

# Exploring the Prospects of Turkish Resource Nationalism

Constructing Subjects and Places through Hydrosocial  
Territories – the Case of GAP

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# *Abstract*

This thesis sets to interrogate the deployment of resource nationalism in the Turkish case, using the hydraulic project *Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi* as a case study. While previous research has often determined resource nationalism through state-building and economic accumulation, the thesis challenges this literature by focusing on how conceptualizations of subjects and places are constructed in conjuncture to resource nationalist imageries to build a sense of national unity. Adhering to the post-structural school and Foucault's versatile conception *governmentality*, resource nationalism is comprehended as a political discourse organized by knowledge-practices, water-scientific resolutions, discursive imageries and political hierarchies. As the region in which GAP is situated has historically been depicted as 'regressive' in comparison to Turkey, I argue that GAP fosters a developmental trajectory to homogenize the region with remaining Turkey. Through an analysis of GAP's policy framework, I conclude that GAP deploy resource nationalism by encouraging ideas of modernization, competitiveness, and entrepreneurship onto subjects and places to bolster socio-economic development and establish a greater sense of national unification. However, as these imageries are not pursued by force, the thesis explores the applicability of productive power, where restraining/uplifting imageries of subjects and places shape how these tenets are conceptualized through naturalizing discourses.

*Key words:* resource nationalism, GAP, hydrosocial territories, governmentality  
*Words:* 19980



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# 1 Introduction

*“The Turkish Nation proves its capabilities by finishing the GAP gradually. Therefore, the GAP symbolizes the progress of Turkish technique, engineering, and labor, and also shows the determination of the nation. In these aspects, the GAP is a masterpiece of the republic of Turkey and gets its power from the Turkish Nation”.*

Süleyman Demirel, 1994<sup>1</sup>

With these words, the former Turkish president Süleyman Demirel described Turkey’s most prominent hydraulic project *Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi*, also known as GAP. Since the Turkish government initiated the project in 1977, the objectives of GAP have shifted from being a project which sought to provide hydroelectric and irrigation services to a full-blown regional development program with socio-political ambitions. This new path was integrated into the project in the late 1980s and sought to provide the region with uplifting activities to foster domestic community participation, improve health, education, and social services (see Carkoglu & Eder 2001; Dohrmann & Hatem, 2014:573; Özok-Gündoğan, 2005). Through these initiatives, GAP increasingly expanded its role as a significant domestic, socio-political actor with the capacity to change discourses around waters and politics in Turkey (Bilgen 2018:126).

Today, GAP’s socio-political ambition permeates the entire project, inciting diverging assumptions about its objectives: on the one hand, stakeholders, scholars, NGOs and local groups have long pointed towards the negative outcomes of GAP. For instance, GAP has been accused of flooding approximately 200 towns and villages (Ilisu Consortium 2005; Ilhan 2009), displacing up to 78 000 people, primarily Kurds, destroying water flows, and damaging cultural heritage (Drazewska 2018:89; Ronayne 2005). Such impacts have incited great critique towards the project, arguing that GAP is essentially a political and social project with the ambition to gain control over the region rather than promoting development.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This quote was taken from Demirel, Süleyman. 1994. “GAP Türkiye İçin Altın bir Çağın Habercisidir Gelin Bu Çağı Hep Birlikte El Ele Gönül Gönüle Karşılalım.” [GAP Is a Messenger of Turkey’s Coming Golden Age: Let Us Welcome this New Era Together with Integrity] *GAP Dergisi* [Gap Journal] 4: 3–4, referenced in Conker, A. (2018) Understanding Turkish water nationalism and its role in the historical hydraulic development of Turkey. *Nationalist Papers*, 2018 Vol. 46(5): 877 – 981.

<sup>2</sup> For further discussions on GAPs inciting of marginalization, see: Joost Jongerden (2010) *Dams and Politics in Turkey: Utilizing Water, Developing Conflict*, Middle East Policy Vol. 17:1; Ilektra Tsakalidou, *The Great Anatolia Project: Is Water Management at Panacea or Crisis Multiplier for Turkey’s Kurds?* Wilson Center, Environmental Change and Security Program.

On the other hand, Turkish authorities have determinately framed GAP as beneficial for regional and national development by bringing the region up to national economic standards and covering the growing demand for hydroelectric services domestically. Furthermore, Turkish authorities have argued GAP to be an essential part of modernizing the nation by increasing the economic and industrial infrastructure as a result of improved hydraulic management (Shaw and Kural-Shaw 1977:389). As Veysel Eroglu, Minister of Forestry and Water Works argued, the dams of GAP will serve as a “symbol of national pride” and a “vision of a ‘great Turkey’” (in Carkoglu & Eder, 2001: 42 and 65).

This puzzle invokes several important inquiries regarding GAP. What does socio-political development imply in this context, and what discursive assumptions can be extracted from it? Furthermore, it is necessary to investigate if national ideas of the Turkish republic transcend the state’s hydraulic projects, e.g., GAP, as they mobilize around similar modernist ambitions. Lastly, it enables questions about how such potential imageries are organized and imposed on the region and its citizens through hydraulic management, and how these are maintained. Before outlining the research objectives of this thesis, I will provide a brief background to nation-building and water management in Turkey by highlighting the emerging of nationalism in the Turkish context. The background will further explicate this puzzle more thoroughly.

## 1.1 Nation Building and Water Management: The Case of Turkey

When the Turkish Republic was established in 1923, the country underwent several interventions that sought to define and unify the newly established republic. The founding father of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, played a fundamental part in defining the republic’s new path, which sought to resemble the ‘modern West’ and distancing itself from its Ottoman heritage (see Yeğen 2007; Zürcher 2010; Landau 1984; Kadioğlu 1996).<sup>3</sup> In the yearning to create a homogenous nation with affiliations to the modern West, Kemalist authorities incorporated reforms in the educational, electoral, agricultural, and military sectors as means to unify citizens of Turkey and institutionalize a new, contemporary “Turkish” national identity (Okyar 1984:49). These reforms would subsequently lay the foundation of what today is associated with

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<sup>3</sup> This idea was primarily promoted by the Kemalist nationalist idea. Attention must be brought to the fact that several counter-nationalist identities also emerged within the Turkish intelligentsia as well as the civil society as a reaction towards the Kemalist paradigm (e.g., Turanism and Ottoman nationalism). In this thesis, however, the Kemalist nationalist trajectory is accounted for, as it has constituted the most encompassing nationalist discourse in the country.



Turkish nationalism, also known as Kemalism. Among others, the reforms adopted a secular and republic approach to politics, a European jurisdictional system, replaced the former Arabic script with a Latin-script alphabet, and sought to draw ethnic inferences between Western and Turkish populations (Öktem 2003:4).

The Kemalist reorganizations also sought to modernize the hydraulic management and agricultural sector as an integral part of creating a powerful, modern, and unified Turkish Republic. The goal was to improve the life standard of citizens and sustain economic capacity by seizing large water resources stemming from the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates. Along with improving infrastructure, hydraulic development became a fundamental part in connecting rural regions with modern cities by accelerating modernization in periapical areas and bringing a modern mindset to the rural societies (Conker 2018:884). The process of inducing the new, Turkish national identity has led to violent political suppression of minorities settled in Turkey, perhaps most notably the Kurdish community, who were accused of hindering national modernization by attaining what Turkish authorities perceived as a ‘regressive’ lifestyle (see Akinci et al. 2020; Harris 2002; Öktem 2013; Zeydanlioglu 2012). To counter this impeding, Turkish authorities sought to eradicate cultural expressions, languages, jurisdictional rights, and the right to assert autonomy by implementing discriminatory policies, posing them as a threat against the Turkish national imperative (Yeğen 2010).

The case of GAP is particularly topical since the region in which GAPs dams are placed has long served as the heart of Turkish nationalist contestations, which remain vivid to this day. The Southeastern Anatolia region houses approximately 90 percent of Turkey’s Kurdish population and is located in the Turkish part of Kurdistan (Itzhak Kornfeld 2020:122). Since the citizens of Anatolia have often been accused of not following the Turkish modernist progression, the region has been depicted as a ‘problematic’ area. Consequently, Turkish authorities were convinced that the lifestyle of these people had to adjust to the “materialistic values of a modern world” (Okyar, 1984:50). During this time period, GAP was launched by the Turkish government to uplift the region from its “relatively backward status” and to “further consolidate the unity and solidarity in the country” (GAP Action Plan 2014-2018:10; 14) through socio-political development and hydraulic expansion. As the project has been severely critiqued for its potential underlying intentions, it remains ambiguous whether GAP should therefore be viewed as a catalyst for development or a strategy to control the area and its citizens by inducing new, ‘modern’ values in the region.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

Consequently, scholars have argued that hydraulic management has played an important role when constructing the Turkish Republic by using it as a means to

improve the country's economic capacity, modernizing and improving citizens life standards and unifying the nation (see Conker 2018; Allouche 2005). Furthermore, there is a continuously growing literature in the field of hydropolitics that seeks to understand how the relationship between water management and state- and nation-building is embodied. Adhering to this growing academic field, I turn to the notion of *resource nationalism*, which seeks to conceptualize how nations mobilize around natural resources as a way to deploy nationalist sentiments. I aim to develop this theoretical field by arguing that resource nationalism can be organized by numerous principles, which in this thesis will be explored through the lens of *hydrosocial territories* and Foucault's idea of *governmentality*. Here, hydrosocial territories are understood as imagined spaces in which human practices, waters, technologies, politics and socioeconomics interact to govern discourses of resource nationalism (Boelens et al. 2016).

The thesis subsequently consists of a two-folded purpose. Firstly, it has a theory-developing ambition that challenges previous research of resource nationalism by endorsing a post-structural orientation. Drawing on Natalie Koch and Tom Perreault's (2018) theory of resource nationalism, I view it as a *political discourse* in which ideologies, nationalist imageries, and natural resources are entwined. Furthermore, I apply a Foucauldian post-structural mindset to explicate this intricacy by aiming focus on how conceptualizations of *subjects* and *places* are constructed in conjuncture to water-scientific resolutions, to see if this might generate resource nationalism. I turn to subject- and place conceptualizations as they together constitute two essential elements of nationalism by associating identities and unification to physical or imagined territorial spaces. By doing so, a new theoretical approach to this field is enabled.

Secondly, there is an empirical ambition to assess the theoretical framework, using GAP and Turkey as a case study. Concisely, I argue that maintaining water projects and buildings dams are justified not solely by materially calculated presumptions, but through how discursive statements around them are constructed, making the deployment of resource nationalism possible. Through a critical analysis of GAP's main policy framework, the thesis sets to explore how imageries of subjects and places are conceptualized and governed to fit the socio-political paradigm of GAP, and whether it might be viewed as a way to deploy resource nationalism.

In sum, the main aim of the thesis is to provide a deeper understanding of the political implications of water management in the Turkish context and explore the potential prospects of Turkish resource nationalism. By critically assessing GAP's policy framework, I examine *whether, and if so – how – GAP deploys resource nationalism, and how this is signified through subject- and place conceptualizations expressed relationally to hydraulic management*. The thesis is driven by a theoretical developing ambition, as I aim to challenge previous literature by departing from a Foucauldian-inspired approach, focusing on the discursive implications of resource nationalism. In the following chapter, I point towards why this is necessary.

## 2 State of the Art

This chapter outlines the current academic field of the two main tenets that the thesis is concerned with: First, it presents the current state of resource nationalist studies, emphasizing its covered and un-covered areas. Second, it discusses how GAP has been studied so far, pinpointing where further studies are encouraged.

### 2.1 Resource Nationalism

Resource nationalism, in essence, aims to conceptualize how states and citizens mobilize around natural resources. As natural resources have become scarcer, increased attention has been directed towards this subject, where scholars have sought to approach it through different ontological and epistemological lenses. Three different perspectives on resource nationalism appear as most discernible: the economic, political/institutionalist, and critical perspectives. Below, I outline the most central studies in these perspectives and identify a knowledge gap.

#### *An Economic Perspective*

One common way to study resource nationalism has been colored by its economic-bargaining prospects. In a study on energy security in Latin America and its implications for global oil supplies, David Mares (2010:6) argued that resource nationalism considers oil to be a “national patrimony” that is used to increase the nation’s wealth by implementing policies that legitimize local- and state ownership of resources. Resource nationalism in Mares view elucidated governments’ strategic incentives by using economic nationalist statements to improve resource industries within a given territory. A presupposed tenet in this view of resource nationalism has an economic grounding as it postulates that natural resource obtains both intrinsic- and market value that can be extracted to benefit nations.

Furthermore, the academic interest in the economic prospects of resource nationalism has been shaped by a so-called ‘global resource boom’. Due to industrialization, increasing demand for energy sources and resources as minerals, coal, and water has grown exponentially during the last thirty years

(Wilson 2015:401). Jeffrey D. Wilson stated that resource nationalism as an academic field entered a phase of revival since its last upswing in the 1970s, pointing towards the field by studying how governmental expropriations, tax increases, and similar forms of nationalistically shaped interventions have arisen globally. Consequently, he implied that the academic term might be relatively new, although the practice is not.

In a globalized context, nations' attempts to control domestic natural resources imply a sort of economic protectionism towards foreign investors' exploitation. For example, Paul Stevens captured states endeavors to '[...] enhance its national patrimony and sovereignty' by "[...] limiting the operations of private IOCs and asserting a greater national control over natural resource development" (2008:5). Similarly, George Joffé et al. (2009) concluded that states aimed towards a maximal national advantage from the exploitation of their natural resources, suggesting that resource nationalism was symptomatic of rising interests of resource exploitation, fueled by market interests (Ibid). Adi Karev's (2013) findings also elucidated how protectionism can take form in various ways in the energy industry. He found two main tendencies that defined how natural resource policies were deployed: firstly, states' resource policies can be protective or open, by either providing low equity participation in production sharing contracts or establishing concessive contracts. Secondly, he concluded that "all governments exhibit degrees of resource nationalism" (2013:14) depending on what assumptions have colored the above-mentioned resource policies. Consequently, Karev's discussion opened up a more multifaceted, albeit still economically deterministic understanding of resource nationalism as something emerging from and staying on a top-level.

As the economized tenet marks, studies that have primarily shed focus on the relationship between states and foreign investors somewhat have been shaped by a realist perception that both adhere to economic deterministic views and remain state-centric. Furthermore, as the chapter has shown, studies engaging in this field somewhat leave the impression that the phenomenon can be quantified, rationalized, and predicted.

