SECTION 3. General issues in management

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Symbolic construction of the Turkish national identity as a factor of international management

Abstract

This paper aims to explore the symbolic construction of the Turkish nationalism during the early Republican period in order to trace the origins of the anti-global nationalism in today's Turkey. It discusses the symbolic bases of the Turkish nationalism by going back to early years of the modern Republic. We identified three main components of the Turkish nationalism in this period: history, geography, and language. They are symbolically constructed within a nationalist perspective. The founders of the Republic and the ideologists of the Turkish nationalism hoped this to serve two purposes. One was to establish the bases of realizing the unity of the Turkish nations. The other, perhaps the most important, purpose was to prove that the Turks were an advanced and civil nation during the course of history, and to respond the Western pressures of disruption, defeat, invasion and exclusion (e.g., the Western labels of barbarian Turks, backward Muslims). The main argument in this study is that the Turkish national identity tried to co-exist with, and to join, the modern Western civilization by placing geography, history and language in a symbolic context and in accordance with the idea that it determines national interests as a part of business of corporations and key factor of managers within the international competitive environment. In this context, the Turkish history was interpreted as the source of human civilization and the Central Asia and Anatolia were the home of human civilization while the Turkish language was viewed as the origin of human languages. By doing so, they aimed to repel the claims of backwardness and barbarity and tried to introduce the national identity as an integral part of the national culture having great impact on a process of negotiations.

Keywords: turkey, culture, history of economic thought, national identity, westernization best.
JEL Classification: B2, Z1.

Introduction

In this historical era of globalized world nation-states experience a great transformation. Some social scientists interpreted this change as the end of nation-states. On the other hand, there are profound controversies and conflicts due to micronationalisms in regional context. Therefore, it is necessary to revisit the early construction of nationalism in Turkey. As a result of the social and political effects of globalization on nation-state and national identity, there emerge new 'national front' movements and new types of reactions to globalization. These developments can also be observed in theTurkish society. Especially Turkey's membership talks with the European Union caused a heated debates as to national identity and the transformation of nation-state leading to the emergence of "nationalist front" movements (Bozkurt, 2004, p. 7; Perinçek, 2005, pp. 1-2). To understand this new political situation and particularly the problem of the nationalism in Turkey it is necessary to analyze how the Turkish national identity was constructed during the early Republican period and what kind of symbolization is used in this construction process.

The early construction of the Turkish national identity can shed a significant light on today's rejuvenated debates because of its role in relation to globalization and Turkey's accession talks with the European Union in particular. While the globalization exposes the county's culture, economy and social structure, the EU accession talks cause heightened debates as to the nature and future of the Turkish national identity. In one extreme, there is a clear rejectionist trend toward both globalization and European Union from both secular and religious camps that emphasize the uniqueness of the national culture. On the other end, there is a strong accommodationism. This accomodationism appears in the form of incorporation of the Western and universal values with little attention to the traditional Turkish culture, or in a more cooperationist attitude with a strong confidence on the traditional identity and culture. While the former represents the traditional secular elites in Turkey, the latter is represented by the Justice and Development Party in power. The fact that both globalization and EU talks began to highlight the need for recognizing the presence of more local elements of the national identity that were ignored in the original construction of the national identity. Therefore, Kemalism as an ideology of national ideology gradually began to withdraw from the strict imagination of national identity (Kramer, 2000).

It is surprising that the arguments of today's new nationalist outlook emerging due to globalization, micronationalism and EU integration go along with the nationalist arguments of the early years of the Turkish Republic (Perinçek, 2004). This paper

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elaborates on how nationalist identity was constructed during these early years by arguing that this construction is made through geography, history and language. Our main assumption is that nationalist symbolic construction in Turkey aimed to develop alternatives to the Western arguments that the Turks were backward and barbarians. This symbolization implies that the Turks are equal to their counterpart in the West and that the Turks led to many great events in history and founded the first civilization and, therefore, deserve to take the place in modern civilization. In this respect this article first elaborates on the symbolization and nationalism. Secondly, it analyzes how and why nationalism was symbolically constructed through the symbolization of homeland or geography, history and language.

1. Nationalist identity and symbolism

Nation-states that emerged as a result of modern political theorization were focused on constructing national identity as a social collectivity. Individuals attempted to find meaning around this new identity. In this context national identity is constructed around the common land, myths, historical memory, duties, rights and economy (Smith, 1994, pp. 31-32). The two main criteria in defining national identity are: continuity over time and differentiation from others (Guibernau, 1996, p. 73). The nation that is a basis of formational identity refers to a group of people organized as a community. This community is based on the assumptions of a common culture, land, history, future and self-government. Nation gradually tends to define itself as a sentiment by differentiating from nation-state with its various forms of nationalisms. The members of the community define themselves as a whole of sentiment with various symbols (Guibernau,1996, p. 47). These symbols try to construct a common meaning to national identity.

