

Assessing Terrorism as a Hegemonic Conception within the Context of Securitization

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Abstract: The concept of terrorism has become a widely referenced phenomenon in the field of international relations in recent years and has become one of the leading parameters in security-based studies. The increase in the number of terrorist activities in recent years has caused terrorism to become a primary and common threat for national and international security, as acknowledged by international law. However, the ambiguity in the definition of terrorism, which is left unclear in the conceptual framework enables terrorism to be manipulated and instrumentalized for political purposes. Thus, it is observed that what is referred to as terrorism or terrorist can be defined in different ways by different political agendas. Regarding this fact, it is argued in this paper that terrorism is easily used as a useful hegemonic tool. Therefore, it has grown as a hegemonic conception. The main argument of this paper is that terrorism functions as the essential and central element in the securitization policies and systems mainly implemented in the Middle East. How the terrorism conception is materialized for the maintenance of hegemony is analyzed in this paper within the framework of critical security and securitization theories based on two cases; Palestinians and the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), which both have been accused of terrorism for hegemonic purposes within the configuration of securitization.

Key Words: Terrorism, Hegemony, Security, Securitization, Middle East.

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Güvenikleştirme Bağlamında Terörizmin Hegemonik Bir Kavram Olarak Değerlendirilmesi

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Öz: Terörizm kavramı, son yıllarda uluslararası ilişkiler alanında geniş çapta atıfta bulunulan bir olgu ve güvenlik temelli çalışmalarda önde gelen parametrelerden biri haline gelmiştir. Son yıllarda terörist faaliyetlerin sayısının artması, terörizmin devlet yasaları ve uluslararası örgütler tarafından kabul edilen ulusal ve uluslararası güvenlik için başat ve ortak tehdit haline gelmesine neden olmuştur. Bununla birlikte, kavramsal çerçevesi netleşmemiş olan terörizmin tanımındaki belirsizlik, terörizmin siyasi amaçlar için manipüle edilmesine ve araçlaştırılmasına olanak tanımaktadır. Bundan dolayı, terörizme ya da terörist ile atıfta bulunulan unsurların, farklı siyasi gündemler tarafından farklı şekillerde tanımlanabildiği görülmektedir. Bu gerçekten hareketle, bu makalede terörizmin etkili bir hegemonik araç olarak kolayca kullanıldığı, bu nedenle hegemonik bir kavram olarak geliştiği ileri sürülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın temel argümanı terörizmin özellikle Ortadoğu’da yapılandırılan güvenikleştirme politikaları ve sistemlerinin zorunlu ve merkezi unsuru olarak işlev görüyor olmasıdır. Bu makalede, terörizm kavramının hegemonyanın sürdürülmesi için nasıl kullanıldığı eleştirel güvenlik ve güvenikleştirme teorileri çerçevesinde, her ikisi de hegemonik hedefler doğrultusunda gerçekleştirilen güvenikleştirmeler çerçevesinde terörizmle suçlanan Filistin toplumu ve Müslüman Kardeşler (MK) örnekleri üzerinden incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Terörizm, Hegemonya, Güvenlik, Güvenikleştirme, Ortadoğu.

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تقييم الإرهاب كمصطلح هيمنة في سياق الأمانة

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ملخص

أصبح مصطلح الإرهاب خلال السنوات الأخيرة ظاهرة يتم الاستشهاد بها على نطاق واسع في مجال العلاقات الدولية وأحد المعايير الهامة في الدراسات الأمنية. زيادة عدد الفعاليات الإرهابية في السنوات الأخيرة، تسبب في وضع مسألة الإرهاب على رأس قائمة الأخطار الرئيسية والمشاركة للأمن الوطني والدولي الذي تقبله قوانين الدول والمنظمات الدولية. إضافة لذلك، فإن الغموض في تعريف الإرهاب الذي لم يتم وضع إطار اصطلاحي له، يسمح بإمكانية التلاعب بالإرهاب واستغلاله لأغراض سياسية. لذلك، يبدو أن الإرهاب أو العناصر التي يشار إليها بالإرهابيين يمكن تعريفها بأشكال مختلفة من قبل أجناس سياسية مختلفة. ووفق هذه الحقيقة، تشير هذه المقالة إلى أنه من السهل استخدام الإرهاب كوسيلة فعالة للهيمنة، ولهذا السبب يمكن القول إن هناك تطور لمصطلح هيمنة. الموضوع الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة، هو أن الإرهاب يعمل كعنصر إلزامي ومركزي في سياسات وأنظمة الأمانة التي تم هيكلتها لاسيما في الشرق الأوسط. هذه المقالة تبحث كيفية استخدام مصطلح الإرهاب من أجل استمرار الهيمنة، في إطار نظريتي الأمن والأمانة النقديتين، من خلال تناول نموذجي المجتمع الفلسطيني والإخوان المسلمين المتهمين بالإرهاب وفق الأمانة التي تم تحقيقها بما يتماشى مع أهداف الهيمنة لكلا النظريتين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإرهاب، الهيمنة، الأمن، الأمانة، الشرق الأوسط.

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Introduction

The concept of terrorism has become a widely referenced phenomenon in the field of international relations in recent years and has become one of the leading parameters in security-based studies. Terrorism has been playing a determinant role, especially in hegemony-based relations in a wide range of references from combatting terrorism to supporting terrorism. Especially in line with the increase in terrorist acts in recent years, terrorism is one of the threatening factors in national security and security of the international community. However, it is seen that the cases referred to as terrorism do not always contain the same meaning, and this points to the uncertainty present in the definition of terrorism. The fact that the conceptual framework of terrorism has not been clarified allows the concept of terrorism to be politicized within the framework of very flexible use. At this point, when the political factors are the determinants in defining terrorism, a politically targeted person, organization, or movement can be accused by political actors of practicing terrorism independent from the genuine elements of terrorism. Thus, terrorism as a fact is not denied or extenuated in ontological terms in this paper but the growing tendency of politicization and instrumentalization of terrorism to be used as the essential source of legitimacy in pursuing hegemonic policies and as a cover for unlawful practices is questioned in epistemological terms.