### *Towards a Political/Institutional Perspective*

Although studies targeting economic impetuses to deploy resource nationalism recognize the political value of natural resources, they overlook how governments shape their politics around such issues in this regard and therefore lack the ability to problematize the political sentiment underbuilding natural resource management. Moreover, studies of economic prospects might provide

the basis that allows governments to pursue resource nationalism but says less about the political factors that facilitate its intentions, forms, or outcomes. Wilson (2011:2015) criticized the market-oriented tenet of resource nationalism by pinpointing its insufficiency in explaining the political and institutional capacities in utilizing resource nationalism. Staying within the economic realm, but stretching it to account for political processes, he introduced a theoretical understanding that considered resource nationalism as a form of economic nationalism. The theoretical attention thus shifted from foreign investor-state relation as determinant to political institutions as the key factor for determining how organizational arrangements were conducted in policy processes (Wilson 2015:403). By emphasizing political institutions' importance in conditioning the forms of resource nationalism, Wilson identified three types of institutional arrangements that produce resource nationalism differently, depending on the "status of the state": market-based, developmental, and rentier-based institutional arrangements (2015:410). Luciani (2011) shifted this lens by considering resource nationalism a phenomenon that encouraged a decrease of exportation of natural resources by maintaining it within the state's borders, implying protectionism in terms of retaining resources within the state's territory in rather pejorative ways.

The shift from an economic to a political/institutional perspective broadened the perception of resource nationalism but has maintained adherence to the rational assumption that states primarily operate from strategic incentives to optimize their prospects. As Stevens concluded: in the end, it comes down to extractive nations "wanting to make the most of their endowment" (2008: 5). As an interesting counter-thought, Dalia Abdelhady et al.'s (2015) article *The Nile and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam* adhered to the idea of optimizing national prospects but remained critical towards the protectionist tendencies. Instead, they asked why national interests in questions of natural resources have indisputably been understood as negative standpoints. Instead of assuming protectionist intentions, they argued that these concepts can be reconceptualized into meeting points in which national interests conjoin with hydrosolidarity principles to improve the living standards in the Nile region.

Lastly, scholars have acknowledged the state-to-state accumulating perspective and shifted the issue to study how elites use hydraulic development to accumulate their social power, authority, and legitimacy by obtaining a hegemonic position (see Zeitoun & Warner 2006; Swyngedouw 1999). Although these studies importantly provided a hegemonic power perspective to natural resource management as a means to remain in control, they have still consistently stayed within the elite-level politics, not considering what implications it imposes on human beings.

The political/institutional perspective has clearly provided insightful conclusions but has left out two important notions. First, it has not yet fully dealt with nationalism as a discourse but rather used the idea of national strength interchangeably with the notion of nationalism. Thus, it remains unclear what organizing principles constitute nationalism as a unifying means. Second, similarly to the economic perspective, it has remained its focus on elite-level politics. Therefore, the idea of nationalism as a discourse, in which culture, history, people, places unify nations by social means has been somewhat overlooked by a state/state-to-state power dogma.

### *A Critical, Human Geographic Lens*

Other academic schools have sought to diversify the field of resource nationalism by pinpointing the narrowly defined understanding of the phenomenon. For example, John Childs criticized the former school for being reduced to “a language of energy security and economic wellbeing” (2016:54). Matthew C. Benwell & Klaus Dodds (2011) stretched the scholarly field of resource nationalism in a study of the Malvinas/Falklands dispute in Argentina, showing that resource nationalism had a greater impact on some citizens than others. Their study aimed to shed light on the plurality of actors that engage in resource nationalism on a non-state level. Following this path, Karen Bakker & Gavin Bridge (2008) displayed how resource abundance and scarcity are contingent through historical and spatial circumstances rather than by external ‘natural’ conditions. They furthermore argued that abundance/scarcity emerged at the intersection of political economy and geology, reconceptualizing natural resources from being a pure commodity into an ideological and material force. These studies have shown that albeit natural resources often tend to become an organizing commodity around which contestations occur, the conflicts also encompass concerns of political economy, national identity, citizenship, or nationhood.

Lastly, the critical human geographic path has contributed to colonial/post-colonial literature by distinguishing resource nationalism between exporting and importing states. Stefan Andreasson (2015) contended that resource nationalism in sub-Saharan Africa’s mineral and energy markets was shaped by their experience of colonialism. Particularly noticeable in the Nigerian case, Andreasson explained how concerns of facing neo-colonial exploitation by earlier settlers played a decisive role in why post-colonial states have sought to expand control over domestic natural resources. Similarly, Bridge & Le Billon (2013) conclude that resource *exporting* states shaped by colonial historical paths tend to be more associated with protecting their resource supplies as a means to assert counter-dominance against previous colonial states. On the

contrary, Koch & Perreault (2018) argued that *importing* states such as the U.S and the majority of Western Europe have primarily focused on securing their resource inflow and access from states with higher levels of resources and exporting policies.

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In this section, I concluded that the field of resource nationalism was initially understood as an outcome of economic and political behaviors. As a critical vein was developed, a larger emphasis was put on the ideological and normative aspects of resource nationalism. This thesis positions itself within this critical vein. It does so by further exploring what implications it might have to deliberately construct political meaning around natural resources, subjects, and places to build a sense of unification – an approach that has been overlooked even in the critical scholarly field of resource nationalism. As Turkey’s ‘hydraulic mission’ shows, natural resource management is prone to be driven by normative and discursive presumptions that draw affiliations with historical/current/future, cultural, socio-political accounts, and that this has implications on humans and places. Unlike previous research, the post-structural/Foucauldian approach allows one to interrogate how such imageries are sustained by a power/knowledge- and governmentality lens. This is highly important as it underlines the political, discursive implications of hydraulic management. By doing so, it becomes possible to critically assess how knowledges are used as means to set fabricated conditions to people’s mindsets of both themselves and places in conjuncture to natural resource activities.

## 2.2 GAP

Considering the politicized implications of Anatolia being a part of Turkish Kurdistan, many studies have pointed towards the complexity of promoting socio-political improvements by GAP. This perception has primarily argued that rather than promoting regional wealth, GAP fuel preexisting political disparities between Kurds and Turks. For instance, Daniel Hillel (1994) argued that some of GAPs socio-political programs have been interpreted as means to colonize Kurdish homelands by providing the Turkish state increasing power over the region and consequently denying Kurdish citizens self-determination.

Considering the violent clashes between the Turkish Government and its Kurdish citizens, the question of GAP and PKK has received academic attention, raising questions of Turkey’s hydraulic project from a security perspective. Nilay Özk-Gündoğan (2005) contended that GAPs socio-political development was used as a mechanism to control the violent encounters between PKK and Turkish authorities

as a complementary means of counterinsurgency. Similarly, Jost Jongerden's (2010) study elucidated the strategic usage of GAP by the Turkish government to block the PKK in two ways: firstly, by using the Euphrates and Tigris rivers as bargaining tools to force adjacent countries to limit their support to the PKK and secondly, using dams as physical barriers to prevent PKK members to mobilize.

Denying the self-determination of certain people implies altering discourses of what constitutes the idea of being a 'Turk'. This question has been touched upon regarding the preservation of cultural heritages and GAP and emphasized the claims that Kurds are in fact not considered as "real" Turkish citizens. For instance, while ruling elites argued that GAP will work to preserve important Anatolian cultural sites, local needs, and cultures, and that "only primitive things" will be submerged by GAP dams<sup>4</sup>, numerous studies have shown that such statements are highly questionable. Behrooz Morvaridi's (2004) article showed that instead of advocating local, cultures and people, GAPs buildings of dams have resulted in displacing approximately 350,000 people, of whom the majority are Kurds. Furthermore, studies show that flooding caused by GAPs dam building will put approximately 80 percent of the Kurdish historical-cultural site Hasankeyf underwater and result in displacing up to 78,000 people, primarily Kurds, raising important questions about what people and cultures are considered important to preserve when building the dams (Drazewska 2018; Ronayne 2005). In a more critical vein, Kerem Öktem (2002) concluded that implementing socio-political policies might lead to further "[...] disempowerment, marginalization and proletarianization of a fair portion of the people displaced by the dam projects" (2002:322).

As noted, most studies regarding GAP have studied the issue from a top-down level, emphasizing current or potential issues with the project, and fewer have sought to study resistance/counter-narratives circulating GAP. However, two studies have attained a perspective that has sought to take a local and grassroots perspective. In their noteworthy article, Lena Hommes et al. (2016) explored how contrasting hydrosocial territories around the Ilisu Dam have arisen by local and international grassroots environmental groups and Kurdish communities reactively towards state elite discourses around water governance. The article broadened the possibilities of studying hydro-politics from a governmentality perspective, approaching the concept of hydrosocial territories as a physical conceptualization. Moreover, Leila Harris (2009; 2008) studies on GAP have shed light on the different modalities of water and conflict geographies, capturing cultural, historical, and contextual political conflict lines surrounding water issues from a local perspective. Applying an ethnographic perspective, Harris studied local knowledges and narratives versus

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<sup>4</sup> Claimed by Turkish Minister of Forestry and Water Affairs Vesel Eroglu, in: - G. Seufert, Das 86se kommt von drau/3en, "Zeit Online", 10 July 2009. Withdrawn from Ronayne, M., and N. Hildyard et al (2000) *The Ilisu Dam, the World Commission on Dams and Export Credit Reform: The Final Report of a Fact-finding Mission to the Ilisu Dam Region*, Kurdish Human Rights Project, <http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/resource/ilisu-dam-world-commission-dams-and-export-credit-reform> [accessed 13/5/2021].



techno-science regarding the implementation of further irrigation systems by looking at where they converge and diverge.

GAP's most persistent critique has come from Arda Bilgen, who argued that three potential rationales have been explicated in GAP's 40 yearlong development/modernization process. Firstly, he contended that GAP can be understood as a means to rectify social differences in Anatolia. Secondly, he argued the project as a means to induce a western developmental discourse. Thirdly, he argued GAP could be understood as a mechanism to pursue material, political, and economic improvements in the region, even if it would also bring ecological and cultural destruction (Bilgen 2019). This was further elaborated in an article from 2020, where a power/knowledge/absence- perspective was utilized on the development discourse of GAP. The article studied how GAP's narratives have been designed through the construction of absence, arguing that the developmental discourse realized by GAP is underbuilt by so-called design power. There, Zeynep S. Akıncı et al. (2020) suggested a new take on the politics surrounding GAP and the Anatolia region, adhering to the post-structural idea of knowledges and "otherness" as an alienating strategy.

To my extended knowledge, only one has so far sought to study the interconnection between Turkey's nationalist trajectory and hydraulic management. Ahmet Conker (2018) drew upon Jeremy Allouche's (2005) conceptual framework of "Water Nationalism" to understand the nationalist sentiments behind Turkey's 'hydraulic mission'. He argued that institutional realization of its hydraulic potential has played an important role in modernizing the country and contributed to nation-building. In sum, he contended that ruling elites have used hydraulic infrastructures and symbolic attributes as means to represent the state's progress to underscore the importance of Turkish waters, as well as in ideas of the 'Turkish homeland' to establish domestic water nationalist discourses. Conker's study viewed water nationalist sentiments primarily as a means to exert state-power in a more traditional sense and by pointing towards how elites impose discursive imageries onto citizens from a top-down level.

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Studies of GAP have often sought to either study it from the Turkish-Kurdish perspective or by contending how GAP exerts power over the region by ideational measures, many of which have posed a critical positioning. However, few have sought to conceptualize this with regards to nationalist sentiments. The one that has (Conker 2018), has however remained within the state-expansion dogma, leaving questions of discursive implications unanswered.

## 2.3 Research Gap

Identified within the two fields, is an overlapping knowledge gap. While the resource nationalist literature has not fully explored how natural resource management affect discursive imageries of humans and places, studies of GAP have often applied a critical lens of this kind. However, instead, studies of GAP have only recently started to scrutinize the project through the lens of nationalism – which appears to have many unresolved inquiries to it. Therefore, this thesis aims to combine the two knowledge gaps and subsequently, contribute to both academic fields concurrently. In the next chapter, I delve into how this is to be understood, and hopefully, in itself explain the importance of studying this subject through this lens.

## 3 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework. It is developed to empirically assess how so-called hydrosocial territories are constructed as means to deploy resource nationalism. The overall argument is that constructions of places and subjects can be viewed as means to uphold governance over spatial configurations – a theoretical assessment, that I use to analyze the empirical material. The following chapter is concerned with presenting the theoretical prospects that underbuild the framework, how they are to be comprehended and assessed. The overall theoretical departure conveys a post-structural red thread in which power is understood as *productive*, meaning that it is produced through social practices governed by knowledges (Foucault 2002).

Before delving into this issue, the thesis aims to discuss how management of natural resources is to be understood as an expression of nationalist sentiments. The first section aims its primary focus describing how discourse is to be understood. Thereafter, hydrosocial territories as a conceptual configuration with the ability to express discursive statements is introduced, which I later intend to analyze in policy documents. In this section, the focus is to illuminate how structure/discourse is *organized*, illustrating a type of agency. Here, I draw inspiration from Foucault's versatile conceptualization of *governmentality* to articulate and organize hydrosocial territories through a knowledge/power perspective. The ability to construct *places* and *subjects* as seemingly neutral through governmentality is considered as key components in the construction of such.

### 3.1 Resource Nationalism as a Political Discourse

While previous research on institutional and state-level resource nationalism has often abided by a realist/deterministic-inspired perception, focusing on power-accumulating aspects of resource management, the thesis draws inspiration from Koch and Perreault's critical perception of how nationalism is conveyed through the idiom of natural resources (2018:611). Consequently, resource nationalism is interpreted as a discourse in which power relations are elucidated and constantly bargained between all societal levels. To understand this intricate relation, I will clarify the two tenets upholding resource nationalism: nationalism as a discourse and natural resources as socially embedded.