Symbols are the stocks of meaning for a society and provide "a capacity to create meaning". Therefore, community members assign similar meanings to the world they live in by using the same symbols (Cohen, 1999, p. 14). These meanings are a "social map" shared by society (Mardin, 1982, p. 91). With this map individuals obtain a common consciousness, values, views, behaviors and beliefs. At the same time, there emerges a culture with consistent meanings around a system of symbols. This culture gains unity by means of meanings provided by these symbols. For example, in Turkey there is a culture unified as around such as a land, flag and bravery (Mardin, 1982, p. 101).

Symbolization can transform a community into a symbol by emerging in the minds of community members. While a community is transformed into a symbol, community members can easily perceive themselves a part of the same collectivity (Cohen, 1999, p. 83). Therefore, symbols function as an important concept that constructs a sense of affiliation with community. In this context the nation formerly different from reality acquires the status of similarity. Therefore, people invest in the ideological integration of the community. This explains the ability of nationalism to unite people from different cultural and social positions. Symbols create a group feeling. People construct the community and use it as an expression of their own identity (Guibernau, 1996, p. 82). Yet through symbols people speak the same language, act similarly, participate in the same rituals, pray the same God and wear similar dresses (Cohen, 1999, p. 20; Smith, 1994, p. 123). The differences in society can also help to eliminate and reinforce unity (Cohen, 1999, p. 82). Symbols are able to transform opposing messages into a single slogan or image and to turm them into an action. Combined with conflict, symbols' capacity to condense, unite and narrow messages can mobilize meanings and political symbols (Brown-Roger, 2003).

Also, symbols function to draw boundaries that are important in the construction of the national identity. The exclusionary and unifying role of symbols in drawing the boundaries is also critical to maintain group identity and its solidarity. As Armstrong put it, symbols like traffic lights, can constitute the markers of boundaries for entrance and exit. Each group, community or state, can develop colors, flags or historical references mobilized for certain goals as symbolic inventories (Brown-Roger, 2003, p. 83-108). As Cohen (1999, p. 19) mentioned, sharing the same symbols leads to distinguishing themselves from other communities by perceiving themselves as separate.

Symbols define national boundaries. The nation attains a sense of unity through symbols by differentiating themselves from others. A symbol can be an object, a sign or a word, making it easy to recognize each other. Therefore, members of the nation will have a sense of difference, and the nation becomes instrumental in differentiating the nation from others (Guibernau, 1996, p. 81). National flags, names of the states, geographies, histories and languages contribute to the construction of national unity. And at the same time to the sense of being different from other nations. Symbols may change their content with the course of time. They bring a continuity with the past into the future. Symbols are not static; they are passed from generation to generation or can emerge with a new generation. Nationalism uses this dynamic feature of symbols to maintain the national unity and improve them interpreting in new ways (Guibernau, 1996, p. 82). The rich associations between symbols and their potential to create new

meanings facilitate the construction of the national identity. Symbols' capacity to create meanings (Cohen, 1999, p. 17), is instrumental in creating new meanings to legitimize national identity. For example, religious symbols are strategically employed to reinterpret the concept of modern national identity.

When the symbols are located within a national context they greatly contribute to the perception of a nation by improving the meanings. In this context symbols try to create "single meanings" by constructing the same language, geography, and history. Through symbols national identity is constructed and reality is transferred to old ultra-reality. Nation states' land, languages, history, names, cities, etc. are carried to extra-reality and gain new meanings through symbols.

2. Turkish national identity and symbolic construction

Turkish national identity is also constructed through various symbols and gained new meanings in the keep nation-state and its relations to the West. Above all, the Turkish national identity emphasizes the "integrity" of the nation in contrast to local, regional, ethnic and religious differences in the Ottoman society (Mardin, 1982, pp. 135, 137). Singular meanings are constructed through symbols. Since the Turkish nationalism perceived the pluralist nature of the Ottoman society as fragmented, the nation was envisioned as national unity that tried to avoid such fragmentation. The available symbols served as a stock of meanings in this envisioning as symbols of history, geography, and language were reformulated in order to attribute new meanings to the nation.

While the Turkish national identity seeks symbolization the meaning it involved against the West becomes important. This meaning of westernizing against the West played a primary role in the symbolization of national identity. As well-known, the fragmentation of the old empire and the invasion of Anatolia by the West always frightened the intellectuals. Even before the war, the intellectuals said: 'we either westernize or collapse… if we don't westernize, the West will expel us not just from the West but from the whole world' (Safa, 1988, p. 20). Against the Western accusations of retardation and the shocks experienced by the intellectuals, the nation-state that was declared to be Republic simultaneously tried to response to the West. The message here was simple: Turks are not backward and have the right to join the West as a developed modern nation.

3. Symbolization of geography/space

In the graveyard tablets that reflect the 17th century Istanbul' classical culture, the homeland is defined as a place where someone was born and grew up (Yildirim, 2005). Therefore, homeland carries a local emphasis. Along with modernity, the notion of homeland keeping to is totally transformed within a new cultural and political paradigm. In this paradigm homeland is placed in a national context and is identified with a national geography and it is perceived as a soil where the sovereignty of nation-state is realized.