The main argument of this paper is that the phenomenon of terrorism is used as a useful tool in maintaining hegemony in the international system and this shapes the general approach to conceptualization. The politicization of anti-terrorism mechanisms and their conversion to a foreign policy instrument have opened up how hegemony can pursue its illegitimate interests in the Middle East within the framework of international legal norms. Hegemony is defined as “the relatively dominant position of a particular set of ideas and their associated tendency to become commonsensical and intuitive, thereby inhibiting the dissemination or even the articulation of alternative ideas” in broad terms while “the associated term hegemon is used to identify the actor, group, class, or state that exercises hegemonic power or that is responsible for the dissemination of hegemonic ideas.”¹ Accordingly, in this paper the term of hegemony is referred to as the power relations in the contemporary context of the international relations led by the United States which assumes the global hegemony in political and cultural terms, and also its associate powers who assume the regional hegemony in the Middle East relying on the US’ hegemonic power at a regional level. Within the context of this conception the US’ hegemony contains the dimension of substantial hard power while it also contains other elements of power in accordance with the Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony based on consent and leadership instead of the use of force or domination² and Robert Keohane’s conception of hegemony in terms of political economy as controlling crucial raw materials, major sources of capital, markets, and competitive advantages in the production of highly valued goods.³

As a matter of fact, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the settlement of the American hegemony through the occupation of Iraq causing the ongoing instability in the region was materialized under the framework of the policy of the fight against terrorism. Similarly, the illegal practices of Israel in the illegally occupied Palestinian territories have been carried out and justified within the framework of fighting against terrorism. Therefore, it can be observed that the instrumentalization of terrorism used in the establishment and sustainability of hegemony, particularly in the Middle East, occurs in two ways. One way is the use

1 Ben Rosamond, “Hegemony, political science,” Encyclopedia Britannica, last updated May 6, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hegemony>.

2 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. New York: International Publishers, 1971.

3 Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, New Jersey: Princeton, 1984, p.33-34.

of terrorism itself by employing terrorist organizations in the region to maintain conflict and instability so the hegemonic control and involvement could be maintained. The proxy wars and non-state actors provide useful mechanisms in this sense. Another type of the instrumentalization of terrorism is the use of terrorism as the sole source of legitimacy for the political interests and gains of the hegemony at the expense of the others in imposing implementations such as occupation, isolation, exploitation, sanctions and the use of brutal force to oppress opposition. It is achieved by taking the definition of terrorism out of its ontological scope into an entirely politically manipulative tool of discourse. In this way, terrorism functions as a cover in international power relations, used against anti-hegemonic actors and political rivals by hegemonic aspirations to legitimize wars, including economic, military, cyber, or media campaigns.

In both ways, terrorism is instrumentalized within a security configuration. The continuity of the use of terrorism requires the continuity of threat-based security projection. As terrorism is constructed politically and positioned at the central role of threat, it brings the politicization of security that is followed by the security dilemma and securitization. The theory of securitization reveals how a political issue is transformed to a security issue through a discourse that is based on a threat definition and that democracy has been taken away by taking extraordinary security measures to achieve the political goals.⁴ The basic argument of this critical approach is that security and insecurity are not naturally existing facts, but produced situations. Critical security theories draw attention to the inevitable relationship between security and politics, demonstrating in various ways that security production is constructed on political needs and goals at state and international levels.⁵ Ole Waever argues that the applications made based on securitization areas of a completely dark process and that normalization can be restored by desecuritization.⁶ The notion of the “Global War on Terrorism” is defined as one of the tools used in the macrosecuritization process which is performed at the system level.⁷ They explain how the post-September 11 context ending the post-Cold War period brought a substantial shift in the Western security policies, and the macrosecuritization project was constructed based on the American hegemony along with the participation of the allies fighting with the Muslim world that was labelled as the “axis of evil” by President Bush confirming the prediction of the Clash of Civilizations by Samuel Huntington.⁸

In the first part of this article the ambiguous definition of terrorism constituting a problematic ground that enables it to be politicized is put forth and the notion of state terrorism is pointed out with particular emphasis to its exception, out of the scope of terrorism. In the second part of this article the initial stage of the politicization of terrorism in which it was attributed to a certain religion, namely Islam since 9/11, and the war and occupation started by the hegemony in the Middle East was justified on the ground of combatting terrorism is described. In the third part, Palestinian society vis a vis Israeli security is analyzed as a significant case that the concept of terrorism is used as a hegemonic instrument at the state level. The main focus of this article is how Israel legitimizes its phenomenal securitization on Palestinians based on the terrorism claim as the vital instrument to demonstrate how the notion of terrorism is politicized for hegemonic interests rather than how Israel terrorizes Palestinian people. In the fourth part, the Muslim Brotherhood case is analyzed, which is also quite significant to indicate the instrumentalization of terrorism in the Midd-

4 Ole Waever. “Politics, Security, Theory.” *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 4/5 (2011), Waever, “The Theory Act: Responsibility and Exactitude as Seen from Securitization” *International Relations*, 29(1): 121-127, 2015.

5 Karin M. Fierke, *Critical Approaches to International Security*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, “Macrosecritization and Security Constellations: Reconsidering Scale in Securitization Theory” *Review of International Studies*, 35, no2, (April: 2009).

6 Waever, “The Theory Act,”

7 Buzan and Waever, “Macrosecritization,” 259.

8 Ibid, 272-75.

le East within the framework of the configuration of the hegemony based securitization project in the post-Arab spring context at the regional level. Both cases represent the victims of brutal securitization in which they are defined as major threat based on accusation of terrorism applied beyond the scope of the concept.

Controversial Definition of Terrorism

The origin of the word terror lies in the Latin word of ‘*terrere*’, which means to shake with fear, to be terrified and was first mentioned in the published appendix of the *Dictionnaire de l’Academie Française* in 1789 referring to the guillotine executions applied to the opponents of the French revolutionaries.⁹ In the Encyclopedia Britannica, terrorism is defined as a systematic use of violence to create a general climate of fear in a population and thereby to bring about a particular political objective.¹⁰ There is no standard definition of terrorism accepted in international law. In the earliest, the 1937 Geneva Convention on Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism, the expression of “acts of terrorism” was defined as “*criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons, or a group of persons or the general public.*”¹¹ Apart from this, there is no generally accepted definition or status of terrorism by the international community.