Despite focusing on different societal levels and embodiments through which nationalism has been expressed, the core idea of nationalism always responds to two things; how social unity among people is organized, and how this is expressed relationally to the space (either physical territory or conceptual) in which unification appear (Koch & Perreault 2018). This has previously been studied through various means, where common meeting points for nationalism have often focused on sharing language, territory, establishing a collective history, present, and future (Wodak et al. 2009:4; Simon & Klandermans 2001:327). Based on such interrelations, I argue that one must comprehend two key notions when exploring resource nationalism. Firstly, one must seek how the idea of individuals become *subjects* through social constructions that create unification among people. This implies understanding what reasons bind people together, how subjects construct identity relationally to higher, norm-shaping instances as well as how such ideas of unification and identification are expressed (see Howarth 2013:2). This argument somewhat responds to Benedict Anderson's (1983) idea of 'imagined communities', which refers to people's ability to construct a sense of community through political and cultural perceptions of a place. Adhering to Anderson's perception opens up the possibility to research how the *subject* is constructed around nationalist imageries in terms of how they relate to cultural and political perceptions. Nations thus convey cultural systems where conceptions of the self are negotiated and reflected upon by humans within the system (Hall 1996).

Secondly, it is crucial to understand how the idea of the person and the collective relate to a territory or an idea of a territory, which hereafter will be referred to as *place*. Often, places are taken for granted as unchangeable and neutral objects due to their physical, pre-determined appearance (Öktem 2003). Despite this, history has shown that territory and the idea of a place is constantly shifting and depends on the political landscape; land borders are often negotiated; invisible borders appear or are being torn down parallel to globalizations' progress. Instead of abiding by a deterministic and material idea of territory, the modernist nationalist school has sought to reconceptualize *place* into a more nuanced matter, loaded with ideological, discursive, historical, and cultural implications (Koch & Perreault 2018:617). To put it concisely, a place is defined by more than just a geographical location – it is defined by the political activities, history, and human behaviors shaping how it is to be understood, making the conception of place a social construction rather than territorial (see Koch & Perrault 2018:617; Hommes et al 2016:11; Swyngedouw & Williams, 2016). As Vladimir Kolossov & John O'Loughlin states, this unique intersection of the subject and its connection to *place* (as a spatial configuration) expresses “a specific type of human territoriality and a territorial form of ideology” (1998:262), viewing nationalism as a discourse where values, places, and ideas of people are interwoven. Taking a modernist stance on nationalism means that the phenomenon is not a static, nor unchangeable phenomenon, but a dynamic process of social and political engineering (Smith 1991).

If we ought to understand subjects and places as shaped by discourse, physical commodities such as natural resources, that are allocated and extracted from certain places must also abide by this understanding. Thus, natural resources are treated as contextually specific and socially contingent ‘cultural appraisals’ of nature, emphasizing their politicized implications (Bridge 2009). This implies that material objects such as natural resources always carry a social value in the sense that people mobilize around them by constructing ideas of places, collectives, and themselves. Treating resource nationalism as a political discourse allows one to critically assess the relations between natural resources and nationalist narrations of identity, spaces, practices, and culture (Koch & Perreault 2018:612). Applying a constructivist theoretical lens acknowledges the political configurations of natural resource management by treating them as ‘ideological cultural appraisals’ of their historical and social context (Bridge 2009). David Harvey furthermore stresses this conception by stating that resources can only be fully defined if the mode of production is contextualized to its current social sphere and viewed relationally (1974:265). In this view, natural resources are never a-political commodities, since they play an integral part in both shaping and being shaped by resource-related discourses surrounding them (Barnes & Alatout 2012; Koch & Perreault 2018). For instance, when actors draw on ideas of utilizing or preserving natural resources (may it be states, nations, individuals, or communities) within certain places, the commodity in itself acquires political value by its sheer existence. As Bridge accurately puts it, “[re]source making activities are fundamentally matters of territorialization – the expression of social power in geographical form” (2010:825).

When fusing conceptualizations of nationalism and natural resources together, natural resources functions as the locus around which actors enhance nationalist imageries, thereby viewing natural resources as the *organizing structure* around which human mobilization transpires. The premise when outlining resource nationalism is thus the following: Although there are numerous reasons for different stakeholders to draw on discourse of resource nationalism, they often boil down to questions of how natural resource management resonates to imageries of state- and nationhood, sovereignty, territory, as well as citizenship privileges and national identities (Koch & Perreault 2019). Natural resources and nations are thus to be understood as dialectical, produced by their social implications rather than by their own nature, making natural resources politicized enterprises. Struggles over natural resources is therefore not a battle over the commodity itself, but rather encompasses an array of political and social contestations that resonate with ideas of nationhood, national wealth, territory, ideologies and identities (Koch & Perreault 2019, 618; Bakker & Bridge 2008; Le Billon 2013). However, despite that nationalism and natural resource management as separate entities are being universal phenomena that often exist parallel within the same space, their parallel existence should not arbitrarily be equated with resource nationalism; resource nationalism occurs when actors, institutions and governments mobilize around natural resources in ways that align with discursive statements to justify political imperatives. Hence, resource nationalism as a discourse is primarily elucidated in circumstances where a

politized agenda is salient in a way that fosters nationalist imageries (Koch & Perreault, 2019:612).

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This section has primarily sought to theorize how natural resources and nationalism are to be understood as discursively intertwined. However, I have not clarified how resource nationalism as a discourse can be deployed or maintained, only conceptualized the two main tenet's interrelation. The two following sections aim to explore the deployment of resource nationalism more thoroughly by approaching it from a power/knowledge lens. The following section elaborates on how hydrosocial territories are constructed as spatial configurations and means to express political discourses as resource nationalism.

## 3.2 Hydrosocial Territories and Governmentalization of Territory

Here, I present the concept of hydrosocial territories as a conceptual space through which resource nationalism is deployed. Note that since the thesis only focuses on the natural resource water, there is also a shift in the language as waters and natural resources are used interchangeably.

Rutgerd Boelens et al. define a hydrosocial territory as a conceptual configuration that intersects human practices, water-scientific resolutions, socio-economic and cultural perceptions to produce social, material, and political outcomes (2016:1). By viewing hydrosocial territories as contextual and transformative rather than fixated spaces, they encompass a human-political-water nexus that is based on “epistemological belief systems<sup>5</sup>, discourses, and political hierarchies” (Boelens et al. 2016:2).

Hydrosocial territories manifest themselves as both *imagined* or *materialized* configurations depending on whether they are physically materialized or not. Regardless of whether they are actually embodied or solely imagined, they convey various functions, meanings, and values to uphold discursive assertions (Ibid.). This does not mean that hydrosocial territories are mutually exclusive within the same geographical space. Rather, due to their multifaceted embodiments and rationales, multiple and often divergent hydrosocial territories are constructed by opposing

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<sup>5</sup> Epistemological belief systems represent the range and state of knowledge in terms of representing what knowledge is and how it can be purchased (source: Boelens et al 2016).

stakeholders to conduct counter-imageries of realities (Hommes et al. 2016).<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, although the thesis aims its attention to the creation of GAPS hydrosocial territory, it does not reject the idea of counter-hydrosocial territories to co-exist or emerge simultaneously. In line with Koch & Perreault (2018), Bruno Latour (1993) argues that material commodities play a part as actants in hydrosocial territories to produce certain perceptions of rational behaviors and perceptions. For instance, Jessica Barnes & Samer Alatout argues that water and water technologies as simultaneously a social and physical actant to show how materiel can play a significant political role in hydrosocial territories by “be[ing] and become a border, a resource for regeneration, a foundation for empire, a means of nation building, and a material linkage between past and present” (2012:485), making the creation of hydrosocial territories an integral part of reinforcing resource nationalism.

Hydrosocial territories encompass an array of organizing principles to maintain itself. This thesis engages in this matter by drawing on Michel Foucault’s perception of power/knowledge relation, utilizing governmentality of territory as a way to organize hydrosocial territories as seemingly neutral and rational (Boelens et al. 2016:6). The term governmentality, initiated by Foucault, refers to “techniques and procedures for directing human behavior” (Foucault 1997:82). Governmentality thus, in the Foucauldian sense, describes practices that seeks to conduct individuals by placing them under authoritative guidance through knowledge practices (*Ibid.*). In this, the process of governmentalization is defined by how water users’ identities are framed by world views imposed on them, and how they act accordingly to such imageries (Boelens et al. 2016). Consequently, governmentality aim its attention to how practices, hierarchies and power relations maintains control over humans by making ideological statements and politics appear as seemingly neutral and uncontested (Russel & Frame 2013:94).

Rather than studying it solely as a structural or exertive quality, Foucault argues that power is produced from tensions of relations between social processes and cognitive domains (Foucault 1979:20). Power is subsequently treated as *productive*, for two reasons. Firstly, because discourse enables humans to think and act upon discursive structures, and secondly, since discourse is reproduced or counteracted when people think and act (Foucault 1979). Power is thus understood as constantly (re)produced through social practices and negotiations that stems from discursive understandings of phenomena, postulating a reciprocal interdependence between discourse and agency (Foucault 2002). Assuming this perception generates a

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<sup>6</sup> In the post-structural vein, discourse is understood as “socially produced forms of knowledge that set limits upon what it is possible to think, write or speak about a ‘given social object or practice’ (Bacchi 2009:35). Knowledge is always bound to an epistemological discourse and can never be fully objective, making knowledge a question of power. However, since the thesis assumes that the *social* realms determine how knowledges operate, and power as something *productive*, human agency must not be disregarded as subordinate to structural accounts. This elucidated an intricate interdependency between discursive accounts and human agency. Consequently, a discourse can never be fully fixated, leaving space for alternative ‘realities’ to emerge.

reactive relation between the structure and agency which either reinforces a discursive perception or contests it. Following the Foucauldian power-analogy, governmentalization of hydrosocial territories is characterized by the maintenance of power divisions through the construction of *subjects* and *places* by restraining envisions of what types of subjects and places are acknowledged within the hydrosocial territory and making it appear as neutral (see Boelens et al. 2016:6).

Since power is understood as productive and can only be sought but never claimed by authorities, no predetermined types of subjects nor places exist statically. Rather, what is elucidated, is that within certain discourses, subjects are produced *or* restrained to reinforce a particular image of reality (Bacchi 2016:71). Mitchell Dean emphasizes this non-fixated subject positioning when arguing that regimes of government can never fully determine what ‘kinds’ of subjects we become. Rather, they “elicit, facilitate, foster, and attribute various capacities, qualities, and statuses to particular agents” (1999:32). This is also what signifies the Foucauldian view on power – unlike the historically conventional idea of coercive power (also known as ‘power over’), governmentality sets fabricated conditions in ways that encourages individuals to become subjects by acting and thinking in certain ways “[...] without being necessarily aware of how their conduct is being conducted from a distance” (Li 2007:5) Thus, subject construction is not innate, but nevertheless a powerful, disciplinary tool. Similarly, places are to be understood differently depending on their discursive setting, what knowledges dictate the understanding of a place, what values they are ascribed, how resources within places are allocated, or how individuals/communities/nation-states relate to the place, making it a creation of political activities. (Re)making a nation and nationalist sentiments is thus a question of political activities.

The process of reinforcing hierarchical relations between places, subjects, and waters by governmentalizing territory has profound political and socio-environmental implications due to its ability to alter water users in terms of how they relate to community, places, with one another, and themselves (Boelens et al. 2016:6). Relating to resource nationalism, such imageries intersect why certain collective statements of values, behaviors, or ways of conducting natural resource management become premiered or neglected within nations/regions/territories, and how subjects might be disciplined into aligning with imageries as such. Essentially, hydrosocial territories can “frame their worldviews, needs, strategies, and relationships differently, building and believing in new models of agency causality, identity, and responsibility” (Ibid.).

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How humans produce meaning through knowledge practices is always discursively bound. Power in hydrosocial territories is thus characterized by practices that create divisions along different conflict lines, and how they are maintained as seemingly neutral by water-scientific resolutions. Furthermore, due to their constantly shifting



objectives, they also manifest the productive capacity of power (Boelens et al. 2016:3, see also: Bury et al. 2013; Lansing 1991; Orlove & Caton 2010). The utility of studying hydrosocial territories/resource nationalism through the lens of governmentalization of territory is primarily when elucidating non-coercive and non-direct power exertion through the creation/management of subjects and places, which leaves political orders seemingly uncontested and unchallenged (Agarwal 2005).

### 3.3 Resource Nationalism Revisited: A Post-structural Departure

The theoretical framework challenges previous studies of resource nationalism by encouraging a poststructural departure that aims to draw affiliations between power, knowledges, and production of discourses. It does so by aiming attention to production of discursive power asymmetries, focusing on how subjects and places are constructed relationally to water-scientific resolutions. In short, I argue that governing natural resources is not only about governing the commodity itself, but also the socio-political context surrounding it. The framework aims to serve as a strategy to understand how resource nationalism as a political discourse is maintained through hydrosocial territories by practicing governmentalization of territory. The suggested assessment of resource nationalism thus expands current literature by considering it to be a political discourse rather than solely viewing it as means to accumulate economic/political leverages. Of vital importance in this critical view is to elucidate the reciprocal relationship between natural resource management and imageries of nationhood, and how these relationships are maintained through knowledge practices.

In sum, this thesis postulates the following theoretical assumptions: *a)* natural resources and nationalism are relationally bound by its discursive context; *b)* constructing hydrosocial territories (imagined and materialized) encompasses an integral part of maintaining such relations, and consequently resource nationalism, through power/knowledge practices; *c)* knowledges authorize subject and place positionings that enforce hydrosocial territories, producing organizing structures around which resource nationalism is elucidated and; *e)* power has a *productive* essence, elucidated in social practices and management of natural goods, where actors are defined by their capacities and practices. Therefore, productive power can accumulate in disciplining effects and potentially induce self-regulation of subjects (Agarwal 2005).

## 4 Research Design

To understand how hydrosocial territories are constructed as well as their ability to express resource nationalism, the thesis delves into how subjects and places are constructed around natural resource management. For this thesis, I study an imagined hydrosocial territory, meaning that I look at how resource nationalism is deployed in the intersection of language/mindsets rather than how it is physically expressed by individual actors. Therefore, the thesis utilizes policy as its main empirical source as it brings “an expansive sense to include both the activities of state institutions and of other agencies and professions involved in maintaining social order” (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016:18).

This chapter is laid out in the following sense: First, I discuss the ontological and theoretical departure of the thesis more thoroughly. Then, I present the methodology, which is inspired by Carole Bacchi’s methodology *What is the problem represented to be?* I also present the empirical material I intend to study before I lastly discuss the potential pitfalls the methodology might generate.