Homeland is certainly not solely territorial space where the national sovereignty is practiced. It rather carries a symbolic dimension in relation to a set of more pervasive and deeper meanings. As Smith (1994) pointed out, 'homeland is a sacred place with historical memories, a sacred place with lakes, rivers, mountains, cities... With these features, homeland is a main source of identity' (p. 25).

In Turkish nationalism related to modernity, homeland carries a significance as a symbolic geography that involves various emotions, values and beliefs as a part of national identity. The notion of homeland (*vatan*) was first used by Namik Kemal that deserved to the title of homeland's poet due to his ability to artfully use literature and poetry. In his play called "Homeland or Silistre" that was screened in 1873, Namik Kemal, perhaps for the first time, draws a striking picture of homeland:

> *Homeland! Homeland! I said homeland is in danger. Don't you hear? Allah created me and homeland raised me. Allah is feeding me… Homeland filled my stomach. I was naked and was dressed by homeland… My body is from homeland soil… My breath is from homeland's air. If I am not to die for the sake of homeland, why was I born? (Kemal, 1996, p. 8).*

Believing that homeland's under siege, Namik Kemal tried to establish a belief in saving the homeland by identifying it with human breath, a feeder and a value to die for. After Namik Kemal, homeland continued to be constructed by the Turkish nationalists as under siege in order to promote a belief in saving and defending it. For example, *Turk Yurdu*, a journal first published in 1911, as a forerunner of Turkish nationalism, keeps similar depictions. Many parallel stories, poems, and articles were published in this journal. A poem that describes homeland as a cluster of feelings:

> *This soil is the place*
> *Where I saw the first light*
> *By opening my eyes without you.*
> *…*
> *How many times I thought about this soil.*
> *I am now walking on it.*
> *Soon I will sleep in his heart.*
> *My heart shakes when I look at this soil.*
> *With my tears dripping on it.*

A drop of my waters that are flowing.
This soil is the one who hears and thinks in me
This soil is the one who sees and is seen in me.
I know my bones from its rocks.
.....
This soil is a source of greatness (Sacit, 1912, p. 214).

In the poem, homeland is described by referring to various feelings and actions such as seeing, sleeping, hearing and thinking. Individual is thought to be unified with its land both symbolically and materially.

Somewhere else in the journal, land is conceptualized as a "symbolic land", as a mother giving birth to humans and is perceived as an entity that teaches the individual humanity. Homeland is thought to be a source of love, to involve belongingness to the birth-place with an aspiration to maintain religion and race, to help to enter human community with a Turkish Muslim identity, and to provide sovereignty and future. Homeland is where someone and his ancestors are buried. Homeland must be loved as a place where one obtains identity and where nations obtain happiness. Homeland is beautiful and symbolizes loyalty to ancestors and the past and, therefore, there is a sense of appreciation for the homeland (Tevfik, 1912, p. 18-21).

Ziya Golalp, a sociologist of nationalism, provides one of the most interesting symbolizations of homeland in the journal *Turk Yurdu.* For him homeland is a sacred country for which lives are sacrificed. While other countries are not considered sacred, homeland is thought so. Those who consider homeland sacred can sacrifice their families, lives and their most beloved ones. The value of homeland comes from its sacred qualities rather than its material features (Gökalp, 1914). Homeland is the place where mosque is called *ezan* and school – *Qur'an*, where people speak one language and practise one religion, have one capital, science and system of knowledge, where shipyards, factories and trains belong to the Turkish nation (Gökalp, 1976, p. 1).

Mehmet Emin, one of the pioneers of the Turkish nationalistic activist-thinkers, was an important figure in the symbolization of the homeland (*vatan*) concept. For him, homeland was the future place where one would be free with his temple, school and everything, where no one would be persecuted, where there was no oppressor or oppressed, the poor and the rich would be equal before justice, where everyone would have a land and a farm living there happily and peacefully and where remote villages would come alive (Emin, 1914). In this respect, Mehmet Emin attempted to create a hopeful utopia about future in the face of despair due to disruptions and fragmentations in the Ottoman society.

Homeland is named after the 'pure soil where the Turks shed with their own blood and live' (Sabir, 1913). Therefore, the conception of the 'pure and sacred' soil is emphasized by many nationalist elite. For example, Nihal Atsız found the prevalence of this approach in the journal *Orhun*, one of the most important representatives of civil nationalism. In its most extreme form, Atsız (1934) said in the homeland 'everything is at war. Everyday is a holy war (*gaza*) against the nature, against the enemy, and even against God… This land is a place of martyrs throughout'. He named the enemies as "subversive communists", "disgraceful Jews", "sneaky and hybrid traitors". He even says that these enemies cannot dismantle the homeland, "let alone God that established the world's system" (p. 1).

