

Vol.5 No.1 (2022)

Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching

ISSN : 2591-801X

Content Available at : <http://journals.sfu.ca/jalt/index.php/jalt/index>

Teaching nation-building and nationalism: a critical perspective of Turkish academia

Begüm Burak^A

A

Independent researcher

Keywords

Education and nation-building;
nation-building;
nationalism;
nationalism education;
Turkey.

Abstract

The process of nation-building can be seen as a never-ending attempt for a considerable number of nation-states. Education has been one of the primary tools in this process. It can be argued that nation-building policies should be seen as aspects of an attempt rather than a project that can be realized successfully in all terms. Following this argument, this study has two main objectives: to draw a detailed literature review addressing the dynamics, actors and stages of the nation-building process and nationalism and to critically analyze how Turkish academia has dealt with nationalism education. This study will proceed via the following sections: Firstly, the main theoretical discussions concerning nationalism will be covered. In this regard, ethnic/civic nationalism and other types of nationalism, including the concept of "banal nationalism" coined by Michael Billig (1995) will be under scrutiny. Secondly, the state-formation process from a cultural viewpoint will be analyzed. In this part, the works of thinkers such as Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci will be referred to. Next, 'the nation-building process as a never-ending attempt' will be addressed. Finally, the teaching of nationalism in Turkish academia will be discussed from a historical viewpoint.

Correspondence

begumburak1984@gmail.com ^A

Article Info

Received 14 October 2021

Received in revised form 15 March 2022

Accepted 31 March 2022

Available online 4 April 2022

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2022.5.1.10>

Introduction

The process of nation-building can be seen as a never-ending attempt for a considerable number of nation-states. This study argues that nation-building policies should be seen as aspects of an attempt rather than a project. Civil wars, internal conflicts, micro-nationalist movements, separatist nationalist movements and some terrorist organizations can be seen as examples that show that nation-building for many states can never be a completely-achieved project.

For Eric Hobsbawm (1990) nations and nationalism are products of social engineering. In this sense, social engineering can be seen as a dynamic process rather than a project that has a determined time period to carry out. The unity within the state cannot remain purely administrative because the coordination of activities requires cultural homogeneity. In this regard, education is very important in providing cultural homogeneity.

This study adopts the argument that national education policies are among the factors which pave the way for the reproduction of the dominant ideology. Therefore, this study recommends that there is a need for the redesign of the pedagogical framework of the teaching of nationalism in order to eliminate social inequalities inherent in society. In this context, Freire's (1970) *The pedagogy of the oppressed* is one of the critical references cited in this study.

This study has two main purposes: the first purpose is to draw a detailed literature review¹ of the nation-building process and nationalism and the second one is to critically analyze how Turkish academia has dealt with nationalism and nation-building education from a historical perspective. The main research question of this study is as follows: From a historical viewpoint, what kind of changes has Turkish academia undergone in terms of nationalism education? In this research question, the notions of nation-building along with nationalism are significant as education has been used as a tool in the early years of the Turkish Republic to indoctrinate the masses. In order to properly understand how Turkish academia has addressed nationalism education from a historical perspective, this study provides a thorough literature review of nationalism theories and nation-building.

The research design of the study applies a qualitative methodological framework and adopts qualitative data collection using primary resources such as constitutions and various secondary resources like books and journal articles. The data of the study are holistic and rich rather than relying on a single data type such as history books.

Based on the above-mentioned research question, this study will first provide the main theoretical discussions concerning nationalism and the state-formation process from a cultural viewpoint. Nationalism as an ideology can be defined as a set of views that underlines the premise that the individual's loyalty to the nation-state surpasses other individual or

group interests. Özkırımlı (2005) defined nationalism as a particular way of interpreting the world. In a similar vein, nation-building can be defined as a process whereby the inhabitants of a state's territory come to be loyal citizens of the state (Bloom, 1990).

In the theoretical framework part, the works of thinkers such as Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci will be cited. This study will provide a thorough analytical framework based on the literature addressing nationalism, state-formation from a cultural perspective and the nation-building process in addition to addressing how Turkish academia has approached nationalism education.

Theoretical approaches to nationalism

There is no single theory to explain the social phenomena of nations and nationalism. A nation can be seen as a particular way of thinking of what it means to be a people, and how this definition of people might fit into a broader world system (Calhoun, 1997). According to Özkırımlı, nationalism is a particular way of interpreting the world, a frame of reference that helps us make sense of the reality that surrounds us (Özkırımlı, 2005). Following Özkırımlı's approach to nationalism, the main focus of this study stresses the importance of nationalism education in building national identity.

Nationalism can be seen as an ideology produced by the resentment of new elites against older elites or opposing countries. Elites can find challenges which mobilize national sentiments and feelings. In this regard, it can be said that nationalism also gives human beings a sense of belonging, offers rescue from alienation and assures individuals they have the right to equal status (Greenfeld, 1992). As a reflection of taking nationalism as a motivation through which national sentiments are mobilized, nationalism education policies in this context play a key role in offering people a sense of identity and belonging.

Ernest Renan stated that nationalism can be seen as a solidarity sustained by a distinctive historical consciousness and defined nationalism as a "daily plebiscite". In the circumstances of late nineteenth century France, Renan drew attention to the importance of the tensions masked in nationalist sentiments. Renan ([1882] 1990) argued that while it was true that acts of violence like ethnic cleansing helped to form the nation, it was also necessary for ordinary people to leave them behind and take the nation as given and not violently created.