### 4.1 Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

The thesis rejects the idea that science only reflects a ‘given truth’ based on a ‘real’ world (Zehfuss 2002:36). Rather, it conveys an anti-foundationalist position by considering the world as socially constructed (Lowndes *et al.* 2018:178). Epistemologically and ontologically, this assumption is reflected in the critical constructivist/poststructuralist tenet that permeates the thesis theoretically and methodologically; it seeks to deconstruct the idea of an objective ‘reality’ and emphasizes the discursive settings that construct our perceptions of reality (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002; Kincheloe 2005). Instead of abiding by the positivist epistemological and ontological tradition, it actively seeks to understand how dominant discourses shape agency, power structures and perceptions of reality by applying an interpretivist approach to studies of discourses (see Kincheloe 1997:56; Marsh *et al.*, 2018:177-184). This premise is pervaded both in how we produce and understand facts and the political field I intend to study by underscoring knowledge practices as means to shape reality (Bacchi 2016:11). Ontology and epistemology can therefore never be fully separated. This is an important notion since it underscores the Foucauldian understanding of the power/knowledge nexus: knowledge and statements of how reality is perceived can never be objective matters – knowledge always reflect power and ideological standpoints (Foucault,

2002:108-109). Consequently, the thesis does not offer an absolute, objective answer to the research question, but rather one alternative to how GAP and resource nationalism might be approached.

The critical vein furthermore emphasizes that the world as we know it should not be taken for granted as objective truth (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002:5). Therefore, in studies of nationalisms' different embodiments and expressions, which are always contextually and socially bound, a critical approach is crucial since nationalism does not pertain an intrinsic 'objective' definition of the state (Özkirimli 2005:17). Considering this ontological and epistemological claim, as well as how my research question is formulated, it is not feasible to speak of answers as fixated, nor of causal inferences between aspects that are considered relevant for the thesis.

#### 4.1.1 What is the Problem Represented to Be? Poststructural Methodological Guidelines

To answer the overall research objectives, there is a need to approach how GAP frames its socio-political objectives by drawing on discursive statements regarding subjects, places, and waters. For this reason, I turn to Carole Bacchi's analytical framework *What is the Problem Represented to Be?* (hereafter WPR), which was developed to interrogate the deep conceptual premises shaping policy proposals (Bacchi 2009: xix). WPR provides the researcher with a handful of analytical questions that aims to examine the relationship between discourse and policy through the concept of problem representation (also known as problematizations). Bacchi essentially argues that "there are no problems separate from the proposals purported to address them" (Bacchi 2009:15). This means that problem representations stem from ideological, discursive, and social ideas of what constitutes a problem rather than objective statements, and that this is reflected in legislation. Consequently, WPR aims to shed light on the ideological and political framings surrounding ostensibly neutral policy formulations.

More than a critical purpose, WPR is also committed to a normative agenda by presuming that

*"[...] some problem representations benefit the members of some groups at the expense of others. [...] The goal is to intervene to challenge problem representations that have these deleterious effects, and to suggest that issues could be thought about in ways that might avoid at least some of these effects"* (Bacchi 2009:44).

To some extent, the thesis is committed to this goal – it aims to highlight how policies are intertwined with political meanings and that these have actual

implications on how subjects and places are (re)produced. Following the Foucauldian tenet, this implies that “every policy or policy proposal is a prescriptive text, setting out a practice that relies on a particular problematization” (Bacchi 2012b:4), highlighting two important notions: that constructing policies has a *productive* force by turning knowledges into practices and those policies can be viewed as strategies of government. Accordingly, I turn to WPR to identify, interrogate, and deconstruct how problem formulations are represented in policies as a way to organize hydrosocial territories and deploy resource nationalism.

### *Analytical Questions as Methodology*

To answer the overall research question, I examine three things: firstly, how GAP presents its overall objectives by how it problematizes the so-called ‘GAP Region’. Secondly, to aim focus on the potential nationalist prospects in GAPs work, I interrogate how subjects, places and hydraulic management are constructed around these problem formulations. Lastly, to provide a critical approach, it is important to ask what discursive implications this might generate. By answering these objectives, I pinpoint how a resource nationalist discourse is deployed, when discussed against the theoretical framework.

Bacchi provides the researcher with six initial questions to critically interrogate discourse in policy. However, since different studies benefit differently from these questions depending on the purpose and scope of the research, not all questions must be answered in the same study to provide valid answers (Bacchi 2009). To limit the study, some questions have therefore intentionally been left unanswered in the thesis. I will discuss which questions I have chosen to leave out, and why, shortly.

Loosely based on Bacchi’s analytical framework, I use four guiding questions to grasp how policy is used as a means to conduct hydrosocial territories and deploy resource nationalism. The questions elaborated provide prospects for a flexible reading of the material, guided by an abductive character. This means that reading the empirics alternates between reading the material in its entirety and at a detail level to give a comprehensive understanding of GAPs socio-political trajectory. I sort in the material by emphasizing how language is organized around what Bacchi calls *key concepts* and *binaries* (Bacchi 2009:7). Key concepts refer to repeating arguments and language use around which problematizations are spoken of as ways to encapsulate political meaning. Binaries, on the other hand, refer to hierarchical dichotomies that are often spoken of in ways that reduces the complexity of hierarchical relations to simplified imageries as a way to uphold power relations (Ibid.). These will be illustrated in the findings chapter but discussed against the theoretical assumptions in the discussion chapter.

Below, I present the utilized analytical questions. On the left side, I outline the initial questions as suggested by Bacchi. On the right side, I present how these questions have been comprehended to fit the purpose of the thesis.

<b>Original WPR-questions as suggested by Bacchi</b>	<b>Adopted questions to fit the thesis</b>
What's the problem represented to be in a specific policy or policies?	How are problem formulations around GAP's socio-political rationale represented in the policy framework?
What deep-seated presumptions or assumptions (conceptual logics) underlie this representation of the 'problem' (problem representation)?	How are subjects conceptualized in GAP's policy framework relationally to the overall problem formulations?  How is place conceptualized in GAP's policy framework relationally to the overall problem formulations?
How has this problematization come about?	-
What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be conceptualized differently?	-
What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?	What discursive effects are generated by these problem formulations?
How and where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended?	-
Apply this list of questions to your own problem representation.	The researchers positioning (Discussed the discussion chapter)

Source: Bacchi & Goodwin (2016:20)

*Question one* is directly borrowed from Bacchi's analytical framework and aims to identify problematizations in terms of how problem formulations are represented in policies. This implies working "backwards" from the proposal (broadly grasped) to identify how problems are formulated – either in explicit formulations or embedded implicitly in solution suggestions. Question one lays the foundation for the rest of the analysis, that seeks to interrogate how such a problem formulation ties to

structural accounts. In this specific case, problem formulations are defined by how socio-political disparities are illustrated as relationally bound to water-scientific resolutions to further on tie it to the theoretical framework.<sup>7</sup>

*Question two and three* draws inspiration from Bacchi's question *What deep-seated presuppositions underlie this problem formulation?* but is reformulated to fit the research objectives. To bind methodology to the theoretical assumptions, this means interrogating how knowledges are constructed around subjects and places, and how they are discussed relationally to the overall problem formulations. The overall objectives of question two and three is to further explore how knowledges underbuilding the problem formulation apply to subjects and places conceptualizations, and how this induces self-regulative and self-fulfilling activities. These two questions therefore raise the question of the reciprocal relation of structure/agency as well as power as productive. Furthermore, the findings stemming from question two and three has implications on the deployment of resource nationalism, in terms of centralizing the empirical analysis around the same main components that are argued to constitute resource nationalist imageries<sup>8</sup>.

Question four is directly incorporated from Bacchi's analytical framework and aims to study what discursive effects the constructions of places and subjects might generate. Effects, in the discursive manner, refer to political implications rather than physical impacts, since the thesis does control for lived implications empirically. It aims its focus to how discourses not only open certain discursive statements/ways of livings by governing knowledges, but also counteracts the possibilities of 'letting forward' alternative forms of identities/discursive statements (Foucault 2002:103; Bacchi 2009). Question four highlights the knowledge/power aspect when conducting governmentalization of territory.

Lastly, I add a final question (The researcher's positioning) to pose a self-reflexive segment where I confer my readings of the material to remain transparent in how I comprehend the empirics, as suggested by Bacchi (2016:20). This question is placed in Chapter 6.3.

I have chosen to leave some questions out from Bacchi's methodology. For instance, question five asks about what lived effects a problem formulation produces. Although the discursive realm is discussed relationally to resource nationalism, lived effects will not be covered since it would postulate empirical material that contains human inputs. Therefore, I cannot make any claims about what lived effects the problematizations produces. Question three and six seek to trace how a problematization has come about, been disseminated or defended, postulating a Foucauldian genealogical analysis, which will not be covered due to the limited scope of the thesis. Lastly, question four examines what is left unproblematic in the problem representation and whether the 'problem' can be

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<sup>7</sup> See Theoretical Chapter: Hydrosocial territories and Governmentalization of Territory

<sup>8</sup> See Theoretical Chapter: Resource Nationalism.

conceptualized differently. Such a question postulates alternative theoretical departures to answer the question, making it inadequate to consider for the thesis.

For this thesis, WPR becomes helpful when studying how the (re)production of subjects, places and water management might deploy resource nationalist sentiments by interrogating the politicized agendas behind every policy (see Bacchi & Eveline 2010:14).

## 4.2 Empirical Material

Here, I turn to the material that will be analyzed to answer the research question. The following section outlines a brief discussion on how and on what basis material has been selected before presenting the concrete material.

Policy as defined by Bacchi includes documents such as “organizational files and records, legislation, judicial decisions, bills, speeches, interview transcripts [...], media statements, organizational charts, budgets, program contracts, research reports, even statistical data” (2016:18). Defining policy through such a broad terminology allows the researcher to take into consideration that not every policy is constructed identically. Consequently, the material has been selected on two bases. Firstly, for discernible reasons, the scope of the thesis and the availability of empirics had to be taken into consideration. As the thesis approaches policy from an abductive departure, the empirics should not consist of too much material at the expense of in-depth quality. Furthermore, I intend to study the current state of GAPs socio-political realm, which imposes the question of availability of material. Due to a lacking knowledge of the Turkish language, I have turned to their official policy documentation published on GAPs English official website. Secondly, based on the theoretical and methodological approach as well as how the research question is formulated, the thesis only treats material comprised of socio-political developmental objectives. This might generate other answers than Turkish written material would have but nevertheless remains equally important.

In sum, the material is based on two main documents: *GAP Action Plan 2008-2012* and *GAP Action Plan 2014-2018*; and several, shorter affiliative documents conducted within the same time, which all target strategic implementations that include social, economic, political, and hydraulic actions. While the main documents comprise the overall official socio-political trajectory of GAP, the affiliative documents are accounted for as complementary to envisage a more comprehensive view of GAP and thus strengthen the empirical evidence. All sources are officially published in English, excluding the possibility of misinterpreting the material. These are all outlined in Appendix A.

### 4.3 Methodological Discussion

On a methodological note, I want to notify the potential pitfalls that a frame analysis of this sort might generate. Although there are clear arguments for problematizations as being constitutive of how we make sense of reality, it remains scholarly disputed whether it is feasible to measure or define such political framings. Studying political framings in similar veins as the thesis suggests has been described as “esoteric, obscure, and difficult” (Davis 1975:509–603). Similarly, Gamson (1975:603–507) argued that studying politically framed issues is practically impossible due to its insufficient systematization. A critique as such is hence one of the most probable critiques of this thesis. Although offering reasonable criticism, such critique tends to reveal a somewhat rationalist view of academics undermining the discursive implications of politics. Rather, I argue that postulating that solution suggestions have discursive implications provides a deeper understanding of how we sort and make sense of the world, despite its retrieve from a systematized methodological approach. Furthermore, the proposed analytical framework should not be misread for being what Gamson views as ‘un-systemic’ due to its questioning of operationalizations. Rather, by assembling the analysis around comprehensive questions about how subjects and places are conceptualized in relation to hydraulic management instead of abiding by narrow terminologies and systematizations, a more multi-faceted, in-depth, and inclusive analysis is enabled. Although other studies might benefit from a more systematized analysis of discourse, I argue that the chosen analytical framework is a fruitful way to approach this issue for one main reason: A too detailed systematization constraints the possibilities to fully encapsulate the power asymmetries entangled and produced from GAPs socio-political and hydraulic management implications.

Furthermore, the risk of determining what factors are constituent of subjects and places on beforehand is that the empirical material is read too literally and runs the possibility of missing important larger discursive characteristics. Instead, it is more desirable to remain open to different factors shaping the problem representations to enable an abductive reading of the material. On the contrary, studies acquiring post-structural elements has endured critique for being ‘too discursive’ (McKee 2009:475) and thus become to detached from ‘objective’ research. Although I find this critique reasonable, as such studies are more likely to be shaped by the authors preconceptions, I do not think it is a critique that should hold the thesis’ ambition back as I remain aware of this issue. Furthermore, as the thesis has a theoretically expanding ambition, it is important at this stage too not get too conclusive too early, but rather be open towards different possibilities – hence, the rather broad methodological questions. The chosen approach is thus rewarding as it intends to provide a new mindset to studies of resource nationalism through problematizations around subjects, places and natural resource management. In this sense, the thesis also has a generalizable ambition – although the outcomes cannot provide general answers for every individual case, it can provide scholars with two general



theoretical approaches in studies of resource nationalism. Understanding how problems are articulated is thus important since it manifests a meeting point in which ideas, context, and normative stances come together.

Lastly, a note on my positioning within the research. In the post-structural tenet, epistemology and ontology are highly dependent on one another, since the researcher cannot position herself outside of the structure surrounding her, which naturally affect the research outcome (Winther-Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:29.). On the one hand, this might weaken the study's internal validity, as it makes the study vulnerable to biases. On the other hand, letting the researcher to reflect upon her own positioning and perception of the world in relation to the research, can also provide a more dynamic and textured understanding of the structural and particular (Kincheloe 1997:58). Thus, to strengthen the internal validity, I added a final self-reflexive question in the discussion chapter and acknowledge that this is only one of many potential readings of the empirics (Bacchi 2016:20).