In the journal *Ülkü,* one of the most important source of official nationalist ideologies during the Republican period, one can find many articles that emphasized the homeland's sacred, metaphysical, emotional features (*Ülkü Mecmuası*, 1935). However, in real politics homeland is constructed in relation to Anatolia. In the 1930s the official textbooks of history and in the Turkish thesis of history, we notice a symbolic construction of geography in a new way. In this construction the Central Asia is constructed as the motherland, Anatolia represents the last phase of its continuum. In the case of Turkish humanity, the motherland first emerges in the Central Asia and matures in Anatolia seen as a place the Turks adopted a homeland in their most civilized and developed phase. Hittites and Sumerians were Turks as the most advanced structures of Anatolian geography. With Hittites and Sumerians, Anatolia reached the highest level of civilization as a Turkish homeland (Tarih, I 1931).

The conceptualization of Anatolia as a geography of a superior civilization aimed to disprove the Western claims that the Turks are backward and, therefore, must be expelled from Anatolia. In this perspective Anatolia becomes the Turkish homeland and represents an advanced civilization (Copeaux, 1998, p. 15). Accordingly, we can interpret Ataturk's thesis transcribed by Afet İnan that the earlier races that lived in Anatolia were Turks in this line.

One of the attempts of geographical symbolization was Turanism. Turan is a geographical symbol, involving various meanings related to geography. It reinterprets the lived reality and real geography through various symbols. In this geographical symbolization, everybody speaks the same language (i.e. Turkish), shares the same ideals (red apple) and combines various communities in itself. Turan becomes instrumental as a symbol in constructing the nation. For example,

Kyrgyzs, Tatars, Uzbeks and the like are considered as Turks and Turkish is promoted as a common language along with a common geography. Simply put, the Turan symbol constructs a common geography, a common language and a common ideal. The Central Asia as the Turks' motherland gains a different meaning in this context.

In 1918 Ziya Gökalp, a sociologist that advanced Turan symbol, tried to answer the question 'Where is the homeland for the Turkish nation?' as follows:

> *"Homeland is neither Turkey nor Turkistan;*
> *Homeland is a great and eternal land: Turan…"*
>
> (Gökalp, 1950, p. 48).

For Gökalp, 'Turan is an ideational land that includes its parts and excludes others. Turan is the sum of 'the countries where the Turks inhabit' (Gökalp, 1950, p. 48). The Great Turan represents a single land in the Turkish spirit, a single ruler and a single language and reflects a general and comprehensive unity, excluding individuality, lineage and tribal components (Gökalp, 1989, p. 101).

Turan is where the Turks are buried and Turkish martyrs fell (Aktuğ 1913, p. 50-52). Turan is depicted as a broad and great world where the knowledge of the era prevails and happiness and life are created (Ziya 1913, p. 197). In the years of decline when the Ottoman empire was under siege by the West it was said 'Turan is crying in the land of Islam' (Gündüz, 1913, p. 465).

According to the Turkish nationalists the Turanis are the most ancient communities of Asia and they come from the same race as the Turks. The picture of a double-headed eagle is a result of the experience of Turani civilization. Just as today's Europe, Byzantium, Rome and Russia attempted to destroy the Turanism in history. Turks, Yakuts, Mongolians, Japanese and Korean people constitute the Turan that belong to the Ural-Altaic race. Japan was founded by the Turanis that established the most powerful state. Mongolians, Seljukis, Ottomans and the like are interpreted as the forces of Turanis that founded states. Asia, Far Asia, Central Anatolia and India are the geographies where several civilizations are founded by the Turanis (Marki Efendi, 1912, p. 231-234).

The homeland symbolized as Turan covers the Eastern geography of the world. This perception of geography is a symbol of a 'Great East' against the Western destruction and cultural pressure. Through this symbol they try to substitute the real homeland that faced the danger of falling apart, invasion, shrinking and extinction with an idea of imagined homeland. They try to provide the members of the nation with an idealist, great, respected, valuable geographical meanings.

The Turan concept remained alive in the republican era's nationalism and was advocated as a cultural geography and a political construction. For example, in the Turkistan night organized in April 20, 1940 the slogan was 'The road from Anatolia to Caucasus goes to the Turan'. The representatives of Azerbaijan, Turkistan, Anatolia, Caucasia, Idyl-Ural regions participated in the night (Bozkurt, 1940, p. 78-79). The new Turkish thesis of history and the Sun Language Theory also involved Turan in a cultural sense. We will focus more on it in terms of the symbolization of history.

2.2. Symbolization of history: national construction of time. The symbolization of history reflects the spirit of the day since it is constructed selectively. The past is symbolically remembered, creating simple historical labels to describe complex and ideological messages. These views can be found especially in political rhetorics (Cohen, 1999, p. 112, 115). The expression of temporal continuity through symbols means 'the reconstruction of a cultural unity in the face of its disruption by the forces of change' (Cohen, 1999, p. 118). Therefore, following the Ottoman decline, Turkish society experienced a deep cultural and political crisis. In order to overcome the danger of "becoming meaningless", the Turkish nation used historical symbolization to define its place in history or world.