For this reason, terrorism has become a highly controversial issue. Following 9/11, the European Union (EU) published a Council framework decision on combating terrorism on 13 June 2002 as binding law for the member States. Broader definitions of elements of a terrorist offense were made as murder, bodily injuries, hostage-taking, extortion, committing attacks, threat to commit any of the above, seriously intimidating a population, destabilizing or destroying structures of a country or international organization or making a government abstain from performing actions, seizure of aircraft, ships or other means of public or goods transport and such.¹²

Various definitions of terrorism have been made at the nation-state level.¹³ Especially after September 11, many countries have redefined terrorism and adopted an anti-terrorism law. The standard definition of terrorism used by the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for both international and domestic terrorism is expressed starting with “violent criminal acts committed by individuals and/or by groups (...).”¹⁴ The UK’s government defined terrorism in 2002 as “the use or threat of action, both in and outside of the UK, designed to influence any international government organization or to intimidate the public. It must also be for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause” and amended by Terrorism Act 2006.¹⁵ Canada’s anti-terrorism Act separates terrorism from regular criminal offenses as does the UK, and defines it as “that which is committed in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause; and in whole or in part with the intention of intimidating the public or a segment of the public, with regards to its security... or compelling a person, a government or a domestic or

9 Paul Wilkinson, “Concepts of Terror and Terrorism,” in *Political Terrorism. Studies in Comparative Politics*. (London: Palgrave, 1974). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-15550-7_1.

10 John Philip Jenkins, “Terrorism,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed November 09, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/terrorism>.

11 See the original document League of Nations, “Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism,” *World Digital Library*, accessed March 15, 2020. <https://dl.wdl.org/11579/service/11579.pdf>.

12 “Council Framework Decision on 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism,” *Eur-Lex*, accessed November 11, 2019. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A133168>.

13 See, “Definition of Terrorism by Country in OECD Countries”, *OECD International Platform on Terrorism Risk Insurance*, accessed December 21, 2019. <https://www.oecd.org/daf/fin/insurance/TerrorismDefinition-Table.pdf>.

14 “Terrorism,” *Federal Bureau What We Investigate*, accessed November, 11, 2019. <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism>, accessed.

15 “Terrorism,” *The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)* accessed December 12, 2019. <https://www.cps.gov.uk/terrorism>.

international organization to do or refrain from doing any act, whether the public or the person, government or organization is inside or outside Canada.”¹⁶ The use of violence and threat is seen as a common element in these definitions. However, the problem lies in that further clauses adopted in the national anti-terrorism laws that leave the scope of the definition within an open-ended form on the political and religious ground, and that causes the breach of objectivity. For instance, the scope of Canada’s Law of Anti-terrorism Act was broadened by the Canadian government with the controversial Anti-terrorism Act, 2015, Bill C-51, which was also amended in 2017 with the expansion of the mandate of the Canadian Security Intelligence Act.¹⁷ It was criticized for its potential deteriorating impacts on freedom of expression and human rights. This approach is argued as “*the intentional effort to maintain the utility of a structured legal definition and a broader, more loosely defined political one*” by Ziyanda Sutuorman.¹⁸

The core issue here is related to the question of who, for what purpose, and how defines terrorism. In this direction, it reveals the fact why terrorism definitions are kept broad and flexible and how they are politicized in an open and manipulative manner. Indeed, many researchers working on the subject argue that keeping the concept of terrorism within the framework of an unclear definition and meaning gap without being subjected to a standard definition is not a coincidence, and this is the choice of policymakers.¹⁹ One way of keeping the framework of the definition of terrorism too broad and loose in the Western states’ laws designed in the context of the September 11th is seen as a separation of terrorism charge from that of the ‘criminal action’ which defined terrorism in the first UN contract. Behind this lies the aim of ensuring that an action can be considered terrorism within the framework of political criteria, although it is not covered by crime.

Definition of terrorism is a controversial issue also with the criticism that the hegemonic powers’ definition of terrorism aims to exempt themselves from the crimes and actions determined within the scope of the definition. According to Noam Chomsky, the definition of terrorism by the US only covers actions taken against America and its allies, while excluding similar and even worse actions carried out by America and its allies against others. He describes the situation as “*Underlying conventional discussion of terrorism and aggression is the consistent rejection of one of the most elementary of moral principles: that we apply to ourselves the same standards we do to others, if not more stringent ones. Acceptable definitions of the terms do, therefore, become a difficult matter.*”²⁰ It highlights the state as an actor exerting terrorism and opens up the debates on the term state terrorism taking place in the literature.²¹ States use violence as the non-state terrorism uses on their populations or on other states that can be seen in many cases throughout histories such as Hitler’s Germany, Stalin’s Soviets as well as the United States using violence outside of the country in several places like Nicaragua, Iraq, and Cuba. However, state terrorism is justified with national secu-

16 “Government of Canada,” *Justice Laws Website*, accessed March 19, 2020. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/a-11.7/page-1.html>.

17 “Understanding Bill C-51: The Anti-Terrorism Act 2015,” *Canadian Civil Liberties Association*, May 19, 2015. accessed March 19, 2020. <https://ccla.org/understanding-bill-c-51-the-anti-terrorism-act-2015/>.

18 Ziyanda Sutuorman, “Terrorism as Controversy: The Shifting Definition of Terrorism in State Politics,” *E-international Relations*, Sep 24, 2019. <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/09/24/terrorism-as-controversy-the-shifting-definition-of-terrorism-in-state-politics/e.t.14.11.2019>.