#### 4.3.1 On Theory, Material, and Methodology as Interwoven

As previously stated, the theoretical aim is to encapsulate how such imageries are conceptualized, while the methodological purpose inevitably becomes to deconstruct ostensibly neutral problem formulations of GAPs socio-political rationale. Theory, methodology, and material are therefore overlapping matters, and can never be fully covered by only looking at one section. The main purpose of asking the four analytical questions is thus to empirically substantiate the discussion chapter. Therefore, the findings must be read in conjunction with the discussion chapter, where the theoretical assessment is incorporated, to provide a more comprehensive answer to the thesis research question.

## 5 Findings

To answer the overall research question of the thesis, problem formulations that concern political, social, hydraulic and economic measures comprise the main focus of the analysis, drawing affiliations between subject– and place construction as well how such are related to water management/hydraulic concerns. I proceed with the analysis by answering the analytical questions presented in previous chapter. Firstly, I discuss how GAPs political rationale speaks of the problems it aims to solve. This implies an interrogation both of problematics and solutions presented. Secondly, subject and place constructions are discussed against the outlined problem formulation(s). Lastly, discursive implications are discussed. At the end of every section, a summary is provided to clarify what has been highlighted.

### 5.1 How are Problem Formulations in GAPs Policy Framework Represented between 2008-2018?

#### *Lacking Development – a Comprehensive Problem*

In the introducing words of GAP Action Plan 2008-2012, it is declared that implementing a regional developmental plan is of highest priority to “[...] reduce interregional development disparities, accelerate regional and local development, ensure a sustained and balanced development and enhance the contribution of all geographical regions to national development.” (p. 3). The regions’ flawed development is repeatedly brought up, encompassing numerous urging issues. Most marked are low labor force rates, per capita gross value added, flawed educational systems, lacking hydraulic services, and slow technical modernization (see GAP 2008-2012: 3 – 4; 5 – 6; 21 – 30; 30; 35; 55; GAP 2014-2018: 10 – 11; 14 – 15; 18 – 19; 21 – 27; 36 – 37; 40 – 41).

These issues are primarily uplifted in comparison to national numbers, showing that the Southeastern Anatolia suffers from significantly low numbers in terms of social and economic wealth compared to the rest of the country. Statistics provided by Turkish Statistics Institute (TSI) and illustrated in GAP Action Plan 2014-2018 shows that the Southeastern Anatolia region had higher unemployment rates

compared to Turkey's average rates, and significantly lower employment rates between 2008-2013.

Social discrepancies are also presented, showing that Southeastern Anatolia strikes lower than average national numbers on several social issues. For instance, the region still suffers from below national average rates in terms of health indicators, leading over national average numbers of infant mortality rates. Pointing towards such statistics, it is concluded that “[...] the need for health infrastructure and health services is still pressing.” (GAP 2014-2018:27). More than infant mortality rates, low educational enrollment is presented as a big issue, where numbers of kids enrolled in preschool hits under 50 % in the region, which has negative implications on social protection (GAP 2008-2012:6; Ibid. 35 – 36).

By displaying such numbers, GAP points towards that the Southeastern Anatolia has not yet attained sufficient living standards compared to Turkey as a whole, holding national development restrained. Therefore, highest priority is “[...] improving the level of income and life quality of people living in the region by utilizing regional resources; reducing and eventually eliminating development gaps between the region and other regions of the country; and contributing to national targets of economic development and social stability by improving rural productivity and opportunities of employment.” (GAP 2014-2018:14) in order to “[...] further consolidate the unity and solidarity in the country by eliminating inter and intra-regional social, cultural, and economic disparities” (Ibid:10). What can be read out is that regional development is not the only goal. Improving the region is a matter of bringing a sense of national unity as well as improving production by allocating equal development opportunities nationally (GAP 2008-2012:4).

That national development is strived towards furthermore justifies state intervention in the region by constitutional provisions, quoted and referenced in the policy framework: “It is the duty of the State to ensure economic, social and cultural development including in particular countrywide rapid balanced and harmonious development of industry and agriculture, to plan for efficient utilization of national resources by taking their inventory and making relevant assessments and to introduce necessary organizational structure for all these” (GAP 2008-2012:4). The Government claims it is their top priority to reinforce strengthening characteristics of each part of Anatolia by enhancing the role and function of Anatolia to contribute to the economy and nation. Utilizing natural resources as water is not only outlined as an option, but an unquestionable necessity for the region's and nation's development. Throughout the problem formulations presented by GAP, the region stands out as a negative counterpart to remaining Turkey, creating a binary division between the perception of being developed/undeveloped.

### *A Flawed Hydraulic Infrastructure*

To materialize new economic structures and provide social development, it is emphasized that there is an acute need to strengthen the regional infrastructure, in which flawed electrical services, irrigation networks, and water facilities are highlighted as in critical need of improvement (GAP 2008-2012:55; GAP 2014-2018:42). Managing regional water resources are advocated not only to promote regional progress but also as a way to contribute to national prosperity by facilitating the region with a stable infrastructure that will increase production and consequently bear socio-economic momentum (GAP 2008-2012:4; *Ibid.*: foreword; GAP 2014-2018:11; *Ibid.*: 25). Energy production coming from water management marks “[...] one of the most pressing needs of our country” (GAP 2014-2018: foreword) where the Southeastern Anatolia region is expected to improve its hydro-technologies to maximize its contribution to national wealth. To do so, the capacity to produce energy must stay larger than the country’s consumption, justifying the regional expansion of dams and capitalization of water-based goods by implementing “[...] a culture of production” (GAP 2008-2012: foreword, see also; AD 6; AD 9; AD 11 – AD 17; AD 20; GAP 2008-2012:55; GAP 2014-2018: foreword).

When formulating problematizations, issues and responsibilities are primarily spoken of as a responsibility by higher authorities towards individuals. For instance, it is argued that inventories by GAP are to be carried out to eradicate socio-political disparities of Anatolia. Furthermore, a strong hydraulic infrastructure is argued for as the main solution in various fields, including social, economic, and cultural sectors (GAP Action Plan 2008–2012:4). By improving the flawed hydraulic infrastructure, national wealth will be benefitted since it will generate job opportunities, economic accumulation, and consequently, socio-economic improvement. Furthermore, expanding irrigation technologies and implementing “a culture of production” is presented as a non-negotiable, all-encompassing matter, legitimized by authorities to protect the citizens of the region (GAP 2008-2012: foreword).

### *Modernization, Competitiveness, and Entrepreneurship as Solutional Development Strategies*

To counter disparities in the region, the policy framework marks the importance of incorporating three key strategies to resolve both social and economic problems and to advance development: *entrepreneurship*, *competitiveness*, and *modernization* (see GAP 2014-2018: 10 – 11; 14 – 15; 23 – 24; 33; 36 – 37; 49; 55; foreword; GAP 2008-2012: 5 – 7; 8 – 9; 21; 23; 25 – 26). While entrepreneurship and competitiveness are promoted as strategies incorporated into human activities, incorporating *modernization* implies a holistic mindset, conveying technological, vocational, and economic measures. Modernization appears as most vivid when speaking of hydraulic solutions, where GAP advocates a modern transformation as a strategy to maximize the production of goods by replacing old irrigation systems,

farming techniques, and infrastructures with high-technological solutions (GAP 2008-2012:5; GAP 2014-2018: 24 – 25).

To keep up with the increased production that these improvements will generate and manage them efficiently, GAP furthermore emphasizes the importance of providing a modern vocational infrastructure and modern market policies (GAP 2008-2012: 5; GAP 2014: 36). Modern solutions as such, GAP claims, entail entrepreneurship and competitive business models among regional enterprises. For instance, to counter the socio-political problematics, “[...] it is compulsory to attract private sector investments in the region” (Ibid.:7) and to advocate increased attention to expanding the production of goods for national and international investors (Ibid.; GAP 2014-2018:40). Doing so will consequently increase “[...] the competitive power of the region [...] as to sustain economic growth and ensure welfare.” (GAP 2008-2012:7) GAP essentially claims that the region will stimulate its economic and social development by transforming its labor market, which will have positive implications on national wealth. By fusing ideas of modernization, competitiveness, and modern vocational solutions such as entrepreneurship, the region will become attractive on both national and international markets and stimulate regional development (GAP 2008-2012:5; GAP 2014-2018: 10 – 11; 15; 36 – 37; 40).

Adhering to these concepts are to be read as promoting a transformation of the regional economic structure positively, not least to the citizens, where it is concluded that a new economic structure will “empower citizens in the region with further skills and qualifications to make labor force more flexible and adaptive to newly emerging business and employment environments” (GAP 2008-2012:7). Consequently, entrepreneurship, competitiveness, and modernization are understood as key concepts due to two reasons: due to their frequent recurrence in the policy framework as key strategies and their heavy emphasis on bringing political meaning into the developmental trajectory, both in terms of how problems and solutions are outlined.

Outlined strategies are described to enhance activity that will eliminate “[...] the relatively backward status of some regions” (GAP 2014-2018:10), in which the creation of a high-tech based, organized, and efficient culture is used as a counter-narrative to the problem of ‘backward status’. This can furthermore be comprehended as an implicit problem formulation, where the region has not yet reached its full potential in terms of streamlining its resource management, nor the infrastructural system upholding it. As a result, the region is not only problematized as flawed, but *underdeveloped*<sup>9</sup>, both in itself, and in comparison, to remaining Turkey, marking a binary division between the region and the nation, individuals who are subjected to GAPs development paradigm and those who don’t, as well as

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<sup>9</sup> Note that the term underdeveloped is never used in the material. Rather, I used it here as a negative counterpart to the development-term that is often referred to in the material, as Southeastern Anatolia is depicted as a region that has not yet attained social and economic momentum.

between what the region *is* and *can become* when following the trajectory of remaining Turkey.

To resolve such disparities, GAP actively seeks to engage citizens of Southeastern Anatolia into labor, primarily through water scientific resolutions by framing it as a rational step towards regional and national affluence (see: AD 6; AD 9; AD 11 – AD 17; AD 20; AD 22; GAP 2008-2012:55; GAP 2014-2018: foreword). Incorporating modernization, entrepreneurship and competitiveness should therefore not be misconstrued as arbitrary developmental strategies. Rather, they reflect an overall ambition to transform and unify the economic structure both regionally and nationally to align with Turkey’s national modernization discourse and further consolidate the connections to ‘modern western’ principles.<sup>10</sup> In a bigger context, these problems are furthermore not only presented as regional concerns. Not maximizing the region’s capacities also holds Turkey’s ability to flourish economically restrained, expressing regional problems as a national concern. The main cause of this ‘underdevelopment’ is narrowed down to historical non-efficient water management, which will be transformed by the new policy framework (GAP 2008-2012:21).

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This section has sought to encapsulate how GAP presents its problem formulations in explicit and implicit manners. The following conclusions can be extracted in terms of how problematizations are discursively outlined. The problem of Southeastern Anatolia is explicitly formulated as stemming from low labor force rates, inadequate hydraulic and infrastructural technologies, low rates of education enrollment, and inadequate social development. The region is depicted as a negative counterpart to remaining Turkey, creating tensions between the region and Turkey, where Anatolia’s problems restrain the nation from prospering. Although regional social and economic disparities are outlined as seemingly ‘ordinary’ issues, they also convey discursive underpinnings through the depicted binary divisions, where the region’s disparities stand for a somewhat underdeveloped status in comparison to remaining, modern Turkey. To counter such regional issues, three main strategies are identified as solutional: modernization, entrepreneurship, and competitiveness. These solutions are intertwined with the problem representation and have been identified as key concepts, as they carry in a political value into how problems are to be resolved through modern market-based solutions.

However, the problem- and solution framework also has consequences for how subjects and places are represented in policy – with its normative agenda affecting the image of the region and its citizens. In the following section, I thus aim to delve into how the discursive implications of GAP’s problem formulations.

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<sup>10</sup> See Chapter Nation Building and Water Management: The Case of Turkey

## 5.2 How are Subjects Conceptualized in GAPs Policy Framework Relationally to the Overall Problem Formulation(s)?

### *Modernization, Entrepreneurship, Competitiveness, and the Subject*

Previous section pointed towards how regional and national development is comprehended as interchangeable with increased modernization, competitiveness, and entrepreneurship of both technical and vocational strategies. Furthermore, such strategies are depicted as central to resolving regional disparities. In terms of how individuals engaging in various GAP projects are portrayed, similar ideas of development appear reciprocally, using economic accumulation as a means to enhance social capital. Citizens of the Southeastern Anatolia are considered “[...] as both the means and end of economic development [...]” (GAP 2008-2012: foreword) and that occupational progress will “[...] advance the welfare and happiness of our citizens (Ibid.). The primary way to accomplish social wealth and value among Southeastern Anatolia’s citizens is not only by improving the quality and magnitude of public facilities such as health care and education. It also aims significant regional emphasis on employment creation through skill-improvement, entrepreneurship, modernization, and competitiveness in both city environments and rural areas, embedding an idea of desirable human traits in the problem formulation (AD 1; AD 6; AD 8; AD 10; AD 15 – 16; AD 21; AD 23 – 24; GAP 2008-2012: 5 – 8; 21; GAP 2014-2018; 10; 14 – 15; 18 – 19; 22 – 26; 30; 36 – 37).

Citizens are encouraged to become more effective, self-maintaining, and competitive to achieve development by cultivating entrepreneurial proficiencies in agricultural and social/cultural sectors. Thus, human value is not only measured by the humanitarian rights citizens are credited with, but also by what they might offer in terms of productivity to the region as well as the nation. For instance, development of *human capital* is advocated to produce better prospects for the region and nation:

“Development of a human capital building model which encourages improvements in individual talents and quality of a human capital while targeting effective secondary and higher education

institutions, research and implementation units, building qualifications and occupational skills, providing high motivation for work, labor force flexibility and employment generation.” (GAP 2008-2012:8-9).

By doing so, individuals not only produce economic development but are also given the chance to both generate and benefit from social development that comes with economic growth, as stated that “[...] the approach will, beyond bringing in and expanding welfare, also support those who produce welfare (GAP 2008-2012:7) and “[...] within the framework of human-focused development concept, social environments will be provided where individuals can realize their full potential and live safe and healthy life up in high standards” (GAP 2014-2018:41). However, given the formulation, it remains uncertain whether only individuals who submit to the solutional framework will benefit from the economic advantages, or all citizens. Regardless, by shifting the focal point from institutional responsibilities to civic functions to work accordingly with GAPs policy framework, an interdependent relation between discursively shaped assumptions of what is supposed to be done and civil human agency is shed upon. Citizens of Anatolia are not only encouraged, but benefit from following the lines of modernization, entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship, while not being offered further solutions if not, creating strong incentives for citizens to maintain the developmental discourse constructed through policy. In this process, the individual becomes a subject under a discursive paradigm, expected to act in alignment with the problem representation.

