region (Goldschmidt et al., 2011:275). The fact that they turned the Druse-Maronite conflict in the year of 1860 into an opportunity and sent soldiers to the region displayed their continuing interest in the region (Uçarol, 2013:257). This condition proceeded after the First World War the French doubled the lands the Lebanon had during Ottoman Empire era and made this region, where predominantly Maronite live, a separate state from Syria (Armaoğlu, 2009:250).

French mandate government gathered a great deal of armament in Syria and started to govern the region directly. The mandate government, who carried out a federal structuring within Syria after Lebanon, established small states of Aleppo, Damascus, Latakia Alevi in Syria to start with (Asker, 2017:1108) and tried to govern the state by using aforementioned fragmentation. However, either the privileges granted to Maronite people or the efforts to govern Syria by dividing her into parts lead to a great disturbance (Cleveland, 2008:245). In order to settle the disturbances France assumed independencies to Lebanon in the year of 1926 and to Syria in the year of 1930. It was an assumed independence because great place was set to authorities of mandate governments in constitutions of both countries. Along with



Italy's occupying Ethiopia, the conditions started to change in the Mediterranean and therefore, forced France to soften her regional policies. In this regard, France made an alliance agreement with Syria in the year of 1936 and made a commitment to leave these lands within three years. However, start of the Second World War in the year of 1939 ruled out the possibility to carry this agreement into effect on the specified date and Syria became independent in the real sense only after the war (Demir, 2011:696).

1. Issue of Hatay in Turkey-Syria Relations

The history of Turks coming to today's Syrian lands in masses dates back to approximately a thousand years ago. It is stated in sources that a group of Turkmens of nearly thousand people came to the region of Aleppo between the years of 1063-1064 during the reign of the Great Seljuq Empire Emperor Sultan Alp Arslan (Gök, 2014:219). However, the beginning of today's Turkey-Syria relations rather started with Egypt Campaign of Sultan Selim. It is known that there were no troubles experienced in governance of this region, which was under the domination of Ottoman Empire approximately for four centuries, excluding the last period of years (Cingöz, 2016).

Along with Egypt Campaign of Napoleon in the year of 1798 (Çolak, 2008) movement of nationalist ideology of French Revolution to these lands transformed into a significant problem later on. Nationalist movements, which particularly made progress in Egypt, Lebanon and Syria in the second half of 19th century, came to a standstill within the scope of Islamic Unity politics applied during Abdulhamid the Second. However, rising Turkish nationalism alongside the Second Constitutional Era caused Arabian nationalism to gain strength as a reaction (Hut, 2016:105). Harsh and authoritative governance of Cemal Pasha, who was assigned to Syria with exceptional powers in the year of 1914, carried aforementioned Arabian nationalism further and seriously damaged loyalty of Arabian society for Ottoman State in Syria (Demir, 2011:693). When the war ended and Ottoman State collapsed, accusations that were reciprocally mentioned between Turks and Arabs and that were maintained up to today particularly by certain segments prevented the possible convergence between the societies. While Turks used the accusation that *Arabs betrayed us*, Arabs used the accusation of *Turks exploited us* both caused both societies to have negative opinions for each other and in one sense this situation formed the basis of Turkey-Syria relations (Benek, 2016:172).

1.1. Annexation Process of Hatay

There are many problem titles between Turkey and Syria (Benek, 2016:172) and Issue of Hatay is the oldest among these problems. This problem started before when lands of Ottoman State was occupied by France after the First World War. After the war, France occupied İskenderun (Alexandretta) Sanjak on the date of December 11, 1918 based on the 7th Article of Armistice of Montrose (Atabey, 2015:193). Lands of Syria and Lebanon were left to governance of France as mandate state at San Remo Conference held on the date of April 25, 1920 (Topal, 2009:2). On the other hand, Turkey started to put up a thriving fight against Greek occupation and gained a significant victory in Sakarya Pitched Battle on the date of September 13, 1921. This victory brought France and Turkey together in making an agreement and therefore Treaty of Ankara was signed between two countries on the date of



October 20, 1921. In association of this agreement the border of Turkey and Syria was determined and government of Iskenderun Sanjak was left to Syria that was under French mandate government. However, establishment of special government regime was registered in the 7th Article of aforementioned agreement and development of Turkish culture and population and usage of Turkish as official language in the region were acknowledged. This article later on became a significant reference point in İskenderun Sanjak's gaining independence and her annexation to Turkey (Atabey, 2015:193). Clauses of Treaty of Ankara were confirmed on the 3rd Article of Treaty of Lausanne and the Syrian border of Turkey was determined in the same manner (Demir, 2011:697). On the date of May 30, 1926 Agreement of *Friendship and Good Neighborhood* was signed between France and Turkey and the administrative arrangement projected for Sanjak (Hatay) Region in Treaty of Ankara was reconfirmed (Asker, 2017:1108).