19 Sutuorman, “Terrorism as Controversy,” 1-5.

20 Noam Chomsky, “Terrorism, American Style,” *World Policy Journal*, volume 24 issue1, (March 2007): 44-45.

21 T.R. Gurr, “The Political Origins of State Violence and Terror: A Theoretical Analysis,” in *Government Violence and Repression: An Agenda for Research*, ed. Michael Stohl and George Lopez, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986); C. Mitchell, et al. “State Terrorism: Issues of Concept and Measurement,” in *Government Violence and Repression: An Agenda for Research*, ed. Michael Stohl and George Lopez, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986); Richard Falk, “War and Peace in an Age of Terror and State Terrorism,” *Uluslararası İlişkiler (International Relations)*, vol. 4 issue 14, (Summer 2007); R. Blakeley, *State Terrorism and Neoliberalism: The North in the South*, Routledge Critical Terrorism Studies; (London: Routledge, 2009), M. Stohl, “The State as Terrorist: Insights and Implications,” *Democracy and Security*, 2, 2006: 1-25; Blakeley, “State Violence as State Terrorism,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Political Violence*, ed. Marie Breen-Smyth, (Abingdon: Routledge, 18 Dec 2012) accessed 21 March 2020, Routledge Handbooks Online.

rity. Some scholars make a distinction between state violence and state terrorism to exclude the state from terrorism even if the state undertakes much worse violence than non-state actors' terrorism. It is argued that state violence has a fundamental qualitative difference from terrorism as a state having the legitimate right to use violence possesses the monopoly on power and violence.²² However, it causes a constant, vicious circle that fighting terrorism with state terrorism feeds terrorism.²³

In the post-9/11 context, the global conception on terrorism defined as the global war on terror provided an excuse to justify the hegemonic powers to start wars as if their legitimate rights. Richard Falk argues that the aim behind the use of the rhetoric "global war on terror" was not about to fight against terrorism, dangerous, extremist, non-state actors. He points out the actual aim as:

*The counter-terrorist campaign was actually functioning as a gigantic public relations campaign mounted by the Bush presidency and designed to divert attention from the real undertaking: the full-scale pursuit of a grand strategy by the United States to achieve and sustain global dominance by military means, with an initial preoccupation about achieving hegemonic control over the Middle East (...).*²⁴

The indefinite conception of terrorism has been used as a hegemonic instrument for the states to justify wars and state terrorism exerted inside and outside of state, especially since September 11.

The Religion of Terrorism

It is observed that the rhetoric of terrorism is mostly referring to a religion or an ideology as the primary source of terrorism, especially in definitions that have been formed after September 11. It is a significant dimension of the matter that definition of terrorism based on religion or religion-related ideology paves the way to politicize terrorism and to enable its use for political purposes. Actually, it has become the mainstream approach to adopt a rhetoric of terrorism accompanied by religion in Western politics and media. Although a specific religion is not explicitly mentioned in definitions of terrorism, it's a well-known fact that the religion which is widely referred to as a source of terrorism is Islam. The fact that the September 11 attacks on the United States were undertaken by the Al-Qaeda organization, which was deployed and enlarged by the United States itself against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and where its militants mostly belong to Islam or that the assassins involved in the attacks are individuals who represent the Islamic world, if not by their identity but then by their nationality, are seen as proofs of the organic link that is supposed between Islam and terrorism. Following the execution of Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden by the Obama administration, the emergence of new "Islamist" terrorist organizations replacing Al-Qaeda, undertaking various terrorist acts constituted a ground that strengthened the perception of Islam as the religion of terrorism. In the security literature, definitions such as "Islamic terrorism," "Jihadists," "Muslim extremists," "radical Islamists" have become established over time within the scope of combating terrorism at national and international levels. Finally, the new version of "Islamic" terrorism formation which emerged in the post-Arab Spring context in the name of "Islamic State" not only symbolized the "indispensable" rela-

²² Blakeley, "State Violence," 2-3.

²³ Falk, "War and Peace," 11.

²⁴ Ibid. 4.

tionship between Islam and terrorism as “inseparable” couple but also added the state dimension into the equation referring to political Islam as the source of “horror” with a substantial contribution to the literature of “Islamic terrorism.” After the Cold War, the expiration of the Soviets’ and Communism’s threats urged the US-led western hegemony to substitute a new enemy and threat definition to reactivate security policies to be able to maintain the expansion of US hegemony. September 11 was a milestone in this sense, and the new enemy and target of the US were found, namely Islam. Following the September 11 attacks, *the Grand Strategy*, which was quickly prepared by the Bush administration, launched a new and great war against terrorism, and the new threat that was the target of this war was defined as “Political Islam.”²⁵ Thus, the September 11 attacks were quite timely to indicate the new threat and enemy that the US needed and to provide justification for the US’ Middle East expansion. Today, most of the American list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations which was updated on January 15, 2019, consists of “Islamic” or Muslim terrorist organizations.²⁶ It indicates that the Americans are focused on the Muslim organizations rather than that all of the terrorist organizations are Muslim.

On the other hand, making the phenomenon of terrorism exclusive to such a religion and its members allows excluding other religious and ideological terrorist organizations and actions from the scope of the fight against terrorism in the literature. Although not identified with a religion or a religious ideology as in the title of the “Islamic State,” numerous terrorist acts were undertaken by organizations or individuals which have been inspired and motivated by religious and ideological motives and purposes that belong to other religions rather than Islam. As the most striking and recent example, the terrorist attack was undertaken on the Mosques, where 51 people who were performing Friday prayers were massacred in Christchurch, New Zealand, on March 15, 2019. The terrorist who acted revealed a manifestation in which he stated the motivation of the action based on the hostility of Islam and an ideology linked to Christianity, including the statements such as “*Hagia Sophia will get rid of the minarets and Constantinople will become the Christian city again as it deserves.*” Neither in media after the attack and nor during the trial of the terrorist, this horrible attack was evaluated based on a religious or ideological reference, the attack was not labeled as Christianist, as in the cases that it is labeled as “Islamist,” and he was not associated with a group or organization. Although it is significant that the attack was condemned widely by the Western authorities, the condemnations did not define it as anti-Islamist or extremist of a religion therefore, the attack was left out of the scope of religious terrorism in literature. In other similar cases, terrorist attacks targeting Muslims or Jewish people were described as individual cases and are generally evaluated concerning mental illness, independent of an ideological reference. It has prevented such terrorist attacks being evaluated within the scope of terrorism by closing the case quickly and avoiding relation of the attack with a possibility of ideological and / or organizational connection or with other similar actions. While these acts are instead defined as hate crimes and separated from terrorism, acts by Muslim individuals are directly defined as Islamist terrorism.

Clara Eroukhmanof points out the fact that although the number of victims of terrorist organizations such as Irish Republican Army (IRA) of the European origin in the 1970s and 80s was much higher than that of today’s “Islamist” terrorist organizations, European leaders never used such definitions as barbarity, horror, brutality they attributed to “Islamic” terrorism.²⁷ Ambassador Nathan A. Sales, the Coordinator for the Bureau of Counterterrorism, the US Department of State, shaped a general framework of US’ coun-

25 See, Steven Wright, *The United States and Persian Gulf Security: The Foundations of the War on Terror*, (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2007), 55-85.