In Turkey, the founders efficiently institutionalized a national history and their support for nationalist narratives was well popularized and canonized by the new state apparatus (Canefe, 2002). The nationalist intellectuals advanced an image of a common nation with historical heroism and victories in community. For them the Turks won all the victories for a great and honorable nation (Gökalp, 1941, p. 13) and became a nation through Mete, Bilge Han, Jangyz and Timurlenk's raids that played a unifying role (Gökalp, 1950, p. 44). As Turks, Timurlenk made other people obey, to himself Bayazed distracted the enemy, the Sultan Selim rushed in to Europe, Asia, Africa and found the world too small while making Istanbul a capital and bringing Caliphate to Istanbul and defeating the United Europe in Mohach. The word 'Turk' became as dreadful and fascinating as God. The Turk becomes the God's elect in the world' (Türkkan, 1940, p. 1).

The Turks are claimed to be the first people that established a civilization. Cities like Samarkand, Tashkent, Bukhara, Konya and Istanbul were the centers of this civilization. They thought that, as a result of excavation the Central Asia as the motherland of the Turks was a home for the most ancient civilization and that the first civilization started

there as animals were domesticated and metals were shaped for the first time (Tarih I, 1931, p. 35). Similarly, many mines in the Altai Mountains are claimed to prove that the Turks were the first to discover metals to extract copper, iron and gold from those mines (Tarih, I 1931, p. 38). In the early historical era when, in various regions of the world, people used to live in the holes of tree and rocks,

> *'the Turks reached the civilization of level to use lumber and metals. The era to distinguish humans from animals, the era of domestication animals, was first reached by the Turks. The first farming as the first sign of control over nature was first developed by the Turks in the Central Asia. Where the grains like wheat and barley rise originated as well as animals like'*
>
> (Tarih I, 1931: 26).

In the course book *Tarih I* written by the creators of Turkish Thesis of History and taught in the secondary curriculum in 1931, it was claimed that the Turks were the first to develop a civilization and that they represent the civilizations of domesticating animals, using metals and agriculture. They even claimed that the firs scripture were invented by the Turks and they were presented as the fathers of the written civilization (Tarih I, 1931, p. 45). In the journal *Kadro* with a leftist nationalist approach shared the same view that the Turks were the first to develop technology and civil life and it claimed, 'pioneering is the custom of our lineage and this lineage left behind many things to be followed by others' (Kadro, 1934-35, pp. 3-4). In this way, history shows that the Turkish nation was born in the lands that were a mother to human civilization and the Turks played a fatherhood role for civilization. It was stated that to maintain this responsibility by every Turk is a mission assigned by history (Ülkü, 1935, pp. 8-12). The contributions made by the journals *Kadro* and *Ülkü* to the symbolic construction are accompanied by the journal *Bozkurt.* In the journal, a poem claims that the first developments of human civilization were achieved by the Turks:

> *We were the first to poke a plow into the soil*
> *We were the first to run water in valleys*
> *We grew thousands of plants in the homeland*
> *While others lived in the caves.*
> *We thought humanity to others*
> *We look like a shepherd, others a herd.*
> ....
> *We used to stretch silk threads in the looms*
> *We used to sew and spread haircloths, rugs and carpets*
> *We used to pound the crops in the valleys*
> *While others did not know what a fire was.*
> *We were the first to water the fields*
> *We have imprints everywhere.*
> *We modified, tamed and melted things.*
> *We look like Sky God in creation*
>
> (Yund, 1939, p. 35).

Poetry is a good example of the symbolization of the Turkish history. The nationalist perspective of the Republican era portrays the Turks' historical role as the initiators related to discovering, and creating, civilization and by using the symbolization potential of poetry. As can be seen in the poetry above, they, for example, make distinctions between the Turks and other human societies with the words 'us' and 'others' as well as between a 'shepherd' and a 'herd'.

The theme that, with migrations, the Turks spread around the world and pioneered in developing civilizations in other regions was an important example of historical symbolizations. This theme was first advanced in the journal *Turk Yurdu*, the main intellectual representative of the Turkish nationalism. Here, the 'Turani race' is said to have left their barren lands and steps, Atilla, Jangyz, Hulagu and Timurlank to spread from Spain to China and from Yemen to India. It was claimed that they mixed with people when they went to Arabia and Persia, they united with Germans and Russians when they arrived in Europe they became a shah in Iran, a sultan in Yemen, a khan in China, a king in Hungary. Therefore, the Turks revitalized the hearts and minds by spreading around the world and this was due to a mission assigned by God (Hikmet, 1912, pp. 189-192). The same perspective can be found in the journal *Ülkü Mecmuası* that was the most important document of official nationalism during the Republican era. In the journal the Turks are said to have gone to China, Japan, and the Okan islands and then to Mexico, Peru and America, from above the Black Sea to Ural, Volga regions, then to Thrace and Macedonia, to the Mansh Sea from there they went to France and named the Alps. Again, they claim that the Turks founded a culture and civilization called Etrusks in Italy and that they influenced the native peoples of America and Europe in growing animals (Muzaffer, 1934, pp. 249-254).