On the other hand, it is known that categorizing different types of nationalisms has long been a scholarly endeavor. Meinecke's work *Cosmopolitanism and the National State* was one of the earliest attempts. Meinecke ([1907] 1970) divided nations into distinct groups as political nations (Staatsnationen) and cultural nations (Kulturnationen). The former are often linguistically defined and ethnically based. In theoretical works, the German Kulturnation appears mostly as an antithesis to the French concept of a Staatsnation (Wodak et al., 2009). In a similar vein, Kohn (1944) was among the first to elaborate on the distinction

1 The literature review section addressing nationalism theories, state formation from a cultural perspective and nation-building process is based on the author's PhD dissertation titled *The image of the undesired citizens in Turkey: A comparative critical discourse analysis of the Hurriyet and Zaman newspapers* which has been published as a book.

between Western and Eastern forms of nationalism. In France, England and America, according to Kohn, the nation was regarded as a rational association of common laws; by contrast, an authoritarian nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe emerged. Accordingly, the ethnic form of nationalism is based on descent, race and kinship. In addition, vernacular culture, especially customs and language are key elements of an ethnic nation (Smith, 1991). This form of nationalism is referred to as the German model and is defined by ancestry, not by boundaries of a state. It is a community of birth and native culture where common descent is heavily emphasized. By contrast, in the Western or civic model of nationalism, national unity arises from a historic territory and laws and the legal-political equality of members which is underpinned by a set of rights and duties. Smith (1991) argued that every type of nationalism contains civic and ethnic elements in varying degrees and different forms.

One of the biggest issues in nationalism literature is the divide between 'constructivists' or 'modernists' and 'primordialists'. Geertz is often considered to be the scholar who introduced the primordial sentiments concept of an individual to the world. According to Geertz (1963), primordial attachments stem from the 'givens'. Primordial attachments are natural rather than sociological. Primordialism is not a single theory, but rather an umbrella term which consists of a number of theories. Modernism is not a homogenous tradition either. The common denominator in modernist theories is that, unlike primordialists, they assert that nations are modern phenomena. The modernists emphasize the historical and sociological processes by which nations are created. The modernist scholars see nationalism rooted in industrialization (Gellner, 1983), the rise of communications media (Anderson, 1983), the development of the modern bureaucratic state (Breuilly, 1982) and regard it as an invention (Hobsbawm, 1990). This study adopts a modernist approach to nationalism. In other words, it can be said that national education is a part of the processes by which nations are constructed.

Nations constitute "dual phenomena, constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people" (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 10). Hobsbawm highlighted the role of political transformations in understanding nationalism and defined it as an "invented" phenomenon. For Hobsbawm, nations and nationalism are products of social engineering. In the era of nationalism, it became tantamount to the enforced maximization of religious, ethnic and economic homogeneity by any means (Quine, 2013).

Michael Billig (1995) challenged the orthodox conceptualizations of nationalism which tend to focus only on its extreme manifestations. Billig introduced the term "banal nationalism" to cover beliefs, ideological habits, representations and unnoticed, routine practices which make the daily reproduction of nations in the West possible (Yumul & Özkırımlı, 2000). These practices are not removed from everyday life, as some observers have previously suggested. Furthermore, Billig questioned why people do not forget their national identity. For Billig, nationalism is constantly flagged in the media through symbols and it is

important to recognize the signs of nationalism which are so familiar that they are easily overlooked.

State formation from a cultural point of view

The traditional state-building approach stresses the establishment or strengthening of state institutions and political systems. The perspective which underlines the political-military dimensions of state formation presents the modern state as a military, political, and economic accomplishment. However, it tends to obscure the fact that the modern state is also a symbolic accomplishment (Bourdieu, 1994).

According to Bourdieu, the state has both a monopoly of physical power and symbolic violence. Symbolic power according to Bourdieu is a hidden structure of power which is applied when coercive power cannot be exercised. Bourdieu (1994) defined the modern state as an institution which successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical and symbolic violence over a definite territory and population. Bourdieu highlighted the state's power of naming, authority and processes of delegation through acts of state. He also enriched the study of nation-states by elucidating the role of symbolic violence in addition to the legitimate use of force by expanding Max Weber's classical definition to emphasize both symbolic and physical violence.

Drawing on Max Weber's definition of the state (1978) as a compulsory political organization that holds the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence within its territory, it may be plausible to suggest that works on the rise of modern nation-states have focused on the political-military dimensions of state formation. Norbert Elias critically took up Weber's core definition and conceptualized European state formation as a 'civilizing process'. Elias (1994) provided significant clues in exploring how the nation-states shape the identity of the citizens along with state ideals. In the theory of the civilizing process, Elias put together the macro-sociological aspects of state formation and the micro-sociological consequences of this process; the ways in which the evolution of the modern state has shaped social practices.

Another writer who moved beyond the materialist conceptions of the state is Patrick Carroll. Carroll studied the use of modern scientific knowledge by British agents in their colonization of Ireland and according to Carroll (2006, p. 2), "states are made of knowledge, just as knowledge is constituted by states". Carroll developed a concept of culture which includes the interrelated parts of discourse (like symbolic meaning) practice (organized social activities) and materiality (constructed environments).