Furthermore, civilians, governments, and various sectors are expected to mobilize activities around natural resource management to produce developmental enhancement according to GAP, when stating: “In all countries, it is the common goal of governments, the private sector and civil society to mobilize human and natural resources together around development objectives [...]” (GAP 2008-2012:3). By claiming that *every* country is driven by the desire to mobilize humans around natural resources to improve the country’s development, the objectives of GAP and human behaviors are rationalized by using a depoliticizing vocabulary around its objectives.

### *Agricultural Work as the Primary way to Produce Development*

Arguably due to GAPs initial purpose of being a hydraulic project, agricultural expansion and labor are presented as the leading ways to produce economic development in the region (GAP 2014-2018:24 – 25). As a result, a significant amount of emphasis is put on investing in modernizing irrigation infrastructure to improve farming practices, projects, and rural development to reach its full potential (Ibid; GAP 2014-2018:37.). The mission to make people more self-proficient attests as highly dependent on improving irrigation systems. Projects under GAPs policy framework are specifically designed to improve rural communities and farmers’



income levels by boosting competitiveness and income-generating activities in ways that would reduce regional disparities. Simultaneously, it is argued that such initiatives will boost the nation by making the Southeastern Anatolia Region more attractive and by contributing to the national economy (see AD 13; AD 18; AD 20). In these projects, competitiveness among enterprises established by regional citizens is formulated as integral actants to ensure human and economic development as well as strengthening institutional capacity (ibid.). Similarly, the main documents convey ideas regarding the intersection of regional socio-economic development, where individual's ability to engage in a competitive structure is urged (GAP 2014-2018:24-25; GAP 2008-2012:7-9; 25)

Adding momentum to economic and social development in the agricultural sector primarily speaks to farmers' ability to modernize irrigated farming's financial techniques and knowledges (AD 10 – 11; 13; 16; 18; 20) More than acknowledging the prospects of indulging in modernized methods, the future problematics for the ones who do not participate are also emphasized. Most notably, the Project on Raising Income Level of People in Areas out of Irrigation (AD 11) shed light on potential consequences for people who do not engage in GAPs mission. What is essentially contended is, that citizens living outside of areas brought under irrigation will not be able to generate the same income level as citizens who do. This "[...] in turn, will lead to income disparities between those living in irrigated farming areas and others in non-irrigated areas" (AD 11), elucidating a hierarchical tension among citizens. The suggested solution for people living outside of irrigation areas is to offer jobs that manage the productions stemming from irrigated areas. Citing GAP, "[...] there is a need to integrate *all* social groups in the project areas with the process of development and ensure that this development is equitable" through activities such as grafting of wild trees, beekeeping, water production, stock breeding, and poultry farming" (Ibid., own emphasis). Thus, GAP encourages people outside of irrigated areas to participate in the activities conducted within irrigated areas, despite not being a part of such.

Nor here are any other potential income-generating solutions beyond this, making individuals implicitly bound to participate in the developmental path taken by GAP, or else, they risk being overlooked. Essentially, development is mostly discussed in terms of the individuals' capacity to pursue productive labor, where people are encouraged to improve their skills in ways that will be economically beneficiary for themselves, the region and the nation. By making GAP an integral part of socio-economic progression, activities both within and outside of irrigated areas are connected to activities conducted by GAP.

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Citizens of Anatolia are not only encouraged but are profited by contributing to regional and national wealth by engaging in activities that are related to hydraulic

management that are shaped by the key concepts modernization, entrepreneurship, and a competitive culture. What can be extracted from this section is that subjects are urged to follow the modernization trajectory presented by GAP. Thus, the discursive path of development suggested by GAP and individual agency become reinforcing. As development, understood as a modernization process, is imposed on individuals by higher authorities, individuals who pursue activities imposed by GAP justify this rationale by living accordingly. Despite not imposing this rationale onto humans by force, two indicators that might generate self-disciplinary behavior for individuals appear as vivid, creating subjects out of citizens. Firstly, social and economic benefits for people when engaging in activities suggested by GAP are heavily emphasized as positive activities with beneficial outcomes in terms of improved welfare and economic situations. Secondly, the lack of justification of, for instance, traditional irrigation methods and techniques under the paradigm of modern development generates silences around other potential lifestyles, making it more beneficial to pursue GAP's activities for individuals. The policy framework furthermore acknowledges that not following the lines of GAP might induce harm on national development, for instance people living out of irrigation areas (see AD 11). As such, subject conceptualizations are pervaded by binary imageries of what constitutes developed/underdeveloped actions and mindsets by those who pursue activities that will generate development, and those who don't.

### 5.3 How is Place Conceptualized in GAP Policy Framework Relationally to the Overall Problem Formulation?

In this section, I shift focus from subjects to how place is conceptualized and constructed within GAP's policy framework. The purpose of this section is to closer examine how imageries encompassing the GAP region are related to the overall problem formulations.

#### *The 'GAP Region' – a Region on The Rise?*

A clear forthcoming envision of the Southeastern Anatolia region is outlined when stated that “By 2023, turning the region into a leading attraction center of Turkey with its vast and fertile irrigable land, a major supplier of organic textiles and foodstuffs, and innovative and competitive organic production” (AD 17). Picturing Southeastern Anatolia's future prospects as a leading production area displays an urge to brand the region from its historical reputation as somewhat ‘backward-striving’ (GAP 2014-2018:10) Emphasizing its own importance in shaping this

path, GAP consequently refers to the region as the ‘GAP Region’ instead of Southeastern Anatolia (GAP 2008-2012; GAP 2014-2018).<sup>11</sup> Within this rebranding, expanding hydraulic services and installing large dams, as well as incorporating the modernized approach to development clearly plays fundamental roles in transforming the region to align remaining Turkey. The purpose is to attract national and international investors to the ‘GAP Region’ and build up the economy. For instance, GAP assures that priority will be given to activities that seek to make local and regional areas more attractive in terms of habitability, job opportunities and private investments (GAP 2014-2018:25; GAP 2008-2012:5). On the contrary, the ‘GAP Region’ is also used to conceptualize the place in the opposite way, encapsulating the flaws pervading the area in terms of insufficient energy infrastructure, low economic accumulation, and problematic social security, as I have previously discussed. In order to align these contractionary images, the ‘GAP Region’ is presented as an indispensable link between the region and Turkey – allowing it to align with the latter in an advancement from underdevelopment to economic growth, from social instability to social progression. Subsequently, the region becomes associated, not with its historical and cultural features, but with a project which self-fulfilling purpose is to connect the local to the nation.

### *Capitalizing on Regional Specialties to Ensure National Wealth*

Increased influence from globalization and advanced modern solutions furthermore affects how the ‘GAP Region’ is discussed as one that has not reached its full potential, especially in terms of creating job opportunities with respect to regional specific potentials. Therefore, to maximize utilization of natural resources and tourist attraction, GAP advocates the creating of regional-specific institutional structures where location-specific needs and capacities are identified in order to attract private investors as a solution to the overall problem formulation (GAP 2014-2018: 36). This implies pinpointing and specifying how different local areas in the ‘GAP region’ can contribute to national wealth and generate competitiveness with their inherent assets (AD 19; AD 15; GAP 2008-2012:4). Regions with different prerequisites must, according to the Action Plans be equated in order to further consolidate the unity and solidarity within the country (GAP 2008-2012:35), justifying increased agricultural industrializations and modernizations in certain areas to maximize their production levels to raise their socio-economic status.

A similar approach is applied onto the rising tourist sector, where cultivating the cultural and historical sites in the ‘GAP Region’ stands as GAPs second top priority to improve the national economy as well as saving citizens from disparities (AD 25). In addition to presenting historical and cultural statements about the region,

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<sup>11</sup> This tendency permeates the entire policy framework. Thus, I have not referred to every time it is mentioned.

tourism also serves as a strategy to contribute to the economic development of the region by making cultural sites into tourist attractions. Citing GAP, it is concluded that “in steps taken to boost economic development, there will be parallel efforts to preserve cultural heritage and utilize this asset for tourism purposes” and to promote the region internationally (GAP 2014-2018:23; 37). Accordingly, numerous tourist projects have been implemented under GAPs policy framework, seeking to brand the region as a leading national symbol and metropolis (see AD 21 – 25). Most prominently is the emphasis on tourist- and cultural attractions uplifting the agricultural aspects of the region’s cultural and historical heritage. The most encompassing tourist destination is MESOPOTAMIA, a large-scale tourist attraction financed by the Turkish government and GAP, with the ambition to brand “[...] the entire region, the richness of the brand history, the region’s entire history, culture, nature, belief, language, folklore, gastronomy, etc.” (AD 23). Moreover, the purpose of MESOPOTMIA is to give the ‘GAP Region’ national and international recognition as “the place where agricultural revolution, hence settled life and civilization emerged” (Ibid.). Water-dependent activities as agriculture are thus contextualized into the ‘GAP Region’ both as a historical national trait and as a future opportunity, where GAP embodies the historical statement through their dams and irrigation systems. Despite doing so, numerous important statements on history are left out in the historical review that the project puts out. Most notably, Kurdish elements of history are silenced in, nor are Kurds mentioned as one of the historical demographic groups that have settled in the region, while minorities such as Armenians and Syriacs are brought up as groups living in the area (AD 23).<sup>12</sup>

The image of the region is shaped by how its historical and cultural heritage is composed and formulated in policy as a part of a prosperous nation. Consequently, leaving out ‘regressive’ lifestyles, as the Kurds have historically been associated with,<sup>13</sup> suggests that their existence does not support the existential narrative of the project. Since the ‘GAP Region’, in turn, is constructed as an essential regional component, a discursive silence around communities as the Kurdish also becomes existential for the regional as a whole. Consequently, determining historical, social, and cultural values of a place – in this case, the ‘GAP Region’ – displays how political meanings are rationalized to generate actions that will improve regional and national prerequisites. The policy framework itself acknowledges this angle to a certain degree, when establishing that cultural sites are “[...] forming the cultural and social structure, developing cultural knowledge and capacities, international relations and cultural interaction” (AD 27). However, what implications this has on, for instance, cultural and historical sites recognized by local groups is left out. Nor are there any indicators of how the historical and cultural story uplifted as defining of the ‘GAP Region’ has been considered, leaving the multifaceted and disputed history of the region unmentioned and unnegotiated.

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<sup>12</sup> This information was brought through the website [Epic History - Culture - Mesopotamia | Mesopotamia is a tourism destination brand of GAP Regional Development Administration. \(mezopotamya.travel\)](#), which was constituted in accordance with and referenced to in AD 23, making me account for it as a part of AD 23.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter Nation Building and Water Management: The Case of Turkey

As a 'Turkish' identity marks its presence in how the region ought to be perceived by writing down the nation's history, a simplified binary distinction between what 'Turkish' and 'other' historical and current claims of the region that diversifies or opposes the major discursive imagery appear. Local knowledges, who have historically been held accountable of carrying 'other' realities than the one led by authorities as GAP are however neglected. Concurrently, modern development stands out as the primary way forward, dominating the numerous knowledges that actually constitute the region, as the problematization puts out a specific historical and future imagery of the region. Thus, while the 'GAP Region' consolidates a more homogenous imagery of the region that seeks to tie closer bonds to the 'Turkish' identity, it also contains segregating elements in terms of not letting other cultural and historical images of the region forward.

### *Modernizing the Urban and the Rural*

The last section aimed to show how conceptualizations of place are shaped by problem formulations. In this section, I want to address this issue further by pointing towards how discursive conceptualizations of place reinforce the modernist/development paradigm, which also lead to physical rearrangements in geographies. I do this to emphasize the self-reinforcing character of power and illustrate how physical items pertain a discursive/social value.

Over the ten-year period studied, an increasing attention is aimed towards modernizing regional socio-geographical places to meet Turkish progression. Among others, this tendency is reflected in the additional developmental axis of GAP Action Plan 2014-2018, named Improving Habitability in Urban Centres (GAP 2014-2018:41). Previous Action Plan (2008-2012) contained four main developmental axes, which aimed to solve the overall problematizations that the region suffered from 1) Supporting Economic Development; 2) Ensuring Social Development; 3) Infrastructural Development and 4) Building Institutional Capacity (GAP Action Plan 2008-2012:21-67). While these issues have been discussed in prior sections of this chapter, the GAP Action Plan 2014-2018 added the fifth development axis as a developmental strategy to reassure "[...] improvements in urban centres of the GAP region in terms of social, economic and spatial concerns for their orderly and safe development and for ensuring urbanization in all senses", primarily in Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa and Gaziantep (GAP 2014-2018:41-42). The new developmental axis appears to not only serve the purpose of improving urban living conditions but to create places that will become "attraction centres" for national and foreign investors as well as encourage "new industrial focuses" in hydraulic and cultural sectors (Ibid.). Improved infrastructure and strengthened institutional capacity are uplifted as important strategies to expand and rearrange urban spaces, justifying the expanded emphasis on the building of

transportation infrastructures and improving urban housings within the ‘GAP region’ (GAP 2014-2018:42; AD 29).

Farmers in rural areas must also improve their standards and expand their capacities to attract urban business environments in urban centres and to keep up with the industrial production speed (GAP 2014-2018:37; 41; AD 18) To identify such capacities in the agricultural sector, the project “Project on Precision Farming and Promotion of Sustainable Practices” among others are introduced, with the overall ambition to conflate efficient farming and increasing economic value in the commodities produced by using high technological cameras and sensors to conduct precise agricultural application (AD 16). While regional inequities are highlighted through these projects, rearrangements of local geographics are justified and rationalized to further eliminate regional economic and social disparities, resulting in changed topography by activities as drilling modern wells, changing crop patterns, constructing large water storages and expanding irrigation systems over 1.7 hectares of land (Ibid; AD 9). Here, competitiveness among farmers stands out as a driving key concept in modernizing urban and rural spaces, as it is argued to fuel the new industrial infrastructures (GAP 2014-2018:41). By creating a competitive environment among entrepreneurial farmers in terms of modernizing techniques, production, as well as strengthened industrialization, GAP marks that socio-economic affluence and stronger unification between rural and urban spaces will be the natural outcome (GAP 2014-2018: foreword). Nevertheless, while the idea of a stronger dependency between rural and urban spaces might generate stronger unification, the opposite potential effect must also be acknowledged. As the industrial/urban emphasis encourages actors in the agricultural sector to strive towards modern practices, the division between those who do so and those who do not, becomes more vivid. Thus, unification is arguably strictly exclusive for those who follow the path of GAP, while non-modernized rural spaces fall into the periphery as they do not contribute to the unity that is strived for.