As of the start of 1930's developments experienced in international arena and the new conjuncture arisen affected the process of Issue of Hatay. While Turkey's becoming a member of League of Nations in the year of 1932 displayed her process in her relations with Western World on one hand, Nazis coming into power in the year of 1933 and Italy's occupying Ethiopia in the year of 1935 brought England, France and Turkey closer (Barlas, 2017:58). England's granting independence to Iraq in the year of 1932 caused Syrian society to have the same expectation and to show more response to French government. Thus, an agreement was made between France and Syrian Government on the date of November 9, 1936 in order to put an end to the mandate government in Syria (Topal, 2009:3). No statement was involved regarding İskenderun Sanjak in this agreement. Turkey reacted against this situation and a diplomatic note was sent to France on the date of October 9, 1936 in order to grant independence to İskenderun Sanjak (Demir, 2011:697-698). Atatürk declared on the date of November 1, 1936 at the TBMM (Grand National Assembly of Turkey) opening that the issue of İskenderun-Antakya region is the most important and only problem between France and Turkey and emphasized that this region was core Turkish land (Karakoç, 2009:103). Thus, as of this date it was started to be mentioned in Turkey that the name of *Sanjak* used for the region was invented by French people and that this was incorrect, however, this place have been a Turkish land for long centuries and therefore should be referred to as *Hatay*. The name of Hatay, which was based on Hattusa that is one of the first settlements in Anatolia originally, started to be used to name this region henceforth by Turkey (Asker, 2017:1106).

Against the developments arisen in the Mediterranean before the Second World War, England, who did not want problems to occur between France and Turkey, got involved in the process as to support Turkey (Köni, 1989:537). France carried the Issue of Hatay to League of Nations and Council of League of Nations acknowledged Hatay as *a separate entity* on the date of January 27, 1937 after the process that was also acknowledged by Turkey (Topal, 2009:5). Parliament of Syria reacted to this decision and made statements claiming that Sanjak was a part of Syria (Atabey, 2015:198). However, this situation did not prevent the process proceeding towards independence of Hatay and State of Hatay was established on the date of September 2, 1938 (Kaştan, 2017:273). On the other hand, Italy's attack on Albania on April 1939, forced France, who did not quite stay close to Turkey's theses on the subject of Hatay to change her attitude and cooperate with Turkey. *Agreement Concerning the Exact Solution of Territorial Problems Between Turkey and Syria* was signed between France and Turkey on



the date of June 23, 1939 and the border was determined as İskenderun-Antakya to be included within Turkish borders (Asker, 2017:1113). Immediately afterwards this development Council of Hatay, which gathered for the last time on the date of June 29, 1939, made a decision to be involved in the borders of Turkey. Council of Syria protested the decision and declared she did not acknowledge aforementioned decision, however, this situation did not affect annexation (Demir, 2011:698).

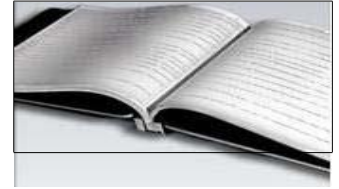
1.2. Issue of Hatay in Relations After Annexation

Although Hatay's admission to Turkey process took place within the context of the relations between France and Turkey, it transformed into an issue of Turkey-Syria in association with Syria's gaining independence. One of the moves of Syria, who gained independence in the year of 1946, was to lay a claim on Hatay (Demir, 2011:698). Syrian Government, who maintains aforementioned claim up to today, continued to display Hatay included within her borders on the maps she printed (Türkiye Gazetesi, 2017). Although Issue of Hatay has continuously been on agenda in relations of two countries, present situation was never acknowledged by Syria. Despite the fact that other problems experienced within Syria-Turkey relations are independent of Issue of Hatay, this issue has always formed a negative basis in every field regarding the relations of two countries.