Another thinker whose studies can be used as an analytical toolkit in understanding the immaterial conceptions of the state is Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci's notion of hegemony is significant as this notion highlights the importance of consent besides coercion while illustrating how state power can be exercised in a stable manner. The theory of hegemony is based on a simple principle: modern man is not ruled by force alone, but also by ideas (Bates, 1975). Physical domination cannot be enough; there is a need for

spiritual supremacy as well. Those who obey must, to some degree, share the values and standards of their superiors and consent to their own subordination. For the ruling elites, the notion of consent is important as they cannot provide and reproduce the dominant ideology among the masses solely via coercion-based measures. Thus hegemony plays a key role in the efficient management of a society, and state schooling plays a key role in the construction of hegemony.

The other thinker whose studies can be used in understanding the immaterial conceptions of the state is Michelle Foucault. Foucault's (1991) notion of "governmentality" that sees the state as an apparatus encouraging populations to be socially and economically productive is another critical term in analyzing states from a cultural perspective. In addition, Foucault's conceptualization of power is useful in studying the power of the modern nation-state in relation to her surveillance of the citizens. For Foucault (1982) it is not a good idea to consider the modern state as an entity which was developed above individuals, ignoring what they are and even their very existence. Foucault coined the term 'bio-power' to refer to a form of power, which initially emerged in the seventeenth century. Foucault wrote that (1981, p. 143), "bio-power brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge/power an agent of transformation of human life". Modern bio-power rests upon techniques of power embedded within the daily practices of social institutions such as schools or prisons. Foucault's conception of the state can be seen as an entity which is something constantly produced and reproduced by practices of government, administration and acclamation. In such a conception of the state, schools have a critical function in enhancing "governmentality".

Within the framework of the immaterial conceptions of the state, nation-building is one of the primary tools through which the idea of the nation is created and reproduced. Nation-building is realized through several instruments and a national education system is one of the important aspects of these tools. The goals that ruling elites pursue during nation-building, such as homogenization and creating a common identity, are made possible through state initiatives such as state schooling.

The dynamics of the nation-building process

The nation-building process can be seen as a never-ending attempt rather than a project that can be fulfilled completely. It can be seen as a dynamic process. The term 'nation-building' is a process which evokes a common identity in order to form unity within the state. Nation-building describes the process whereby the inhabitants of a state's territory come to be loyal citizens of the state (Bloom, 1990). The homogenization policies led by the state elites during nation-building play a key role in the nation-building process. Homogenization can be defined as the sociopolitical process of fostering cultural homogeneity. This is directed by elites who often engage in social engineering. In this context, homogenization can be viewed as an elite-driven attempt to impose socio-cultural changes which eventually lead to the achievement of cultural uniformity (Conversi, 2007).

Central to the homogenizing policies carried out during nation-building is the creation of a national history. Establishing a common past for a large community requires a degree of social consensus on historical experience. This consensus has been pursued through national history writing and national education. Poggi (1978) related the expression of geographic, linguistic, cultural and ethnic distinctiveness of a community to the attempts of national unification. According to Hutchinson (2006) one of the institutions through which national unification is sought is mass conscription. In addition to mass conscription, state schooling is also important in the nation-building process. Compulsory education plays a decisive role in developing uniformity among citizens, which is a fundamental aspect in nation-building.

On the other hand, considered purely in terms of the state's coercive capacity, there are different strategies to homogenization such as forced assimilation, expulsion and extermination. However, homogenization is not always implemented through violent methods but also through quieter migrations of ethnic groups (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998). According to Mylonas (2013), there is a categorical conceptualization of nation-building which posits three possible state policies like accommodation, assimilation or exclusion. The elites can pursue cultural, occupational, educational, demographic, political, and other state policies to push the non-core group into adopting the core group's culture. This is known as assimilation (Mylonas, 2013), with the ultimate goal of integration. These policies differ from group specific plans because they do not target particular groups, but may disproportionately affect a specific group (or part of a specific group). According to Mylonas (2013), assimilationist policies seek to secure the loyalty of an individual or a community and can be either violent or non-violent. Alternatively, the elites can retain the non-core group in the state, but grant the group special minority rights. Certain differences of the non-core group are respected, and institutions which regulate and perpetuate these differences are put in place. This is called accommodation.

In summary, nation-building involves attempts to reconfigure collective identities by adjusting national priorities and morals, as well as through attempts to sentimentalize or even de-sentimentalize these concepts within the national consciousness (Norman, 2006). Linguistic and ethnic standardization, citizenship policies, compulsory education, mass media and mass conscription are the primary tools employed by elites during nation-building.

The teaching of nationalism in Turkish academia

According to Althusser (1971), schools are among the ideological state apparatuses through which state ideology is reproduced. The institutions such as schools, the churches, and the media serve to transmit the values of the state. In the Turkish context, national history has been one of the important tools in reproducing the idea of a Turkish national identity. Seeds of nationalism in Turkey have been sown through history textbooks and national education.

This section of the study is an attempt to critically analyze

the Turkish perspective of nationalism studies from a historical viewpoint. Before the establishment of modern Turkey in 1923, the education system had been based on a non-secular framework in the Ottoman times. The establishment of the Republican regime brought a radical system change in teaching and the educational field. The principles of secularism and Kemalism as the core state ideology have been two critical factors shaping both Turkish national identity and Turkish academic structure especially in the early years of the Republic.