The Turkish Thesis of History claims that a major climate change in the Central Asia forced the Turks to migrate from their homeland toward China, India, Africa, Levant and Europe. And, the Turks are said to 'carry civil knowledge, high and noble morals, pure and simple faiths to these regions' (Tarih I, 1931, p. 28). According to this thesis, the Turks established a civilization wherever they went, for example, keep in Mesopotamia by drying out swamps and opening up water channels. When they reached Egypt, they settled in the Nile delta and established the Egyptian civilization. The westward migrations found the Aegean basin as suitable for

settlement. Again, history shows that the brackicephal tribes founded Mediterranean civilizations in the regions known with the names of Troy, Crete, Lidia and Ionia. The origin of the brackicephal tribes is the Central Asia, the motherland of the Turks. This explains the similarities between the antique pieces in Crete and Troy (Tarih I, 1931, pp. 30-31). Again, the Turks are said to have brought civilization to Europe in the shores of the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea, reaching the Atlantic Ocean from Europe and invaded Britain and Ireland, carrying the arts of the iron, age polished rocks, copper, rice. The Turks freed the natives peoples of Europe from cave lifestyle by teaching them agriculture, farming, domesticating animals, pottery (*Tarih I*, 1931, p. 33).

The Turkish Thesis of History aimed to reverse the Western claim that the Turks were backward and barbarians by placing history in a new context. As explained, even the Europeans are said to owe their modern civilization to the Turks by portraying them as the founders of all civilizations. Therefore, the promoters of Turkish nationalism tried to overcome the charges of backwardness by creating a national civilization as the owners/forerunners of all world civilizations. In this context, they tried to depict the founders of Anatolian civilizations (i.e., Hittites and Sumerian) as Turks.

Anatolianism as another dimension of the Turkish Thesis of History was instrumental in constructing national identity by placing history in a certain meaningful context. In this respect, Hittites were symbolized as a brackicephal version of the Turkish Alp. The brackicephals were viewed as a 'race with the most advanced civilization', coming from the Central Asia and founded the Hittitean civilization. Therefore, this civilization, too, is considered as a Turkish civilization. As the most ancient civilization that lived in Anatolia, the Hittites shared the same anthropological features of today's Anatolian Turks (Saffet, 1934, pp. 263-267). In other words, this perspective claims that the Turks dominated European culture by establishing one of the most advanced civilizations in Anatolia (Saffet, 1935, pp. 355-364). In addition, by claiming that the Turks were a force behind the modern Western civilization, they tried to prove that the Turks were a part of the Western civilization in an evolutionary view of history.

These efforts to associate the names of places and tribes in Anatolia with the Oghuzs aimed to relate the Turkish national identity with Anatolia. For this purpose, the Anatolian tribes are viewed as a continuation of the Turkish lineage and tribes. For example, as a Turkish lineage's name; the fact that Bayat is given to various villages in towns in Antalya, Bolu, Sivas, Kastamonu, İsparta, Bilecik, Sinop, Kocaeli in Anatolia is thought to prove this thesis (Orkun, 1935, pp. 189-199). Consequently, such a nationalist interpretation of history consolidates the place of Turkey in modern Western civilization on the one hand while it gives a common vision of history to the nation on the other. This new meaning of history both reinforces the unity of national identity and creates a 'sense of greatness' in the face of Ottoman decline and being invaded by the West. This sense of greatness can be seen as the meaning-creation efforts by the subordinated societies to overcome inferiority complex. We can say that the Turkish history involved such a meaning-construction.

4. The role of language in constructing a national identity

Building a nation goes hand in hand with standardization in language. The reformation movement in Europe meant the reconfiguration of prayers in local languages. In countries such as Germany, Britain, the language was standardized, as in Prussia, Austria and France (Rokkan, 1999, pp. 165-166). In Turkey, the nationalist discourse began to focus on the standardization of language at the national level, as the foundation of a Turkish nation-state required a common language to create a common meaning of national identity. The debates over language aimed to develop a nation-wide language and sometimes a language that surpasses national boundaries in the Turani geography. Language was instrumental in symbolizing geography and history. That was because common symbols of space and time and words produced through language became stronger in stories, poems and other literary works. Therefore, as a system of symbols the Turkish language became a major tool in constructing the Turkish national identity.