26 “Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO),” *Congressional Research Service*, accessed November 25, 2019. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/IF10613.pdf>.

27 Clara Eroukhmanof, “Securitization Theory” in *International Relations Theory* ed. Christian Scheinplflug, (Bristol: E-International Relations Publishing, 2017), 109.

ter-terrorism entirely based on the “Islamic terrorism” in the foreword he wrote for the 2018 Country Report on Terrorism by underlining the activities of the terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS and other Pakistan and Palestine based organizations. He also explains that “Iran remains the world’s worst state sponsor of terrorism.”²⁸ While he never touches any other non-Islamic terrorist activities as if they never existed, he points out an individual terrorist attack with an over-generalizing approach: “*Meanwhile, homegrown terrorists, inspired by ISIS ideology, planned and executed attacks against soft targets, including hotels, restaurants, stadiums, and other public spaces. The December 2018 shooting at a Christmas market in Strasbourg, France, which killed three people and wounded 12, demonstrated the ability of homegrown terrorists to strike in the heart of Western Europe.*”²⁹

As a result of a deliberate construction of the perception of the “Islam-terrorism connection,” anti-Islamic political operations have gotten a two-dimensional arbitrary mechanism. The first dimension is the fact that the people belong to Islam in cultural, historical, and geographical terms are under the risk of being treated as potential terrorists through the perception that Islam has a natural commitment to terrorism. This constructed prejudice that provides a ground of legitimacy to victimization of Muslim individuals or groups based on allegation of terrorism can allow innocent people easily to be exposed to the accusations of terrorism. As a matter of fact, in some western countries, especially in the US, Muslim individuals have been subjected to various abuses such as unfair treatment, discrimination, arrest, visa ban etc. frequently since September 11.³⁰ At the political level, it is inevitable that states, institutions, organizations, and governments can be the target of terrorism accusations as it provides the easiest and costless war for political interest groups or rivals. Its seen that spreading anti-Muslim sentiments relating with terrorism world-wide provides a general sense of justification for the war of attrition with the lowest cost without needing to base it on proofs. US President Donald Trump’s enactment of a travel ban law against Islamic countries in the first year of his presidency actually is a good example of that. With this law, known as the Ban on Muslims, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia were exposed to severe discrimination against the citizens of seven Muslim countries. Considering the political conflicts between these countries that are accused of supporting terrorism and the US, it is clear that these countries are not randomly selected Muslim countries. Moreover, the fact that the two non-Muslim countries covered by this ban, Venezuela and North Korea are the states whose policies contradict with the American hegemonic interests reveals that this ban is at its core politically motivated.

The other important dimension of the issue is that a Muslim person, community, or institution that is intended to be identified with terrorism, is indeed the victim of terrorism. Muslims and especially mosques have been targeted in the increasing number of anti-Islamic attacks in recent years in the US and the European countries. Increasing in parallel with the rise of racism in the West, hostility to Islam is camouflaged under the definition of “Islamophobia.” This discourse, conceptualized in the sense of fear of Islam, implies that Islam is identified with terrorism, and it is the religion that should be feared. This approach assumes that the fear of Islam is natural, and the terrorist actions taken against Muslims with the fear of Islam can be seen at least as understandable and should not be considered as terror. Based on the definitions, as the term Islamophobia is not replaced or alternated with a term such as anti-Islamism like anti-Semitism, terrorism targeting Muslims are encouraged and promoted.

On the other hand, it is seen that the targets of the terrorist organizations allegedly of Islamic origin

28 “Country Report on Terrorism,” *Bureau of Counterterrorism*, accessed January 20, 2020. <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2018/>.

29 Ibid.

30 See, Falk, “War and Peace,” 5-6.

such as ISIS, Al-Nusra, etc. are generally Muslim countries and societies. While this terrorism identified as “Islamic” and attributed to the doctrines such as “Radical Islam” or “Jihadism,” is expected to target non-Muslims, it is mostly located in the centers of instability in the Middle East, fighting with the other Muslims and serving for the anti-Islamic interests rather than Islamic interests. For instance, this “Islamist” or “jihadist” terrorism has not been seen targeting non-Muslim states or societies such as Israel. It opens the discussion to the question of how much of this terrorism is Islamic. From this point of view, the possibility that a terrorist organization that explicitly names itself with the word of Islam is not Islamic, but that it may have been designed against the Islamic countries should be evaluated in an objective framework without being reduced to creating conspiracy theories.

Terrorism as a Political Weapon in the Context of Securitization

Parallel to increasing a terrorism threat since September 11, security policies are designed and implemented based on the hegemonic interests in securitization processes which eventually produce terrorism in the vicious-cyclical process of the security dilemma. Within the scope of the war of the hegemony forces against terrorism, the Middle East has been turned into an open macrosecuritization project based on entirely political motives. In such a macrosecuritization process as Buzan and Waever define, the role of the “Islamic terrorism,” namely the Al-Qaeda in the post-9/11 context and the ISIS in the post-Arab Spring context, has been functioning with harmony to make this system work in which “*‘the enemy’, Al-Qaeda, is clearly willing to play along in a mutually beneficial conflict escalation.*”³¹ Against the common threat and enemy, a multilevel and multifaceted process of macrosecuritization was constructed in the Middle East in which several powers have deployed troops in Syria, Iraq, Libya in order to achieve their political and hegemonic interests and goals.

The main issue here is that the perception of the threat that is created and collectively recognized provides legitimacy of intervention at both state and international levels as much as the fear and persuasion it creates. As a matter of fact, in the dark process of securitization, the state itself, by creating a great threat perception for “national security,” has been able to exert disproportionate power over the targeted actors, and thus state terror emerges. Waever underlines that this threat-creating act is carried out in an entirely verbal action as he called it, a “speech act,” within the framework of politicians’ cooperation with the other sectors like media.³² For example, the former UK Prime Minister David Cameron advocated British presence in Syria as the only way to get rid of the ISIS threat in his speech at the parliament on 2 December 2015 and likewise the French prime minister Francois Holland who declared a counter war and enforced the state of emergency against the threat of the “Jihadists” particularly for the destruction of the ISIS after the Paris attack on 13 November 2015.³³ Numerous examples of political speeches can be added to them, showing how the rhetoric is used to activate and justify the securitization policies. The discourse adopted to construct a securitization project contains the natural element of othering and discrimination. It is at this point that terrorism comes into play as the sole and primary threat with its reference to Islam, that has been accepted by the international consensus, which legitimizes the security policies of the hegemony forces today within the framework of the rhetorical actions as explained in the previous section.