Nationalism education in the early Republican era

The single-party years between 1923 and 1950 are known as the period of the early Republican era. In these years, the Kemalist nation-builders had been engaged in producing a national Turkish citizenship regime along with building a national identity. In this context, nationalism education and research focusing on nationalism studies were used as primary instruments to legitimize and reproduce the Kemalist state policies. Through history textbooks and national education, the aim of making the masses internalize the newly-established regime had been pursued by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his associates.

Following the proclamation of the Republic, Atatürk started a series of revolutions in order to make the Turkish society a secular and developed nation. A radical change was made in fields like economy, education, and law. The ideology of nationalism provided the required basis for Kemalist revolutions in all fields (Dönmezer, 1983). The field of history has been among the most important elements that build the cultural roots of a nation. A modern Turkey could only be established through national consciousness. Thus, the teaching of nationalism had played a key role in constituting this consciousness.

Eugene Weber (1976) argued that the patriotic feelings had to be learned in France, and this can also be relevant for other contexts in the making of nation-states. In the Turkish case, the Kemalist elites used national education as a tool to build a common national character. In addition to formal school system, Millet Mektepleri (National Schools) and Halk Evleri (People's Houses) were founded (Ersanlı, 1996). People's House's publication *Yeni Türk Mecmuası* (New Turk Magazine) was one of the important publications promoting national ideals and values (Tütüncü, 2007).

One of the most important developments in nationalism education had been the establishment of the Turkish Historical Society in 1932 with the aim to conduct historical studies. The view which noted that Turks had spread their ancient cultures serving for other civilizations during their migration from Central Asia was promoted through the Turkish Historical Thesis (Zürcher, 2004).

The main objective of national education during this period was to raise a generation with commitment to the Turkish Republican ideals. In these years, the textbooks titled *History in the Republic* by İhsan Şerif Saru and *National History* by Fuat Köprülü were prepared for the 5th grade students (Ata, 1998). After 1925, following the suggestion of the Turkish



Figure 1: National schools were opened in 1928 (Bekar, 2020).



Figure 2: Atatürk and his adopted daughter Afet İnan, one of the first Turkish female history professors and ideologues of the Turkish Historical Thesis (<https://isteataturk.com/g/icerik/Afet-Inan-a-Yazdigi-Mektup-16011937/773>).

Historical Thesis, new arrangements were made for primary and secondary schools. In these years, a two-volume book titled *Medeni Bilgiler* (Civic Knowledge) prepared by Afet İnan was published with the aim to disseminate the idea of a 'good citizen'. In parallel, the lectures on the history of the revolution given by Recep Peker, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt and Yusuf Hikmet Baydur were significant parts of the teaching of nationalism (Tütüncü, 2007).

It can be said that the education policies of this era had a progressivist and secular mentality. In addition to the above-mentioned mentality, Turkish nationalism education had an ethnicist and even racist character. Nazan Maksudyan's work titled *Türkçülüğü Ölçmek: Bilim kurgusal Antropoloji ve Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Irkçı Cehresi* [Measuring Turkishness: Science fiction anthropology and Turkish nationalism's racist aspect] (1925-1939) reveals this character.

Another work focusing on the official history approach of the Republican regime is Büşra Ersanlı's work. Ersanlı's work titled *İktidar ve Tarih: Türkiye'de 'Resmî Tarih' Tezinin Oluşumu* [Power and history: The constitution of the official history thesis in Turkey] (1929-1937) focuses on the relationship between power and history writing. This work notes that the Kemalist elites tried to homogenize the masses through resorting to the historical origins of Turks. In addition to Ersanlı's work, Füsün Üstel (2004) in her detailed research, titled *Makbul Vatandaşın Peşinde: II. Meşrutiyet'ten Bugüne Vatandaşlık Eğitimi* [In pursuit of the acceptable citizen], analyzes the formation of the 'desired citizen' through the citizenship textbooks.

After the death of Atatürk, İsmet İnönü was elected as the new president. Under İnönü's rule, Arabic works and languages were banished and Western works were promoted (Şeker, 2000, p. 13). The first Educational Council was held in 1939 and the second Educational Council was held in 1943 to discuss the newly-established history courses. In this period, a report was presented to the Presidency of the Council regarding this issue. The report underlined the necessity of planning a new programme. Following this, the history textbooks of high schools were revised based on a secular and Western outlook (Köken, 2002). Humanism was adopted in the preparation of textbooks in the 1940s (Şimşek, 2013). Another feature of the education during the İnönü period was the peak seen in military practices. Military lessons and physical training were taken much more seriously and expanded to almost all education levels.

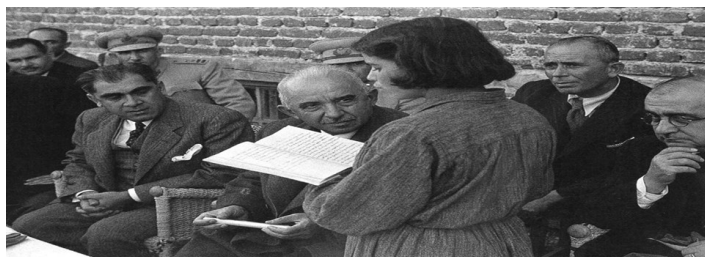


Figure 3: İsmet İnönü's visit to Village Institutes (Güneri, 2004).