As Syria, who gained her independence in the year of 1946, made annexation of Hatay a problem, Turkish and Syrian officials met and came to a mutual agreement under conciliation of Nuri Sait Pasha who was the Iraqi Prime Minister of the period. In accordance with this, while Turkey stated that she would not be insistent on the subject of Syria acknowledging the annexation of Hatay, Syria committed that she would not claim the issue officially. Thus, although the problem was not solved, it was frozen or postponed in a sense (Demir, 2011:698).

The year of 1946, when Syria gained her independence, corresponds to the dates when the world evolved into a bipolar structure. In this period that is called Cold War period, Turkey's taking place in West Block and Syria's staying closer to USSR became determinative in relations of two countries (Demir, 2011:700). Although there were no Hatay-based problems experienced in relations of two countries in this period, mistrust relationship that is fed from this issue catalyzed having troubles in other fields.

Discussing the factors determining Turkey-Syria relations in two separate dimensions as relations between two countries and relations between Turkey and Arab World would make the issue more understandable. Turkey's being the first Muslim country acknowledging Israel in the year of 1949 affected her reputation in the Arab World negatively and this was also reflected in her relations with Syria. Turkey's being a member of NATO was another development to prevent the improvement in relations of two countries. However, the real crises arose after Baghdad Pact was established in the year of 1955 (Cingöz, 2016). Syria, who was disturbed by Baghdad Pact, gained the support of USSR who also maintained a similar stance against the pact. After the Suez Crisis in the year of 1956, anti-Western standpoint rose in Syria and the country rapidly came closer to USSR. Clearances are performed in some institutions in Syria and communist-leaning people were assigned to positions and this situation disturbed Turkey regarding being surrounded by communists. Turkey, who



perceived this as a threat, massed troops along Syrian border in the year of 1957 and therefore, two countries came on the verge of a war. USA's supporting Turkey and USSR's supporting Syria transformed the situation to a trouble between blocs. However, as Saudi Arabia got involved as a conciliator the crisis was resolved and tension within the relations of two countries was removed (Demir, 2011:705).

Turkey supported Arab countries in Arab-Israel Wars on the years of 1967 and 1973. Although this condition give satisfaction to Syria, no real improvement was enabled in relations. Hyper-nationalist attitude of Hafız Esad, who took over the country's government with a coup, was effective in this condition. A new problem arose in relations of two countries as of 1970's. This problem, which was briefly defined as *water problem*, showed up as Turkey started to construct dams on Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and alongside Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) division of waters between Iraq, Syria and Turkey transformed into a problem. Syria qualified the rivers, which were defined by Turkey as transnational waters, as international waters. These different legal definitions made reaching an agreement with regards to sharing the waters (Saltürk, 2006:28-32). Syria's attitude with regards to Orontes River, which passes over Syria and empty into Mediterranean Sea in Hatay, is different and her attitude is directly associated with Issue of Hatay. Since Syria considers Hatay included in her own lands, she does not interpret this river as an international water and shows an approach to this river that is close to *absolute sovereignty* doctrine (Dalar, 2010:106-113).

Another problem, which started in 1970's and continued until the end of 1990's, in relations of two countries is the support granted by Syria to PKK terrorist organization. Syria enabled PKK to take shelter and set up camps both in her own lands and also in Bekaa Valley that is under control of Lebanon. Moreover, the country allowed Abdullah Öcalan, who was the leader of PKK, to reside in Damascus until 1999 (Benek, 2016:184,185). However, at the end of 1990's, Turkey's declaring that she was run out of patience in this matter and putting a military intervention towards Syria on her agenda, forced Syria Government to take a step back. An agreement was signed in Adana on the date of October, 19-20, 1998 and with this agreement Syria acknowledge to cut the support she granted to PKK (Gökcan,2018:186,187).