31 Buzan and Waever, “Macrosecuritization,” 274.

32 Waever, “The Theory Act,” 121-7.

33 Eroukhanof, “Securitization Theory,” 107-9.

However, the operations of securitization undertaken with unproportioned security measures based on the threat of terrorism cannot finally go beyond the impasse of the security dilemma. Securitization is built on such a security conception that is defined based on priority of hegemonic powers' security at the expense of others' security ultimately producing the security dilemma. Here, conception of security needs to be deconstructed based on the five security questions: Whose security? Against which threats? Through which means? With which cost? And for which values?³⁴ The "security" policies that are the source of this dilemma eventually turn into mechanisms that reproduce and even strengthen terrorism instead of preventing it. Because security policies are directed based on othering, the state produces its enemy and brings it to terrorism with othering.³⁵ In this vicious circle, security versus terrorism reproduce terrorism versus security. This system presents a favorable structure for the sustainability of the hegemony, as the ultimate goal of the "war against terrorism" is protecting hegemonic interests rather than destroying terrorism. As a result, the political landscape is shaped in the context of securitization and security dilemma in the Middle East and North Africa by the hegemonic control.

Two interlinked cases of securitization in the Middle East showing how terrorism is politicized to be used for hegemonic purposes are selected, Israel's securitization over Palestinian people at state level with regional and global implications and the Muslim Brotherhood movement-centered securitization exerted at regional level which has played a determinant role in the regional geopolitics in the post-Arab Spring context.

Israel's Security and "Palestinian Terrorism"

Israel's security is perhaps the most emphasized national security in the international arena more than the security of any other country, including the USA, and has been a major parameter in the regional policies. Israeli security has both foreign policy and domestic policy implications as it has been implemented inside and outside of the state at both national and regional levels. In the domestic policy dimension, Israeli security constitutes a very appropriate case in terms of construction of securitization through the marginalization of a specific population namely the Palestinians for the political interests at the expense of the security of others.

The reason why Israel's security is so vital is entirely political because it is a concept of "security" built to legitimize and to stabilize the occupation of Palestine. Since such a state establishment made on the territory belonging to the others based on elimination of the native population, the security has been the existential matter for the state of Israel. Based on "Israel's security" narrative, the securitization system has been constructed in which the threat is defined as the Palestinian people of the occupied lands. The Palestinian society, which does not have a state and is weak in military, economic and political terms and is in real insecurity under occupation, is claimed as an "existential threat" to the security of the powerful Israeli state. To support this disproportionately structured argument of the "Palestinian threat," the notion of terrorism has been employed, and Israel's securitization practices are legitimized based on combating against "Palestinian terrorism." Palestinians' existential struggle against the Israeli occupation that has been

34 See: David Baldwin, "The Concept of Security", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (1997): 5-26.

35 See, David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

executed with human rights abuses and ethnic cleansing³⁶ is claimed as terrorism. Israel's securitization exerted on the Palestinian population is argued scholarly as being the deepest securitization.³⁷ A multidimensional, systematic, and in-depth securitization process has been prevailing since 1948, based on a constant state of emergency.³⁸ In fact, regarding its longevity, consistency, regularity, and magnitude, Israel's securitization is a state, a mode of being, beyond a process.³⁹

The discourse of "Palestinian terrorism" has widely been used through a multidimensional campaign by the political cooperation of big media companies, academia, science, and art activities as the sole source of legitimacy for the securitization that Israel has carried out within the occupation. The statement that "Arabs who want to destroy us" referring the Palestinian citizens of Israel taking place in Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's official web page in September 2019 is just one of the numerous examples showing to what extent the threat perception and fear atmosphere are created.⁴⁰ This political rhetoric is supported by the authorities of the global hegemon, namely the United States who adopted the same discourse as Israel uses in the foreign policy. In the foreword of Coordinator of the US Counterterrorism Bureau, it is stated that "Israel continued to face terrorist threats from Hamas and other terrorist organizations in Gaza."⁴¹ It is significant to show how the notion of terrorism is politicized that the American policy does not hesitate to label Hamas and other Gaza based groups as terrorist organizations without considering the role of Israel imposing an inhuman blockade on the people of Gaza who have been suffering from deprivation of basic needs such as electricity, medical services, medicine in addition to the right to travel since 2007. American policy never mentions Israeli State terrorism involved in Gaza with 2327 civilian casualties in 2014, 174 in 2015, 299 in 2018, and 137 in 2019.⁴² In America's 2019 Terrorism report, not only Gaza-based organizations but also other Palestinian legal organizations and groups such as the West Bank-based Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF), Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine (PLFP) are included to the Foreign Terrorist Organizations list. Regarding the fact that Israeli securitization has been implemented since 1948 starting much long before the foundation of Hamas, the question must be asked about whether the Israeli securitization caused by Hamas and such groups or the resistance activities of these groups are caused by the Israeli securitization. It is not argued here that military aggression of Hamas or any individual or organizational violence undertaken by Palestinians should be tolerated. However, a biased and unfair approach of pro-Israeli American policies and discourse is emphasized to point out the significant role it has played in justifying Israeli state terror reproducing Palestinian resistance. It clearly reflects the policy consensus between the US and Israel particularly on the Middle East affairs as seen in the US' Iran policy. Israel's interests and security has always been the priority in the US foreign policy towards to Middle East to varying extents depending on the leader mainly because of the impacts of the pro-Israel lobbying activities on the US political mechanisms.⁴³ Especially during the presidency of current president Donald Trump, the US government supports all the radical steps Israel attempts to take starting with moving the US Embassy from

36 See, Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, (Oxford: Oneworld Publication, 2007). Rashid Khalidi, *The Hundred Years War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance 1917-2017*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2020).