Nationalism education during the Democrat Party rule (1950-1960)

Turkey transitioned to a multi-party system in 1946 and Democrat Party (DP) under Adnan Menderes leadership came to power in 1950. However, the change in education policies in a multi-party period was shaped by some earlier developments. One of them had been the Fourth Congress on Education which was organized in 1948. After this congress, education started to be handled with a more inclusionary approach. For instance, the Turkish History Thesis which had an ethnicist character was criticized. The Democrat Party (DP) came into power in 1950. The DP under the leadership of Adnan Menderes had a different perspective in terms of culture, education, economics and the relationship between state and religion (Eroğul, 1970). In terms of the policies of education, the introduction of religious education at primary schools, the reopening of the Imam Hatip schools² (secondary education institutions that train government-employed imams), and the closure of Village Institutes were among the primary policies that were implemented.

In the DP era, radical changes were made in history education. In these years, the interest in the Ottoman and Islamic history was empowered. During the ten-year period in which Menderes was in power, five governments were formed in the Grand National Assembly. All government programmes were based on the principles of the party programme. The principles in the programmes emphasized commitment to national, spiritual and traditional values. The nationalism

² Imam Hatip Schools are secondary education institutions ('hatip' coming from Arabic khatib). Since their creation in the 1950s, Imam Hatip schools have been controversial in the debate about Turkey's secularism.

education in these years had been influenced by religion and cultural values in a more concrete way as compared to previous years. For example, famous historian Fuat Köprülü had an important influence on the nationalism education during the DP period. Fuat Köprülü was among the founding members of the DP. Köprülü had many criticisms against the Turkish History Thesis which was theorized by Atatürk. According to him, the arguments of the Thesis had not been based on scientific principles.

The transition to a multi-party system led to significant changes in the field of education. Important reforms such as the opening of new universities were undertaken. Four new universities were founded in this era. The share allocated to education from the general budget in the 1940s was around 6–7%. In 1960, when the Menderes government was overthrown by a military coup, this rate had been doubled and had risen to over 13% (Karakök, 2011, p. 97).



Figure 4: A view of Middle East Technical University in Ankara in the years of its foundation (Sakaoğlu, 2003).

Nationalism education during the military regimes (1960-1980)

The military coup of May 27, 1960 had a major impact on Turkey. The fall of the Menderes government and the rule of the military regime which continued until 1963 had led to significant changes in Turkish political life. These changes shaped education policies as well. The 1961 Constitution had addressed higher education in a wider scope. In addition, the courses and textbooks were revised. In this period, migration from the village to the big cities accelerated and the demand for education increased. As a result, the insufficient supply started to become a barrier to access to education.

An important development seen in educational field after the 1960 coup was the opening of Maarif Colleges. The Maarif Colleges had gained importance in early 1960s. The opening of Maarif Colleges which was made possible with the effect of developing relations with United States was followed by the arrival of the "American Peace Volunteers" in Turkey to work in the field of education with an agreement signed in 1962 (Gündüz & Erdemir, 2021).

With regards to the changes in curricula, in the years following the 1960 coup, elective religion courses were included in the curriculum. In order to spread and promote the spirit of May 27, a textbook titled *May 27* in schools was published. Nationalism education in these years promoted the idea of national and territorial integrity of the Turkish

Republic through not only textbooks but also through legal arrangements. The 1961 and 1982 Constitutions had a major impact on education policies. The military coups in 1960 and 1980 caused the militarization of state administration and coalition governments ruled the country. The instability in politics has also shown itself in education. It can be said that the best example of this is the frequent change of the ministers of national education.

Nationalism education in the post-1980 period (1980-2002)

The September 12, 1980 military coup had a major impact on Turkey's political, administrative and economic life. The military regime continued until 1983. In addition to restructuring Turkish politics, it also caused the militarization of social and educational fields. The military tutelage showed itself as national security courses which started to be taught (Öztürk, 2009). In 1982, a new constitution was drafted. New regulations were enacted in higher education after the coup. The most critical one was the Law No 2547 which established the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). This law put a heavy emphasis on Kemalist nationalism in higher education. According to Hesapçioğlu (2009), Higher Education Law No. 2547 that was enacted after the 1980 coup replaced a French influence in education by an American influence. It is also to be noted that, raising young generations as individuals who are sensitive to the values of common history and a culture based on Atatürk's principles and reforms had been the primary goal of nationalism education in these years.

In the aftermath of the 1980 military coup, new regulations were enacted in teacher education, religious courses and the content of textbooks were revised. In textbooks, the notion of Turkey's 'internal enemies' was used as a tool to construct enemies that challenge the unity and the principles of national ideology and to enhance the idea of national belonging (Altınay, 2004). After the 1980 coup, compulsory religious education was introduced. The 1982 Constitution obliged all schoolchildren, from the fourth grade until graduation from high school, to take the 'Religious Culture and Ethics Knowledge' courses (Burak, 2015).

After 1980, in a similar fashion to Thatcher in the U.K. and Reagan in the U.S., Turgut Özal's rule in Turkey had paved the way for economic and political liberalization. The neo-liberal economic policies not only shaped the public affairs but also shaped the content and management of education. So a critical development in educational policies after 1980 was liberalization. The increase in the number of private schools can be seen as a sign of this development, however, this increase had not brought a radical change in the objective of national education. The objective of national education has stayed the same: promoting national ideology.