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In this section, I have discussed how imageries of place are facilitated and constructed through GAPs policy framework. Firstly, it is possible to conclude that rather than endorsing self-preservation or alternative historical accounts and narratives, the idea of a ‘GAP Region’ is heavily shaped by its ability to utilize and modernize both the region and its natural resource management. Therefore, assets in primarily agricultural, but also cultural terms are pinpointed and uplifted as highly specific to their local placement in order to attract both investors, habitants, and tourists. Secondly, the ‘GAP Region’ is not only constructed by its future prospects, but also by its monitoring of historical and cultural implications, creating two dichotomous conceptions of the region – the uplifted, modern place it seeks to *be* and *become*, and the silenced one. Rather than making amends with the

historical grievances that have shaped the region in this matter by acknowledging other regional statements, the conceptualization of the ‘GAP region’ is exclusively imposed from an elite level, giving it mandate to govern the social conceptions of the region’s historical and future prospects. This furthermore appears to be related to the physical arrangements of the ‘GAP Region’ as modernized techniques and urbanization gain acknowledgment in the policies. This process of reconceptualizing the region is clear in the ten-year span that the analysis comprises, most vividly by the additional developmental axis “Improving Habitability in Urban Centres”. Here, it is also emphasized that physical arrangements and objects such as irrigation systems and urban spaces pertain social/discursive value, as they physically embody GAP’s socio-political rationale and reinforce it.

In many ways, the key concepts and binaries shaping the overall problem formulations are discovered here. The construction of place in GAP can generally be understood as the need for regional improvement in order to correspond to the national image. However, GAP’s conceptualization of the region also becomes a necessary mean to produce subjects, as it provides individuals with contextual and physical prerequisites to modernize their labor and lifestyles in conjuncture with the developmental path. Therefore, the creation of place and subject in GAP’s policy framework cannot be separated, but rather be viewed as two complementary conceptualizations that allow its over-arching socio-political rationale. In the following section, I thus aim to analyze the discursive implications that might generate from how places and subjects are correspondingly constructed.

## 5.4 What Discursive Effects are Generated by this Problem Formulation?

So far, the findings have illustrated that the hydraulic infrastructure of GAP promotes modern solutions to the social disparities it aims to fix, including free marketization, technical improvements in irrigation-based sectors such as agriculture. Moreover, entrepreneurship and competitiveness among individuals and enterprises are uplifted as ways to boost the economy and subsequently solve inequalities among regions and humans to unify the nation. The ‘GAP Region’ is argued to have a strong agricultural history, which GAP takes hold of by legitimizing its irrigational work in the region.

Previous sections have also pointed towards how these strategies have been uplifted through de-politicizing language usage and by neglects of other potential solutional frameworks, making these strategies appear as neutral and self-evident. Since the thesis has a critical purpose, there is a need to critically assess the

developmental trajectory. Firstly, it conveys an idea of how *economic* development ought to be conducted for the region's and the nation's best. To target low levels of economic integration, insufficient regional employment rates and low production capacity, which all lead to a flawed economic structure, increased attention to expanding free-market opportunities so it aligns with the national and global market is especially emphasized (GAP 2008-2012:3; 5; 7; 8 – 9; 21; 23; GAP 2014-2018: foreword; 26; 29; 36 – 37; 41; 48; AD 17; AD 1; AD 14). This is furthermore not only expressed as an urge to uplift the region from economic despair but also to consolidate national unity and solidarity by improving production and spreading developmental prospects on a national level (GAP 2008-2012: foreword). This westernized economic logic naturally resembles a capitalist developmental trajectory that is not uncommon, nor bound to specific states. In this sense, assuming nationalist interests in the developmental discourse might appear misdirected. However, as the policy framework numerous times conflates ideas of socio-economic development to state- and nation-building, both in terms of stronger social linkages among its citizens and economic improvement, it can also be viewed as coexisting capitalist and nationalist factors/ideologies in the creation of an increasingly homogenous system. Moreover, as the background chapter revealed, Turkish authorities have since the birth of the Turkish nation indulged in 'Westernized' economic, political and social endeavors as a way to position themselves from the 'rural-lifestyle' as well as constructing a homogenous socio-political apparatus and people. GAP might in this way be considered as a means in this nation-encompassing project. By rationalizing the developmental discourse, less legitimacy is brought upon other countering realities – which in the geographical context, has extra bearing.

Secondly, social development marks another important tenet of uplifting the region from its despairs. Expanding and improving regional infrastructure constitute one of the main determinant objectives of GAP to ensure “[...] economic transformation and acceleration of social development” (GAP 2014-2018: 42), which essentially has contextual implications regarding how Southeastern Anatolia has historically been viewed and what aims to transform into. It also displays an intricate interplay between discursive ideas and human behaviors, where self-disciplining behaviors become a potential outcome. Strengthening social development is uplifted as relationally bound to economic improvements, where social/human capital is equated to the ability to produce labor and conduct self-fulfilling job-related endeavors (GAP 2014-2018:41; GAP 2008-2012:35). Here, individuals are benefitted – however, not forced – to act in certain in alignment with GAP's directives, consolidating the interplay between discursive and human elements. However, people living outside of irrigation areas – voluntarily or not – do not fall within these responsibilities of GAP. Moreover, people are encouraged to seek education in order to reinvest acquired skills in the region. Those failing to meet these expectations of contributing to the aim of the project are essentially excluded from reaping the economic and social benefits. Most importantly, the discursive implications following the creation of GAP as an existential part of the region – and not as a stand-alone project – implicitly implies the production of 'good' and 'bad'



citizens: i.e., those following GAP's directives contribute to the regional and national progression, while those who do not, hinder it. Subsequently, the discursive effect on subjects shapes what human activities are encouraged, made visible, or are silenced within the GAP policy framework (see Bacchi 2009).

The findings further suggest that conceptualizing place through problem representations also has discursive effects on how the region is perceived. While the region suffers from lower living standards than remaining Turkey, a counter-image of the region is set out by GAP to uplift it as a modern and leading production area, where expanding the hydraulic services plays a decisive role (GAP Action Plan 2014-2018: foreword). However, 'rebranding' the area has shown to be more encompassing than shaping the future prospects of the region. As the policy framework takes hold of the agricultural and irrigation-related future of the 'GAP Region', the history of the place is also altered. While certain historical attributes, such as the "birth of agriculture and civilization" are brought up, others, as the Kurdish heritage is neglected, raising important questions of the deep-seated presumptions that underlie the 'GAP Region', its agricultural revolution, and who is allowed recognition in the emergence of the Turkish civilization.

Bacchi (2009:4) states that "[...] some problem representations benefit the members of some groups at the expense of others [...]". However, in terms of how the 'GAP Region' is perceived from a cultural/historical point of view, this poses an additional dimension of inequity related to the place that stretches beyond binaries, where certain groups are not benefitted, nor actively suppressed relationally to the place, but merely silenced. The discursive effect from such formulations thus generates socio-political statements about the region in terms of what identities are associated to a place, its history, its presence, and its future. Naturally, the discursive effects on subjects and places appear interchangeably rather than separately. However, studying them independently has allowed an effectual deconstruction, where the disentanglements can shed light on how what appears to neutral policy formulation is rather functional productions of power.

## 5.5 Summary Findings

This chapter has sought to empirically substantiate how GAP presents its socio-political rationale in terms of outlining problematizations, solutions, subject- and place constructions. Using WPR, the chapter has interrogated how GAP problematizes hydraulic management in conjuncture to subject- and place conceptualizations, and how it links to ideas of regional and national prosperity. In sum, the region is problematized for maintaining insufficient living standards, having low economic accumulation and flawed progression in comparison to remaining Turkey.

The most striking finding of GAPs socio-political rationale is the political underpinnings of incorporating a developmental strategy into a space that has historically been neglected and disempowered for its flawed progression. Modernization, competitiveness and entrepreneurship have stood out as GAP's developmental strategies, which furthermore have methodologically been understood as *key concepts* around which political meaning is centralized. Such strategies are strongly tied to water-related activities within agricultural and irrigational sectors, as utilizing regional resources has stood out as a fundamental solution to regional disparities. Furthermore, the chapter has sought to point towards the complexities of inducing a certain socio-political rationale, which has also affected what imageries of the region have been put forward or silenced and how it might impose a self-regulative approach to subjects and reconstructing place through discursive statements.

The grand idea of GAPs socio-political rationale has left very little space for alternative imageries to emerge and maintain due to its problem- and solution representations, which this chapter has sought to shed light on. Moreover, this has had implications on historical, contemporary and future ideas of the nations' progress, in which the 'GAP Region' has been narrated to fit the purpose of being understood as a key region in the nation's progression (GAP 2008-2012: foreword). While this imagery has been unquestionably brought forward, simplified *binaries* and silences of the region's complex history and presence have been generated in terms of those who pursue development, and those who don't. Silences have furthermore been incited from this fabricated dichotomy, where historical and cultural statements from local communities are not granted acknowledgement when covering the 'GAP Region' in policy. Instead, an imagery that aligns with the nation's image of itself as a future leading region, imposed by authorities is represented (see MESOPOTAMIA).

Additionally, this chapter has critically assessed how subjects and places are conceptualized in GAP's problem representations to further substantiate the empirical material. By doing so, this chapter has concluded that the developmental trajectory of GAP is based on politicized arguments of social and economic progression creates normative assumptions of how individuals and places are conceptualized in ways that makes GAP appear as beneficial for national progression. Thus, the circulating back to social and economic development within the findings should not be misconstrued as a circle reasoning, but rather be viewed as illustrative of the forceful machinery behind GAPs rationale.

## 6 Theoretical assessment

In this section, I discuss the findings through the lens of the theoretical framework and shed light on the research objectives. As underbuilt by water/subject/place governmentality practices, nationalism is expressed not only among elite actors or institutions, but also by what imageries it imposes on subjects and places being brought under hydraulic projects. As such, I argue that GAP appears to deploy resource nationalism by its ability to ‘elicit, facilitate, foster, and attribute various capacities, qualities, and statuses to particular agents’ (Dean 1999:32) through its problem formulations. Lastly, I scrutinize the researcher’s positioning within the analysis as a way to remain valid (Bacchi 2016:20). Therefore, a self-reflexive segment is added, where discuss how I have comprehended the empirics to remain transparent.

### 6.1 Governmentalization of Territory – Constructing an Imagined Hydrosocial Territory

In terms of how GAP is constructing an imagined hydrosocial territory through governmentalization of territory, several inferences can be drawn. In accordance with GAPs grand narrative embedded in numerous problematizations regarding the ‘GAP Region’, imageries of subjects and places are altered to suit it’s discourse. Here, producing knowledges of how regional and national development are to be conducted stands out as governmentality strategies, entwining discursive imageries with human practices and water management (see Foucault 1979). By promoting and sustaining development-affirmative envisions, in which entrepreneurship, modernization, and competitiveness stand out as pivotal key concepts in agricultural and irrigational sectors, GAP illustrates a forceful hydrosocial territory by pointing towards how ‘*epistemological belief systems, political hierarchies, and naturalizing discourses*’ (Boelens et al. 2016:2) shape the conception of its population and the region.

The most vivid *epistemological belief system* is the uncontested belief of modern development and its maintenance by the key concepts. As citizens are introduced into this particular mindset through problem- and solution representations, other alternative potential ideas of such are left unmentioned, arguably putting

individuals under governing knowledge practices (Foucault 1997; Boelens et al. 2016).

The official problematizations represented by GAP not only problematizes the region as being shaped by a regressive lifestyle, but also by its implications on national wealth. Fostering national solidarity and development through hydraulic management is thus rationalized, or perhaps more accurately – depoliticized – into the policy framework by referring to it as the “states’ duty” to ensure socio-economic development by utilizing natural resources rationally (GAP 2008-2012: page; GAP 2014-2018: 14). Through the theoretical lens this can be read as a way to *neutralize the discourse* through epistemological belief systems (Boelens et al. 2016; Russel & Frame 2013:94; Winther Jørgensen-Phillips 1999).

Furthermore, lacking acknowledgment of other understandings of development generates silences of the diverse water-related practices and techniques that might exist in the region. Rather, what becomes dictating are the potential improved living standards that come when subjects adjust their responsibilities, identities, and needs accordingly to discursive accounts, such as economic enhancement, welfare, and national affluence (Boelens et al. 2016). Upholding this discursive imagery, are the manufactured *political hierarchies* that have been established through policy. Relating to this, is the governing of subjects. By eliciting and facilitating GAP’s development trajectory, subjects are exposed to the knowledge system that producing regional and national development through hydraulic management is of highest priority. They are encouraged to engage in activities brought by GAP by being given social and economic benefits if they do, and not if they don’t. Here, the Foucauldian take on power as productive marks its presence, as GAP sets manufactured conditions for subjects to act upon within the agricultural sector in order to be benefitted as a disciplining means (see Agarwal 2005). By constructing narrow imageries of what constitutes socio-political and hydraulic development – a modern approach driven by entrepreneurship, competitiveness and modernization – power takes a more subtle form than the coercive. It does so by producing knowledges that divide people into political hierarchies between those who pursue national developmental and those who do not. Thereby, establishing norms of seemingly ‘good’ and ‘bad’ citizens as related to ‘modern’ and ‘regressive’ lifestyles through binary divisions (see Li 2007:5; Dean 1999:32; Foucault 1979). As power has a productive essence in terms of creating subjects and places under this modern paradigm, it reciprocates when political hierarchies are normalized, when benefits are provided for subjects who act accordingly and when physical landscapes are rearranged to fit the grand narrative of GAP.