37 Uriel Abulof, "Deep Securitization and Israel's Demographic Demon," *International Political Sociology*, 8 (4) (December:2014).

38 See, Khalidi, *The Hundred Years*.

39 Hannan Nanic, "The Effectiveness of Israel's Securitization Narrative on its Impunity in the Context of UN Resolutions Violations" (MA Thesis, Utrecht University, June 25, 2018), 41.

40 "Facebook penalises Netanyahu page over hate speech violation," *The Guardian*, accessed December 5, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/sep/12/facebook-disables-netanyahu-page-bot-over-hate-speech-violation>.

41 "Country Report on Terrorism." *US. Department of State*, accessed January 15, 2020. <https://www.state.gov/country-reports-on-terrorism-2/>.

42 "Data on Casualties", *Occupied Palestinian Territory, ONCHA United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*. Accessed March 2, 2020. <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>.

43 See, John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem and supporting the annexation of East Jerusalem and some part of the West Bank by Israel in the framework of the so called “peace plan” announced in 2020. It is seen that there has been a reinforcing relationship between Trump’s political interests and Israel’s security based political interests.

The core issue here is that as the loose and ambiguous definition of terrorism enables it to be politicized easily, the politically formed terrorism claims are not required to be proved as long as they are strongly advocated within the speech act mechanism of the securitization project. Whether the alleged Palestinian organizations are actually terrorists does not matter, but what matters is how it was manipulated and advocated by the Israeli campaign and its supporters. Israel’s grave insecurity narrative built based on the existential threat of “Palestinian terrorism” has been well advocated through the alignment of the foreign policy discourse of the US, media, and academia supporting Israel’s argument to the international audience. It highlights the power-politics relations at the core of it. Through the hegemonic power transferred from the American hegemony, the “security” argument is supported strongly providing justification, sustainability and impunity for Israel’s deep securitization project which is established and developed against the international law. Therefore, the claim of “Palestinian terrorism” has been quite useful in maintaining Israeli hegemony on Palestinian territories as well as American-Israel hegemony in the region to design a regional status quo based on the priority of Israel’s security.

The Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood case as well is a significant example of the politicization of the notion of terrorism in the Middle East within the framework of securitization in which it has merely been labeled with terrorism for entirely political purposes. The Muslim Brotherhood Organization (MB) was founded in 1928 as an Islamic social organization in Egypt by Hasan Al- Banna. Although it grew as a promising civil society organization and consisted of mostly educated young members such as doctors, engineers and teachers founding schools, hospitals, helping poor and such, its impact on the society was perceived as a threat for the political authorities such as Jamal Abdel- Nasr, Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarek. However, the restrictions and oppressions could not prevent it from going beyond the national borders and becoming an international organization in the Middle East.

Its growing impact and magnitude as it evolved into a political movement through establishments of its political party branches in several Arab countries increased threat perceptions related to it by the autocratic regimes in the Middle East. The “Arab Spring” developments brought substantial change initially in favor of the MB, by the fall of Mubarak’s regime under which the MB had been officially banned for years. The Freedom and Justice Party, founded by the MB, won the first free parliamentary elections in Egypt with the 65 percent of the total votes. The MB emerged as the most potent political movement in the country. While it was a historic moment for Egypt’s democratization, it caused the MB to be put at the center of an international smear campaign. It meant, in fact, the victory of the moderate political Islam receiving much popularity in the Middle East societies, which was the actual threat in the region for the regimes of the Gulf monarchies as well as Israel.⁴⁴ Therefore, the first democratically elected government of Egypt was overthrown by the military coup that was supported by the regional status quo powers.

44 See, Philipp O. Amour, “Israel, The Arab Spring and the Unfolding Regional Order in the Middle East: A Strategic Assessment,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 44:3, (2017), 293-309.

In the post-Arab Spring context, the MB was designated as a terrorist organization by an international coalition and become the central factor in the regional political clash between the status quo powers; Saudi Arabia and Israel with the allied middle powers and the counter-hegemonic states; Iran and Turkey and their pragmatic allies.⁴⁵ In this context, the interests and threat perceptions of the Saudi led Gulf Monarchies and Israel met in a reticent consensus. The MB and Iran have been the primary common threats in their security conceptions. The regime securities of some Gulf states were threatened by the MB movement with its successful democratic experiences in Egypt and Tunisia while “Israeli security” was also threatened by the MB government in Egypt especially with its link to Hamas during the “Arab-Spring.”⁴⁶ Covert alliances between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) since the mid 90’s and lately between Israel and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) have been developed based on this political convergence on the regional policies.⁴⁷ President Trump has brought these two parties of the region together in a regional alignment for establishing the status quo.⁴⁸

The KSA announced its designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group on 3 March, 2014. On March 21, 2014, Bahrain followed it to designate the Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. The UAE designated the Muslim Brotherhood and its local affiliates such as Al-Islah in November 2014. American Senator Ted Cruz proposed the “Muslim Brotherhood Terrorist Designation Act of 2015” bill to the Congress claiming that the MB is a Radical Islamic Terror Organization, and that it’s a national security matter. The bill could not receive enough votes and was reintroduced in 2017. President Trump first directed the State Department to look into designating the Brotherhood in 2017 but it decided that the group did not meet the legal requirements to be a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) since it is not a unitary organization and does not have an established pattern of violence. In April 2019, Trump announced that he would seek to have the State Department designate the Muslim Brotherhood an FTO. It is interesting to note also that Al-Qaida and ISIS denounced the MB defining it as “devastating cancer.”

Mark Lync remarks that “there is near-universal consensus in the analytical, academic and intelligence communities that the Brotherhood is not a terrorist organization” and that “the Brotherhood’s political strategy and ideology emphasized patient social transformation and electoral participation rather than the violent overthrow of regimes. It has consistently condemned acts of terrorism such as al-Qaeda’s attack on the United States.”⁴⁹ David Kirkpatrick points the fact that “historians say there has been no evidence since then that the Egyptian Brotherhood, as an organization, has engaged in violence.”⁵⁰ The founding leader Hasan Al-Banna’s reaction to the attempt of bombing a courthouse in 1948 by denouncing it and stating that “they are neither Brothers nor are they Muslims”⁵¹ demonstrates the fundamental mentality of the movement.