Agreement of Adana virtually became a milestone and a new period started in relations of two countries. In year 2000, President of the Republic of Turkey Ahmet NecdetSezer's attending the funeral of Syrian leader Hafız Esad's funeral was a concrete step taken by Turkey in order to mend the fences between two countries. Thus, this step was not remained unreturned and the relations progressed to much further levels in the period of new Syrian leader BeşarEsad. When positive attitude of Turkey, who act in accordance with conception of *zero problem with neighbors*, is supported by Syria, a spring weather that was never experienced before was generated between two countries(Altundeğeret al., 2016: 292).High Level Cooperation Council was established and this rapprochement, which came as far as joint cabinet council meetings, was disrupted by the conflicts experienced in Syria in the year of 2011(Duran, 2011:512-514).

Relations of two countries progressed to the best point up to that day just before year of 2011, the period after year 2011 presented a direct opposite case. Along with the conflicts, which started as Arab Civil Commotions influenced Syria, Turkey issued a call for Syria government to solve the problems through dialogue and not by resorting to violence.



However, this call was not answered and Syrian government increased the level of violence. Turkey, who speculated that no result might be obtained diplomatic relations, closed down her representative office in Damascus in March of year 2012. Syria's crashing a warplane of Turkey down on the date of June 22, 2012 brought the relations to an irrecoverable point (Altundeğeret al., 2016: 291). In the upcoming period, Turkey carried out the military operations called *Euphrates Shield* (Bayezit, 2016:84-112) on the date of August 2018 and *Olive Branch* (Köylü, 2018) on the date of January 2018 to the northern part of Syria in order to terminate the threat that terrorist organizations, who deployed on Syrian side, towards Turkey.

2. Geopolitical Importance of Hatay

Turkey's longest land border is the Syrian border and the longest part of aforementioned border pertains to the city of Hatay. Coastal length of Hatay, which has 279.3 kilometers of border length to Syria, to Mediterranean is 175.6 kilometers (Atasoyet al., 2012:108)). In respect of her geographic position Hatay, in a sense, is like a police station of Anatolia in Syria that expands to the south (Geçenet al., 2017:147,148). Hatay geography, which is quite a strategical region today, maintained her importance throughout history particularly in consequence of port of İskenderun. İskenderun that is expressed to be established by Alexander the Great became the last point of trade route coming from Eastern Asia and expanding to Mediterranean. Aleppo, which was a significant trade center, opened up to the world through Port of İskenderun (Ürkmez, 2016:1,2). In conjunction with building steamboats after Industrial Revolution, Port of İskenderun intensified as it was the case in every port. Just like the importance it held for the Ottoman State, the Port of İskenderun, which provided the quickest shortcut from Eastern Mediterranean to Middle, Southern and Eastern Anatolia, gained a strategical position for imperialist countries who were making plans on the region. Thus, the interest England and France took on Port of İskenderun increased at the end of 19th century. This condition also took place in plans of allocation of Ottoman State's lands. While Syrian lands that belonged to Ottoman State was granted to France with the secret agreement, which was made in the year of 1916 and was called Sykes-Picot, a different arrangement was made for Port of İskenderun. In accordance with aforementioned agreement, it was determined that Port of İskenderun would be a free port that would be open to trade of England (Asker, 2017:1105). England, who left whole lands of Syria to France, would not surrender Port of İskenderun.

2.1. PKK/PYD (Democratic Union Party) Factor

Hatay Region, which has attracted attention rather by the reason of Port of İskenderun in history, comes into prominence due to her strategical position today. Particularly the internal conflicts started in Syria in the year of 2011 and the changing domestic political balance thereafter made Hatay even more important. The Civil Commotions that started in Tunisia created a domino effect and affected other countries in the region and Syria was one of the countries who got affected the most. Syrian Government's trying to prevent the demonstrations started in the country transformed into an internal conflict shortly afterwards. The authority of the government depreciated and non-state armed organizations started to



establish authority in different geographies of the country. A chaotic environment was originated in Syria during this period where external powers were involved either directly or by means of the organizations they supported.

Many terrorist organizations, which took advantage of the chaos emerged in Syria, got involved in the conflicts here and started to generate areas of sovereignty for themselves in different regions. Particularly PYD (Democratic Union Party)/YPG (People's Protection Units)¹ and ISIS (DAEŞ)² became prominent among these terrorist organizations and they started to control extensive areas. PYD, which dominated a small area at the beginning, expanded the area it controlled within a couple of years with the support of USA and Syrian government. PYD that predominated in three separate small regions in northern Syria in the year of 2014, came to control almost the whole region starting from Iraqi border to Hatay³ at the end of the year 2017. The united line that PYD, which is tried to be legitimized by means of ISIS's actions, tries to generate was disrupted for now with Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch operations that Turkey carried out.