Furthermore, *place*, especially the ‘GAP Region’, has profound implications on how hydrosocial territories displays more than a geographical location through a binary mindset, as territory encompasses the imagery of “*be[ing] and become a border, a resource for regeneration, a foundation for empire, a means of nation building, and a material linkage between past and present*” (Barnes & Alatout 2012:485). As previous chapter illustrated, the envision of the ‘GAP Region’ as a

forthcoming national attraction center of Turkey in terms of supplies, the region's agricultural and civilized history is governed to fit the present and future imagery (see AD 15), illustrating a power tension between local lifestyles and authoritative discursive statements. As GAP maintains the position of an authoritative, knowledge producing instance, people settled in Anatolia are considered to be in need of modernization due to the 'regional regressive status'. As such, territorial governmentalization retains the capacity to rearrange and dictate the region's 'way forward' by upholding discursive assertions of what is 'rational' and not (see Boelens et al. 2016). This justification is furthermore supported by the idea of agricultural activities as essential for national progression, making hydraulic expansion and development through modernization appear as the reasonable way to go. As this discursive imagery is brought forward, other potential rationales of what development might imply are restrained, and occasionally silenced. In this way, GAP both grasps and affirms an imagery of the region and the nation's historical heritage and incorporates its own rationale into this as an inevitability.

The research question as suggested aimed to answer *whether, and if so – how – GAP deploys resource nationalism, and how this is signified through subject- and place conceptualizations expressed relationally to hydraulic management*. As conceptualizations of subjects and places are so strongly rooted in how GAP outlines its hydraulic and socio-political rationale to foster regional and national progression, it could be argued that these signify the deployment of resource nationalism by the construction of a hydrosocial territory. However, before ending this thesis, I will further reflect upon this matter against the resource nationalist lens and contextual setting.

## 6.2 Revisiting Resource Nationalism

By constructing an imagined hydrosocial territory, GAP draws on the resource nationalist discourse by appealing to hydraulic production as a means to enhance national development, highly dependent on how the region and its citizens proceed with hydraulic activities.

As Turkish authorities have sought to modernize the country, the Anatolian region received extra attention in this mission, due to its 'problematic' conditions (see Akinci et al. 2020; Özdoğan 2001; Yildiz 2001; Harris 2002; Öktem 2013; Zeydanlioglu 2012). By incorporating and rationalizing a modernized mindset that merges socio-political and water-scientific resolutions, it could be argued that GAP in many ways embodies the Turkish nationalist discourse. Firstly, as the developmental trajectory of GAP responds to certain modern solutions that are imposed on individuals living in the region, a homogenizing dimension in terms of subjectification appears: The problematizations represented in the policy

framework draws inferences in terms of how subjects are constructed to higher, norm-shaping instances (see Howarth 2013:2), resembling what Anderson calls an ‘imagined community’ (1983). Similar to Turkey’s modernization nationalist trajectory, GAP’s hydraulic mission is driven by comparable mindsets as means to further consolidate unification within the country. Related to how Okyar stated, this could be viewed as a way to encourage citizens to comply to “materialistic values of a modern world” (Okyar, 1984:50). The idea of unification – an imagined community – is here implied by how GAP promotes certain endeavors over others, and subsequently letting certain, standardized identities forward. As subjects are conceptualized in conjunction with GAP’s discursive trajectory by encouraging them to indulge in modern vocational techniques and urban/industrial lifestyles, they become more unified with remaining modern Turkey. Alternative or challenging identities are on the contrary not acknowledged or appear as regressive, showing how assembling unity by silencing contesting imageries is retained by creating a sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’.

Place is furthermore heavily driven by the social imageries surrounding it, in which waters play a key role in creating a powerful, modern republic, making water appear as ‘cultural appraisals’ (Bridge 2009) rather than solely material objects. This is perhaps most vivid in the project MESOPOTAMIA, where waters are incorporated into GAPs imagery of the region as a national epicenter where the “agricultural revolution, hence settled life and civilization emerged” (AD 23). As this idea is fortified through policy, unification through a sense of a collective history, presence and future is shed light upon through water-related activities (see Wodak et al. 2009; Simon & Klandermans 2001:327). This also taps into a bigger idea of Turkey that ties closer ties to the modern West as Kemalist reforms suggested, by indulging in a Western economic infrastructure and technical modernization to strengthen both the capacity and the unification of the nation. Such procedures will make the region more similar to remaining Turkey by adjusting infrastructure, mindsets and geographical arrangements, according to the policies.<sup>14</sup> By doing so, managing water resources becomes relationally bound and legitimized by a larger idea of what constitutes unity in the Turkish nationalist paradigm. As matters of national unification and hydraulic management and identities are strongly underscored within this spectrum, it comprises the idea of a resource nationalist discourse (Koch & Perreault 2018).

### 6.3 The Researchers Positioning

In this section, I address the final methodological objective, where I position myself within the analysis to remain transparent and assure internal validity. For this

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<sup>14</sup> See section *Modernizing the Urban and the Rural*

reason, the following section aims discuss how I have comprehended the empirics and whether certain factors have been left out, as a way to demonstrate reflexivity (Bryman 2012:118).

As the thesis has been guided by a specific question, the reading and selection of the empirics are naturally affected. Because the thesis focused on resource nationalism, the primary attention has been on how socio-political ambitions and hydraulic management are related through subject- and places conceptualizations. Through this bias, other potential sectors have been overlooked. For instance, I actively left out certain policy formulations targeting the tourist/cultural/social sector, since they did not provide substantial material to answer my research question. However, this does not mean that these were not affected by the overall developmental/modernization trajectory, only that they did not touch upon hydraulic matters. Entrepreneurship, competitiveness and modernization often stood out as vital strategies in the cultural/tourist sector. For instance, GAP emphasized the importance of providing young adults and women with education in order to utilize their knowledges to become more economically independent and participate in activities that improves the economy by claiming that

“[...] it is it is important to facilitate the labor force participation of vulnerable groups including women and youth. In this context, training and consultancy services will focus on occupation and skill building and helping individuals start their own business” (AD 1)

Likewise, several social policy targets were driven by the same strategies. For instance, several policies aimed to improve institutional capacity, provide women with modern entrepreneurial and vocational skills to reassure economic prosperity for the individuals as well as the competitive market (see AD 4; AD 5; AD 14; AD 8; AD 26; AD 25). Although they accordingly sought to conceptualize subjects and places through similar problem representations and strategies, they did not associate it with GAP's hydraulic mission, making them less adequate for this thesis. AD 4 was sifted out as it did not provide further information on neither issue.

## 7 Concluding Remarks

In this section, I start by pointing towards how the thesis challenges previous research and how it can be further studied. Lastly, I make some final reflections of the thesis as a whole.

Relationally to the current research field, the thesis has challenged and elaborated these academic fields by two primary means. Firstly, it has enabled a post-structural approach to theoretically comprehend how nationalist imageries and natural resource management are intertwined through manufactured perceptions of subjects and places. This theoretical approach challenges ontological and epistemological departures of the economic/political school, where resource nationalism has yet to fully come to terms with the distinction between socially constructed nationalist imageries and pure state-power accumulation. Furthermore, the thesis has given the critical tenet significant theoretical tools to approach how subjectification is processed in questions regarding natural resources, which in this case has shown to be of great significance. With that said, previous research of resource nationalism should not be rejected as misdirected due to their strong emphasis on economic, political, and state-accumulating aspects. Wilson (2015) is correct when stating that political institutions often constitute central factors in determining how resource nationalism is organized, and that it often has strong linkages to economic interests. GAP is a prime example of a political institution driven by economic interests. However, this thesis has renegotiated the organizing factors of such inferences by focusing on how institutional and socio-economic discernments permeate conceptualizations of subjects and places rather than the institution itself. Thus, the thesis offers the current school of resource nationalism a critical lens in which new perceptions of the field transpires.

Secondly, the thesis has contributed to the scholarly field of GAP by drawing affiliations between GAP and Turkish nationalist sentiments, which has been given remarkably little attention. Although previous studies of GAP have raised important critical inquiries, most scholars have committed themselves to studying how the project has posed marginalization of minorities, primarily the Kurdish community (see Jongerden 2010; Özok-Gündoğan 2005; Hillel 1994). As the Kurdish community has historically been strongly rooted in the region, this topic is to some extent inevitable – the thesis itself has touched upon this matter at various points. However, such studies have often centralized their study to be a regional problem. While these studies have been meticulously worded, I have sought to shift the focal point to a national perspective. As an expansion to Conker's (2018) conclusions, the modernist/developmental nationalist paradigm has been observed not solely as something being exercised and embodied on an elite level. Rather, the thesis has



illustrated that discursive imageries also transcend down to the individual level by ascribing values onto people and places who can live according to such principles.

While the thesis has contributed to studies of resource nationalism and GAP, it has also opened up additional questions that might be interesting to look further into. Firstly, as the thesis has primarily had a theoretical emphasis, it must be investigated *if* and *how* citizens experience GAP's socio-political rationale. A potential pitfall in theoretically developing studies is that they might not respond to peoples' experiences, making this an urgent matter to explore further. This could for instance combine the theoretical framework with a methodology that interrogates lived experiences to provide a more societal approach. Moreover, the study has exclusively interrogated GAP's grand narrative, leaving contesting imageries unmentioned. As Hommes et al. (2016) concluded, divergent counter-imageries are to be explored further, which would also confirm whether this theoretical starting point is fruitful. Assuming a politicized agenda behind every policy, as Bacchi states, has proven to be a helpful tool to untangle power asymmetries and political agendas, as long as it is made with precaution and transparency. In future studies, the methodology could however be more precise by further questions or be combined with an additional method to extract more detailed observations. A genealogy methodology, for instance, would consolidate the relationship between the case and the theoretical assumptions more precisely.

Lastly, a note on self-reflection. Throughout the thesis, I have discussed water as interchangeable with natural resources in a theoretical manner. However, as the thesis evolved, I have contemplated whether the same principles can actually be applied onto all natural resources, and why this theoretical tenet has done so. For instance – as different natural resources such as oil, minerals, gas and waters, are driven by different political and economic interests, it might be presumptuous to assume that they mobilize nationalist imageries through similar means. As the case of GAP, waters might for instance be such a politicized commodity not only because of it being a natural resource, but because of the region's strong heritage of agricultural activities. Therefore, I strongly urge a deepened problematization of the theoretical school of resource nationalism.

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The main purpose of the thesis has been to answer whether, and if so – how – GAP deploys resource nationalism, and how this is signified in subject- and place conceptualizations that are expressed relationally to water-scientific resolutions. In terms of deploying resource nationalism, one can argue that GAP has sought to consolidate national unity and increase national wealth by advocating the expansion and modernization of hydraulic services through governing techniques. Similar to Kemalist nationalist reforms, resource nationalism in the case of GAP is characterized by the capacity to modernize regional and national infrastructures,

vocational methods and mindsets to consolidate a more homogenous state. GAP can be viewed as a catalyst for resource nationalism, as it draws strong affiliations between unifying national aspirations, fueling a homogenized mindset among regional citizens and remaining Turkey, and by conflating imageries of places and people through its hydraulic mission to foster a sense of historical, present, and future cohesion. On the contrary, and perhaps most importantly, I have emphasized the conditional premises of such unification, as the problem formulation strongly divides citizens between those who submit to the socio-political and modern mindset, and those who don't. Unification, according to this premise, is thus primarily brought upon those that follow and exemplify the project's objectives, while those who do not remain in the periphery, constituting the problem outlined by GAP.

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## 9 Appendix

<b>Policy Documents</b>	<b><i>Current Years</i></b>
GAP Action Plan (ref. GAP 2008-2012)	2008–2012
GAP Action Plan (ref. GAP 2014-2018)	2014–2018

<b>Affiliative Documents*</b>	<b><i>Current Year(s)</i></b>
<b>AD 1:</b> Multi-Purpose Community Centers (ÇATOM)	1995-2020
<b>AD 2:</b> Activities for Children (Children’s Reading/Playing Rooms and GAP-Cheetos Child Development Centers)	2001-2020
<b>AD 3:</b> Public Health Literacy Project in the GAP Region	2003-2020
<b>AD 4:</b> Project on Capacity Building in Local Government Personnel in the GAP	2014-2017
<b>AD 5:</b> Project on Strengthening Women and Women’s Civil Society Organizations in Less Developed Regions of Turkey	2015-2018
<b>AD 6:</b> Project and Action Plan on Health Status of People Working in Agriculture	2013
<b>AD 7:</b> Project on Healthy Eyes and Success in Education	2003
<b>AD 8:</b> GAP Youth Houses	2008-2012, 2012-2016

<b>AD 9:</b> Agricultural Research Project	(1989) 2009-2018
<b>AD 10:</b> Project on Diversification of Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Activities	2009-2018
<b>AD 11:</b> Project on Raising Income Level of People in Areas out of Irrigation	2009-2018
<b>AD 12:</b> Developing Infrastructure for Animal Husbandry	1998-2009, 2009-2018
<b>AD 13:</b> Reforestation and Erosion Control Project	2009-2018
<b>AD 14:</b> Project on Innovations for Empowerment of Women in GAP Region	

<b>AD 15:</b> GAP Agricultural Training and Extension Project (GAP-TEYAP)	2011-2013, 2014-2016, 2017-2018
<b>AD 16:</b> Project on Precision Farming and Promotion of Sustainable Practices	2014-
<b>AD 17:</b> GAP Organic Farming	2009-2017
<b>AD 18:</b> Irrigation Investments Impact Assessment Project	2015-2019
<b>AD 19:</b> Project on Integrated Resource Efficiency in Agriculture and Agriculture-Based Industry	2017-2019
<b>AD 20:</b> Integrated Rural Development Project	2009-2018
<b>AD 21:</b> Project on Needs Assessment in Enterprising and Innovation	2017-
<b>AD 22:</b> Project on Management, Operation and Maintenance of irrigation Systems in the GAP Region	2015-2019
<b>AD 23:</b> GAP Regional Tourism Oriented Promotion and Branding Project	2011-
<b>AD 24:</b> Implementation of Promotion and Branding Management Plans	2016-2018
<b>AD 25:</b> Project for Strengthening Physical Infrastructure for Tourism in the GAP Region	2011-
<b>AD 26:</b> Project for the Preservation of Dome Houses and Barak Culture on the GAP Region	2017-
<b>AD 27:</b> Conservation Project of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage	2019-
<b>AD 28:</b> GAP Region Topographic Map Preparation	2005-
<b>AD 29:</b> Urban Transportation Project	2016-2018

\*All affiliative documents were accessed from GAP's official website, referenced above.