Despite the wide consensus of the experts on that the MB cannot be defined as terrorist organization based on the criteria, the race of the regional status quo powers to designate the MB as terrorist following the Egyptian coup indicated that it was a politically driven campaign of a power projection. To eliminate

45 Mehran Kamrava, “Hierarchy and Stability in the Middle East Regional Order,” *International Studies Journal*, 14, no. 4 (Spring, 2018), 11-13.

46 Amour, 295-9.

47 Jonathan Marcus, “Israel and Saudi Arabia: What’s Shaping the Covert Alliance” *BBC NEWS*, 24 November 2017. Accessed May 16, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42094105>.

48 See Adam Entous, “Donald Trump’s New World Order,” *The New Yorker*, June 18, 2018, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/06/18/donald-trumps-new-world-order>.

49 Marc Lynch, “Attempts to designate the Muslim Brotherhood have failed before. Why is it returning now?” *The Washington Post*, May 1, 2019, accessed February 2, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/05/01/designating-muslim-brotherhood-terrorist-organization-has-failed-before-why-is-it-returning-now/>.

50 David D. Kirkpatrick, “Is the Muslim Brotherhood a Terrorist Group” *The New York Times*, April 30, 2019, accessed December 11, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/30/world/middleeast/is-the-muslim-brotherhood-terrorist.html>.

51 Ibid.

the substantial impact of the Brotherhood representing moderate political Islam in Tunisia, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Palestine, it was aimed to label it with terrorism. In this power projection, the main issue is how powerfully the campaign was operated based on the claim of terrorism to manipulate perceptions against the MB rather than proving that the Brotherhood is really a terrorist organization. The UAE has been operating lobbying efforts in the US and European countries with large investments against the MB and related organizations, in particular against Qatar recently. The anti-Brotherhood campaign led by the UAE was addressed to its own society as well as the other Arab societies through producing and broadcasting anti-Brotherhood series, shows, and religious programs to replace the popularity of the MB with hatred.

The Saudi-BAE-Bahrain-Egypt coalition started an anti-Qatar campaign in 2014 based on the reason that it was supporting the Brotherhood and hosting its leading members. By the recent and ongoing embargo exerted on Qatar since 2017, the quartet requested Qatar “severing all ties to terrorist organizations, specifically the Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS, Al Qaeda, and Hizbollah, formally declaring those entities as terrorist groups” among the 13 demands.⁵² The US President, Donald Trump, showed support for the quartet and used the same discourse of blaming Qatar with supporting terrorism. The violation of sovereignty rights of an independent state and the fundamental rights of its people has been justified based on the allegation of “supporting terrorism” referring to the Brotherhood. The whole process that has started with the Egyptian coup undertaken against the MB and its supporters including the embargos on Qatar represents a macrosecuritization system applied at the regional level and led by the global hegemon in which the terrorism has been used as the central instrument. The concept of terrorism was instrumentalized by the hegemonic powers for the political purposes beyond the scope of its definition to eliminate the anti-hegemony actors, namely the MB and its allies, to establish the status quo in the Middle East.

Conclusion

Terrorism emerged as a hegemonic conception to be instrumentalized through politicization in pursuing hegemonic interests and practices in the post-9/11 context, with the foremost implications in Middle East politics. The concept of terrorism defining the primary contemporary threat at national and international levels, functions quite efficiently in implementing and maintaining threat-based securitizations beyond the security parameters with a central and crucial role. As the conception of terrorism after the 9/11 attacks was constructed with a particular reference to Islam, the counter-terrorism acts at both national and international levels were addressed to the Middle East, mainly providing substantial involvement and control to the hegemonic powers, namely the United States and its allies, through securitization projects at various levels. Besides the fact that the indeterminateness in the use of the concept of terrorism allows it to be politicized, the identification of terrorism with Islam at an epistemological level promoting Islamophobia and anti-Islamic sentiments has provided more suitable ground to politicize terrorism to be used against Islamic actors since the 9/11 attacks. Persistent use of the term of the “Islamophobia” instead of anti-Islamism highlights the key role of the discourse in the maintenance of the perceptions towards the assumed link between Islam and terror providing approval to the anti-Islamism.

⁵² See, Zeina Azzam and Imad Kharb ed. *The GCC Crisis at One Year, Stalemate Becomes New Reality*, (Washington DC: Arap Center Washington DC, 2018).

In the post-Arab Spring context, the role of terrorism has entered to a new stage in which the design and protection of the regional status quo have been implemented within the macro- securitization project based on an entire politicization of terrorism. The regional level securitization has been constructed against the moderate political Islam represented by the central actor MB seen as threat for the securities of the Gulf monarchies and Israel based on allegations of terrorism. Israel's securitization established at state level and deepening since 1948, has been extended based on discourse of "the existential threat of Palestinian terrorism" in the framework of the regional securitization led by the American hegemony in the post- Arab spring context. The alignment between Israel and the regional powers such as the KSA and the UAE on the same security projections based on the shared threat perceptions, increased Israel's hegemonic power through the US' support. Consequently Israel's securitization in Palestine was granted substantial justification through the approval of the leaders of these Arab states and legalized with the Trump peace plan, the so-called "deal of the century," which includes the annexation of the West Bank by Israel followed by the latest "peace" agreements between Israel and the UAE and Bahrain. These peace agreements led by the Trump administration are expected to be followed by some other Gulf States.

These two interlinked cases of the hegemony-based securitization projects have been implemented based on the speech act with a great campaign built on the discourse of counter-terrorism that was adopted by the political actors and media. The truth, as a result, occurs as not what is really happening but what people are made to believe. That the power-politics relations are the core issue in securitization, which is built on terrorism threats, indicates that this type of securitization is established as a hegemonic process. As the sole internationally acknowledged threat, terrorism plays a central role in securitization and so in the maintenance of the hegemony, it can be argued that terrorism is required to be maintained for the sustainability of the hegemony, and non-state terrorist organizations will be continuing to exist with different names or formations to keep the notion of terrorism threat alive. In the vague atmosphere of the state and non-state actors relations in the Middle East, anti-hegemony states will be continuously accused of supporting terrorism while the terrorist and non-terrorist organizations will continue to be put in the same category in smear campaigns.

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