Hatay constitutes an impediment against the corridor, which PYD created by uniting the regions on the north of Syria where Kurds, Arabs and Turkmens live, to exist onto the Mediterranean (Cıvaoglu, 2015). Therefore, it shall be expected that PYD would be making plans on Hatay for the political structure it is trying to establish in Northern Syria. Because it seems quite hard for a state or a similar political formation that does not have an exit to a sea to continue her existence for a long term. Even if it is possible to establish a political structure in this region with the support of USA or similar imperial power, it is not quite probable for this structure to continue its existence. Therefore, Hatay has the critical importance to enable Syria or generally a structure that will be established on north of Iraq and Syria to have an exist to a sea. Thus, when the action map of PKK is examined, it may be observed that there is a consideration of this opinion and frequent actions are experienced here.⁴ It may also be observed in the confessions of yielded terrorists that PKK placed a special emphasis on Amanos mountains and the militants sent there were extraordinarily selected (Sabah Gazetesi, 2018). PKK's Amanos structuring was caused to collapse in the last couple of years, however, PKK still continues its existence. Therefore, Hatay maintains her strategical importance in association with PKK/PYD.

2.2. Petrol and Natural Gas in Eastern Mediterranean

Hatay has an irreplaceable importance in respect of her geopolitical position for Turkey's existence in Eastern Mediterranean. Accomplishing positive results from the petrol and

¹ It was established on order of Abdullah Öcal in the year of 2003 in Syria under the name of. Köylü, op. cit.

² IŞİD (ISIS-Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) was established in the year of 2004 in Iraq under the name of Tevhid ve Cihat (Unity and Jihad) and after a set of changes within her body, the name was changed to Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) on April 8, 2013 and announced that the name is changed to State of Islam. Since IŞİD (ISIS) is generally used in Turkish literature, the name used in the same line in this study. ISIS, who primarily gained strength in Iraqi territories where state authority is weak and who conquered Mosul on June 2014, then started to be effective in Syria and have a command of a wide area. Muammer Cengil, Ali Rıza Aydın, "IŞİD (Irak Şam İslam Devleti): Psikopolitik ve Teolojik Bir Değerlendirme", *İğdir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, (6), 2014, pp.51-63, p.53. Dolunay Şenol, Sezgin Erdem, Elif Erdem, "İşid: Küresel Bir Terör Örgütü", *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 26(2), 2016, pp.277-292, p.278.

³ Excluding the regions controlled by Turkey through aforementioned military operations.

⁴ See below for actions carried out by PKK on the border of city of Hatay in the last period. <https://yenidenergenekon.com/247-teror-neden-hatayda/>



natural gas exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean as of 2000's made the region even more significant for Turkey.

3.4 trillion meter cubes of natural gas reserve were determined in Eastern Mediterranean basin in consequence of exploration activities carried out until today (Karagölet al., 2017:14). However, exploration activities in the region have not been completed yet. It is considered that there are significant reserves in regions belonging to Lebanon and Syria. Even if it was not stated by the official sources, it is claimed a reserve greater than ever explored until now was discovered at Noor field of Egypt (Sputniknews, 2018). On the other hand, Turkey started exploration activities in the regions included among her borders. It is not right to use a final statement regarding the reserve amounts of Eastern Mediterranean since exploration activities are actively in progress. It is possible for each and every new exploration to increase the reserve figures. On the other hand, the disagreements among the countries in the region with regards to the borders of naval sovereignty territories are not solved yet and this condition is affecting the exploration activities. It is considered that the region will increase in strategical importance as the new reserves emerge.

When special condition of Cyprus is excluded, it may be observed that Hatay is the most important component of Turkey's existence in Eastern Mediterranean. Hatay extends Turkey's borders of exclusive economic region she has on Eastern Mediterranean towards the south. In addition to this, Hatay also undertakes a strategical role for the security of Cyprus and the region in respect of her position. It is certain that the increases in the explored reserve amounts and exploration of new reserves in the region will increase the importance of Eastern Mediterranean and hereby of Hatay.