On the other hand, the 1990s witnessed the rise of political Islam in Turkey under the leadership of the Welfare Party. This rise alarmed the secularist actors among which the army had been the most powerful one in these years. In 1997, a military intervention known as the "post-modern coup" happened. On 28 February 1997, the National Security Council (NSC) held the longest meeting in its history to

propose an ultimatum to the Welfare Party. The government was presented with a list of anti-Islamist measures, ranging from bans on private Quran courses to curbs on the donation of sacrificial animal hides to religious organizations. At the top of the list was the demand for the extension of compulsory education to eight years. This clearly aimed at removing the intermediate sections of the Imam Hatip schools. In these years, Islam's social and economic bases as well as its political actors were very much targeted (Burak, 2010). Apart from that, in 1999, Turkey gained the status of official candidacy for European Union. In line with this, in the late 1990s, many students were sent to European countries for education.

Nationalism education during the Justice and Development Party rule (2002-2021)

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (JDP) came to power after the 2002 general elections. Since 2002, Turkey has been ruled by the single-party rule of the JDP. In the 2000s, the Turkish education system has undergone a significant change in terms of the philosophical foundations on which it is based. In this process which started to be implemented in primary education in 2005 and in secondary education in 2007, a constructivist approach was preferred. The constructivist approach puts the student in the centre instead of the teacher (Yazıcı & Şimşek, 2012).

One of the most important structural changes brought about by the 2007 history curriculum is the abolition of courses such as General Turkish History, Islamic History and Ottoman History that had been started to be taught with the 1993 curriculum. Instead, the 'History of Revolution and Kemalism course' and the 'Contemporary Turkish and World History' course in the 12th grade were added to the curriculum in 2008.

Another important development in education during the JDP rule was the abolition of "Andımız" (Our Oath). In 2013, Turkey's Council of State, the highest administrative court in the country declared that the recitation of the oath will no longer be part of the daily routine for Turkish students. The oath was saying the following (Bayar, 2021):

I am a Turk, I am honest, I am hardworking. My tenet is to protect the young, respect my elders, to love my country and my nation more than my own self. My goal is to improve and to advance. O great Atatürk! I swear to walk incessantly on the path that you have paved towards the goals you have set. May my existence be dedicated to the Turkish existence. Happy is the one who says 'I am a Turk'.

According to some Kemalists, the discontinuation of this oath was a sign of abandoning the Kemalist understanding of nationalist ideology. In these years, an ultra-conservative and nationalistic approach was adopted. The JDP embodied its conservatism with both a national and security-oriented approach. The developments in that period (such as the Arab Spring, the Gezi Park events, the presidential election in 2014) paved the way for the adoption of a new approach.

JDP rule paved the way for important changes such as extending the duration of compulsory education to 12 years. In these years, two different phases were existent. The first phase between 2002 and 2011 which was defined by the introduction of neoliberal policies had continuity with the past education policies and the principles that determined them. The second phase covering the last decade witnessed more complex and major changes through which all educational structures were influenced by religious and conservative policies (Durakbaşa & Karapehlivan, 2018). The efforts to increase religious themes in education and de-secularization attempts by marginalizing pedagogy with Kemalist symbols, adding Islamic celebrations to the academic year programmes, and ending republican celebrations such as May 19 Youth and Sports Day became visible along with gender-based discrimination. These changes were regulated by a series of administrative instructions, regulations, decrees and laws (Kandiyoti & Emanet, 2017).

Another significant step taken in order to strengthen cultural values and Islamic moral values in education was the start of "Values Education" (Değerler Eğitimi). Türkmen (2009) in his study focusing on the changes made in the curriculum of the courses on Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge between 1995 and 2007–08 notes that the new content of these courses has been designed to impose religion in a neoliberal fashion.

On the other hand, a critical development that had important impacts on many fields like administration and education has been the military coup attempt of 2016. The military coup attempt of July 15, 2016 was followed by a state of emergency in the country. During this period, the Ministry of National Education announced a new draft curriculum presenting new courses at the primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary school levels. The changes made in the curriculum included removing important historical events and founders of the republic (e.g. Atatürk and İsmet İnönü) and replacing them with Islamized ones promoting Muslim scientists, and increasing the religious content in the textbooks. Kandiyoti and Emanet (2017) argue that the rhetoric of *The July 15 victory of democracy* has been represented as 'the foundational event' of the New Turkey. In short, it can be said that the JDP rule especially in recent years has injected a considerable degree of moral and religious themes into education while undermining the Kemalist nationalist ideology.

Conclusion

The nation-building process can be seen as a never-ending attempt. It can be argued that nation-building policies should be seen as aspects of an attempt rather than a project. Education has been one of the critical instruments in this process. Through mass education, state elites reproduce dominant ideology. Nationalism can broadly be defined as a particular way of interpreting the world and different contexts have different types of nationalisms. Mass education and national history writing have been primary tools in the nation-building process. Through these two primary tools, elites attempt to homogenize the masses and

create a national identity.

Nation-building and state formation cannot be regarded as material processes that only include military and administrative features. In fact, these processes also include immaterial characteristics and cultural homogenization constitutes a critical part of these characteristics. Homogenization is the sociopolitical process of fostering cultural homogeneity. Homogenization can be viewed as an elite-driven attempt to impose socio-cultural changes which eventually lead to achieve cultural uniformity (Conversi, 2007). Central to the homogenizing is the creation of a national identity. This has been mainly pursued through national education. Mass education and national history writing are among the primary tools in the nation-building process. Through these two primary tools, elites attempt to homogenize the masses and create a national identity.