The early Turkish nationalists criticized the state of the Ottoman language in order to emphasize the need for a unity of the Turkish language. According to the first language movement called *Yeni Lisan* (New Language), the Ottoman language was 'the language of the Palace School that was nationless, cosmopolitan and flatterer' (Seyfettin, 1912, pp. 33-37). The fact that the Ottoman society was based on ethnic, regional and religious differences and that these communities maintained their distinctiveness through their different languages were considered as the main cause of Ottoman decline. For them, the Ottomans did not focus on such language differences and rather reinforced the to maintain their difference from the main society (Celal, 1935, pp. 87-89). In the modern period the Turkish language was hoped to become the most basic cultural element in the construction new Turkish national identity.

One of the main argument of the *Yeni Lisan* Movement was about saving the 'Turan family' from by the Western siege through a notion of national language. In this line, Omer Seyfeddin, a representative of the *Yeni Lisan*, claimed that the whole world wants to destroy societal and political entity of the Turks. What the Europeans did to the Crescent is hard to forget. As in Egypt and Syria, Bulgarians, Serbians, Greeks around us display animosity toward the Turks. Albanians established a national language by forgetting our brotherhood and beginning to use 'Christian alphabet, Latin alphabet… From Shkodra to Baghdad, the Turan family or the Turks' that occupies the Ottoman land can be freed from this siege by a voluntary movement. And this was only possible with a progress based on the philosophy of a national language (Seyfettin, 1911, pp. 20-32).

The same role assigned to geography and history in the face of a Western siege was assigned to language, as well. For this purpose, the Turkish language was portrayed as the most civilized language of the world and as the first language of civilizations superior to other languages. The nationalist approach claimed that Europeans, for years, searched for the origin of language but could not find it. However, they think that the Turkish language has many signs to prove that it was the main source of civilizations. In addition it embraces all European languages and Eastern ones (Necmi, 1932, pp. 50-51). In The Turkish History Research Program explained in the journal *Ülkü*, it was claimed that the Turkish language was a source of all world languages and that it constituted the cultural bases of major world civilizations. They tried to prove that Turkish language was a major factor in the development of all world languages and that the Turkish language gave birth to Sumerian, Hittite and other Anatolian cultures as well as Egyptian and Greek cultures. Therefore, they tried to show that the Turkish race constituted the main origin of the modern Western cultures (Ülkü, 1935, pp. 8-129).

The Sun Language Theory also provides a good example in this context (Ülkü, 1936, pp. 331-334) because through this theory they tried to describe the evolution of the Turkish language and to prove that all other languages stem from it. Moreover, this theory becomes instrumental in a coherent construction of national identity. For example, such languages as Samoyeds, Finnish, Tatar, Mongolian, Tunguz constituted a unity under the umbrella of 'Ural-Altaic Languages' (Hikmet, 1912, pp. 189-192; Gökalp, 1950, p. 44).

The attempt to create a national unity by establishing a unity of meanings through the New Language was one of the main goals of nationalist movements. They promoted the language spoken by the people and to revise it to be used as a tool to create national sentiments and ideals (Aydingun and Aydingun, 2004). For that cause, in the Young Pens (*Genç Kalemler*) Ömer Seyfettin said that Turkish was 'the most complete, simple and natural language of the world and therefore we need to remove foreign grammatical rules that spoil it like a stain' (Seyfettin, 1911, p. 20-32). Calling for a unity in language by eliminating the differences between the written and spoken languages, Ziya Gokalp expressed the need for ignoring the Ottoman language:

> *'Turks have a united conscious,*
> *One religion and one homeland.*
> *However, they all can diverge*
> *Unless they have one language'*
>
> (Gökalp, 1976, p. 17).

Here the emphasis is made on a need for a unity of language as a perquisite for a unity of homeland and religion in constructing a national identity. The lack of a unified language will prove other unities useless. In that sense, a national unity is equated with a unity of language.

A unified language was viewed as possible through emancipating the Turkish language from the Arabic and Persian domination (Canip, 1913, pp. 116-120). Also, parallel to the novelties brought by printing technology, Turkish had to be written in simpler forms. This development of a simple language is important in expanding nationalist ideas to people. The defense of the Turkish language that can be understood by all meant that everyone reaches nationalist ideas as a modern phenomenon through a modern technology of printing. Conscious of this, nationalist intellectuals assumed the role of simplifying the language in order to improve the status of nationalism and their own. Definitely this was crucial in the construction of a homogeneous national identity. It was seen instrumental in realizing homogeneity in Turkey and in the Turani races of keep Central Asia. In this respect, they referred to the reinterpretation of the past and sought a "pure language". For example, it was argued that Turkish language was 'used the same way from the shepherd to the King but its 'great disruption' was initiated by the Turks' conversion to Islam' (Orhun, 1933, p. 1). Along with their distaste toward religion's dominance in culture and language (Lewis, 1968), the founders thought language reform was necessary and meaningful in this respect. Changing the order of loyalty from religion to nation was common to almost all nationalism (Uzer, 2002). In the book called Civil Information dictated by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk strikingly explains the symbolic significance of Turkish language:

> *'Turkish language can be a language that is the most beautiful, richest and simplest. Therefore, every Turk loves his/her language and strives to excel it. Also, Turkish language is a sacred treasure for the Turkish nation because with countless difficulties it faced the Turkish language serves to protect everything that makes up its national existence such as morality, customs and interests. Turkish language is the heart of the nation and mind'*
>
> (Inan, 1988, p. 19).