CONCLUSION

Annexation of Hatay to Turkey is the oldest and most probably the most important problem in Syria-Turkey relations. Although there has not been any direct conflict nor crises experienced between two countries originating from this problem, this problem has always played a negative role in development of their relations. Even if this issue is put into the background in accordance with the developments in international arena or the process of the relations between these two countries, no serious progress was made within the context of the solution until today. This issue is instantly brought to agenda within problems experienced based on other topics between two countries and Hatay is displayed as a part of Syria on maps served outside from time to time. Solution of aforementioned problem was not possible even in the spring weather experienced in the relations of two countries after 2000's.

Although Hatay is seem like a source of a problem within relations of two countries, aside from being a part of the homeland Hatay also have a great importance for Turkey because of her geopolitical position. Hatay, which has always been a significant geography throughout history on the occasion of İskenderun Harbor, is the last point where trade routes arrive in East Asia. On the other hand, the city also connects geographies of Black Sea and Anatolia with Egypt and Palestine. Hatay, which has been a significant region since ancient times, became even more important due to the internal conflicts started in Syria after the year of 2011. The city is started to be considered as an exit door to Mediterranean of the zone tried to be generated by PKK/PYD on the north of Syria. By means of two military operations carried



out by Turkey to the region, the west of the line, which is desired to go from Iraqi border up to the Mediterranean, was cleaned from terrorist organizations to a considerable extent. In addition to this, exploration of new energy fields on Eastern Mediterranean in the recent period increased the importance of Eastern Mediterranean and therefore city of Hatay that extends to Eastern Mediterranean in this context. When it is considered with regards to the security of Cyprus and Eastern Mediterranean, it may be observed that Hatay has a strategical position in the region.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Altundeğer, N. & Yılmaz, M. E. (2016). İç Savaşın Bölgesel İstikrarsızlığa: Suriye Krizinin Türkiye'ye Faturası, **Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi**, 21(1):289-301.
- Armaoğlu, F. (2009). **20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi**, Alkım Yayınevi, İstanbul.
- Asker, A. (2017). Misak-ı Milli' den Anavatan'a: Sancak Meselesi ve Çözümü, **Yeni Türkiye**, (93):1105-1116.
- Atabey, F. (2015). Hatay'ın Anavatana Katılma Süreci, **AVRASYA Uluslararası Araştırmalar Dergisi**, 4(7):192-209.
- Atasoy, A. & Geçen, R. & Korkmaz, H. (2012). "Siyasi Coğrafya Açısından Türkiye (Hatay) – Suriye Sınırı", **Türkiye Coğrafyası Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi**, VII. Coğrafya Sempozyumu Bildiriler Kitabı, Ankara.
- Bayezit, F. (2016). Dengeleme Davranışı Olarak Fırat Kalkanı Operasyonu: Neoklasik Realist Bakış, **Barış Araştırmaları ve Çatışma Çözümleri Dergisi**, 4(2):84-112.
- Benek, S. (2016). Türkiye-Suriye İlişkilerinin Sosyal Coğrafya Açısından Tarihsel Arka Planı, **Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences**, 15(1):171-192.
- Cengil, M. & Aydın, A. R. (2014). IŞİD (Irak Şam İslam Devleti): Psikopolitik ve Teolojik Bir Değerlendirme, **Iğdır Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi**, (6): 51-63.
- Cingöz, İ. (2016). Tarihsel Süreçte Türkiye-Suriye İlişkileri ve Hatay, Bulgaristan Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi, 10 Haziran 2016, <https://www.bghaber.org/bghaber/tarihsel-surecte-turkiye-suriye-iliskileri-ve-hatay/>, 15.05.2019
- Cıvaoğlu, G. (2016). Hatay'ın önemi, 21.10.2015, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/hatay-in-onemi/siyaset/ydetay/2135152/default.htm?utm_source=gazeteoku&utm_medium=referral, 15.05.2019
- Cleveland, W. L. (2008). **Modern Ortadoğu Tarihi**, Çeviren: Mehmet Harmancı, Agora Kitaplığı, İstanbul.
- Çolak, K. (2008). Mısır'ın Fransızlar Tarafından İşgali Ve Tahliyesi (1798-1801), **SAÜ Fen Edebiyat Dergisi**, (II): 141-183.
- Dalar, M. (2010). Asi Nehri'nin Türkiye-Suriye İlişkileri Üzerindeki Etkisi Ve Geleceği, **Ortadoğu Analiz**, 2(15): 106-113.