As Althusser (1971) noted, schools can be seen as ideological state apparatuses through which elites reproduce the dominant ideology. Education in Turkey has been used as an instrument to reproduce a Kemalist hegemonic discourse for several decades. Schools aimed not only to instill the Kemalist worldview but also to legitimize state homogenization policies during nation-building as well (Yılmaz & Burak, 2011). The nature and objectives of education in Turkey have been subjected to change in the course of time and nationalism education has changed, too. In the early years of the Republic, state elites used schools and textbooks as a tool to impose a hegemonic state ideology, namely Kemalism. In the multi-party era, this changed to some degree but the use of education as a tool for reproducing the dominant ideology did not change.

This study has attempted to provide an analytical framework based on the relevant literature addressing nationalism, state-formation from a cultural perspective and the nation-building process. In addition, it has addressed how Turkish academia has approached nationalism education in the course of time. In Turkey, the change of political leaders and the revision in the dominant ideological framework of the state have led to changes in the content of history textbooks and curricula. Education has been used as an instrument to impose a hegemonic worldview upon the citizens.

In the formal education system in Turkey, nationalism education was conceived to be part of the state-centric modernization project which would transform the public and private domains in order to create an organic Turkish society out of the Ottoman Empire (Üstel, 2011). Framed by a strong state tradition, the Turkish state has and always had a strong say in what is taught and how it is taught throughout the country. Apart from that, Turkey is transforming itself following the official candidacy in the European Union in 1999. One important reform in the field of education is the inclusion of human rights themes into education.

Paulo Freire in his book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) argues that the traditional education system serves to support the dominance of the powerful people within society and thereby it maintains the powerful groups' political and economic status quo. According to Freire, to

overcome the oppression, education must be designed to inspire and enable the oppressed people in their struggle for liberation. Based on Freire's argument, nationalism education in Turkey should be redesigned to promote a more just society. Through creating a pedagogy of the oppressed, it will be easier to eliminate a social order that objectifies individuals. Consequently, the oppressed could achieve their full humanization. The democratization of Turkey's militaristic and particularistic elements included in nationalism education would be a critical requirement.

References

Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and philosophy and other essays*. Monthly Review Press.

Altınay, A. G. (2004). *The myth of the military-nation. militarism, gender, and education in Turkey*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Anderson, B. (1991 [1983]). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Revised Ed.). Verso.

Ata, B. (1998). *John Dewey and primary education of history in Turkey (1923–1930)*. Symposium on Atatürk's Targets after the Proclamation of the Republic, Atatürk Research Center, 70–74.

Bates, T. R. (1975). Gramsci and the theory of hegemony. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 36(2), 351-366.

Bayar, Y. (2021, April 8). Happy is the one who says 'I am a Turk': The story of an oath. *Open Democracy*. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/happy-is-the-one-who-says-i-am-a-turk-the-story-of-an-oath/>

Bekar, T. (2020, January 6). Millet mektepleri (national schools). *ÖnceVatan*. <https://www.oncevatan.com.tr/millet-mektepleri-makale,47478.html>

Billig, M. (1995). *Banal nationalism*. Sage Publications.

Bloom, W. (1990). *Personal identity, national identity and international relations*. Cambridge University Press

Bourdieu, P. (1994). Rethinking the state: Genesis and structure of the bureaucratic field. *Sociological Theory*, 12(1), 1-18.

Breuilly, J. (1982). *Nationalism and the state*. St. Martin's Press.

Brubaker, R., & David D. L. (1998). Ethnic and nationalist violence. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24(1), 423-452.

Burak, B. (2010). *Türkiye'nin siyasal ve yönetsel yaşamında 28 şubatsüreci'nin yeriüzerine bir inceleme, (The Feb. 38 process in Turkey's political and administrative life)*. (Unpublished Master Thesis). Istanbul University, Istanbul.

Burak, B. (2015). *The image of the undesired citizens in Turkey:*

A comparative critical discourse analysis of the Hürriyet and zaman newspapers (PhD Thesis) Fatih University, Istanbul.

Burak, B. (2022). *The image of the undesired citizens in Turkey: A comparative critical discourse analysis of the Hürriyet and zaman newspapers*. Generis Publishing.

Calhoun, C. (1997). *Nationalism*. Open University Press

Carroll, P. (2006). *Science, culture, and modern state formation*. University of California Press.

Conversi, D. (2007). Homogenisation, nationalism and war: Should we still read Ernest Gellner?. *Nations and Nationalism*, 13(3), 371-394.

Dönmezer, S. (1983). *National culture*. Ankara.

Durakbaşa, A., & Karapehlivan, F. (2018). Progress and pitfalls in women's education in Turkey (1839-2017). *Encounters in Theory and History of Education*, 19, 70-89.

Eroğul, C. (1970). *Demokratpartiideolojisiivetarihi* (DP: Ideology and history) Ankara: Sevinç.

Ersanlı, B. (1996). *İktidarvetarih: Türkiye'de 'resmitarih' tezinin oluşumu* (1929-1937), (Power and history: The constitution of official history thesis in Turkey). Afa.

Foucault, M. (1981). *History of sexuality* (Vol, 1). Penguin Books.

Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. In D. Hubert, & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. University of Chicago Press, 208-226.

Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon. & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*. Harvester, 87-104.

Freire, P. (1970). *The pedagogy of the oppressed*. Penguin Random House.