The above text emphasizes the language as a set of meanings that construct, protect and glorify a national identity.

In 1932 the Turkish Languages Conference was first convened by the time's leaders, scientists and intellectuals aimed at exploring the roots of Turkish language and at realizing its standardization. In 1942 the fourth Conference summarized in the Report of General Secretariat involved various examples of such attempts. Firstly, we find the attempts to construct the roots of Turkish language in line with the new state's nationalist perspective. In this context one example was Naim Onat's 'Turkish that found Arabic Language'. Similarly, the fourth Conference witnessed the attempts to establish the 'Etymology of Altai-Sam languages' by comparing Turkish, Mongolian, Manchu and Tonguz (The Fourth Turkish Language Conference, 1943, p. 12-14). Moreover, the report explained the purpose of the efforts as 'to inform the world about the prehistoric roots of Turkish language as a sacred legacy and its being the basis for modern languages' (The Fourth Turkish Language Conference, 1943, pp. 12-14). Finally, through these findings they aimed to prove that the Turks represented the main source of all civilizations.

The findings presented in the conference show that the government supported various efforts to standardize the Turkish language. For example, Radloff's 'Dictionary of Turkish Dialects' were translated into Turkish and the languages of Yakuts, Chuvashes, Altay-Aldags, Balkars, Bashkurts and Chagatays were included in the dictionary and a project was launched to make a new dictionary of the Turkish dialects and the efforts to develop the Turkish Etymological Dictionary were increased. The efforts of language standardization led by Ali Canip Yöntem were initiated and a dictionary of Turkish of Turkey was initiated by Ömer Aksoy (The Fourth Turkish Language Conference, 1943, pp. 14-6). As a result of these efforts various concrete results were attained such as the publication of Scanning Journal (1934), Pocket Guides (1935), Journal of Oral Collections (1939-41), Pocket Guide of Terms (1941) (The Fourth Turkish Language Conference, 1943, pp. 22-24). All of those publications aimed at creating a national integration by creating a standardized Turkish language.

The Turkish language was thought to be a language of perfection, riches, purity and to be a basis for all world languages as well as to be a communication system against the Western siege. It was seen as a system of symbols that unites the newly created national identity and legitimizes the Turkey's integration with the world.

Conclusion

National identity plays an important role in the continuity of a state or a nation as it provides meaning for the current state of affairs. In Turkey history is interpreted within a cultural perspective consistent with the modern nationalist identity and it is 'reinvented' within a new set of meanings. These meanings aimed to refute the charges of backwardness and they served to associate Turkish society with universal, developed and modern Western civilization. The main theme in the attempts of symbolization of history, geography, culture and language were that the Turkish society as a whole were a part of modern Western civilization and that, as a great nation, the Turks played an important role in history. It was claimed that the Turks founded the first civilization and that they served as the forerunner of the Anatolian civilizations and they inspired the Greek civilization. The main function of Turkish History Thesis was to create a meaning for that cause rather than being purely scientific. This thesis claimed that the Turks were leading figures in the history of civilizations and contributed to major civilizations of the world.

Probably due to their desire to distance themselves from the Islamic past represented by the Ottoman Empire, the founders of the new-nation state focused on the pre-Islamic origins of the Turkish culture and its relations with the Western civilization. For that purpose, the language was used as an important symbolic mechanism in constructing the national identity. The Sun Language Theory claimed that all world languages stemmed from the Turkish language. Early nationalists criticized the Ottoman language for being under a heavy influence of Arabic and Persian and emphasized the need to nationalize and purify the Turkish language, thinking that a unified and purified language will help realize the national unity and integration.

Starting with the declining Ottoman society, the symbolization of geography incorporated the theme that the homeland was under siege. While it carried a wider and more symbolic geography,

during the Republican era it was defined more concretely with Central Asia and Anatolia. In this line they considered the Hittits and Sumerians as the ancestors of the Turks living in Anatolia. In terms of culture and civilization, the nationalist claimed that the Turks were the most advanced societies of their time and contributed to the development of sedentary life-style such as domestication animals and tilling the soil. The development of the Turkish nationalism is a good example of strategic use of historical symbols in constructing a new national identity and pride by referring to selective aspects of history.

The symbolic aspects of national identity still play in today's Turkish political agenda in relation to the rise of globalization in general and to the EU accession debates in particular. During these debates and negotiation, national identity is under strong blows from these two forces and swings between a Third wordlist rejectionism and self-confident accommodation of the Western culture and civilization. This self-confidence about the national identity is maintained, at times, in reference to both historical glories and in relation to the level of westernization realized during the last two centuries in Turkey.

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