- Demir, Ş. (2011). Dünden Bugüne Türkiye'nin Suriye Politikası, **Turkish Studies**, 6(3): 691-713.
- Dolunay Ş. & Erdem, S. & Erdem, E. (2016). Işid: Küresel Bir Terör Örgütü, **Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi**, 26(2):277-292.
- Duran, H. (2011). Adana Protokolü Sonrası Türkiye-Suriye İlişkileri, **Ortadoğu Yıllığı**.
- Geçen R. & Usun, Ç. F. (2017). Hatay İli Jeopolitiğini Şekillendiren Temel Faktör: Suriye Sınırı, **Çukurova Araştırmaları Dergisi**, 3(2):126-149.
- Goldschmidt Jr. A. & Davidson, L. (2011). **Kısa Ortadoğu Tarihi**, Çeviren: Aydemir Güler, Doruk Yayıncılık, İstanbul.
- Gök, İ. (2014). Türklerin Suriye'ye Girişi ve Süleymanşâh, **Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi** (36):217-251.
- Gökcan, Ö. (2018). Türkiye-Suriye İlişkilerinde Bir Kırılma Noktası: Ekim 1998 Krizi Veya Diğer Bir İfadeyle "İlan Edilmemiş Savaş", **Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi**, 13(1): 169-198.
- Hut, D. (2016). Osmanlı Arap Vilayetleri, Arabizm Ve Arap Milliyetçiliği", **VAKANÜVİS-Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi**, Ortadoğu Özel Sayısı, (1):105-150.
- Karagöl, E. T. (2017). Özdemir, Büşra Zeynep, **Türkiye'nin Enerji Ticaret Merkezi Olmasında Doğu Akdeniz'in Rolü**, SETA Yayınları, Ankara, 92.
- Kaştan, Y. (2017). Atatürk Dönemi Türkiye – Suriye İlişkileri", **Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi**, 10(53).
- Köni, H. (1989). Hatay Sorununa Yeni Bir Bakış", **Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi**, 1(4):535-539.
- Köylü, M. (2018). Suriye, PYD/YPG Yapılanması Ve Zeytin Dalı Harekâtı, **ASSAM Uluslararası Hakemli Dergi (ASSAM - UHAD)**, (11).
- Sabah Gazetesi, (2018). PKK'lı Teröristten Flaş Amanos İtirafı", 31.08.2018, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2018/08/31/son-dakika-pkkli-teroristten-flas-amanos-itarafi>, 15.05.2019
- Saltürk, M. (2006). Orta Doğu'da Su Sorunu ve Türkiye Açısından İncelenmesi, **Güvenlik Stratejileri Dergisi**, (3):21-38.
- Sputniknews, Akdeniz'de Dengeleri Değiştirecek Doğalgaz Keşfi (2018), <https://tr.sputniknews.com/ekonomi/201806291034070594-akdeniz-dogalgaz-kesfi/>, 15.05.2019
- Topal, C. (2009). Sancak (Hatay) Sorunu ve İkinci Dünya Savaşı Öncesi Süreçte Arap Kamuoyundaki Etkileri, **Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi**, 11(2):1-16.
- Türkiye Gazetesi, (2017). Suriye'den Türkiye'yi tahrik eden harita: Hatay'ı Suriye sınırlarına aldılar, <https://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/gundem/496477.aspx>, 15.05.2019
- Uçarol, R. (2013). **Siyasi Tarih (1789-2012)**, Der Yayınları, 9. Basım, İstanbul.



AKADEMİKBAKIŞ DERGİSİ

Sayı: 74 Temmuz - Ağustos 2019

Uluslararası Hakemli Sosyal Bilimler E-Dergisi

ISSN:1694-528X İktisat ve Girişimcilik Üniversitesi, Türk Dünyası
Kırgız – Türk Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Celalabat – KIRGIZISTAN

<http://www.akademikbakis.org>



Ürkmez, N. (2016). **Doğu Akdeniz’de Bir Liman Kenti: İskenderun (1914-1919)**, Pegem Akademi, Ankara.