Geertz, C. (1963). The integrative revolution: Primordial sentiments and civil politics in the New States. In C. Geertz (Ed.), *Old societies and new states: The quest for modernity in Asia and Africa*. Free Press, 107-113.

Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and nationalism*. Cornell University Press.

Greenfeld, L. (1992). *Nationalism. Five roads to modernity*. Harvard University Press.

Gündüz, M., & Erdemir, A. (2021). The place and importance of the Maarif Colleges in Turkish Education System. *Research on Education and Psychology*, 5(2), 246-266.

Güneri, M. (2014). *Hasanoğlanhatırası* (The memory of Hasanoğlan.) İşBankasıYayınları.

Hesapçioğlu, M. (2009). *Türkiye'decumhuriyetdönemindeeğitimpolitikasıvefelsefesi*.

- (Education policy and philosophy in Turkey during Republican era) M.Ü. Atatürk Eğitim Fakültesi Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi, 29, 121-138.
- Hobsbawm, E. (1990). *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hutchinson, J. (2006). Hot and banal nationalism: The nationalization of 'the masses' in Gerard. *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, 1, 295-306.
- Kandiyoti, D., & Zühre, E. (2017). *Education as battleground: The capture of minds in Turkey*. Globalizations.
- Kohn, H. (1944). *The idea of nationalism: A study in its origins and background*. Macmillan.
- Karakök, T. (2011). Menderes dönemi'nde (1950 – 1960) Eürkiye'de eğitim, (Education in Turkey in Menderes period) *Yükseköğretim ve Bilim Dergisi/ Journal of Higher Education and Science*, 1(2), 89-97.
- Köken, N. (2002). *Understandings and education of history during the Republic Period (1923–1960)*. (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis). Süleyman Demirel University, Isparta.
- Maksudyan, N. (2005). *Türkçülüğü Ölçmek: Bilim kurgusu Antropoloji ve Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Irkçı Çehresi, 1925-1939* (Measuring Turkishness: Science fiction anthropology and Turkish nationalism's racist aspect). İstanbul: Metis.
- Meinecke, F. (1970) [1907]. *Cosmopolitanism and the national state*. Princeton University Press.
- Mylonas, H. (2007). A theory of nation-building assimilation and its alternatives in southeastern Europe. *Paper prepared for presentation at the 3rd Hellenic Observatory PhD Symposium on Contemporary Greece: Structures, Context and Challenges*, LSE (June 14-15 2007).
- Norman, W. (2006). *Negotiating nationalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Özkırımlı, U. (2005). *Contemporary debates on nationalism: A critical engagement*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Öztürk, Ö. (2009). *1980 Sonrası Türkiye'de Milli Eğitim İdeolojisi, (The education ideology in Turkey after 1980)*. (Unpublished Master Thesis). Selçuk University, Konya.
- Poggi, G. (1978). *The development of the modern state: A sociological introduction*. Stanford University Press.
- Quine, M. (2013). *Population politics in twentieth century Europe: Fascist dictatorships and liberal democracies*. Routledge.
- Renan, E. (1882). What is a nation? In H. K. Bhabha (Ed.), *Nation and narration*. Routledge, 8-22.
- Sakaoğlu, N. (2003). *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi*. (The history of education from the Ottoman times until today). İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Smith, A. D. (1991). *National identity*. University of Nevada Press.
- Şeker, K. (2000). *Cultural life during the period of İnönü, (1938–1950)*. (Unpublished PhD Thesis). Süleyman Demirel University, Isparta.
- Şimşek, A. (2013). *Geçen Yüzyılda Türkiye'de Tarih Dersleri*, (History courses in Turkey in the last century) https://www.academia.edu/4264130/Ge%C3%A7en_Y%C3%BCzy%C4%B1da_T%C3%BCrkiye_de_Tarih_Dersleri
- Weber, E. (1976). *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernization of rural France, 1870-1914*. Stanford University Press.
- Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology*. University of California Press.
- Wodak, R. (2009). *The discourse of politics in action: Politics as usual*. Palgrave.
- Türkmen, B. (2009). 'A transformed Kemalist Islam or a new Islamic civic morality? A study of 'religious culture and morality' textbooks in the Turkish high school curricula'. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 29(3), 381–397.
- Tütüncü, F. (2007). *The national pedagogy of the early republican era in Turkey*. (Unpublished PhD Thesis). Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- Üstel, F. (2011). *'Makbul vatandaş' in peşinde: II. Meşrutiyet'ten bugüne Türkiye'de vatandaş eğitimi. (In pursuit of the acceptable citizen: Citizenship education from the 2nd constitutional period until today)*. İstanbul: İletişim.
- Yazıcı, F., & Şimşek, A. (2012). Tarih Öğretiminde Nesnellik Sorunu, (The question of objectivity in history teaching). *Tarih Okulu Dergisi*, 11, 13-32.
- Yılmaz, İ., & Burak, B. (2011). Instrumentalist use of journalism in imposing the Kemalist hegemonic worldview and educating the masses in the early republican period. *Turkish Journal of Politics*, 2(1), 109-120.
- Yumul, A., & Umut, Ö. (2000). Reproducing the nation: Banal nationalism in the Turkish press. *Media, Culture & Society*, 22(6), 787-804.
- Zürcher, E. J. (2004). *Turkey: A modern history*. IB Tauris.

Copyright: © 2022. Begüm Burak. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.